Università degli studi di Milano *Università degli studi di Torino*

PhD PROGRAM
SOCIOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL RESEARCH – 29th cohort
SETTORE SCIENTIFICO SPS/08

DIGITAL DISTINCTION
Studying musical taste through digital methods

Doctoral dissertation by
Massimo Airoldi

Supervisor: Prof. Federico Boni
Co-supervisor: Prof. Adam Erik Arvidsson

Director of Doctoral Program: Prof. Mario Cardano

Acknowledgments

"Guarda che facce! Non vale proprio la pena recitare per loro un pezzo simile, tanto non lo capiscono..." [*Café Berlin*, Marco Maria Linzi, 2017]

This work is dedicated to Stefi, who helped me to remain sane through her patience, humour, freedom, intelligence, love. First, I want to thank her, together with the beautiful people that made me happy out of the "PhD tunnel". On top of this extra-academic list, my friends Marco, Micaela, Sabrina and Babu of Teatro della Contraddizione, Jack, Giulia, Silvia, Eugenio and the whole Cafè Berlin brigade, Enri, Daniele, Anita and, in general, all the wonderful people/cats with whom I shared the same stage/song/beer/hug. I am particularly grateful to my parents – who always supported my (disputable) life choices –, my cool grandmas (<3) and my dear brother – who introduced me to the most fascinating thing I ever encountered, that is, music (you must excuse me, music, if here I treat you in such an arid, scientific way!).

If now I can consider (part of) myself as a sociologist, I must thank the great human beings that I had the chance to meet during the many years spent around via Conservatorio: Alessandro Caliandro (who believed in me from the very first moment); Federico Boni (my motivator-supervisor); Adam Arvidsson (an inspiring mentor); Davide Beraldo (special mention for the drinking/programming skills), Alessandro Gandini (my fav *homo academicus* and informal reviewer), Alberto Cossu, and all the lovely viralbeaters/digital ethnographers; Francesco Molteni, Iraklis Dimitriadis, Martina Panzarasa, Valeria Resta, Francesca Arcostanzo, as well as all the other NASP comrades; the Department of Social and Political Sciences – in particular, Sergio Splendore, Mauro Barisione, Ferruccio Biolcati, Roberta Sassatelli and Luisa Leonini. Also, I want to sincerely thank Alex van Venrooij, Gry Høngsmark Knudsen, Mario Cardano, Marco Santoro, Carlo Genova, Adina Marincea, Johan Hagberg, Rino Clerici and the CSBNO staff for their thought-provoking suggestions as well as concrete support, which invaluably contributed to make this dissertation possible. Finally, I owe many thanks to the people who took part to the present study, either by generously accepting my online interview invitations or by completing a boring questionnaire. To the fans of stigmatized music artists: never let distinction bring you down.

Table of content

Acknowledgments....3
Preface....7
Introduction....8
Chapter 1. Taste, distinction and social structure....14
Introduction....14
1.1 Cultural taste and society....14
1.2 A social theory of taste and distinction....16
1.3 Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit....19
1.3.1 Habitus....20
1.3.2 Cultural capital....21
1.3.3 Field....22
1.3.4 Symbolic power....23
1.4 Bourdieu's theoretical legacy....24
1.4.1 A reductive account of agency, culture and interaction....26
1.4.2 The real is relational, culture is practical....30
1.5 Distinction after Bourdieu: empirical evidences....32
1.6 Methodological issues in the study of taste and distinction....39
1.6.1 Measuring objectified and embodied tastes....40
1.6.2 Studying distinctions in practice....42
Chapter 2. Studying distinction through digital methods....45
Introduction....45
2.1 The digitization of taste....45
2.1.1 Culture goes digital....46
2.1.2 Towards a digital sociology of taste....48
2.2 An inductive investigation of taste in music....53
2.3 Social situations, justifications and digital distinctions....56
2.4 A digital distinction? Research questions and hypotheses....61
2.5 Digital data, mixed methods....64
2.5.1 A digital field analysis of music on YouTube....65
2.5.2 Bridging digital distinctions and social stratification....66
2.5.3 From concepts to data....68
2.6 Music consumption in Italy....70
2.6.1 Italian music: artists, hierarchies and classifications....71
2.6.2 Italian listeners: digital consumption, persistent inequalities....75
Chapter 3. Mapping the field of music consumption on YouTube....80
Introduction....80

3.1 Music reception in the age of algorithmic culture 81
3.2 The digital field of music consumption as an (actor-) network 84
3.2.1 A networked field 85
3.2.2 Algorithmic intermediation 87
3.3 Data and methods 89
3.3.1 Data collection and sampling 90
3.3.2 Data processing 91
3.3.3 Networks and clustering 93
3.4 Results 95
3.4.1 Related-videos network 95
3.4.2 Related-artists network 97
3.4.3 Commenter-artist network 99
3.4.4 Aesthetic discourse clustering 102
Conclusion 105
Chapter 4. On justifying musical taste: aesthetic judgements and distinction on YouTube 107
Introduction 107
4.1 Evaluative repertoires between Bourdieu and Boltanski 108
4.1.1 Taste of reflection and taste of the senses 109
4.1.2 Digital situations and orders of worth 110
4.2 Cultural evaluation in a digital field 112
4.3 Data and methods 116
4.3.1 Analysing justifications 117
4.3.2 Measuring cultural legitimacy 117
4.3.3 Interpreting distinctions 118
4.4 Aesthetic judgements and evaluative principles 119
4.5 Mapping cultural legitimacy on YouTube 125
4.5.1 The distribution of musical worth 125
4.5.2 A networked symbolic universe 127
4.6 Narrating distaste: Italian music listeners and digital distinctions 133
4.6.1 Music, authenticity and distinction 133
4.6.2 Symbolic violence and social worth 137
Conclusion 141
Chapter 5. Taste biographies. Interviews with Italian digital music consumers 145
Introduction 145
5.1 Music consumption and individual agency 146
5.2 Taste, technologies and contexts of music reception 149
5.3 Research design 152

5.3.1 Going beyond the screen 152
5.3.2 A qualitative investigation 154
5.4 Results 155
5.4.1 Digital music reception and everyday life 156
5.4.2 Cultural capital and the languages of taste 162
5.4.3 “Good” and “bad” music, “serious” and “easy” listening 170
Conclusion 178
Chapter 6. Musical taste in Italy. Symbolic struggles and social roots 182
Introduction 182
6.1 From symbolic to social boundaries (and vice versa) 183
6.2 Social space, homology and embodiment 187
6.3 Data and methods 193
6.3.1 Questionnaire design 194
6.3.2 MCA... 198
6.3.3 Open-ended questions 198
6.4 Reassembling the field: symbolic, aesthetic and social spaces 200
6.4.1 Axis 1: intellectual versus popular 200
6.4.2 Axis 2: engagement versus detachment 205
6.4.3 Axis 3: old versus new generations 207
6.5 Cultural legitimacy and musical boundaries 210
6.5.1 “Good” and “bad” artists 211
6.5.2 Networks of likes and dislikes 214
Conclusion 217
Concluding remarks 220
References 226
Appendix 1 238
Appendix 2 245
Appendix 3 247
Appendix 4 249

Preface

"The nature of scientific activity is thoroughly misrepresented by the form of presentation which is used in the reporting of science" [Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, 1986:28]

Few months before starting my Ph.D., I had no idea of what my research project would have been about. I had just moved in the outskirts of Milan when, one night, I heard an unusual music coming from outside my room's window. The small flat was just in front of a Chinese-Japanese restaurant, like many others in town. That night, it looked like a giant isle of light and sound amid the darkness of the normally desert road, crossed by the rare flashes of fast cars. I walked down the street and, finally, entered the restaurant. It was surprisingly large and – beyond a foggy free-smoking corridor full of parents and children, ideally sharing the same cigarettes – I finally saw the source of the music which was causing me an uncontrolled, virulent disappointment. A DJ was playing *musica neomelodica*, contemporary pop songs made in Naples. A happy, multi-ethnic crowd of working class men and women in their 40s was dancing around the tables of the enormous hall – their stomachs full of cheap sushi, their hands shaking, as in a grotesque parody of *La grande bellezza*'s starting scene.

I am not a judgemental person. I listen to a lot of different music. I like what is generally considered weird, and – believe me – that sort of situation looked definitely weird in a posh, business city like Milan. Still, once I entered the large hall, smelled the fried residuals of tons of Asian-food-for-Italians, stared at the people there and – especially – heard that music, I probably looked like a first-class Titanic passenger casually passing by a third-class feast. That feeling I had, it was neither rational, nor entirely conscious. It was disgust. Why did I react that way? The idea of the present dissertation was born in that moment, from my own sense of distinction.

Milano, 27/05/2017

Introduction

"Wedged between vomit and indifference, there must be a fan base: some middle-of-the-road Middle England invisible to the rest of us. Grannies, tux-wearers, overweight children, mobile phone salesmen and shopping centre devotees, presumably" [The Independent on Céline Dion, cited in Wilson, 2014:19]

Cultural taste is an established research object in sociology. On the one side, it has been traditionally conceptualized as an identity marker, a powerful symbolic device which "unites and separates" (Bourdieu, 1984:86). On the other side, the social processes underlying its formation, transformation and circulation have been approached from many distinct theoretical perspectives (see Section 1.1). The present dissertation deals with both social facets of cultural taste, by focusing on a specific artistic realm – that is, music.

This work explores the social uses and social roots of musical taste in contemporary Italy. For the first time, large amounts of online data, retrieved from digital platform YouTube, have been exploited for this purpose, in the broader context of a mixed-method research design. Following an inductive methodological approach, the present study shows that shared notions of "good" and "bad" musical taste – broader and more flexible than what the traditional highbrow/lowbrow dichotomy implied (Levine, 1988) – have manifest social consequences as well as tacit social determinants. Notwithstanding the academically successful claims of a widespread de-hierarchization, democratization and hyper-individualization of postmodern culture (e.g. Bauman, 2011), this unconventional empirical investigation sheds light on how cultural distinction works in the digital age, considering Italy as "an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations" (Bourdieu, 2002:268).

In *La Distinction*, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu famously investigated the social and symbolic mechanisms underlying cultural taste in 1960s France (1984). On the one hand, individual taste was described by Bourdieu as the product of objective social conditions. Highly educated bourgeois' "propensity and capacity" (Ibid.:173) to appreciate a difficult classical piece like Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavier', far from being the subjective manifestation of a "natural" attitude, represented the social outcome of high-class cultural socialization. On the other hand, taste was seen as a classificatory device, ultimately reinforcing symbolic cleavages which reflected "a particular state of social struggles" (Ibid.:476-77). "Legitimate" cultural goods were nothing but those appropriated by the elites. For this reason, the

intellectual appreciation of Bach's aforementioned work acted as a "distinctive" sign in the French society of that time, whereas the "naive" preference for a popularized piece like "Blue Danube" was regarded as a "mark of infamy" (Ibid.:17). In Bourdieu's view, tastes in matter of culture carry the embodied traces of their social roots as well as the symbolic consequences due to their position in a field's classification system. The mastery of aesthetic distinctions between "the beautiful and the ugly" is itself a means for being socially "distinguished" (Ibid.:6) – which, without any intentionality, contributes to reproduce long-lasting social inequalities. Essentially, this is how the "logic of distinction" works (Ibid.).

In the nearly fifty years since Bourdieu's research team collected the empirical materials then analysed in *La Distinction*, Western societies have dramatically changed, and cultural taste too. Wider access to higher education and increased social mobility partly eroded the insurmountable class barriers characterizing 1960s France. Technological shifts revolutionized cultural reception, ultimately leading to the current ubiquitous access to an unprecedented variety of cultural goods through digital media, at low or no cost. Furthermore, the rising globalisation and commodification of culture have eroded previously established hierarchies of legitimacy (see Janssen et al., 2011). Then, it is no surprise that, in the early 1990s, the Bourdieuian theory of taste began to be considered as outdated (see Peterson and Kern, 1996; Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007).

Nevertheless, recent literature in sociology of culture indicates that distinction, far from having disappeared, still pervades our digitized societies (see Friedman et al., 2015). Of course, this does not necessarily imply that contemporary consumers debate about Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavier' or Strauss' 'Blue Danube' (Holt, 1997a). Cultural tastes are now *substantially* different in terms of content from 1960s France's ones, but may well work according to the same relational mechanisms described by Bourdieu (1984).

Still, it is practically difficult to empirically test such a hypothesis on a large scale. Indeed, given the complexity of contemporary culture-scapes (Bennett et al., 2009), distinctions are harder to grasp using conventional methods (see Jarness and Friedman, 2017; Rimmer, 2012). For this reason, in recent years, a number of scholars repeatedly stressed the need for inductive, relational, unobtrusive, mixed-method approaches in the study of cultural taste and classification (e.g. Sonnett, 2016; Beer, 2013; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Lizardo and Skiles, 2016; Peterson, 2005).

Where are today's cultural boundaries? Where's "high"? Who's "low"? How do "new" forms of distinction work in the fields of social life? These questions dominate current debates in sociology of culture (see Bennett et al., 2009; Bellavance, 2008; Jarness, 2015).

They are also at the core of the present dissertation, which moves from the following methodological premise: since cultural tastes, aesthetic judgements and classificatory practices are now largely objectified in the form of researchable digital data, cultural distinctions can be studied through digital methods in a large-scale, naturalistic, relational and ground-up way (Rogers, 2013). Hence, I investigated the Italian field of music consumption employing a non-conventional mixed-methods approach, party based on large amounts of digital data collected from YouTube – the most used music service in Italy as well as worldwide (IFPI, 2016b). Such a "digital" field analysis (see Savage and Silva, 2013) allowed me to unobtrusively study distinctions "in practice", as immersed in the context of digitally-mediated social situations – thus overcoming one of the main weaknesses of Bourdieu's work, that is, the lack of attention to the interactional level of social life (Santoro, 2011). The present research is guided by the following research questions[1]:

- Are one or more notions of cultural legitimacy shared among Italian music listeners?
- What are, if any, the currently legitimate styles of music appreciation and evaluation?
- Do differences in musical preferences work as distinctive signs?
- Are differences in styles of music appreciation and evaluation distinctive?
- Are such differences linked to differences in education, family-based cultural capital, social class, age and gender?

These key issues all point to a broader dilemma, that is: does the Bourdieuian theory of distinction apply to contemporary, digitized societies?

The term "digital" in the title of this dissertation does not regard solely my methodological strategy. Music is now largely detached from any material support, with the sole niche exception of vinyl records. The consumption of recorded music, for the most part, takes place on digital platforms (IFPI, 2016a). Musical choice is currently more and more outsourced to recommender algorithms' automated suggestions (Morris, 2015). Once endowed with a digital device and an Internet connection, everyone can potentially access hundreds of millions of music tracks, everywhere, in any moment, at low or no cost. Consequently, "musical socialization" (Rimmer, 2012) is potentially freer from inequalities rooted in social origin, education and class (see Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). Digital media have eroded traditional barriers to the circulation of cultural products (Verboord, 2011), renegotiating the social mechanisms in play in the construction of individual taste (Barile and Sugiyama, 2015). Have they dismantled distinction too?

[1]For further details about the research questions, see the dedicated section in Chapter 2 (2.4).

This is not what my data indicate. In contemporary Italy, musical taste – intended as both what one likes and how one likes it (Jarness, 2015) – underlies a distinctive logic. Aesthetic judgements about "good" and "bad" music give rise to forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989) directed towards stereotypical categories of listeners. Some artists and genres are largely admired and respected, while others are almost universally loathed and stigmatized. Dominant social strata tend to dislike the formers less, while illegitimate musical preferences mainly correspond to dominated social groups. Furthermore, different modes of music appreciation – clearly reproducing a Kantian opposition between "pure" and "naive" gazes (Ibid.) – are even more tightly associated to antithetical positions in the "social space" (Bourdieu, 2002).

The present dissertation is organised following a logical sequence that corresponds to the actual implementation of the research process. After a short introduction to the social dimension of taste (Section 1.1), *Chapter 1* presents the social theory introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in *La Distinction* (1984), describing the core arguments (Section 1.2), the broader theoretical framework (Section 1.3), its main weaknesses and strengths (Section 1.4). Then, I discuss the relevance of Bourdieu's work for the current study of cultural taste (Section 1.5) as well as key methodological issues in contemporary sociology of culture (Section 1.6).

Chapter 2 illustrates the overall research design and methodological approach of my work. The implications of digital media for the sociological study of cultural taste are discussed in Section 2.1, while Sections 2.2 and 2.3 describe, respectively, the inductive character of my digital field analysis and the epistemological implications of cultural distinctions "going digital". Then, I illustrate research questions and hypotheses (Section 2.4), present an overview of the methodological strategy adopted in each research step (Section 2.5) and review sociological and musicological literature about the Italian field of music consumption (Section 2.6).

Chapter 3 aims to map the relational structure of the Italian field of music consumption from the ground-up, through the quantitative analysis of metadata about 17,734 YouTube music videos featuring a total of 2,145,857 comments. After having discussed the idea of "digital field" considering relevant literature about networks, relational sociology and online algorithms (Section 3.2), I describe in detail how YouTube data have been selected, retrieved and processed in the present study (Section 3.3). The application of network analysis techniques to different relational datasets involving music videos and YouTube commenters allowed me to reconstruct from below crowd-generated clusters of artists perceived as subjectively similar by digital listeners (Mohr, 1998; Airoldi et al., 2016). Three main music

categories – Italian music of the past, mainstream Italian pop and Italian rap – emerged from the data (see Section 3.4). Unsupervised clustering techniques applied to commenters' aesthetic discourses unveiled the same tripartite structure, organised along two main dimensions: new versus old and "serious" versus "light".

The macro "cartography of taste" (Sassatelli, 2007:94) resulting from Chapter 3 is then examined from a closer point of view. *Chapter 4* sheds light on the interactional, distinctive uses of musical taste, through the qualitative analysis of a sample of nearly 5k "critical" YouTube comments (Section 4.3). First, the grounded coding of aesthetic criteria employed in taste-justifications reveals that the social construction of musical worth on YouTube follows a Bourdieuian logic of cultural embodiment based on the opposition between "intellectual" and "popular" aesthetic views (1984), rather than corroborating Boltanski and Thevenot's situational perspective (2006; 1999) (see Sections 4.1 and 4.4). Second, the descriptive analyses of musical dislikes and artistic analogies as of Section 4.5 show that a multidimensional cultural hierarchy characterizes the Italian field of music consumption. Although different musical realms have internal hierarchies of legitimacy, some artists work as boundary-objects (see Star and Griesemer, 1989) – that is, they represent transversally intelligible standards of cultural "excellence" (Barth, 1981) or "infamy" (Bourdieu, 1984). Last, the naturalistic study of distinctions on YouTube focuses on the stigmatization of "inexpert" listeners, evident in struggles about musical authenticity as well as in diffuse forms of symbolic violence (Section 4.6).

The subsequent chapters bring taste back to the individual level of identities and the material roots of social stratification. Chapter 5 presents the results of semi-structured interviews with a small sample of YouTube users, selected from my digital dataset (Section 5.3). This research step qualitatively explores the intersections of taste, technology, everyday life and social structure (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Interviewees' taste biographies show the enduring influence of family-based cultural capital on the ways music is evaluated, appreciated and consumed. Overall, digital listeners' agency in matter of taste appears to be socially and symbolically constrained, as diffused forms of "cultural goodwill" witness (Bourdieu, 1984). Interestingly, the distinction between an Adornian "serious listening" (Fabbri, 2003) and a situational "easy listening" (Airoldi et al., 2016) spontaneously emerges from interviewees' accounts. It will be interpreted in the light of the novel concept of "situational omnivorousness" (Section 5.4).

Chapter 6 aims to map the social roots of musical taste (and distaste). I distributed an *ad hoc* designed questionnaire to the users of a network of public libraries based in the north-west

area of Milan. Data have been analysed using multiple correspondence analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) and visual network analysis (Venturini et al., 2014), in order to inductively map the space of social positions underlying differential taste patterns and perceptions of cultural legitimacy (Section 6.3). Results show that education, occupation, gender and age are all relevant social factors along three main dimensions structuring the field – that is, "intellectual" versus "popular", engagement versus detachment, new versus old generations (Section 6.4). Open-ended questions about "good" and "bad" as well as favourite and least favourite artists unveil in a ground-up and fine-grained way the musical boundaries segmenting the field, confirming that transversal notions of "good" and, especially, "bad" music inhabit Italian listeners' classificatory imagination (Beer, 2013) (see Section 6.5). Overall, survey data demonstrate that digital distinctions have material social roots.

Chapter 1. Taste, distinction and social structure

"The manner in which culture has been acquired lives on in the manner of using it" [Pierre Bourdieu, 1984:2]

Introduction

The present work investigates the distinctive uses of musical taste among Italian listeners. In doing so, it aims to replicate Bourdieu's path-breaking study (1984) in a specific field of cultural consumption, employing an inductive mixed-method approach based on digital data. This theoretical chapter will first reflect on the social dimension of cultural taste (1.1). Second, it will describe the social theory of taste introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in *La Distinction* (1984), highlighting the core arguments (1.2), the broader theoretical framework (1.3), as well as its widely acknowledged weaknesses and strengths (1.4). Then, Section 1.5 will discuss the relevance of the Bourdieuian analysis of taste in the study of contemporary societies, reviewing contributions that empirically challenged or validated some of its main assumptions and results. Finally, section 1.6 will address crucial methodological issues and novel opportunities in sociology of culture.

1.1 Cultural taste and society

Taste is inextricably linked to individual subjectivity. It is related to the senses, to the body, to our capacity to perceive and experience the world. It underlies everyday "practical" routines and taken-for-granted habits that do not require a reflexive awareness (see Sassatelli, 2007). At the same time, it shapes our identity and self-presentations – who we (think we) are, how we contextually pretend to be. Far before the advent of Facebook and Twitter, individuals were already defined by their likes and favourites – and, more interestingly, by what they hated, rejected, loathed (Miller, 1997). As the old saying "*de gustibus disputandum non est*" currently means, taste is a private, personal, subjective matter. Still, as this very same saying originally meant, taste is also a self-evident social fact. Indeed, it was considered "beyond dispute" because "one could not legitimately have differing opinions about it. Taste was thought to be based on one's sense of taste alone" (Gronow, 1997:9) – that is, a common, socially-shared and historically-rooted notion of "good taste" (see Levine, 1988).

According to Immanuel Kant, taste is both individual and social, subjective and objective. In *Critique of Judgement* (Kant, 1987), the universal character of "good taste" – consisting in a purely aesthetic, disinterested, intellectual approach – was conceived as deriving from a "sensus communis" (Ibid.:20), meaning, "a communal sense, or a community of feeling and taste" (Gronow, 1997:88). In practice, far from being truly universal, the Kantian idea of artistic taste was the exclusive prerogative of a very restricted community, that is, cultural elites.

The German philosopher was writing towards the end of the 18th century, when the word "taste", left apart his (original) physiological sense, essentially became "equivalent to discrimination", a means for distinguishing the "good, bad or indifferent" (Williams, 1985:313). At that time, the sacralisation of "fine" arts was taking place in Europe and was about to begin in the US (see van den Haak, 2014; Levine, 1988). The outcome of this bourgeoisie-lead process consisted in a rigid cultural hierarchy featuring, at the top, complex forms of classical as well as avant-garde art and, at the bottom, "vulgar" popular culture (van den Haak, 2014:50). The consolidation of a highbrow/lowbrow cleavage during the 19th and early 20th centuries largely varied from nation to nation (see, for instance, DiMaggio, 1992; Santoro, 2010), depending more on concrete societal and institutional processes than on an abstract "sensus communis aestheticus" (Kant, 1987). More generally, shifts in systems of cultural classification are affected by context-specific factors such as level of social mobility and intergroup sociability, degree of access to the educational system, characteristics of the national cultural repertoire, type of media system, institutional policies in matter of culture (see Janssen et al., 2011; DiMaggio, 1987).

The relationship between cultural consumption and social stratification was early analysed by Weber (1978), Veblen (1973), Goffman (1951) and Packard (1960), who all stressed the role of elite taste as a status-marker in modern societies (see Peterson, 1997; Levine, 1988). Differently, Simmel (1981) – followed by Blumer (2007) – was interested in the dynamic processes underlying the formation and diffusion of collective tastes in the realm of fashion (see Gronow, 1997). In post-war Europe, the study of cultural reception was dominated by Frankfurt school theorists' normative perspective while, in the US, the rising "mass society" approach was characterized by a similarly "unproblematic" view on cultural industries and popular tastes (see Lizardo and Skiles, 2008:2). It was not until the 1970s that the work of Pierre Bourdieu in France began to problematize the mechanisms of power underlying the production and reproduction of cultural taste, emphasizing for the first time the "socially mediated nature of demand for the arts and the role of other institutional domains—in

particular the family, occupational groups and the educational system—in the formation of culture-consuming publics" (Ibid.:4). *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984) is the major outcome of this path-breaking strand of research.

1.2 A social theory of taste and distinction

The aim of *La Distinction*, as it is clearly stated in the preface to the English translation, consisted in "giving a scientific answer to the old questions of Kant's critique of judgement, by seeking in the structure of the social classes the basis of the systems of classification which structure perception of the social world and designate the objects of aesthetic enjoyment" (Bourdieu, 1984:xiv). Taste, traditionally considered as an innate feature ascribed to human nature, was to be brought back to culture and, particularly, class struggles. The key thesis of *La Distinction* is that cultural taste – the taste for the arts as well as for "symbolic goods" in general (see Bourdieu, 1985) – is simultaneously the (naturalized) social product of class-based socialization and a classificatory device drawing symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar 2002), ultimately serving to reinforce and reproduce long-lasting social inequalities[2]. Thus, according to Bourdieu, taste is social in two main ways: first, it is the outcome of dispositions and competences deriving from the accumulation of (potentially convertible) "cultural capital" (see Section 1.3.2) – accomplished through the embodied socialization of both class and the educational system; second, it is the "practical operator of the transmutation of things into distinct and distinctive signs" (Bourdieu, 1984:174), that is, a means for evaluating and communicating the "worth" (see Stark, 2009) symbolically associated to things, to oneself and, especially, to others.

> "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed" (Bourdieu, 1984:6).

In Bourdieu's theory, embodied classificatory schemes and culturally shared systems of classification, reflecting structural social inequalities, radically shape individual identities, perceptions and behaviours, even in the apparently innocent realm of cultural consumption. The aesthetic boundaries separating "good" and "bad" music, "intelligent" and "trivial" paintings, as well as "fine" and "kitsch" furniture or "excellent" and "disgusting" wine, have

[2] The notion of "symbolic boundary", based on the works of Lamont (1992) and Barth (1969), represents a useful analytical tool for the analysis of the classificatory struggles characterizing cultural distinctions (see Lamont and Molnar, 2002).

similar social roots, deeply embedded in the objective differences between those who are endowed with the symbolic power assured by cultural and economic capital (see Section 1.3), and those who are not. Working class and petit bourgeoisie are depicted by Bourdieu as both socially and symbolically dominated, being involved in a sort of rigged game, the game of culture, whose rules are advantageously naturalized by the dominant classes. This highly conflictual context is where distinction – defined by Proust as "the infinitely varied art of marking distances" (Bourdieu, 1984:66) – comes from and it is enacted.

The easiest interpretation of this theoretical picture is to imagine two stereotypical persons: the snob educated bourgeois and the poor, illiterate working class man. The first one has a "highbrow" taste for complex classical music, while the latter only likes simple, "popular" music; the bourgeois strategically exhibits her "conspicuous consumption" of legitimate art (Veblen 1973), while the working class man is inevitably stigmatized for his "disgusting" tastes. Well, this account of Bourdieu's theory – sadly common, especially in the North-American literature – is simply wrong (see Lizardo, 2014; Lizardo and Skiles, 2014). As Bourdieu verbosely repeats in the introduction of his book, distinction is less a matter of "what" is consumed – namely, cultural preferences as "objectified taste" – than about "how" aesthetic objects are practically appreciated – that is, "embodied taste" (see also Holt, 1997a) On the one side we have taste objectified in consumer goods and consumption behaviours (e.g. vintage clothes, impressionist paintings, Japanese food, the early Tom Waits), which have both a material and a symbolic side, being consumption both a practical action (Warde, 2014; Bourdieu, 1977) and a "stage in a process of communication" (Bourdieu, 1984:2). These classified (and socially classifying) practices are described by Bourdieu as positioned on a socially recognized hierarchy of cultural legitimacy, which features the objectified tastes of dominant classes at the top. The totality of these items represents an ideal "space of lifestyles", an abstract sociological representation of "the universe of stylistic possibles" (Ibid.:208). Considering that individual preferences are primarily the products of the unequal distribution of cultural competences across classes, Bourdieu's theory implies that different sets of distinctive, symbolically ranked practices and consumer goods will overlap different, analogously ranked segments of population.

However, this does not automatically mean that distinction is synonymous of "symbolic exclusion" towards "lowbrow" consumers and their tastes (see Bryson, 1996), or that high status consumers are necessarily "highbrow snobs" (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Symbolic exclusion in the fields of cultural consumption represents a first type of distinction, regarding objectified taste. On the other side, a second and subtler type of distinction concerns

embodied taste – that is, the styles of appreciation or, in other words, the classificatory schemes involved in the practice of consumption, regardless of the cultural contents to which they are practically applied (see Holt 1998). Taking the formal, distant manner of artistic fruition described in Kant's "Critique of Judgement" as an emblematic example, Bourdieu painstakingly describes two opposed ways of seeing, classifying, understanding, evaluating cultural goods: the dominant "pure" gaze, focused on the formal elements of artistic production, and the dominated "naïve gaze", limited to the content of the work of art itself (Bourdieu 1984:32; Lizardo & Skiles 2014). Bourgeois' and working class' "eyes" are themselves societal, historical products rooted in cultural, educational and life inequalities. On the one hand, the popular, "naïve" aesthetic view is rooted in a taste of necessity, "based on the affirmation of continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function" (Bourdieu 1984:4). Conversely, Bourgeois' "pure" aesthetic disposition implies "the capacity to consider in and for themselves, as form rather than function, not only the works designated for such apprehension, i.e., legitimate works of art, but everything in the world, including cultural objects which are not yet consecrated" (Bourdieu, 1984:3).

This means that the logic of cultural distinction can be displayed not only through what one actually likes or dislikes, but also – more powerfully – through how cultural objects are aesthetically valuated and evaluated (Lamont, 2012b), by means of a practical mastery that "is, for the most part, acquired simply by contact with works of art – namely, through an implicit learning analogous to that which makes it possible to recognize familiar faces without explicit rules or criteria" (Bourdieu, 1984:4). Hence, in Bourdieu's view, "the seemingly opaque realm of artistic perception is opened up as a system of hierarchized differences" (Prior, 2005:126).

This second-order, "practical" distinction, based on embodied tastes and underlying a parallel aesthetic hierarchy of legitimate and dominated styles of appreciation (Bourdieu, 1993), carries important theoretical implications. First, it is not necessarily conscious: while symbolic distinction – concerning objectified taste – implies a more or less explicit acknowledgement of a cultural hierarchy of vertically classified cultural practices, aesthetic distinction works at the unintentional level of practice (see Bourdieu, 1977), through the application of taken-for-granted cognitive schemes acquired through socialization (see Section 1.3). Second, in Douglas Holt's words, "to express distinction through embodied tastes leads cultural elites to emphasize the distinctiveness of consumption practices themselves, apart from the cultural contents to which they are applied" (1998:6). Thus, the practical application of a "pure" aesthetic disposition by educated bourgeois, intellectuals

and artists transcends legitimate arts, enabling them to confer aesthetic status even to banal or common cultural objects (e.g. kitsch, trash) (Bourdieu, 1984:282). As Bourdieu states, the "naive exhibitionism of 'conspicuous consumption' [...] is nothing compared to the unique capacity of the pure gaze, a quasi-creative power which sets the aesthete apart from the common herd" (Ibid.:31)[3].

The cruel game of taste and distinction drawn by Bourdieu looks more complex than what our previous example has shown. The educated bourgeois may well appropriate "popular" cultural goods, having the competences to do it in an aesthetically legitimate, justifiable way. On the contrary, the working class man, lacking the necessary cultural and educational capital, will be confined to the realm of popular culture and "naïve" artistic appreciation anyway. At the same time, our stereotypical bourgeois may well not stigmatize him for this, not being intentioned to symbolically exclude lower classes – although, in Bourdieu's pessimistic world, the logic of distinction would work anyway at the practical level of aesthetic dispositions. Furthermore, forms of cultural rejection and symbolic hostility might work in the opposite direction too, being directed by working classes toward highbrow artistic forms such as free jazz or abstract painting, given the "implicit 'acknowledgment' of the existence of objective, non-negotiable barriers to that person's own ability to enjoy a coherent experience outside of the realms that he or she has mastered" (Lizardo, 2014:351).

To sum up, *La Distinction* suggests that, rather than thinking of cultural taste as a free choice (Lizardo, 2014: 356), it represents simultaneously 1) the objective product of long lasting, class-based social inequalities in the distribution of resources and as 2) the producer of distinctions working both at the symbolic (objectified taste) and practical level (embodied taste). The following section will situate these arguments in the broader context of Bourdieu's peculiar conceptual toolkit.

1.3 Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit

Four main concepts, developed by Bourdieu throughout his carrier, found coherent application in *La Distinction*: habitus, cultural capital, field, symbolic power[4]. Together, they sketch an ambitious theory explaining both the social uses and social origins of taste

[3] Openly critical of Veblen's work (1973), Bourdieu described the conspicuous "anxiety of exposing oneself" (1984:57) as a characteristic of the French petit bourgeoisie seeking for legitimation – arguing that the undisputed amount of symbolic capital already owned by the cultural elites paradoxically frees them from the symbolic constraints they themselves established and perpetuated (Bourdieu, 1989:20).

[4] See Bennett and Silva (2011) for an account of the genesis of the concepts of habitus, cultural capital and field.

(Lizardo, 2014), which attempts to overcome dichotomies that are still highly debated in contemporary cultural sociology, such as objectivity/subjectivity, symbolic/material, rationality/irrationality (see Sassatelli, 2007; Warde, 2014; King, 2000; Calhoun et al., 2002:259-60). In the following pages, I will briefly define these concepts, mainly through the words of Bourdieu himself. Then, Section 1.4 will discuss whether they represent a suitable conceptual toolkit for the current analysis of cultural taste and distinction.

1.3.1 Habitus

Objectified and embodied tastes are manifestations of the mechanisms of habitus, which is both "the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (*principium divisionis*) of these practices" (Bourdieu, 1984:170). Habitus is described as the embodied product of (domestic and class-based) socialization, a unified set of dispositions and cognitive schemes rooted in social structures, particularly class. On the one hand, habitus objectively embeds culture and society; on the other, it invisibly shapes them through the creative generation of everyday individual practices (Bourdieu, 1977), providing actors with a practical knowledge about their world.

Bourdieu sees the sets of clustered consumption practices distinguishing the lifestyles of the different classes as the coherent *opus operatum* of a hidden *modus operandi*, that is, the generative principle of the habitus (Ibid.:72). In plain words, there is no direct connection between being an educated bourgeois and liking classical music or abstract art: statistically observable relations between social positions and consumption practices are just the outcome of habitus' embodied scripts, homologically applied across cultural realms (see Lizardo, 2014:345).

Each individual, carrying these "long-lasting" and "transposable" cultural schemes, is a "producer and reproducer of objective meaning", since "his actions and works are the product of a modus operandi of which he is not the producer and has not conscious mastery" (Bourdieu 1977:79). However, Bourdieu describes the same structurally constrained individual agents as "virtuosos" (Ibid.:79) who know the script so well that they can "elaborate and improvise upon the themes which it provides and in the light of their relations with others" (King 2000:419). In Bourdieu's view, "structures are 'structuring' in the sense that they guide and constrain action. But they are also 'structured' in the sense that they are generated and reproduced by actors" (Calhoun et al. 2002:260). The concept of habitus, "conceiving embodiment as something preceding consciousness without having to resort to biological essentialism" (Sassatelli, 2007:92), is at the hearth of Bourdieu's proposal of a

structural-constructivism, namely, a theoretical perspective aiming to reconcile social structure and individual agency, material practices and culture (see Calhoun, 2002:259-260).

1.3.2 Cultural capital

In the hierarchical social world described by Bourdieu, agents who occupy the dominant positions in the social space will – by reason of the functioning of the habitus – accumulate material and symbolic advantages at the expenses of agents socialized in the dominated classes. These relative advantages can be conceived as differences in the volume of "capital" owned by the agents and displayed in the stratified markets of society. This broader notion of capital is articulated in three main guises (Bourdieu, 1986). The first and more intuitive is "economic capital" (financial resources). The second is "social capital" (one's relationships, group affiliations and social network). Cultural competences and goods, together with educational qualifications such as diplomas or degrees, work in the contexts of everyday life as a third, peculiar form of capital, distinct from the other two but equally powerful in shaping individual life trajectories. This is what Bourdieu calls "cultural capital", a key resource in the "multidimensional status game" of social life (Holt, 1998:3). Cultural capital is made of three distinct components, who differ substantially in the way they can be acquired, transmitted and, eventually, converted in economic or social capital (see Bourdieu, 1986). The dispositions and schemes of classification embedded in the habitus work as a sort of "embodied cultural capital", which can be acquired even "in the absence of any deliberate inculcation" and it is normally transmitted hereditarily through socialization (Ibid.:48-49). This is the case, for instance, of the "pure" aesthetic gaze described above (1.1). Then, cultural goods – for instance, paintings – can be appropriated both materially and symbolically. In the first case, they have an economic value, and work as economic capital. In the second case, they work as "objectified cultural capital" – easier to be acquired and transmitted than embodied cultural capital, though a certain amount of embodied knowledge is needed to actually "use" it. The third and last state of cultural capital is institutional, that is, objectified in the form of "legally guaranteed qualifications" (Bourdieu, 1986:50), which distinguish the owner from the autodidact and, furthermore, are easily convertible in economic capital (and vice versa). If habitus, dealing with the social origins of taste, represents the pivotal element of the "structural" part of *La Distinction*, cultural capital is at the root of the "interactional" one – namely, the analysis of its social uses and social consequences (see Lizardo, 2014).

1.3.3 Field

The field is where cultural, economic and social capitals are at work and a fourth, meta-type of capital – symbolic capital – is at stake. According to Bourdieu, a field is a "domain of social life that has its own rules of organization, generates a set of positions, and supports the practices associated with them" (Calhoun et al., 2002:262). Social agents, each endowed with a different quantity as well as a different relative composition of individual capital, are metaphorically seen as competing in multiple, overlapping, "games", struggling to defend or improve their positions, seeking for converting their capitals in symbolic profit – what Bourdieu calls "symbolic capital" (1977) and Weber would call "social honour" (1978). The coordinates of agents in a field are a function of the volume and composition of their stock of capital. Habitus is what transforms these coordinates in concrete "position-takings", that is, practices (Bourdieu, 2002:271). Thus, the social space of a field can be interpreted both in terms of the overall amount of capital owned by different social groups and in terms of its "mix" (Calhoun et al., 2002:263) – which, for instance, spatially discriminate between those rich in cultural capital and poor in economic capital (e.g., teachers, artists) or vice versa (e.g. entrepreneurs) across different classes defined by their overall "capital volume" (Ibid.). These clusters in a field's social space normally overlap corresponding clusters of practices in the space of lifestyle, given the habitus-effect (see Bourdieu, 1984).

The Bourdieusian field, alike the ethnographic one (see Burrell, 2009), is essentially an analytical tool employed by the researcher to interpret social reality (Calhoun et al., 2002:264). According to Savage and Silva, the sociological value of the Bourdieu's field metaphor stands in the opportunity to avoid the

> "rather formulaic fractal divide between the macro and micro, society and individual, structure and agency, material and social, embodied and existential, national and cosmopolitan, through its insistence that formation of shared fields is inherently bound up with the simultaneous creation of stakes and positions in multiple spaces and at different levels" (2013:124).

The main peculiarity of the concept of field as it is conceived by Bourdieu stands in its relational character, since "every position-taking is defined in relation to the *space of possibles*" (Bourdieu, 1983:313). This means that, for instance "the meaning of a work (artistic, literary, philosophical, etc.) changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader" (Ibid.).

La Distinction empirically deals with a variety of cultural fields, mainly from the point of view of consumption (e.g. music, visual arts, sport, photography). Each field is internally characterized by similar, "homological" social dynamics (Bennett et al., 2009:12) and involves different types of social agents – such as producers, critics, publishers and consumers themselves. Other works by the same author (1983; 1985; 1993) focused on the specificities of the field of cultural production, which is depicted as split into two main sub-fields struggling one against the other: the sub-field of mass production – linked to the wider "field of power" – and the sub-field of restricted production – relatively autonomous from the field of power, seeking a principle of hierarchization essentially based on artistic prestige (see Bourdieu, 1983). According to Bourdieu, the historical reasons of the legitimacy of bourgeois' "pure" aesthetic disposition (see Section 1.2) are to be found in the emergence of an autonomous field of artistic production, defined as "a field capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its products" (Bourdieu 1984:3).

1.3.4 Symbolic power

Distinction is a matter of symbolic power, which is a core concept in Bourdieu's research enterprise of unveiling the naturalized power relations bridging culture and social structure, symbolic boundaries and social struggles (Lamont and Fournier, 1992:4). Symbolic power represents, in a way, the *trait d'union* between these two intertwined sides of social life:

> "through the distribution of properties, the social world presents itself, objectively, as a symbolic system which is organized according to the logic of difference, of differential distance. Social space tends to function as a symbolic space, a space of lifestyles and status groups characterized by different lifestyles. Thus the perception of the social world is the product of a double structuring: on the objective side, it is socially structured because the properties attributed to agents or institutions present themselves in combinations that have very unequal probabilities: just as feathered animals are more likely to have wings than furry animals, so the possessors of a sophisticated mastery of language are more likely to be found in a museum than those who do not have this mastery. On the subjective side, it is structured because the schemes of perception and appreciation, especially those inscribed in language itself, express the state of relations of symbolic power. I am thinking for example of pairs of adjectives such as heavy/light, bright/dull, etc., which organize taste in the most diverse domains. Together, these two mechanisms act to produce a common world, a world of commonsense or, at least, a minimum consensus on the social world" (Bourdieu 1989:20).

Social inequalities at the material, objective level are reflected by corresponding inequalities in the distribution of symbolic power among social groups, which are perpetuated through cultural classifications crystallized in language and institutions. "Belief, credit and discredit,

perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition-name, renown, prestige, honour, glory, authority" are all subsumed by the umbrella-term "symbolic power" – a Weberian-like type of power that, in order to exists, needs to be socially recognized (Bourdieu, 1984:251). Since "profit in legitimacy [...] consists in the fact of feeling justified in being (what one is), being what it is right to be" (Ibid.:228), symbolic power necessarily implies culturally shared "standards of morality and excellence" by which "judging the others as well as oneself" (Barth, 1981:203). The practical differences between pop and jazz music, red or white wine, golf or soccer, once perceived through the habitus' categories of perception, act as distinctive signs in abstract symbolic systems. That is, "a difference [...] only becomes a visible, perceptible, non-indifferent, socially *pertinent* difference if it is perceived by some who is capable of making the distinction" (Bourdieu, 2002:272-273). Far from being confined to things and practices, symbolic distinctions always carry implicit judgements directed to those "classified by the classifier" (Bourdieu, 1984:6). For this reason, the exercise of symbolic power enforces a form of "symbolic violence" towards the dominated victims of the classification (see Bourdieu, 2002). On the contrary, those rich in symbolic power have the unique privilege of "not worrying" about distinction (Bourdieu, 1984:249).

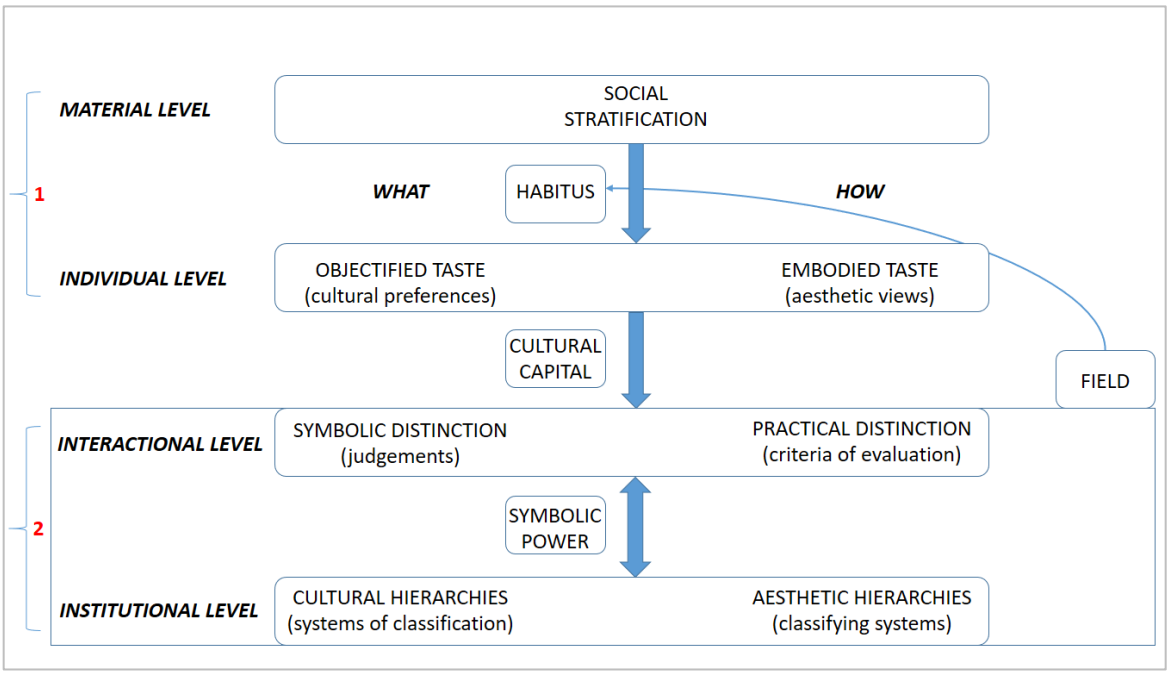
Symbolic power, acting as a form of capital, is at stake in any field of social life (see Bourdieu, 1980; 1986). It can reproduce itself, since it is exactly through the exercise of symbolic power that, for instance, the "consecration" of a work of art, with its resulting symbolic worth, is established by agents such as publishers or critics. At the same time, this type of power constantly circulates, being the contingent outcome of ongoing symbolic struggles, regarding – for instance – what is "art" and what is not (Bourdieu, 1980:265:266).

1.4 Bourdieu's theoretical legacy

Bourdieu's social theory of taste employs the four concepts described above along four main societal levels – material (objective), individual (subjective), interactional and institutional. The map below (Fig. 1) presents my interpretation of the overall theoretical model underlying *La Distinction*, in a systematized and simplified version. The objective level of social structure shapes both what individuals consume (objectified taste) and how they do it (embodied taste) through the generative mechanisms of class-based cultural dispositions internalized as habitus. This is the core thesis of the first part of *La Distinction* (see 1, Fig. 1), regarding the social origins of taste (see Lizardo, 2014). At the same time, objectified and embodied tastes, together with educational qualifications, work as cultural capital, which

converts the objectively-determined individual experience with culture and the arts in a "currency" spendable in the fields of social life. This leads us to the second part of Bourdieu's theory (see 2, Fig. 1), concerning the social uses and social consequences of taste. At the interactional level, differences in what and how one consumes become distinctive signs in a network of symbolic relations (Bourdieu, 1984:483). The ability of being "distinguished" by appropriating the "right" practices (symbolic distinction) in the "right" manner (practical distinction) is a main source of symbolic power in the cultural field. The institutional (macro) level of culture (in the anthropological sense) – where both the "right", legitimate practices and aesthetics are crystallized as implicit hierarchies – impacts on social practice. At the same time, given the (relative) margins of freedom provided by the creative force of the habitus – enabling, for instance, bourgeois' aestheticization of common objects –, cultural goods' "reputational currency" (Holt, 1998:4) is constantly valued and devalued. Thus, cultural hierarchies – ordering, for instance, painters, sports or fashion brands according to their social legitimacy – are challenged and renegotiated through social practice (Bourdieu, 1984:249). This is also true for aesthetic hierarchies, as in the case of the historical construction and institutionalization of the distinction between "pure" and "naïve" gazes (see Bourdieu, 1983:317-318). Hence, the symbolic struggles in play in the cultural field historically produce changes at the institutional level, which are consequently incorporated generation after generation in the habitus' cultural schemes (Bourdieu, 1984:577-78).

Figure 1 A representation of Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The social origins of taste (1) and its social uses (2)



This broad theoretical framework is still a highly debated one in sociology of culture. *La Distinction* is considered as one of the most influential sociological works of the twentieth century, and its author is among the most cited sociologists of all times (see Lamont, 2012a; Santoro, 2011). Bourdieu's theory, not differently from his methodological approach and tortuous writing style, has been harshly criticized by many scholars, from several point of views. However, many others continue to praise and analytically employ his sociological framework, both in "orthodox" and "heterodox" ways (Lamont, 2012a:230). The following sub-sections deal with the main critiques to Bourdieu's social theory of taste (1.3.1) and with what I and others believe are its timeless merits (1.3.2).

1.4.1 A reductive account of agency, culture and interaction

The social world portrayed by Bourdieu in *La Distinction* is often considered a hierarchical, static and deterministic one. At the core of these critical arguments is the concept of habitus – the class-based generative principle underlying social life. As King puts it, "although Bourdieu believes that the notion of the habitus resolves the subject-object dualism of social theory, in fact, the habitus relapses against Bourdieu's intentions into the very objectivism which he rejects" (2000:417). Habitus is probably the most controversial Bourdieusian concept, as well as the least successful one, academically speaking (see Warde, 2008). Several reasons explain this diffuse criticism.

First, a literal reading of the definition of habitus leaves almost no space to individual agency, since social structure, embodied in the form of stable cultural schemes of classification and perception acquired during socialization, subtly guides and shapes social actors' behaviour throughout life and across social contexts (Sassatelli, 2007:94; King, 2000; Lahire, 2004; Lamont, 1992). There is no escape from the logic of the habitus: those raised in upper class families will master the "language" of culture and have easier access to education, while working class children will be confined to the popular "taste of necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984:372). This is a rather deterministic and debatable picture. It is plausible, indeed, that individual habitus changes over time, since "individuals might acquire heterogeneous tastes and dispositions through their exposure to cultural trainings and discourses that are not necessarily connected to their class position" (Bennett, 2009:27). Moreover, class is not enough. Gender, ethnicity, religion carry their own habitus as well, in a picture complicated further by international mobility and globalised culture (Prior, 2005:131). As Bennett and colleagues rightly point out, far from being a unified set of coherent class-based dispositions, habitus "is more typically written across in complex and sometimes contradictory ways, depending on how class, gender, age and ethnicity interact in the processes of person formation" (Ibid.: 3).

Second, in Bourdieu's account of the social origins of taste (see Lizardo, 2014), change is unlikely to occur not only in the individual life course, but also at the historical and societal level (see King, 2000:427). Although the substantive contents of the habitus mutate over time as a consequence of the generational incorporation of the cultural changes produced in the fields of social life (see Fig. 1) – in a process that Bourdieu, inspired by scientific literature on magnetism, calls "hystheresis effect" (see Bourdieu, 1977:78) – the objective social boundary between dominators and dominated is destined to stay the same, as a consequence of the incessant, hegemonic reproduction of inequalities. This deterministic view, excluding social as well as symbolic upward mobility[5], is clear in the following passage of *La Distinction*, discussing the concept of "popular culture" in these terms:

[5] It is relevant here to quote Bourdieu's portrait of the "parvenus", who "presume to join the group of legitimate, i.e. hereditary, possessors of the legitimate manner, without being the product of the same social conditions" and, as a consequence, "are trapped, whatever they do, in a choice between anxious hyper-identification and the negativity which admits its defeat in its very revolt: either the conformity of an 'assumed' behaviour whose very correctness or hyper-correctness betrays an imitation, or the ostentatious assertion of difference which is bound to appear as an admission of inability to identify" (1984:95).

"a paradoxical notion which imposes, willy-nilly, the dominant definition of culture [...] What is generally meant by popular art, i.e., the art of the peasant classes of capitalist and pre-capitalist societies, is the product of a stylizing intention which is associated with the existence of a hierarchy" (Bourdieu, 1984:395).

Habitus is not the sole debated aspect of Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The implicit assumption of the presence of a broadly shared hierarchy of cultural legitimacy, coupled with a recognized form of cultural capital, is central in *La Distinction*. This represents another problematic point, as Michele Lamont bluntly remarked:

"in Distinction Bourdieu tends to generalize about the culture that prevails in the intellectual milieu in which he lives – arguing that it pervades the French population at large. Indeed, he is mostly concerned with the status signals that are valued by Parisian intellectuals and by cultural and social specialists generally. Like them, he stresses the importance of refinement and of cultural status signals. Like the Parisians, he tends to minimize the importance of moral boundaries. And like many high-powered intellectuals, he presumes that everyone is equally consumed with professional success" (Lamont, 1992:186).

Moreover, according to Paul DiMaggio, the extent to which a given system of cultural classification is hierarchical depends on several societal and institutional properties, which are: high isomorphism between taste and social differentiations; low intergroup sociability; humanist educational system; low access to higher education; low differentiation in the artistic classification (1987:447-48; see also Section 1.1). If this picture could plausibly apply to France in the 1960s, current societies are radically different with this respect. Postmodern theorists (e.g. Bauman, 2011) claim that ubiquitous processes of de-hierarchization, plularisation and cultural fragmentation have substantially dismantled Bourdieu's homological link between lifestyles and social stratification, fostering the disappearence of the traditional distinction between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" taste (for a review, see Warde, 2008; Prior, 2005; van den Haak, 2014). Even assuming the intersubjective existence of cultural stratification in a given society, why postulating just one hierarchy of cultural legitimacy and not multiple, parallel, conflicting ones? On this matter, Thornton's notion of "subcultural capital" (1995) highlighted the emergence of a youth culture with its own codes, symbols and inner systems of classification. More recently, Tony Bennett and Mike Savage have employed a disaggregated and less rigid conceptualization of cultural capital in their studies about class, culture and distinction in UK (Bennett et al., 2009; Savage et al., 2013), acknowledging the inadequacy of bounded, nation-based notions

of “cultural legitimacy” and “field” in the age of digital communication. As also Simone Varriale noted,

> “globalizing forces restructure national cultural fields in significant ways. They create new divisions between and within national contexts, while enduring differences in economic and symbolic capital shape how cultural organizations respond to transnational dynamics” (2016b:44).

Thus, the overall picture is more fluid and multifaceted than what an orthodox reading of Bourdieu would imply. Furthermore, other critical questions undermine a blind acceptance of *La Distinction*’s theoretical assumptions. To what extent is a supposed cultural hierarchy recognized broadly across the population (see Warde, 2008; Lamont and Lareau, 1988)? What if – as several influential contributions remark (e.g. Lamont, 1992; Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006; Stark, 2009) – multiple aesthetic criteria for the attribution of worth coexist? Meaning, while in Bourdieu’s theory of taste the value of a cultural object (or practice) is estimated with reference to a single legitimate criterion – namely, the distant and disinterested “pure” aesthetic (see Section 1.2) –, the cultural field may be equally characterized by “plurarchies” (Lamont, 2012b) of horizontal, competing evaluative principles (Stark, 2009) or “orders of worth” (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). For these reasons, Bourdieu’s tacit assumption that the same cultural and aesthetic hierarchies are recognized by a whole country population seems hardly applicable in the study of contemporary societies.

Last, a fourth weakness of Bourdieu’s theoretical approach lies in the lack of attention to the interactional level of social life, which is crucial in Boltanski and Thevenot’s work instead (2006; 1999). Bourdieu harshly criticized what he alternatively labelled “interactionist fallacy” (1984:578) or “subjectivist illusion”, meaning, a sociological perspective that “reduces social space to the conjunctural space of interactions, that is, a discontinuous succession of abstract situations” (1984:244). According to Bourdieu, social situations cannot be understood without considering participants’ coordinates in the social space – i.e. the “structure of objective relations which determines the possible form of interactions and of the representations the interactors can have of them” (Ibid.). Although in “Outline of a Theory of Practice” (1977) the same author emphasizes the virtuosity and creativity of social action, in *La Distinction* (1984) social practice is merely intended as a set of objectively determined “position-takings” in the abstract context of a “field” (see Bottero and Crossley, 2011). Even though consumption is defined as an “act of deciphering, decoding” (Bourdieu,

1984:2), the necessary stages – in the Goffmanian sense (1959) – of this communicative process never appear throughout the six-hundred pages of the book. Nevertheless, the logic of distinction pertains exactly to the neglected interactional level of social situations (see Eliasoph and Lichterman, 2003). As Marco Santoro points out, "'situation' seems a necessary middle term between habitus and field. People never act directly in fields, but always in field-specific situations, or in situations embedded at the intersection of (usually many) fields" (2011:14). Even if it is true that – as Bourdieu states, in open opposition to Goffman (1982) – "the truth of any interaction is never entirely to be found within the interaction as it avails itself for observation" (Bourdieu, 1986:16-17), a theoretical account of the mechanisms of distinction should not ignore the micro-interactional dynamics of social situations, as *La Distinction* does instead. This critical position has been put forward, for instance, by Bottero and Crossley – who propose a social network approach to the field of cultural production (2011) – and Alan Warde – who stresses Bourdieu's lack of attention to the ways in which taste is justified in the course of everyday interactions (2008). Hence, the symbolic struggles involving cultural taste can be understood only once situated in the interactional context of social situations (Benzecri and Collins, 2014; Santoro, 2011; Holt, 1997a). Acknowledging the active role of communicative interaction in reproducing, challenging and negotiating the social order may serve to mitigate the controversial aspects of Bourdieu's theory of distinction, by taking into account the otherwise absent "indeterminacy in the relations between individuals, which allows for intersubjectively meaningful but creative social action" (King, 2000:431).

1.4.2 The real is relational, culture is practical

Notwithstanding its weaknesses, Bourdieu's sociology of culture is still regarded by many as, in Scott Lash's words, "not only the best, but [...] the only game in town" (1993:193 in Prior, 2005:130). One pragmatic reason behind the persisting sociological relevance of Bourdieu's legacy is that he never wanted to develop a monolithic grand theory. He created, instead, a flexible conceptual toolkit for investigating and understanding the world (Calhoun et al., 2002:259; Santoro, 2011). This favours a fertile, multidisciplinary, heterodox reading of his works (Lamont, 2012a), allowing researchers to pick up what is useful and discard what is not (Santoro, 2011).

A second fundamental reason lies in the enduring sociological value of some of the ideas he put forward (Prior, 2005). Two in particular, the relational organisation of social reality and

the practical character of culture, will be discussed below, as necessary starting points for analysing taste and distinction today.

Bourdieu, inspired by structural linguistics, sees the real as relational (2002). Actors, social practices and their meanings cannot be interpreted in isolation. Instead, we must think of them as embedded in overlapping networks of relations, organized in dynamic systems – that is, fields (see Section 1.3.3). These relations can be metaphorically represented as relative distances in a multidimensional space. For instance, the more an underground genre becomes popular in a given musical field, the closer it gets to the "position-takings" characterizing the lifestyle of mainstream audiences. Every change in the field's "space of possibles" or in its underlying social space impacts on the overall system of relations (Bourdieu, 1983). The notion of "difference" is at the root of these mechanisms:

> "the very title *Distinction* serves as a reminder that what is commonly called distinction, that is, a certain quality of bearing and manners, most often considered innate [...], is nothing than *difference*, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a relational property existing only in and through its relation with other properties" (Bourdieu, 2002:270).

As Bourdieu incessantly remarks, relational thinking is the antidote to substantialist analyses of society – that is, those naively focusing on the substantial, visible content of social reality rather than on its latent sets of relationships (Bourdieu, 2002; see also Kirchner and Mohr, 2010). To illustrate this logic, in the preface to the English translation of *La Distinction* he listed some examples of US cultural goods that could roughly correspond to the French ones mentioned in the book, in terms of their position in the field of cultural consumption (1984). This way of comparing (*substantially* different) social contexts in relational terms is a key feature of Bourdieu's scientific enterprise, and a valuable analytic tool for the contemporary study of cultural systems (see Bennett et al., 2009; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Atkinson, 2011; Holt, 1997a; Kirchner and Mohr, 2010).

The "theory of practice" (Bourdieu, 1977) represents a second major contribution to the discipline (see Lizardo, 2011). The key idea is that culture is not made solely of conscious knowledge and shared systems of meanings, but it is also a practical process based on unconscious dispositions. Class differences in styles of artistic appreciation, as described in *La Distinction* (see Section 1.2), are one example of how embodied culture works "practically", in an unintentional and automatic way (Bourdieu 1977:80). Although the homological relation between habitus and action as it is presented in *La Distinction*

(Bourdieu, 1984) is widely regarded as too deterministic (see Section 1.4.1), Bourdieu's earlier "theory of practice" (1977) portrayed a (relatively) more dynamic account of social life, made of "complex, negotiated, and ever-changing relations between individuals" (King 2000:421). In this guise, Bourdieu can be seen as a post-structuralist thinker *ante litteram* (see Lizardo, 2011; Holt, 1997b).

Practical accounts of social life are particularly influential in contemporary sociology (see Warde, 2014; Sassatelli, 2007). For instance, Stephen Vaisey (2009), aiming to include both conscious cultural values and embodied cultural schemes in a single model of culture in action, emphasizes the analytical relevance of practical theories, proposing a synthesis between a notion of culture as "loose repertoire of justifications" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999) or "toolkit" (Swidler, 1986) and of culture as structuring, internalized habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Notably, a similar compromise between communication and practice, *opus operatum* and *modus operandi*, characterizes also Bourdieu's perspective on the social uses of taste (see Fig. 1, 2) – which is less rigid than his parallel account of the social origins of taste (see Lizardo, 2014) and, at the same time, more suitable as a starting point for the development of a theoretical framework for analysing distinction in practice (see Section 1.6).

1.5 Distinction after Bourdieu: empirical evidences

La Distinction was based on research materials collected during the 1960s and on research already published in journals since the early 1970s (Santoro, 2011:4). The empirical analyses relied mainly on a survey carried out in Paris, Lille and a small French provincial town in 1963 and, again, in 1967-1968, involving 1217 respondents. Together with a socio-demographic section, the questionnaire included a set of questions on attitudes to photography and twenty-five items on tastes in interior decoration, clothing, singers, cooking, reading, cinema, painting, music, photography, radio (Bourdieu, 1984:506). In order to construct the survey, Bourdieu and his research team conducted a number of preliminary qualitative interviews and observations involving individuals with different social backgrounds, used throughout the book for strengthening the interpretation of the questionnaire results. Also, several other complementary statistical sources were employed as background data on French society and its social structure (see Ibid.:519). The method adopted for interpreting and visualising the survey data was multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), a statistical technique developed by statistician Jean-Paul Benzécri and capable to inductively "map the relationships between cultural tastes and practices and social

positions on the same plane, as variables whose interaction can be analysed without the a priori assertion of hierarchical relations of causal dependency between them" (Bennett at al., 2009:33-34). This method was (and still is) particularly suited for operationalizing the otherwise abstract theoretical notions of field, social space and symbolic space, by allowing the visual representation of the data on bidimensional maps (see also Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010). Bourdieu illustrated the empirical results in an unconventional way, making – as he put it – "the most abstract coexist with the most concrete" (2002:268). The detailed analysis of taste and social stratification in 1960-70s French society was presented solely as a particular empirical articulation of what he believed was a general process of social reproduction of inequalities and cultural enforcement of class-based, ingroup-outgroup boundaries. France was described as a highly hierarchical social context, with members of the professional elites, petit-bourgeoisie and working class showing largely different patterns of consumption and of aesthetic appreciation across a number of cultural realms (see Section 1.2). Differences in tastes were shown to be dependent also on the relative amount of cultural and economic capitals characterizing different class fractions. While legitimate taste was portrayed as associated to cultural goods such as opera, "difficult" classical music or abstract painting, a corresponding hierarchy of embodied tastes practically distinguished the formal and disinterested style of artistic appreciation of cultural elites both from the content-based popular aesthetic of working classes and from the anxious "cultural goodwill" of the petit bourgeoisie (Bourdieu, 1984).

Surely, in post-war Western societies, having a "highbrow" taste constituted an undisputed standard of social excellence. But later, during the 1960-70s, the emergence of international cultural markets, the diffusion of television and an increasing access to higher education fostered structural changes impacting on the very same social dynamics analysed in the book (see Bachmayer et al., 2014; Janssen et al., 2011; Peterson, 1997). Published in 1979 in French, *La Distinction* had little to say also regarding core political issues of that period, such as the rising cultural and social mobilisation around issues of gender, ethnicity and youth (Bennett et al., 2009:33). The social world portrayed by the nearly contemporary works of authors like, for instance, Lyotard (1979), Meyrowitz (1985), Maffesoli (1996) and Giddens (1991) was more fluid and multifaceted than Bourdieu's one. According to them, the social reproduction of long-lasting inequalities and cultural traditions was finally coming to an end, for a multitude of reasons. A dehierarchized, globalized, liquid, mediatized "postmodernity" was there to come (Bauman, 2000).

With this sort of intellectual climate, it is no surprise that, few years after the English translation of *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), new sociological studies questioned Bourdieu's findings. In the early 90s, societies were *substantially* different compared to thirty years before, and the US were *substantially* different from France. David Halle's ethnographic investigation concluded that American high class consumers did not show a formal, "pure" aesthetic view (1993). Bonnie Erickson's study (1996) similarly witnessed negligible differences in cultural taste across occupational classes. Above all, the most successful outcome of this critical strand of research is Richard Peterson's Omnivore-Univore Thesis (2005). In the early 1990s, Richard Peterson's analysis of survey data about music consumption in the US showed that high status consumers were shifting from "snobbishness" to "omnivorousness" – i.e. from the almost exclusive participation in legitimate cultural genres (classical music and opera) to a novel "openness" towards pop culture (Peterson and Kern, 1996). The idea of omnivorousness challenged the persistence of a symbolic boundary between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" cultural tastes – wrongly assumed as central in Bourdieu's work (Lizardo and Skiles, 2014). With some revisitations, the concept of "cultural omnivore" dominated two decades of sociology of culture, leading to a massive amount of empirical research conducted in dozens of countries (see Peterson, 2005; Sullivan and Katz-Gerro, 2006; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2006).

However, not everyone in the academic community agreed with dismissing the sociological insights of *La Distinction* as outdated (Atkinson, 2011). With an article published in *Poetics*, Douglas Holt aimed to "recovery Bourdieu's theory of tastes from its critics" (1997a). His harshest remarks were directed to his North-American colleagues, whose studies were described as merely evaluating "whether the particular articulation of cultural capital in French society of the 1960s - objectified primarily in the legitimate arts and embodied in formal aesthetic appreciation - applies to the contemporary United States" (Holt, 1997a:100). In other words, according to Holt, most of those studies pretending to empirically question the findings of *La Distinction* fell into that very same substantialist fallacy anticipated by Bourdieu himself in the preface of the book (1984). Legitimate taste is a relational, contextual, moving symbolic construction (Savage and Gayo, 2011; Bachmayer et al., 2014), the contingent outcome of historical processes of intellectualization and canonization by producers, cultural intermediaries, institutional actors (see Santoro, 2002; van Venrooij and Schmutz, 2010; DiMaggio, 1987; Levine, 1988). On the contrary, the notion of "omnivore" is itself built on fixed, preconceived categories of "high" and "low" art (see Rimmer 2012). In order to study processes of cultural distinction, it is necessary to take into account the

"inherent dynamism of the social world", since it "would be absurd" expecting the patterns laid out in *La Distinction* to "apply unchanged today" (Atkinson, 2011:171).

At the same time, it is true that – as empirical studies show (e.g. Lizardo and Skiles, 2016, 2015; Roose et al., 2012) – the propensity to dislike others' cultural tastes has generally decreased in Western countries during the last three decades. This trend may be alternatively interpreted as a decrease in symbolic exclusion (Bryson, 1996;1997) or, more interestingly, of its social acceptability in the age of (apparent) tolerance and relativism.

Does this necessarily mean the end of distinction? The answer is no, for two main reasons. First, cultural distinction is not necessarily synonymous of intentional "symbolic exclusion" – as wrongly assumed, for instance, by Bryson (1996). Distinction is an eminently embodied, practical process, concerning more the styles of consumption and appreciation than its substantial content (Jarness, 2015)[6]. Thus, considering solely objectified taste, Peterson and colleagues naively pretended to challenge *La Distinction* while leaving apart its core argument (Lizardo and Skiles, 2014; Atkinson, 2011; Holt, 1997a). Second, forms of symbolic distinction may actually "be there", without the methods being actually able to measure them. The mainstream methodological approach in the recent history of sociology of taste consists in the secondary analysis of multiple choice survey questions asking for the like/dislike of broad categories, such as "pop" or "rock" music. This obscures within-genre differentiations between, for instance, "mainstream" and "underground" artists, carrying distinct symbolic values (Bachmayer et al., 2014; Lizardo and Skiles, 2014; Atkinson, 2011). As Bourdieu puts it:

> "Many surveys on consumption impose [...] taxonomies which have sprung straight from the statisticians' social unconscious, associating things that ought to be separated (e.g., white beans and green beans) and separating things that could be associated (e.g., white beans and bananas-the latter are to fruit as the former are to vegetables)" (1984:21).

Third, different meanings may be attributed to the categories employed in the questionnaire – that is, in Atkinson's words: "what counts as 'classical' for one person might not for another" (2011:170). Thus, three main hypotheses are logically in play in the study of the social uses of cultural taste:

[6] For this reason, throughout this work I distinguish between "symbolic distinction" – involving identitarian "boundary-works" (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) based on the recognition of a cultural hierarchy – and "practical distinction" – regarding the unconscious exercise of embodied cultural capital (see Section 1.2).

a) both symbolic (objectified) and practical (embodied) distinctions are present and significant;

b) while embodied taste, related to styles of artistic consumption and appreciation, socially acts as a distinctive sign, taste objectified in the form of cultural goods is less relevant;

c) distinction is not in play in the fields of cultural consumption at all.

Recent developments in sociology of culture tend to reject the latter (see Atkinson, 2011), supporting either *a* or *b*. Despite an increased availability of cultural goods at low or no cost on digital media (Anderson, 2006), the impact of social origin, education and class on the reception of cultural goods and activities is still significant. The relation between high endowments of cultural capital and familiarity with "legitimate art" is persistent across nations (see Katz-Gerro, 2002; Kraaykamp and van Eijck, 2010; Bennett et al., 2009), although it has been partially obscured by the notion of "omnivore", whose operationalization neglects the ongoing symbolic struggles surrounding the definition of "legitimate art" (Savage and Gayo, 2011; Rimmer, 2012). Certainly, the coherent picture of a deeply stratified and culturally homogeneous society like France in Bourdieu's portrait (1984) simply does not apply to a globalised, digitized, post-fordist world. Tony Bennett and colleagues, in their ambitious study of cultural taste in contemporary UK across a variety of fields of consumption, concluded as follows:

"Unsurprisingly, from a sociological point of view, characteristics like class, education, gender and age are associated with different locations in the space of lifestyles. Our multiple correspondence analysis demonstrates, and other statistical techniques confirm, that cultural preferences track lines of social cleavage. This does not, however, assume a highly unified and uniform shape. The most powerful dimension of cultural difference – the first axis – reflects what Bourdieu called 'total volume of capital', holdings of cultural and economic assets, which form the basis of the social class structure. However, education and occupation differentiate some fields more than others, for example, in the reading of books, in visual art and in music. However, tastes in music are even more strongly differentiated by age, while preferences among television programmes and regimes of body management vary more in relation to gender. While Bourdieu effectively reduced patterns of cultural taste in France to differences of class habitus, treating gender and age as secondary, such a strategy would not properly apply in Britain in 2003" (2009:251).

New salient cleavages, such as those related to age, gender and ethnicity, shape the fields of cultural consumption (see also Christin, 2012). The logic of distinction, though diluted in a

complex, multifaceted social world, it is far from disappearing (Lizardo and Skiles, 2008; Friedman et al., 2015). Thus, the question is not whether distinction exists or not, but whether it acts both in symbolic and practical ways (*a*) or not (*b*). Hypothesis *b* was stressed by Holt (1997b, 1998), who argued that:

> "Given the deteriorating classificatory power of objectified tastes, cultural elites in advanced capitalist societies now attempt to secure distinction by adopting their consumption practices to accentuate the embodied form. Emphasizing embodied tastes leads to a different style of consuming than in previous eras. [...] In other words, to express distinction through embodied tastes leads cultural elites to emphasize the distinctiveness of consumption practices themselves, apart from the cultural contents to which they are applied" (Holt, 1998:5).

This view has been empirically confirmed, for instance, by McCoy and Scarborough (2014), who qualitatively studied the consumption of "bad" television in the US. Their interviewees showed a clear logic of distinction in patterns of viewing styles across genres, with educated viewers having the cultural sophistication for adopting alternative modes of consumption, e.g. ironic ones – as described by Bourdieu in the case of kitsch (1984:282). Alan Warde (2007) similarly found that the most striking class differences in taste in the UK regarded styles of cultural appreciations rather than objectified tastes. Vegard Jarness reported analogous findings in his Norwegian case study (2015).

Of course, the functioning of embodied taste, and of the resulting "practical distinction", may well not be anchored to Bourdieu's modernist conceptualization of a formal, "pure gaze". Indeed, other contributions suggest that, being a historical product (Bourdieu, 1983), the dominant style of appreciation has mutated (e.g. Hanquinet, Roose, and Savage, 2014). In this sense, omnivore "eclecticism" and cosmopolitan cultural orientations may now act as emerging forms of dominant aesthetic appropriation (e.g. Bellavance, 2008; Prieur and Savage, 2013; Bennett et al., 2009). In general, these works do not only remark that, in cultural taste, "how" is now more important than "what" (Jarness, 2015), but they also reveal the widespread yet implicit knowledge of shared cultural hierarchies, embedded in the justifications and answers of the respondents. However, according to these authors, people are much less confident in recognizing them than what hypothesis *a* would imply (Bellavance, 2008).

According to hypothesis *a*, both "practical" and "symbolic" cultural distinctions are at work in the current stages of social life, as originally emphasized by Bourdieu (1984). This is what, for instance, Bachmayer and colleagues suggest (2014). In their qualitative study of

the class-based preferences and aesthetic views of Salsa music listeners, they concluded that distinction – broadly conceived as an ingroup-outgroup social dynamic – has never disappeared (Ibid.:80). Similarly, Friedman and Kuipers (2013) found that high and low cultured British and Dutch consumers have clearly different comedic tastes as well as styles of comedic appreciation. These findings recall well-known Bourdieuian *topoi*, like in this case: "one of the most prominent themes of HCC [high-cultural-capital] appreciation – the desire for comic 'difficulty' – is bound up with the knowledge that this aesthetic approach sets one apart from other comedy consumers" (Friedman and Kuipers, 2013:183). European comedy audiences make negative aesthetic and moral judgment directed to "lowbrow" publics – that is, manifestations of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2002). Accordingly, Savage and Gayo's field analysis of musical taste in the UK, far from showing an omnivorous cultural tolerance, revealed symbolic tensions between experts and pop-oriented listeners, rooted in class, educational and age differences (2011). As Marcel van den Haak pointed out in the conclusion of his in-depth analysis of cultural stratification in the Netherlands,

> "that are many ways in which people – particularly higher educated – 'do' cultural hierarchy. First, they look down, though often not explicitly, on 'lower' tastes and on people who *like* these 'lower' tastes. They mock and stereotype others' tastes and distance themselves from the popularity of these tastes. Sometimes, they speak somewhat ironically or apologetically about their own occasional 'guilty pleasures'. These distinctions do not only concern the specific tastes of others, but also the perceived absence (or low frequency) of certain cultural practices, the lack of knowledge, and the refusal to be open to new forms of culture that do not immediately appeal" (2014:283).

Cultural distinction is not just a European thing. A recent longitudinal study on musical taste and symbolic exclusion in the US conducted by Lizardo and Skiles (2016) concluded that, although between 1993 and 2012 there has been an overall increase in "categorical tolerance", the propensity to dislike other tastes has remained stable among most privileged strata of the population, and "generational mechanisms also seem unlikely to bring the end of symbolic exclusion any time soon" (Ibid.:103). In sum, these contributions support the idea that not only one or more hierarchies of legitimacy are perceived in the field of cultural consumption, but they also produce relevant, recognized symbolic boundaries, ultimately linked to corresponding social boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002).

In brief, recent empirical research in the sociology of taste – by rejecting a (naive) positivist approach to survey data and employing qualitative or mixed methods instead – shows that the analysis of the social uses of taste introduced in *La Distinction* is still valid and valuable

today[7], once it is adapted to a *substantially* different social world. Will Atkinson, critically reviewing a number of empirical studies on musical taste, concluded that "Bourdieu's original account [...] proves as robust today as it did thirty years ago" (2011:184). However, sociological methods must be adjusted too, given today's "complex tapestry of forms of cultural engagement" (Lizardo and Skiles 2008:4) and weak, enclave-based, overlapping cultural boundaries (Bennett et al., 2009:255). This is precisely the topic of the following section.

1.6 Methodological issues in the study of taste and distinction

Cultural taste is a complex thing, being both subjective and socially-determined, intellectual and emotionally-driven, symbolic and practical, relatively stable as well as dynamically related to the contexts and activities of everyday life. Following Bourdieu (1984) and Holt (1998), the social dimension of taste can be operationalized distinguishing objectified taste (the cultural goods one likes) from embodied taste – the practical ways of liking, evaluating, and consuming cultural goods. Both forms of taste, once immersed in a social context, can produce distinctions (Holt, 1997a:99) – regarding, on the one side, what one likes and, on the other, how one likes it (Jarness, 2015). The first type of distinction, here called "symbolic distinction", is about objectified taste, and implies the agent's awareness of the symbolic value attached to specific cultural items by a social group. "Practical distinction" concerns embodied taste and modes of consumption instead, and it is not necessarily intentional (Holt, 1997a:101). Embodied cultural capital works at the practical level of interiorized knowledge. Hence, as a good basketball player simply plays "in the right way", without thinking about every move or step he does, an art connoisseur "naturally" masters the game of culture. The (intended or not) display of this apparently natural talent might function as an unaware, distinctive sign in a given social context (Bourdieu, 1984).

From the point of view of a researcher, these premises carry several implications. First, studying taste is not exactly the same as studying distinction. Bourdieu's survey analyses focused solely on the social determinants of embodied and objectified tastes (1984), while the part of *La Distinction* concerning the social, distinctive uses of taste (see Lizardo, 2014) relied on the qualitative empirical materials collected through in-depth interviews and

[7] Unsurprisingly, postmodern theorists are reluctant to acknowledge it, as 2011 Zigmunt Bauman's book witnesses. Perhaps it is because, in Douglas Holt's words, they "are embedded so deeply in the HCC habitus that they are unable to muster the requisite sociological reflexivity to note that the ability to playfully aestheticize a wide range of consumption objects is esteemed, and so has become naturalized, in their social circles, but not in those of lower social classes" (Holt 1998:22).

observations. Differently from taste, distinction, implying socially situated attitudes and behaviours, it is not easily measurable through questionnaires (Atkinson, 2011; Holt, 1997a). Sub-sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 below discuss some of the methodological issues related to the study of cultural taste and distinction.

1.6.1 Measuring objectified and embodied tastes

In *La Distinction*, Bourdieu employed different sets of survey questions for the study of objectified tastes, cultural participation, cultural competences and embodied tastes (1984). In order to measure objectified tastes in the arts, the questionnaire included multiple choice questions asking for the favourites among lists of singers, musical works and painters – whose *a priori* selection was informed by previous qualitative observations. Differently from more recent research, genre items were employed only in the case of cinema and literature. Other questions regarded participation and behaviours, in the domains of cinema, furniture, leisure, clothing, radio and TV programmes. Then, cultural competence was measured through open questions asking for the name of the composer/director of given musical works/films. Finally, embodied tastes were grasped, on the one hand, inquiring about a) the criteria underlying the selection of furniture, clothes, food, friends and b) the aesthetic attitudes towards cinema, classical music, painting[8]; on the other, presenting a list of objects (e.g. a landscape, a snake, a first communion) and asking whether, given each of them, a photographer would be likely to produce a beautiful, interesting, meaningless or ugly photo. The "beautiful photographs" question specifically aimed to investigate the distribution of a formal, aesthetic disposition across respondents belonging to different social classes.

Unfortunately, such a sophisticated survey design has not been very common in later studies of taste (see Peterson, 2005). Taste has been rarely investigated across cultural realms (exceptions are Chan and Goldthorpe, 2006; Bennett et al., 2009). Objectified cultural taste has been mainly operationalized using broad categories instead of specific artists or works of art (see Atkinson, 2011; Rimmer, 2012). Given the evident limits of this approach (see Section 1.4), John Sonnett (2016) as well as Vlegels and Lievens (2016) recently proposed the use of open questions to inductively derive respondents' favourite and least favourite music artists and genres (2016). Embodied taste – namely, evaluative criteria, styles of appreciation and aesthetic views – has been mostly ignored both theoretically and

[8] Through questions such as the following: "which of the opinions below is closest to your own view?" (Bourdieu, 1984:516).

empirically, by survey research (Roose et al., 2012; Atkison, 2011; Warde, 2008; Holt, 1997a).

Qualitative methods allow for more detailed accounts of both objectified and embodied taste. The use of in-depth interviews has become more frequent in sociology of taste and consumption (see Atkinson, 2011), given the possibility to better capture the trajectories of individual taste, the competences, aesthetic views and vocabularies displayed by the respondent, the inter-relations between different fields of consumption, as well as the links between taste, means of consumption and contexts of reception (see Nowak, 2016; Bachmayer et al., 2014; Bellavance, 2008). However, small-scale qualitative investigations cannot really aim to replicate Bourdieu's extensive analysis – conducted on a large sample of citizens, mixing survey data, ethnographic observation, qualitative interviews, complementary statistical sources and quasi-experimental analysis (see Appendixes 1,2,3 and 4, Bourdieu 1984).

In consonance with Bourdieu's example, the richest and most interesting contributions in the recent history of sociology of taste feature mixed-method approaches. The value of multi-methods research designs in this field has been underlined, for instance, by Elizabeth Silva and colleagues, as it follows:

> "The relationship between class and taste is just such a complex matter. We might want to know about what people do, what people like, how people practically classify cultural products, how they feel about others with different tastes, and what they envisage to be the significance of differences in taste. No single method or technique would be sufficient for the purpose. Methodological eclecticism most productively provides not a means of checking on the accuracy of facts, but the plausibility of interpretations. It is, we suggest, the enhanced coherence of interpretations that can be derived from the use of multiple methods which justifies, and will often demand, such a research design" (2009:313).

Some studies integrated statistically-representative survey data – analysed via multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) – and qualitative interviews or focus groups (e.g. Bennett et al., 2009; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Savage et al., 2013)[9]. Others mixed conventional

[9] MCA allows to determine clusters of individuals sharing similar consumption patterns, derive the socio-demographic features which are likely to characterize them and, eventually, select exemplar cases for further qualitative inquiries (Savage and Gayo, 2011). As these and other contributions indicate (see also Savage et al., 2013; Roose et al., 2012), the inductive character of MCA makes it a still useful technique for the investigation of cultural taste and of its latent social roots.

survey data analysis and network analysis in order to reconstruct the field of music consumption (e.g. Sonnett, 2016; Vlegels and Lievens, 2016)[10].

As Jennifer Mason remarked, mixed research designs allow to better grasp the multi-dimensionality of social experience as well as the compresence of "macro" and "micro" scales (2006). In conclusion, if mixing methods represents a pragmatic way for addressing the multifaceted character of cultural taste, inductive approaches are equally necessary for dealing with the moving symbolic meanings and classifications socially attached to cultural goods and practices (see Airoldi et al., 2016; Beer, 2013).

1.6.2 Studying distinctions *in practice*

In Chapter 5, titled "The Sense of Distinction", Bourdieu (1984) relates his MCA results about the social roots of taste differentiation – which supported the homological relation between class and taste across fields of consumption – to general considerations about the social relevance of these differences, based on in-depth interviews and observations conducted at interviewees' homes. Only these latter empirical materials are about distinction *stricto sensu*, since they precisely account for the symbolic and practical social processes through which the taste differences documented by the statistical analyses are transformed in distinctive signs.

Eventually, distinction cannot be adequately studied through traditional survey research (Holt, 1997a). An attempt in this sense is Bethany Bryson's quantitative analysis of dislikes in music (1996). However, though it shed light on the relation between dislike patterns and social stratification in the US, the author's conclusions about "symbolic exclusion" were anything more than speculations (see Holt, 1997a). In order to grasp symbolic distinction and – to an even major extent – practical distinctions based on distinctive styles of appreciations, a qualitative approach is needed, since it allows to infer the implicit cultural norms and schemes underlying agents' perceptions and representations. This point of view is widely accepted in current sociology of taste, as the number of recent studies employing in-depth interviews with small samples of consumers witnesses (e.g. Bellavance, 2008; Bachmayer et al., 2014). This latter methodological strategy was used also by Michele Lamont in her influential comparative investigation of French and North-American upper-middle classes (1992). Her findings showed that, while in Paris "highbrow snobbery"

[10] The use of network analysis has become increasingly popular in sociology of culture, given the possibility to map cultural fields as networks made of producers, cultural goods or consumers (see Bottero and Crossley, 2011; Airoldi et al., 2016).

strongly impacted on the formation of social networks, “money” and “morals” were more relevant, respectively, in New York and in small city centres. However, as Holt noticed, “to reach this conclusion, she implicitly assumes that the assertiveness with which her informants invoke a cultural hierarchy in the interviews reflects directly the strength of the cultural boundaries that they draw in everyday social interaction” (1997a:105-106). We also know from Lizardo and Skiles that, at least in the US, younger generations are on average less inclined to reject others’ tastes in surveys (2015). Thus, we can argue that respondents’ representations provided in interview settings are not the most indicated empirical materials for the study of cultural distinction, given the potential biases due to dynamics of social desirability.

Taste, in order to classify the classifier (Bourdieu, 1984:6) and being “put to use” as a distinctive sign, must be immersed in a social context. “Cultural matter” matters precisely in the practice of social interaction (Lizardo, 2016), both as an argument of conversation and as a practical action (Holt, 1997a:106) – e.g. choosing the “right” song during a party, reading a book in a crowded bus. For this reason, as Richard Peterson acknowledged, “rather than asking people what they like and what they do, it would seem preferable to unobtrusively observe people as they make consequential everyday choices that are open and publicly available” (2005:272). That is, studying cultural distinction in a naturalistic way, as embedded in the “micropolitics of everyday social interaction” (Holt, 1997a:115). As Section 1.4.1 stresses, this is a missing piece also in Bourdieu’s own research (1984), which downplayed the key role of social situations in reproducing, negotiating and transforming the “social” (Eliasoph and Lichterman, 2003). Despite the demand for a “microsociology of cultural consumption” (Benzecri and Collins, 2014), there have been few empirical responses in this sense. For instance, Antoine Hennion’s ethnography of music listeners (2001) points to this empirical direction, but stressing the subjective side of consumption instead of its social, distinctive uses.

Interesting pieces of research employed text analysis to inquire distinction in media discourses, such as Lawler’s work on the representation of contemporary British middle-classes in press coverage (2008), Johnstone and Baumann’s study of categorizations in gourmet food writing (2007), Schmutz’s analysis of symbolic distinctions in newspaper articles about Popular music (2009), van Venrooij and Schmutz’s cross-national investigation about the aesthetic evaluation of Popular music albums by critics (2010). Although cultural intermediaries such as journalists and music critics are extremely relevant players in the game of culture, since they crucially reproduce and shape the classificatory

systems enabling distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984), novel data sources allow the large-scale, in-depth, unobtrusive and inductive exploration of distinction *in practice*. This new methodological opportunity is precisely what the following chapter will be about.

Chapter 2. Studying distinction through digital methods

"Science and technology multiply around us. To an increasing extent they dictate the languages in which we speak and think. Either we use those languages, or we remain mute" [Introduction to the French edition of *Crash*, James Graham Ballard, 1974:7]

Introduction

The present work aims to empirically explore whether Bourdieu's theory of distinction applies to contemporary, digital societies. In the last three decades, many contributions investigated both the social determinants and social uses of cultural taste, having *La Distinction* as a main reference. They focused on a variety of consumption realms, through quantitative, qualitative as well as mixed methodological approaches, leading to rarely generalizable and sometimes contrasting results (see Sections 1.5 and 1.6). Acknowledging the limitations and strengths of both Bourdieu's and his followers' work, the goal of this dissertation is to investigate cultural distinctions in an inductive, unobtrusive, relational, fine-grained, large-scale way. This has been possible through the analysis of digital data collected on YouTube. As this chapter illustrates, a digital-based, mixed-method approach has been employed in order to explore the Italian field of music consumption from the ground-up.

2.1 The digitization of taste

Imagine a place where consumption practices, objectified and embodied tastes, symbolic and practical forms of distinction leave persistent footprints which can be searched, tracked and analysed by researchers. This is precisely the digital environment constituted by social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube. Every step we take online is carefully and invisibly recorded by digital platforms – which store this information in databases, in order to use it for customizing our online experience, as well as for further commercial purposes (Airoldi, 2015; Beer, 2009; Cheney-Lippold, 2011). Such digital traces are the main object of the present work. The following sections will discuss the impact of digital media on cultural reception (2.1.1) and sketch the potential relevance of digital methods for the sociological study of cultural taste (2.1.2).

2.1.1 Culture goes digital

Gregory Bateson defines information as "a difference which makes a difference" (2000:315, cited in Striphas, 2015:400). In the specific case of cultural information, a second-order, "social" difference is implied. From a Bourdieuian perspective, information about legitimate culture – e.g. what music is "good", how to consume and evaluate it properly – represents an unevenly distributed (re)source of distinction.

In modern societies, cultural socialization is mediated by education, family, occupation and – therefore – social class (Bourdieu, 1984). Also, mass media play a fundamental role in the dissemination of information about cultural goods, as in the case of music (van Venrooij, 2009). At the same time, some of them have the power to reduce barriers to the transmission of information and, as a result, differences among social groups.

> "As a result of the widespread use of television [...] the social information available to the ghetto family now more closely resembles the information available to the middle class family. Information available to women now more closely resembles information available to men. Formerly distinct groups not only share very similar information about society in general, they also share more information about each other – information that once distinguished 'insiders' from 'outsiders'. As a consequence, traditional group bonds are weakened and traditional distinctions among groups partially blurred" (Meyrowitz, 1985:131).

In the case of Internet and digital platforms, the same process described by Meyrowitz does not affect solely information as it is commonly intended. Being digitized, cultural products such as books, musical works and movies become themselves information – as a series of binary numbers, of "simple yes-no decisions" (Striphas, 2015:400). As such, they do not need a physical support anymore. Consequently, their production, circulation, consumption, as well as the diffusion of news and communication about them, have all radically mutated in the last three decades (see Beer and Burrows, 2013; Benkler, 2006).

Even consumers' aesthetic evaluations and "cultural talks" (Lizardo, 2016) are now largely digitized, in the form of reviews and opinions shared online (see Verboord, 2011; Hanrahan, 2013). Records, books, movies' "value" is now objectified in the average number of "stars" assigned by amateur reviewers, or in the hundreds of positive and negative comments left at the bottom of a webpage (see Arvidsson and Caliandro, 2016; Stark, 2011). Digital media have blurred the boundaries between production and consumption (Ritzer, 2013), as well as between professional and amateur artists and critics (Verboord, 2009). This is exemplified by YouTube's imperative: "broadcast yourself". It is sufficient to have a smartphone and an Internet connection to share user-generated content to a (potentially) worldwide audience

(van Dijck, 2009), as well as to instantaneously encounter an enormous variety of cultural content (see Anderson, 2006). The circulation of cultural goods online is now ubiquitously organised by algorithms that automatically suggest "what items to buy, what music to listen to, or what online news to read", based on the computational analysis of users' behaviour on digital platforms (Ricci et al., 2011:1). Flourishing in the e-commerce sector around the early 2000s (Bolton et al., 2004), such recommendation systems are now featured by a growing number of online services, such as Spotify, Amazon, YouTube. For this reason, sociologist Ted Striphas argues that we have entered the age of "algorithmic culture" (2015), characterized by "the use of computational processes to sort, classify, and hierarchize people, places, objects, and ideas, and also the habits of thought, conduct, and expression that arise in relationship to those processes" (Hallinan and Stiphas, 2014:3). This socio-technological shift is likely to have relevant consequences for the Bourdieuian game of culture:

> "If cultural intermediaries such as critics, talents scouts and the like were once responsible for the 'presentation and representation' (Bourdieu, 1984) of culture, or for the construction of value and framing of encounters with cultural goods [...], it is hard to deny that recommendation services, and the algorithms that constitute them, are increasingly part of the intermediation process" (Morris, 2015:450).

Acknowledging the perils of technological determinism, many scholars are currently reflecting about the effects of digital media on artistic legitimacy, taste and cultural inequalities. Mark Verboord's comparative study of online and printed book reviews represents one of the few empirical investigations dealing with this understudied topic (2011). Results show that, online, far more books authored by traditionally marginalized categories of writers – such as female and popular fiction authors – are reviewed. Thus, being Internet-mediated communication a "less hierarchical system of creating symbolic value" (Ibid.:442), it is also likely to undermine the reproduction of rigid definitions of cultural legitimacy, fostering a more plural, disintermediated and "consensual" idea of artistic worth instead (Hanrahan, 2013). Furthermore, social media (ideally) promote intergroup sociability, and digital archives feature an endless variety of artistic genres and styles (Beer and Burrows, 2013; Anderson, 2006) – two factors that are believed to contribute to the erosion of cultural hierarchies (DiMaggio, 1987).

Online it is possible to discover and consume an unprecedented amount of cultural products and information, available at low or no cost, on demand, everywhere, regardless of one's social origin, educational level, gender, ethnicity or occupation. This surely represents a (potentially) revolutionary shift in terms of taste differentiation and cultural inequality (see

Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). Still, one could rightly object that the mere fact that many museums have free entry does not mean that everybody enters. Nevertheless, according to Barile and Sugiyama, digital technologies contribute to the disruption of traditional mechanisms of cultural reproduction and taste making, as in the case of app Shazam:

> "Shazam is not simply a search engine that is able to recognize what kind of recorded track is played in our everyday cultural environment; it is the scanner helping us to discover new directions of our taste everywhere […]. Shazam is also a process of self-education that guides the user to create a personal taste and adopt it as a significant part of his/her social experience. If in the past one needed to be part of a social class and/or of a subculture through a pedagogic process of *bildung*, today this social mediation is less important and it is almost completely replaceable by applications available on our smartphones (2015:413).

Can digital platforms partly substitute the slow mechanisms of cultural socialization and embodiment at the root of distinction processes? Assuming habitus to be more flexible and changeable than what Bourdieu theorizes, can digital forms of cultural reception reduce class differences in terms of embodied and objectified tastes? These remain largely unexplored issues. One of the rare studies empirically addressing these points took place few years before the spread of smartphones and recommender algorithms (Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). The authors concluded as follows:

> "The use of technology for discovering new music and culture may become more pervasive in the future; but, based on evidence presented here and historical work on the relationship between technology and culture, we suspect it will be used to reinforce existing social patterns and relationships, rather than transform them" (Ibid.:246).

In sum, the impact of digitization on taste and distinction is not clear yet, and it deserves further empirical attention (see Chapter 5). The following section deals with digital media from a very different perspective. That is, not as research objects, but as research instruments instead.

2.1.2 Towards a digital sociology of taste

In 2016, over 50% of the world's population is online. This percentage rises to 73% in Europe and 89% in North America[11]. Globally, active social media users are estimated to be

[11] See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm [Accessed: 17 November 2016].

about 2.3 billion[12], spending an average of two hours per day networking and messaging[13]. Following the overwhelming growth of Internet usage, online data have been increasingly exploited in social and political research, from a variety of methodological points of view (see Caliandro and Gandini, 2017; Marres, 2012; Bruns and Burgess, 2012; Coleman, 2010; Beer, 2012). The digital methods approach is probably the one that contributed most to the advancement of social media research in the last decade (see Rogers, 2013). Digital methods propose to take advantage of the ways digital platforms produce and organize data in order to map social issues and political controversies (see Marres, 2015; Marres and Weltevrede, 2013). By reflexively taking into account the technological affordances of online social contexts, this approach escapes both the oversimplifications characterizing many Big Data studies (see boyd and Crawford, 2012) and the conservative scepticism dominant in qualitative sociology, thus representing a valuable methodological perspective for doing social research online.

At the core of digital methods' epistemology there is Noortje Marres and Richard Rogers' call for "following the medium" (Rogers 2013). Echoing Bruno Latour's appeal to "follow the natives" (2005), these two authors and their research team have developed a methodological approach focused on the adaptation of online devices for purposes of social research (Marres 2012:151). Within the "Digital Methods Initiative" based at the University of Amsterdam, they also built a number of online tools that permit the automated retrieval of huge amounts of online data from a number of sources[14]. The main premise underlying this research effort is that data collected from platforms such as Google, Facebook or Twitter are not mere manifestations of a virtual realm sharply detached from a supposed "real" social world (Jurgenson, 2012; Rogers, 2009). On the contrary, having absorbed a significant portion of individuals' daily life, digital platforms represent a novel research instrument for the study of contemporary societies as a whole (Rogers, 2013). Both users' online practices and mediated communications are automatically archived in digital databases, together with metadata enabling the accessibility and searchability of the archives in question (Beer and Burrows, 2013). These "native" digital footprints are what here is called digital data.

According to Richard Rogers, digital data must be distinguished from "digitized data", present also in analogue format (e.g. e-books), and "virtual data" – those resulting from

[12] See http://wearesocial.com/uk/special-reports/digital-in-2016 [Accessed: 17 November 2016].
[13] See http://www.globalwebindex.net/blog/social-media-captures-30-of-online-time [Accessed: 17 November 2016].
14 Some of these tools are freely available online here: https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase [Accessed: 20 November 2016].

virtual interviews and online surveys (2015). A first, promising aspect of digital data is that they ontologically transcend the never-ending duality between "micro" and "macro" (see Latour et al., 2012; Mohr et al., 2015). A closer observation of large datasets featuring millions of communicative interactions (e.g. tweets, YouTube comments, Facebook posts) allows the researcher to qualitatively observe cultural processes working at the micro level of social situations, while simultaneously relating them to macro trends at the level of the aggregate (see Arvidsson et al., 2016; Ford, 2014). In some ways, this opportunity to "zoom in" and "out", combining quantitative overviews of immense cultural landscapes and in-depth analyses of users' representations and behaviours, can be interpreted as the sociological equivalent of the invention of telescope. On this matter, Latour and colleagues argued that digital data "may provide another way to render the social sciences empirical and quantitative without losing their necessary stress on particulars" (Latour et al. 2012:18). A second important feature of digital data is their ontological relationality.

> "As digital media are organized as networks both at the physical and content level (the Internet is the interconnection of computer-networks and the World Wide Web is the interconnection of online hypertexts), the inscriptions that they produce are natively relational" (Venturini et al., forthcoming:3).

This point is particularly relevant here, considering the centrality of relational thinking in both Bourdieu's work and, more generally, in contemporary sociology of culture (see Section 1.4.2). While the relational character of the online data has proved to be particularly suited for network analysis approaches (e.g. Airoldi et al., 2016; Arvidsson et al., 2016; Latour et al., 2012), the textual nature of most digital interactions has traditionally fostered the use of discourse and content analyses (see Caliandro and Gandini, 2017). Although social media use is getting more and more visual (see Murthy, 2008), comments to online contents are normally textual. Moreover, the ubiquitous presence of metadata attached to images and videos – like user-generated tags and descriptions (see Beer, 2013) – makes text analysis a still valid methodological approach to digital data. This is even more true considering the recent diffusion in the social sciences of various automated text mining methods (see Mohr and Bogdanov, 2013). According to several scholars, novel computational techniques applied to large textual corpuses of digital data may represent the future of cultural sociology (DiMaggio et al., 2013; Mohr et al., 2015). Still, the risks and limitations of online social research must be considered.

First, considering social media as a sort of "open laboratory" (e.g. Bond et al., 2012; Giglietto et al., 2012) presents obvious ethical implications (see boyd and Crawford, 2012) and rarely acknowledged epistemological biases – for instance, those deriving from considering the Internet as a monolithic, homogeneous realm (see Whitty, 2008). A context-sensitive perspective is needed, in order to recognize the specificities of data collected from different digital contexts, featuring peculiar socio-technical "affordances" influencing patterns of online interaction (see Baym and boyd, 2012; boyd, 2011; Meyrowitz, 1985). As Venturini and colleagues correctly point out, "digital technologies (as all communication media) do not just trace, but also translate the interactions that they support" (forthcoming:5). Hence, it is necessary to know the "languages" of digital platforms, in order to be able to comprehend the social forms that inhabit them (see Rogers, 2013).

Second, through the study of publicly available digital data it is not possible to track individual behaviour and socio-demographic characteristics – unless one works at Google or Facebook. From the point of view of a sociologist, this would neither be ethical – for evident reasons of privacy – nor feasible, since collectable digital data hardly feature information about users' education, class, ethnicity or gender. Digital platforms allow to study self-presentations, communicative interactions and online practices instead, using social situations and media contexts rather than individuals as main unit of analysis.

Third, despite the wide diffusion of social media, digital inequalities remain strong, not solely in the well-known form of a "digital divide" in Internet access but, also, in more nuanced ways. On the one hand, online users are on average younger, richer and more educated than their peers. On the other, socioeconomic status is associated also to differential patterns of Internet usage and unequal endowments of digital competences (Hargittai, 2010; Micheli, 2015; Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). This evidently affects the representativeness of Internet research (see Savage et al., 2013).

Last, not every researcher can freely access archived digital data, since they are owned and managed by private companies such as Facebook, Google or Twitter, which normally make only a minor part of them publicly accessible, at their conditions. According to boyd and Crawford (2012), this creates a new digital divide between Big Data rich and Big Data poor institutions, with public universities being more likely to be the latter. Notwithstanding these limitations, as David Beer remarks (2013; 2012), sociologists should take advantage of the enormous amount of user-generated data publicly available on social media.

The digitization of social life creates brand new methodological opportunities also for the sociological study of taste and distinction. Nevertheless, up to now, few sociologists have

exploited digital data for this purpose. Ori Schwarz examined 316 online user-generated reviews on films and restaurants, aiming to unveil the social use of the Israeli discursive category "farteism" and its consequences on the negotiation of cultural value (2016). Daniel Allington analysed online ratings on an interactive fiction website, in the context of a mixed-method research about cultural evaluation in a very specific field (2016). Similarly, the aforementioned work of Mark Verboord (2011) studied online reviews about fiction books in order to assess their impact on cultural products' commercial success. Others articles, more broadly, investigated online cultural classifications in the field of music consumption (e.g. Beer, 2013; Airoldi et al., 2016; Silver et al., 2016). No one, at present, has systematically researched cultural taste and distinction through digital data.

Still, there are several good reasons for doing that. As Tony Bennett and colleagues noticed, the inner relationality of digital data present new opportunities for field analysis (2009:32). Meaning, through digital methods is possible to follow Bourdieu's suggestion to

> "break both with the blind use of indicators and with spurious, essentialist analyses which are merely the universalizing of a particular experience, in order to make completely explicit the multiple, contradictory meanings which these works take on at a given moment for the totality of social agents and in particular for the categories of individuals whom they distinguish or who differ with respect to them" (Bourdieu 1984:19).

The large scale of digital databases can potentially make us closer to what Bourdieu indicated as the "only way of completely escaping from the intuitionism which inevitably accompanies positivistic faith in the nominal identity of the indicators". Meaning, carrying out a (at that time) "strictly interminable analysis of the social value of each of the properties or practices considered – a Louis XV commode or a Brahms symphony, reading Historia or Le Figaro, playing rugby or the accordion and so on" (Bourdieu 1984:20).

Furthermore, this could be done taking into account the interactional dimension of social life guiltily neglected by the author of *La Distinction*, which can be studied in a naturalistic way – as praised by both Richard Peterson (2005:272) and Douglas Holt (1997a:115). Being digital data collected in an unobtrusive way, they represent unique materials for the observation of cultural distinctions "in practice", enabling the study of classificatory struggles and boundary-works in the context of social situations.

2.2 An inductive investigation of taste in music

The main insight of the literature presented in the last chapter is that, although Bourdieu's modernist postulates cannot be taken for granted 38 years later – e.g. the relevance of class, the presence of a shared hierarchy of cultural legitimacy in objectified taste, the dichotomy between formal and "naive" aesthetics –, the logic of distinction is still out there (see Friedman et al, 2015). It works within cultural genres (Bachmayer et al., 2014), by means of the display of distinctive modes of consumption (Jarness, 2015), remaining loosely but persistently linked to a variety of social factors – such as education and class, but also age, gender and ethnicity (Bennett et al., 2009).

Becoming more nuanced, distinctions are harder to grasp through conventional methodological perspectives (Atkinson, 2011). Given the increased complexity of contemporary societies, an inductive methodological perspective on cultural classifications is needed (see Savage et al., 2013:226; Savage and Gayo, 2011). Hence, here, the Italian field of music consumption has been studied without assuming *a priori* neither the presence (or substantial content) of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies, nor a relation between social position and taste. This was possible by focusing on a non-conventional research context, using non-conventional methods.

YouTube is the second most visited website worldwide after its owner, Google[15]. Every day, visitors are more than 1 billion[16]. With 82 percent of them searching for music content[17], YouTube is also the most used music service in the world, as well as in Italy (IFPI, 2016b). The first part of the present research consists in the inductive exploration of this large digital context, inspired by a digital methods approach (Rogers, 2013). I mapped the Italian field of music consumption "from below" (Knoop et al., 2016), as it is objectified in the form of digital contents and discourses shared by artists, labels and listeners on the platform.

While *La Distinction* begins with an account of the social mechanisms underlying cultural taste and, then, describes and interprets its social uses (1984), this work substantially reverses this sequence. My starting point is the large-scale analysis of the field's "symbolic space" (Bourdieu, 2002). The first part of the present study empirically explores the distinctive uses of musical taste in contemporary Italy, combining the inductive construction of a "cartography of taste" (Sassatelli, 2007:94) and the unobtrusive observation of its social consequences (see Chapter 3 and 4). In other words, the purpose of this research step is to

[15] See http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/youtube.com [Accessed: 24 November 2016]
[16] See https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/en/ [Accessed:24 November 2016]
[17] Rising to 93% amongst 16-24 year olds (IFPI, 2016b).

study distinctions "in practice", embedded in the ways consumers represent their (and others') tastes in comments to music videos on YouTube.

Hence, I mapped the relations among music videos, artists, commenters and aesthetic judgements, captured on the most popular online music repository in the world (see Airoldi et al., 2016). In this manner, I tried to reconstruct the field's "space of possibles" (Bourdieu, 1983:313) as well as its inner cultural systems of classification in a "ground-up" way (Beer, 2013), adopting a relational, anti-substantialist perspective (Kirchner and Mohr, 2010).

As I anticipated in Section 2.1.2, publicly available digital data do not inform much about users' social background and demographics. Thus, in order to relate online taste manifestations and digital distinctions to their structural roots, I employed interview and survey data. The second part of the present work aims to understand who actually "distinguishes", how, and from whom else (Chapter 5 and 6). In studying the relations between cultural taste and social stratification, conventional notions of "highbrow" and "lowbrow" music were not taken for granted. Rather, a fine-grained, digital map of the field's "symbolic space" supported the design of survey questions capable to situate in the "social space" tastes, boundary-works and aesthetic dispositions emerged in the previous digital inquiry (Bourdieu, 2002). Borrowing Bourdieu's jargon, I inductively mapped the *opus operatum* and, then, inquired its hidden *modus operandi* (1977). For many aspects, the present research design is inspired by John Mohr's perspective on "measuring meaning structures" (1998). Here below are his guidelines for conducting structural analyses of cultural systems:

> "(a) basic elements within a cultural system are identified, (b) the pattern of relations between these elements is recorded, (c) a structural organization is identified by applying a pattern-preserving set of reductive principles to the system of relations, and (d) the resulting structure (which now can be used as a representation for the meaning embedded in the cultural system) is reconnected to the institutional context that is being investigated" (Ibid.:352).

The cultural system investigated throughout this dissertation is the Italian field of music consumption (see Section 2.6). Music enters these pages only as a cultural commodity carrying conflicting social meanings, as well as experiencing a particularly rapid transition from a "material" to a "digitized" status. A number of influential studies in sociology of taste focused on music consumption (see Peterson, 2005). Many researchers introduced their analyses with a much-quoted statement of *La Distinction*: "nothing more clearly affirms

one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music" (Bourdieu, 1984:18). However, Bourdieu had classical music in mind. As he wrote in another, less-quoted excerpt, this latter type of art

"says nothing and has nothing to say. Never really having an expressive function, it is opposed to drama, which even in its most refined forms still bears a social message and can only be 'put over' on the basis of an immediate and profound affinity with the values and expectations of its audience" (1984:19).

Popular music is different, being songs closer to drama in conveying messages pointing to different audiences and topics. Moreover, it is a largely diffused cultural good and – as a consequence – a less "distinctive" one, as Bourdieu himself pointed out:

"the song, as a cultural property which (like photography) is almost universally accessible and genuinely common (since hardly anyone is not exposed at one moment or another to the 'successes' of the day), calls for particular vigilance from those who intend to mark their difference. The intellectuals, artists and higher-education teachers seem to hesitate between systematic refusal of what can only be, at best, a middle-brow art, and a selective acceptance which manifests the universality of their culture and their aesthetic disposition" (1984:60).

If, on the one hand, these latter words anticipated the supposed "historical shift" towards high status omnivorousness announced in the early 1990s by Richard Peterson and colleagues (Peterson and Kern, 1996), on the other hand they highlight a crucial aspect of popular music, which is even more evident in present times. That is, the fact that a large majority of consumers, across social classes and age cohorts, have heard about most popular music artists, even without necessarily liking them. Such "cultural encounters" (Varriale, 2016a) increasingly happen on online platforms like YouTube, where new songs are freely available (sometimes, despite copyright laws) while older ones are meticulously archived (Roberts, 2012:271). In addition, in the last decades, popular music has been intellectualized by critics working for broadsheets and magazines, who progressively applied "highbrow" aesthetic criteria to a (previously) "lowbrow" art (see van Venrooij and Schmutz, 2010). This trend is well-documented also in the Italian context (see Varriale, 2016b) and suggests that popular music now attracts a miscellaneous audience (see also Peterson, 2005). Thus, by studying aesthetic judgements regarding well-known artists in the Italian music market, I captured narrations of both high- and low-class, young and aged publics. The transversal reception of popular music, together with the now widespread use of YouTube, prevented

my sample of digital data from being biased by a marked overrepresentation of specific fractions of music listeners (see Section 2.5).

As I decided to study music consumption partly because of my background knowledge on the topic, my choice of doing it in my home country, similarly, was based on an objective need for specific linguistic and cultural competences, especially in the more qualitative analytical passages. Through the in-depth investigation of the social, practical and symbolic processes surrounding this peculiar field of music consumption, I aim to make Italy "an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations" (Bourdieu, 2002:268) – which are perhaps different in their substantial manifestations, while hiding similar underlying relations. More details about music production and consumption in Italy will be given in Section 2.6. The following section will deal with the epistemological implications of cultural distinctions "going digital" instead.

2.3 Social situations, justifications and digital distinctions

Differences in taste, once immersed in a social context, become distinctive signs. Sharing a song on your Facebook profile is not like listening to it alone in your car. For the same reason, a conversation about music with your friends, colleagues or acquaintances can be dangerously different from a peaceful exchange of subjective opinions. As Bourdieu argued, taste is a matter of symbolic power, which is ultimately at stake in the fields of social life (1989). However, what Bourdieu did not argue is that social life is enacted in myriads of social situations, involving different people, carrying various "definitions" and implying contrasting self-presentations (Goffman, 1959). Following recent contributions stressing the need for a situational approach to cultural taste (e.g. Benzecri and Collins, 2014; Santoro, 2011), this study investigates cultural distinction as a social practice immersed in the "micropolitics of everyday social interaction" (Holt, 1997a:115). Theoretically speaking, this brings us to a long-lasting sociological dilemma, that is, how the "macro" level of cultural norms and collective representations enters the "micro" level of social situations, and vice versa.

Logically, one or more shared notions of cultural or aesthetic legitimacy are necessary preconditions of distinction. The diffuse and tacit knowledge of those symbolic goods and behaviours placed at the top and at the bottom of a socially recognized ranking of worth produces a homologous hierarchy of "good" and "bad" listeners (Lopes, 2006) – meaning, a symbolic boundary (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Here I define this process "symbolic distinction", which is strictly related to the exercise of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989).

At the same time, dialectically, social practice – especially by institutional actors and cultural intermediaries – affects the definition of what is "highbrow" and "lowbrow", "good" and "bad" music, "kitsch" or "trash" (see McCoy and Scarborough, 2014; van Venrooij and Schmutz, 2010; Levine, 1988).

This work does not have the ambitious purpose of documenting the institutional genesis of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies in the Italian field of popular music (see instead Varriale, 2016b; Santoro, 2013, 2010, 2002; Santoro and Solaroli, 2007). It solely aims to inductively reconstruct their perceived contents, as well as the ways in which such classificatory systems are discursively put into action by YouTube commenters and, more in general, by digital music consumers. Alike Bourdieu, taste is treated as a "classifying device", and judgments of taste as more than mere subjective opinions. Differently from Bourdieu, the logic of distinction is studied as it is practised in online social interactions.

In the case of comments to music videos on YouTube, social interaction corresponds to asynchronous textual communication, which is directed to both the author of the video and the "invisible audience" (Boyd, 2011) of other actual and potential commenters. Co-digitally-present YouTube users do not normally know each other, except from the basic social information carried by their nicknames and by the content of previous comments. It is a semi-anonymous and public kind of social situation. Using Joshua Meyrowitz's terms, the "social information" available in such an electronically-mediated context are very limited (1985). As a result, this type of social situation fosters discursive representations of one's and others' tastes that reflect widely shared social knowledge about what is "right" and "wrong" in music, since these representations are presumably tailored for a wide and hardly predictable audience. An exercise of sociological imagination in the guise of Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) reveals the similarities between this type of situation and other, more familiar ones – like, for instance, a "small talk" among strangers meeting for the first time outside of a concert hall. These stereotypical social actors would normally comment the quality of the performance, narrate their feelings, express a preference for a particular song and, eventually, laugh at those listeners who have never heard about it. They would formulate utterances carrying social meanings and symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002), intersubjectively shared in a linguistic community (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Moreover, they would put to use different "evaluative repertoires" in support of their judgements (Bachmayer et al, 2014; Lamont, 2012b; Wagner, 1999), since the speaker's main goal in conversation is to provide "evidence for the fairness or unfairness of his current

situation and other grounds for sympathy, approval, exoneration, understanding, or amusement" (Goffman, 1974:503).

Not surprisingly, given the current interpenetration of digital media and everyday life (Jurgenson, 2012), music listeners tend to behave in similar ways when commenting on YouTube (see Thelwall and Vis, 2012). However, a fundamental source of discontinuity is that, once in the digital environment, their body is absent, apart for those clues intentionally left on social media profiles. This means that, borrowing the Goffmanian distinction between "communication" and "expression" (Goffman, 1969), digital co-presence is based solely on the intentional transmission of messages (that is, communication), while the social information unconsciously carried by the body, like in the case of gestures or vocalizations, is normally missing. While bodily expressions are personal, idiosyncratic and related to the backstage of social life, intentional communication fosters strategic self-presentations instead (Meyrowitz, 1985:94). Thus, social media are interpretable as collections of front-stages, whose performances and representations are not particularly different from those displayed in face-to-face offline social situations (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, users' digital traces are persistently stored online and, thus, can be exploited for large-scale sociological analyses (see Section 2.1). But, yet, some epistemological problems come into view. It is a matter of fact that YouTube comments to music videos are normally short and likely to simply express in few words users' support toward the artist (Thelwall and Vis, 2012). How is it possible, then, to produce relevant sociological knowledge analysing such poorly informative empirical materials? My analytical solution is to focus on "critical comments" – meaning, aesthetic judgements characterized by a negative sentiment. I did so for two main reasons: the first one is that symbolic distinctions are better measurable considering dislikes than likes (see Bryson, 1996; 1997; Lizardo and Skiles, 2016; Varriale, 2016b); the second one is that the cultural order implicit in social situations is more likely to emerge in the case of conflict, as ethnometodology suggests (Garfinkel, 2002).

In their influential book "On Justification", Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot deal with similarly revealing social situations, called "critical moments" (2006; 1999). In a critical moment, people "realize that something is going wrong; that they cannot get along any more; that something has to change" (Boltansky and Thevenot, 1999:359). In the socio-technical context of YouTube music videos, this happens, for instance, once a user realizes that her favourite singer has become a "sell-out", notices that the lyrics are copied from another song, or feels stigmatized by other commenters criticizing her tastes (see Chapter 4). Both in face-

to-face and online social situations, the outcome of such moments of crisis is the same: “the person who realizes that something does not work rarely remains silent” (Ibid., 360). According to Boltansky and Thevenot, the sociologically interesting aspect of the resulting criticism is that it produces disputes where the persons involved are “subjected to an imperative of justification” (Ibid.). In other words, critical actions, by breaking the normality of a social situation, need to be justified. The valuable intuition of Luc Boltansky and Laurent Thevenot was to theoretically develop a grammar of the plurality of (mutually incompatible) modes of justifications, called “orders of worth” (2006; 1999).

When users criticize artists and other listeners in comments to YouTube videos, they often employ arguments to justify their opinions in front of the “invisible audience” (boyd, 2011) of the platform. The analysis of justifications allowed to look for the general in the particular, that is, to explore the normative principles of worth practically used by listeners in their judgements of taste.

According to Harold Garfinkel (2002), the objective social order is locally constructed through the ritual practices and the culturally-informed accounts of social actors immersed in social situations (Collins, 2004). If music listeners commenting on YouTube, through their ritual games of criticisms and appreciations, stigmas and defences, co-construct or perpetuate some form of social order in the realm of cultural taste, then this becomes observable precisely through the study of justifications.

The naturalistic character of online unobtrusive observations carries evident epistemological advantages with respect to the asymmetric situation of the interview setting (Peterson, 2005). Following Bourdieu, the context-collapse (boyd, 2011) due to the cohabitation of “highbrow” and “lowbrow” audiences and contents on YouTube produces “virtually experimental situations”, resembling the “side stages” of mass media described by Meyrowitz (1985):

> “television, which brings certain performances of 'high' art into the home, or certain cultural institutions (such as the Beaubourg Centre or the Maisons de la culture), which briefly bring a working-class public into contact with high art and sometimes avant-garde works, create what are virtually experimental situations, neither more nor less artificial or unreal than those necessarily produced by any survey on legitimate culture in a working class milieu. One then observes the confusion, sometimes almost a sort of panic mingled with revolt, that is induced by some exhibits” (Bourdieu 1984:33).

YouTube comments are not anonymous answers to a questionnaire, but spontaneous self-presentations performed in an interactional context. They could correspond to “real” tastes,

or maybe not – but this is not the point of this digital investigation anyway. The main point, instead, is to reconstruct how commenters *represent* music artists, their fans and themselves in a public situation. The resulting representations reflect the surrounding systems of cultural classification which make possible to transform an aesthetic judgement into a symbolic action, understandable by other members of a given cultural context (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Thus, a first research question is the following: what is considered as "worthy" in the domain of Italian popular music? The empirical observation of what is considered as unjustifiably "bad" or obviously "good", naturally "authentic" or, simply, "fake", say something about eventual hierarchies of legitimacy and configurations of symbolic boundaries in the realm of musical taste (Lamont, 2012b; Lamont and Molnar, 2002; Warde, 2008). The myriads of digital distinctions constellating YouTube comments, taken together, may or not reveal the existence of perceived rankings of objectified tastes (i.e., cultural hierarchies) and social categories – since taste classifies the classifier too (Bourdieu, 1984).

Then, a second issue is: what regimes of evaluation are socially acceptable in justifying one's critical judgement? If I state in front of a platoon of Justin Bieber's fans that their idol, simply, "sucks", I could not support my argument by saying "well, that's because he is too blonde". That does not make sense. Probably, blondeness would not be recognized as an acceptable criterion of artistic evaluation. In *La Distinction* (1984), the sole "legitimate" evaluative repertoire is prescribed by the Kantian, "pure" gaze. As illustrated in Section 1.2, it implies the distant and disinterested appreciation of the formal, canonical elements of the work of art. At the opposite pole of the aesthetic hierarchy, there is the "naive", popular gaze, focused on function and content instead. These aesthetic views, being the embodied product of class socialization, are considered by Bourdieu as stable properties of the individual, homologously applied throughout the lifestyle (1984). On the contrary, Boltanski and Thevenot (2006;1999) portray the social world as characterized by a plurarchy of regimes of evaluation, which are not properties of individual but, instead, of social situations. These two opposite perspectives on cultural evaluation will be empirically tested by analysing the formal elements of taste justifications on YouTube in a grounded way (see Section 2.4).

The large-scale investigation of the social uses of taste at the micro-level of online "critical moments" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999), presented in Chapter 4, will be followed by the analyses of interview- and survey-data (Chapter 5 and 6). They will mainly deal with the overlaps of consumption practices, music preferences (objectified taste), aesthetic views

(embodied taste), boundary-works and socio-economic conditions (age, gender, economic capital, cultural capital). It is possible here to anticipate that, notwithstanding *substantial* differences and an increased cultural and societal fragmentation, the Bourdieuian sociological account of taste does not look outdated in contemporary Italy – at least in the field of music consumption. The pages below recall the methodological steps followed to get to this general conclusion.

2.4 A digital distinction? Research questions and hypotheses

This dissertation is organised along five main research questions, aiming to address four specific hypotheses. My research questions regard, on the one hand, the perception of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies, which represent the shared cultural terrain where distinctions come from (RQ 1 and 2). On the other, they concern the social transformation of taste differences into distinctive signs (RQ 3 and 4) and the structural mechanisms underlying cultural stratification (RQ 5).

- *RQ 1* Are one or more hierarchies of cultural legitimacy broadly shared among Italian music listeners? If so, what artists and genres are perceived as culturally legitimate? Which ones are stigmatized instead?
- RQ 2 What are, if any, the legitimate styles of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation? Are one or more aesthetic hierarchies recognized by agents in the field?
- RQ 3 Do (eventual) hierarchies of cultural legitimacy, once practised in the context of social interaction, produce forms of symbolic distinction excluding specific social groups and categories of listeners? If so, how do these distinctive mechanisms work?
- *RQ 4* Do (eventual) differences in embodied taste – that is, in the individual modes of music consumption, appreciation and evaluation – practically work as distinctive signs in the field?
- *RQ 5* Do differences in objectified and embodied taste clearly overlap differences in the distribution of cultural and economic capital? Moreover, what about age and gender differences? In brief, if distinctive signs in the field's symbolic space exist, who distinguishes in the social space? From whom else?

The fact that this work is based on an inductive methodological design does not mean that, at the level of theory, no hypotheses can be rejected or validated. On the basis of the literature review presented in Chapter 1, four hypotheses that discard some of *La Distinction*'s

assumptions and conclusions were individuated (Bourdieu, 1984). Through inductive empirical analyses, I checked whether each of them was falsified or not by my findings. This procedure aimed to test the applicability of Bourdieu's theoretical model to the Italian cultural context.

a) *Lamont's hypothesis*: there is no single, salient, universal definition of legitimacy in the Italian field of music consumption, but a cultural plurarchy instead. Different taste publics perceive alternative hierarchies of artistic worth, which may be more or less salient and based on distinct criteria of evaluation.

   This hypothesis, which is related to RQ 1, is based on the work of sociologists who studied how intersubjective ideas of worth are socially constructed and institutionalized (see Lamont, 2012b; Stark, 2009; DiMaggio, 1987). Particularly, Michele Lamont's comparative investigation on social status in France and the US shed light on the co-presence of distinct hierarchies based, respectively, on money, morals and manners (1992). In the context of the present work, we can analogously hypothesize that radically different rankings of "worthy" music artists and genres co-habit in the domain of Italian popular music. Empirically speaking, this means that the symbolic value commonly associated to singers like Mina, Laura Pausini or Eros Ramazzotti is contested and far from being univocally recognized. The opposite case, implying the diffuse perception of a given hierarchy of objectified taste, would support a strictly Bourdieuian interpretation instead.

b) *Boltanski's hypothesis*: there is no shared aesthetic hierarchy in the Italian field of music consumption. A non-ranked plurality of orders of worth is practically employed by consumers while "making sense" of music. The Kantian "pure gaze", with its implicit evaluative framework based on disinterest and distance, is not the sole socially accepted grammar of worth guiding artistic perception, evaluation and valuation.

   Although Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot mainly focused on organisations (2006;1999), their intuitions can be extended to the domain of artistic appreciation. Their main point is that the cultural principles employed in the evaluation of the worth of an entity (a person, an action, a concert) are heterogeneous. Instead of being stably embodied in individuals or social groups, these "orders of worth" act as situational properties (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999). In other words, according to these authors, a social agent may adopt a "formal" aesthetic in the morning and a "functional" evaluative

principle in the evening, regardless of her cultural background. This would reject Bourdieu's theory of habitus and taste embodiment (1984). Thus, for what concerns the present digital investigation, I expect the aesthetic principles displayed by a YouTube commenter in her taste justifications to vary, instead of presenting individually-based patterns. Moreover, it can be hypothesized that, overall, listeners do not perceive that specific modes of artistic perception and cultural consumption are more "highbrow" or "legitimate" than others (see RQ 2).

c) *Holt's hypothesis*: while differences between "legitimate" and "dominated" modes of cultural consumption, appreciation and evaluation – meaning, embodied tastes – still bear a distinctive value linked to the social structure of power relationships, differences in objectified taste do not.

According to Douglas Holt, historical changes have drained the symbolic potency of objectified cultural capital (1998:5). In particular, the postmodern blurring of traditional cultural hierarchies and classifications has reduced the distinctive power of symbolic goods. In other words, it is not enough to listen to the "right" type of music, but it is necessary to do it in the "right" way, through the exercise of embodied cultural capital. Thus, "status is expressed and reproduced through implicit evaluations in everyday social interactions" (Holt, 1998:4) – that is, what here I call "practical distinction". A similar point of view is shared also by Jarness (2015), Atkinson (2011) and Lizardo (2008). This does not mean that the substantial content of "legitimate" and "dominated" embodied tastes is necessarily the same indicated by Bourdieu decades ago (although this is put forward by Atkinson, 2011). Eventually, as several contributions suggest, new bourgeois aesthetic dispositions could have replaced or joined the Kantian "pure" gaze at the top of the aesthetic hierarchy. These are, for instance, a cosmopolitan orientation toward praising internationality (Meulemanm and Savage, 2013; Varriale, 2016b) and a reflexive attitude, based on what is best for one's own self-realisation (see Giddens, 1991; Atkinson, 2011). Also omnivorous "openness" (Peterson and Kern, 1996), according to many, can be interpreted as an emerging high-status aesthetic view (see Newman et al., 2013).

Hence, following this literature, I should expect: a) a low incidence of symbolic distinctions based on objectified taste (see RQ 3); b) evidence of practical distinctions, regarding embodied taste (see RQ 4); c) a non-homologous relation between objectified

taste and social stratification; d) a significant overlap between legitimate embodied tastes and privileged social strata (see RQ 5).

d) *Bauman's hypothesis*: in a "liquid modernity", cultural taste is an individual matter. The processes of marketization, digitization and globalization have erased cultural, aesthetic and social hierarchies. Distinctions, if present, are mere subjective actions freed from any link to social structure.

   In a recent book, Zygmunt Bauman (2011) applied his well-known "liquid" metaphor to the cultural field, writing about the postmodern individualization of culture, due to the massive overproduction and circulation of commodity signs at the global level (see also Holt, 1998). Bauman argued that, in *La Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) was observing "culture at its homeostatic stage: culture at the service of the status quo", while "culture is now able to focus on fulfilling individual needs, solving individual problems and struggles with the challenges and troubles of personal lives" (2011:11-12). In a postmodern world, there is no disputing about taste (see van den Haak, 2014:281). The rising penetration of the Internet, ideally enabling the free circulation of knowledge and information (see Benkler, 2006), provides new sources of cultural socialization (partly) independent from one's class background. The digitization of taste – which is becoming the customized product of algorithmic recommendations on digital platforms such as Netflix, Spotify or YouTube (see Striphas, 2015; Barile and Sugiyama, 2015; Hallinan and Striphas, 2014) – allows individual patterns of cultural discovery which were not possible in an age dominated by conventional cultural intermediaries (Morris, 2015). Together with the unprecedented availability of cultural goods worldwide and the commodification of art (Bauman, 2011), these processes may have contributed to an individualisation, de-hierarchization and – ultimately – de-socialization of musical taste. According to this postmodern view, I expect my data not to reveal neither any clear relation between objectified/embodied tastes in music and social strata (see RQ 5), nor the perceived and distinctive presence of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies (see RQ 1, 2, 3, 4).

2.5 Digital data, mixed methods

Like *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), the present study consists in a mixed-method investigation. Omar Lizardo and Sara Skiles recently recommended future research to take "a mixed-methods approach [....] following a logic of theoretical (rather than random)

sampling and using interview-based and other close-to-the-ground observational methods, useful for separating 'sayings from doings'" (Lizardo and Skiles 2016:103). This is precisely the methodological direction followed by this work, which is articulated in two complementary research-steps: a digital field analysis (Savage and Silva, 2013) of YouTube data (Chapter 3 and 4) and a more conventional study having individuals as research units (Chapter 5 and 6). The following sub-sections will give an overview of each of these methodological strategies.

2.5.1 A digital field analysis of music on YouTube

Chapter 3 will present an inductive map of the field of Italian popular music consumption, constructed by applying network analysis and clustering techniques to digital data collected from YouTube. In order to build a relational dataset of music videos, I "followed" YouTube's recommender algorithm (see Section 2.1.1). YouTube's related videos algorithm works by aggregating videos users might be interested in (Airoldi, 2015), automatically producing "a ranked list of related videos shown to the user in response to the video that she is currently viewing" (Bendersky et al., 2014:1). The "relatedness score" between two YouTube videos is algorithmically computed considering patterns of shared viewership (Bendersky et al., 2014; Davidson et al., 2010). Namely, if many users watch video A right after video B, these two videos are likely to then be related. As a consequence, YouTube publics are at the same time producers and targets of the resulting recommendations, since the associations between videos reflect users' consumption patterns, as well as their underlying classificatory practices (see Airoldi, 2015). In the case of music, this implies that a) "related" videos tend to be "similar" in terms of content, and that b) this similarity is not a mere computational outcome, being rooted in users' crowd-based patterns of sequential viewing (see Airoldi et al., 2016). Given a seeding sample of nine contemporary Italian pop songs (see Tab. 9, Appendix 1), I queried YouTube API[18] for related videos – 25 related video per each of the seeding sample – and then iterated the procedure five times, removing duplicates. Though this sort of "snowball" logic (Browne, 2005), I ended up with a relational dataset consisting of 17,734 music videos uploaded by 8,478 YouTube accounts based in

[18] An API (Application Programming Interface) is a set of methods used to programmatically access a system. In this case, YouTube Data API version 2.0 allowed me to query YouTube's servers for data, thanks to a Python-based software developed by Davide Beraldo. YouTube Data API version 2.0 has now been replaced by version 3.0. The documentation is still available here: https://developers.google.com/youtube/2.0/developers_guide_protocol_api_query_parameters [Accessed: 21 November 2016].

Italy. This sample, though non-representative in statistical terms, covers a wide range of Italian popular music artists and genres – in particular mainstream pop, rap and *canzone d'autore* (see Santoro, 2002; Santoro and Solaroli, 2007; Fabbri and Plastino, 2014). Subsequent analyses have confirmed what previous research suggested (Airoldi et al., 2016) – meaning, that the resulting platformed associations amongst music artists and *milieux* (Webb, 2007) mirrored "real" cultural relations. The reliability of the sampling procedure was then verified by conducting a network analysis on a second sample of music videos obtained through a different, keyword-based procedure. The resulting network showed patterns of association comparable to those characterizing the original one, thus proving the robustness of the analyses (see Fig. 23, Appendix 1).

Subsequently, I focused on the user-generated comments to my set of music videos. Of over 2 million comments collected, I selected solely those responding to the following criteria: a) longer than three words each; b) written in Italian; c) published between 2014 and 2015; d) containing judgements of taste regarding the videos' musical content. The resulting dataset of about 98k comments made by 68k users has been analysed employing several data mining techniques, such as k-means clustering and multidimensional scaling (see Everitt et al., 2011; James et al., 2014). These techniques allowed me to map in an unsupervised way the associations among artists emerging from YouTube users' discourses and classificatory imagination (Beer, 2013).

Then, in Chapter 4, I focus on digital distinctions and taste justifications. A sub-sample of about 5k "critical comments" was extracted and examined through discourse analysis (see Fairclough., 2003), hierarchical clustering (Everitt et al., 2011) and network analysis' techniques (see Venturini et al., 2014; Wasserman and Faust, 1994)[19]. On the one hand, this research step aimed to reconstruct the symbolic value attached to music artists by taste publics on YouTube, assessing whether one or more hierarchies of cultural legitimacy were – explicitly or implicitly – conveyed by users' narrations and justifications. On the other, it shed light on the interactional, distinctive uses of objectified and embodied tastes by Italian commenters.

2.5.2 Bridging digital distinctions and social stratification

While Chapter 4 investigates how distinction, crystallized as culture, works at the interactional level of online social situations, Chapter 5 and 6 brings it back to the individual

[19] For details about the selection, categorization and analysis of critical comments, see Section 4.3.

ground of identities and to the material roots of social stratification (see Fig. 1). Following recent literature (Savage and Gayo, 2011; Bennett et al., 2009) as well as Bourdieu's own work (1984), semi-structured interviews and multiple correspondence analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) were employed. 15 qualitative interviews conducted with a theoretical sample of YouTube users allowed me to in-depth study the intersections of music consumption, taste and everyday life, as well as to contextualise and triangulate my digital findings (see Chapter 5). Respondents' accounts on the genesis of their tastes provided me with a dynamic, in-depth point of view on their cultural capital (Atkinson, 2011). Moreover, individual narrations of the everyday processes of musical choice helped me to identify emerging relations between embodied taste, technology and contexts of consumption.

Then, an online survey was distributed to nearly 20k users of a local network of public libraries situated in the North of Italy (see Chapter 6). It inquired objectified and embodied tastes in music, consumption practices, perceptions of cultural legitimacy and distinction, socio-demographic features. In addition to multiple choice questions, designed on the basis of the YouTube field analysis results, the survey included open questions, aimed to produce an inductive and fine-grained interpretation of cultural legitimacy and musical boundaries across socio-demographic profiles (see Sonnett, 2016; Vlegels and Lievens, 2016). Furthermore, a set of items about YouTube usage assessed the extent to which digital results can be considered as fairly representative of Italian listeners in general[20].

1591 individual responses were collected and analysed using MCA (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) and visual network analysis (Venturini et al., 2014), in order to reveal the overlaps between symbolic and social spaces in the field of music consumption (Bourdieu, 2002). Digital findings provided a map of the social meanings attached to the tastes and practices quantified by the survey. Indeed, in this research step, the analytical value of the survey lies in its complementarity. Without information about producers and victims of distinctions, the persistent, significant role of social inequalities in shaping cultural taste and, more generally, "classificatory imagination" (Beer, 2013) would have been undetectable.

Aiming to grasp the multidimensionality of taste and distinction across "micro" and "macro" as well as "online" and "offline", this mixed-method study focused on different research units: music videos and artists, in Chapter 3; judgements of taste and discursive repertoires, in Chapter 4; individuals and socio-demographic groups, in Chapters 5 and 6. The integration of these different pieces of research lies at the "level of explanation" (see Mason, 2006:20).

[20] Results proved that music listening, discovery and commenting on the platform are common activities in my sample of respondents, across age cohorts and educational levels (see Appendix 4).

Meaning, the research steps presented in the following chapters are concatenated and complementary. They develop the overall argument in an ordered sequence, ranging from the inductive exploration of the digital field to the analysis of survey data.

2.5.3 From concepts to data

The two, intertwined theories presented by Bourdieu in *La Distinction* (1984) – namely, one accounting for the social origins of taste and the other explaining its social uses (see Lizardo, 2014) – employed a peculiar analytical toolkit, then revisited and developed by further contributions in sociology of taste (see Chapter 1). This section briefly illustrates how the following theoretical notions have been operationalized in the present work: field, cultural legitimacy, aesthetic hierarchy, objectified taste, embodied taste, cultural capital, economic capital and distinction.

- *Field*. The Italian field of music consumption has been empirically reconstructed through both digital and "conventional" data. A, first ground-up classification of the artists and bands involved has been derived from the network of associations among related videos (Airoldi et al., 2016). The representation of cultural fields as networks of interrelated genres and artists has several precedents in sociology of culture (e.g. van Venrooij, 2009; Crossley, 2008; Bottero and Crossley, 2011; Webb, 2007). Here, instead of superimposing abstract categories to different fractions of the field, I inductively inferred them by interpreting the overall structure of the network and its clusters (see Chapter 3). Having mapped the supply-side of the field, aesthetic judgements on YouTube (see Chapter 4) and interview data about digital music consumers (see Chapter 5) have been analysed in order to explore listeners' "position-takings" constituting the field's "symbolic space" (Bourdieu, 2002). Then, applying multiple correspondence analysis and network analysis to survey data, I related such symbolic space to the underlying space of social positions (see Chapter 6).
- *Cultural legitimacy*. The existence, degree of universality and contents of perceived notions of cultural legitimacy were assessed in five main ways, then triangulated. First, the relative rate of negative comments per each artist has been computed, producing a quantitative ranking of artists, ordered by the sentiment of the discourses surrounding their YouTube videos. Second, any artist or band mentioned in the critical comments sub-sample have been coded, indicating the sentiment of the mention in question. This way, I was able to represent the neutral, positive or negative associations between artists

in a network-form, visually providing information about the distribution of cultural legitimacy in the field. Third, interviewees were asked about their points of view on musical worth. Last, the questionnaire featured open-ended questions about a) artists associated to the generic notion of "good music" b) artists similarly associated to "bad music".

- *Aesthetic hierarchy*. As "aesthetic hierarchy" here I intend a hierarchy of modes of consumption, aesthetic criteria and embodied tastes, ranking "how" one consumes, instead of "what" (Jarness, 2015). The empirical relevance of this concept has been assessed in two ways. First, by qualitatively coding the aesthetic criteria displayed by the authors of critical comments and analysing their distribution. Second, by inquiring how interviewees reflected about theirs (and other's) styles of music appreciation and evaluation.
- *Objectified taste*. Individual objectified tastes have been studied both via semi-structured interviews – through a set of questions about interviewees' musical preferences – and via questionnaire, which featured items measuring the like, dislike or indifference towards a list of eight music genres, as well as open-ended questions asking for favourite and least favourite artists in three broad musical domains (contemporary Italian music, Italian music of the past, international music). Also, two different YouTube music videos were presented to respondents, together with items asking to what extent they agreed with various aesthetic considerations about them – inspired by the analysis of YouTube comments. Responses to these questions served to situate listeners' boundary-works in the field's social space.
- *Embodied taste*. Embodied taste is measured in two main ways. Namely, during qualitative interviews informants were asked to talk freely about the criteria they use for evaluating music, in order to infer their incorporated aesthetic views. Then, in the questionnaire, one set of multiple choice questions about criteria employed in evaluating "good" and "bad" music allowed to measure respondents' embodied tastes and to relate them to various socio-demographic variables.
- *Cultural capital*. Following the conceptualization proposed in *La Distinction*, this work focuses on inherited cultural capital and educational capital (Bourdieu, 1984). These two main types of cultural capital have been operationalized in Chapter 5 and 6 considering, respectively, parents' and interviewees/respondents' educational qualifications. Also, interviewees were asked to narrate how and when they started to listening to music, in order to qualitatively grasp the role of family-based cultural capital in their primary

musical socialization (Rimmer, 2012). In addition, the survey variable "number of books owned" has been employed as supplementary indicator of (objectified) cultural capital in the MCA (see Chapter 6).

- *Economic capital*. Economic capital has been measured using occupational status instead of education as main indicator. Survey respondents were classified using eight broad occupational categories, inspired by Bourdieu's own work (1984): Entrepreneur/Executive/Professions; Teacher; Clerk; Other worker; Student; Retired; Housewife; Unemployed.
- *Distinction*. According to Bourdieu (1984), distinction works both at the intentional, symbolic level of communication and at the practical, automatic level of cognition. On the one hand, symbolic distinctions have been studied analysing the sample of critical YouTube comments and the accounts provided by interviewees, searching for manifestations of a perceived superiority in matter of cultural capital and taste – that is, the practice of looking down on others' taste. Also, it has been possible to grasp the nuanced mechanisms of practical distinction by analysing how interviewees and commenters represented their and others' styles of music consumption, evaluation and appreciation. Last, specific survey questions similarly attempted to capture both symbolic exclusion toward non-expert publics and the exercise of practical distinction.

2.6 Music consumption in Italy

Finally, the present section discusses the societal context of the present empirical research. Some background knowledge about both the supply and the demand sides of the Italian music market will be provided, referring to literature in sociology and popular music studies. More specifically, the recent historical trajectory of Italian popular music – with its internal classifications, leading artists and institutionalized cultural hierarchies (Section 2.6.1) – will be shortly described. More detailed information about the field of Italian popular music will be given throughout this work, aiming to make empirical results intelligible to non-familiar readers. Then, I will portray music publics in contemporary Italy – their tastes, consumption practices and cultural inequalities (Section 2.6.2). Particular attention will be given to societal and institutional factors that are proved to affect systems of cultural classification.

2.6.1 Italian music: artists, hierarchies and classifications

Italian popular music is normally associated to the melodious stylistic form of the "Canzone Italiana" (literally, Italian song), derived from the Neapolitan song tradition and celebrated every year since 1951 by the national music contest and award "Festival di Sanremo", which featured internationally well-known performers such as Mina, Adriano Celentano, Andrea Bocelli, Eros Ramazzotti, Laura Pausini (see Fabbri and Plastino, 2014; Prato, 2010).

Commercial Italian songs known as "musica leggera" (literally, "light music"), supported by a growing recording industry, monopolized Italian mainstream music up until the mid-1960s, when – given the global rise of rock and youth movements – new genres rapidly emerged: on the one hand, Italian rock music, early exemplified by bands such as Pooh, Nomadi, and, later, by Italian progressive rock (e.g. PFM, Area, Banco del Mutuo Soccorso); on the other, *canzone d'autore* (singer-songwriter's song), featuring artists such as Domenico Modugno (considered as the initiator of this artistic movement), Luigi Tenco, Fabrizio De André, Lucio Dalla, Rino Gaetano, Francesco De Gregori, Paolo Conte (see Santoro, 2002; Fabbri and Plastino, 2014). The so-called *cantautori* – literally, artists who sing their own songs – successfully differentiated themselves from the Italian mainstream landscape thanks to the nonconventional lyrics and the "authentic" way of singing and performing (Tomatis, 2014:85), and acquired soon "a marked symbolic power" due to their widely recognized poetic and artistic value (Santoro, 2002:114).

Moreover, in the last three decades, a number of international music scenes have been absorbed and appropriated by the Italian music industry. Above all, hip hop represents an interesting example of how a foreign music genre adapted to the Italian context, from the rise of an autonomous Italian rap scene in the early 1990s to the increasing exposure of the 2000s and on. Sociologists Marco Santoro and Marco Solaroli interpreted the development of Italian rap as a sort of continuation of the *cantautori* tradition, emphasizing the role of *canzone d'autore* in the legitimization of the Italian rap culture (2007). In the 2010s, hip hop has become even more popular in Italy, in particular in the form of the "pop-rap" songs of artists like Fedez and J-Ax, reaching top positions in the domestic music charts. Furthermore, the Italian musical field counts several underground scenes (such as, for instance, indie-alternative rock, folk-revival, reggae, dance-electro, punk) and regional milieaux – like *musica neomelodica*, particularly popular in the Naples area (see Fabbri and Plastino, 2014 for an overview). Another relatively recent phenomenon is the diffusion of music talent shows on domestic television (see Prato, 2010). Winners and finalists – like, for instance, Marco Mengoni, Emma Marrone and Alessandra Amoroso – have often become important

players in the Italian pop industry – although, in some cases, for a short time. In sum, the main music genres identified in the field of Italian popular music are the following, as indicated by Fabbri and Plastino:

> "Canzone italiana (Italian mainstream pop), canzone d'autore italiana (singer-songwriters), rock (Italian individual rockers, and bands), canzone napoletana (Neapolitan Song) and neomelodici, musica strumentale (instrumental music, especially in a neo-minimalist or neoclassical style), musica da film (film music), Italian electronic dance/techno, Italian hip-hop, Italian jazz, canzone politica (topical and protest songs), cabaret, canzone religiosa (religious songs), canzone per bambini (songs for children), Italian heavy metal, Italian prog, Italian punk, Italian reggae, Italian world music/Mediterranean music" (2014:9).

Can we talk of "Italian music" as a whole? The answer of musicologist Paolo Prato is yes, although hybridizations and international influences have always been strong in the Italian context (2010:460; see also Varriale, 2016b). The stylistic stereotypes characterizing Italian popular music as melodramatic and melodious are hardly applicable today (Ibid.), apart for the case of those artists intentionally proposing and revisiting the *bel canto* tradition for contemporary global audiences, like Andrea Bocelli and Il Volo. Nevertheless, acknowledging the coexistence of various sub-genres resulting from transnational contaminations, the field of popular music "made in Italy" (Fabbri and Plastino, 2014) shares a long history (see Prato, 2010), a national system of institutional actors (Varriale, 2016b; Santoro, 2013) and – except for the few international pop stars – a mostly domestic audience. In the first quarter of 2016, all the top ten best-selling albums in Italy were authored by Italian artists – namely, Alessandra Amoroso, Claudio Baglioni and Gianni Morandi, Marco Mengoni, Salmo, Modà, Vasco Rossi, Laura Pausini, Elisa, Gemitaiz, Ezio Bosso[21]. In general, it is sufficient to glance at the weekly reports published by FIMI – that is, the Italian music industry federation – to realize that foreign artists are exceptions in the Italian music charts[22]. In the first half of 2016 the national repertoire continued to dominate the consumption of recorded music[23]. This makes Italy closer to France[24], while being radically different from more international European markets, such as the Netherlands[25] or Germany[26].

[21] See http://www.allmusicitalia.it/news/vendite-primo-quadrimestre-2016.html [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
[22] See http://www.fimi.it/classifiche#/category:album/year:2015 [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
[23] See http://www.fimi.it/news/il-mercato-discografico-italiano-cresce-dell1-nel-primo-semestre-2016 [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
[24] See https://acharts.co/france_albums_top_150 [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
[25] See http://www.dutchcharts.nl/weekchart.asp?cat=a [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
[26] See http://www.billboard.com/charts/german-albums [Accessed: 28 November 2016].

The historical roots of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies in the Italian musical field can be dated to the institutionalization of opera as an artistic form autonomous from the market, in the early 20th century. As sociologist Marco Santoro noted in his analysis of the establishment of *La Scala* theatre in Milan, this process took place in a way slightly different from the American case described by DiMaggio (1992):

> "opera's cultural legitimacy as a genre—and opera's cultural capital as a high culture form—did not simply result from specialized institutional or organizational arrangements, even if these were effective in separating opera production from the logic of the market (but not from political life and its pressures). Instead, the evaluation and usage of Italian opera also stemmed from its high social honor—inherited from the court system and aristocracy, whose signs of status are well visible in buildings and sculptures; from its artistic etiquettes—as imposed by the enduring charisma of musicians like Toscanini, whose myth is still alive in Italy like in the U.S.; from its low-cost spectacles spurred by the State (which were very common during the Fascist regime and in the initial years following its demise); and from its deep moral and spiritual meanings (linked to the Risorgimento heritage) that are transmitted by the school system […]. Given such elements, as well as others (e.g., mass mediated broadcasts and recordings), opera in Italy has remained a significant part of the national popular culture—consumed and appreciated, albeit in different manners (i.e., more emotionally and viscerally than rationally or reflexively), by members of social groups usually kept separate by 'serious' 'music" (Santoro, 2010:549).

Hence, what the case of *La Scala* suggests is that the symbolic boundary between "serious" and "vulgar" music was (politically) constructed and institutionalized in Italy without a distinctive intention "to draw boundaries between different kinds of people" (Ibid.:545). At the same time, a "pure" aesthetic disposition towards opera – "an art form that was to be listened to with devoted concentration and not watched amid distractions" (Ibid.:544) – was institutionally promoted.

Fabbri and Plastino's account of the hostile attitudes of Italian conservatories towards popular music (2014:10) suggests that a deep cleavage between "legitimate" music (opera, classical and jazz) on the one side and *musica leggera* ("light" music) on the other persists. Furthermore, recent contributions prove that symbolic boundaries between "high" and "low" art have been established by Italian cultural intermediaries and institutions also within the domain of popular music. By analysing how music critics wrote about American and British pop-rock in the 1970s, Simone Varriale documented the genesis of the artistic legitimation of international popular music in Italy (2016b). Italian music magazines of that period were very concerned in drawing distinctions between artistically valuable and "lower" forms of popular music. Music critics fostered the emergence of new forms of subcultural and

cosmopolitan cultural capitals, while still largely employing aesthetic criteria borrowed from already legitimized artistic forms (Ibid.). A similar process of selective intellectualization in the realm of popular music invested also a domestic genre, that is, *canzone d'autore*. As Marco Santoro in-depth described (2002; 2013), the consecration of *canzone d'autore* had a tragic beginning: the suicide of singer-songwriter Luigi Tenco, 28 years old, during the 1967 edition of Festival di Sanremo. Tenco contributed to the social construction of the *cantautore* as an artist, thanks to the seriousness of his lyrics, the "authentic" singing style and the disinterested approach to the market (Santoro, 2002). He explicitly wanted to distinguish from *musica leggera* and his suicide – justified as an act of protest against Italian music publics – helped the whole *canzone d'autore* to become a semi-autonomous artistic field, in-between mass production and "high" art (Santoro, 2013).

"Tenco's suicide elicited a process of valuation and boundary-setting whereby certain songs could be differentiated, and then distinguished, as instances of serious and valued art objects, a seriousness and worth which was previously attributed only to 'high' music works and musicians" (Ibid.:230).

The cultural legitimation of *canzone d'autore* has been possible only through a progressive "purification" from its "vulgar" popular origins and the consequent adoption of a "high culture" rhetoric (2002:118-119). A cultural association dedicated to Luigi Tenco, founded immediately after his death, had a key institutional role in defining *canzone d'autore* as main aesthetic benchmark in the field of Italian popular music (see Santoro 2002; 2013). Later, the artistic connections between some Italian rappers and the tradition of *canzone d'autore* served as a means for launching the ongoing consecration of rap music (see Santoro and Solaroli, 2007). Conversely, an opposite process of institutional stigmatization regards, for instance, *musica neomelodica*.

"Neomelodici (neo-melodists) is the name given to a wide group of vernacular Neapolitan pop singers who over the last two decades have been hugely successful among Southern lower-class audiences. Their songs mix sentimental singing with global pop, telling stories about everyday life in quartieri (rundown neighborhoods). While despised by most of the local bourgeois and intellectual milieu and almost invisible on the national scene, neomelodici's music is popular all over Southern Italy, where it can be heard on the streets, bought on CDs in street markets, and enjoyed live at public celebrations and wedding parties" (Perna, 2014:194).

Singer Gigi D'Alessio is one of the few *neomelodici* who gained large visibility among national audiences. As musicologist Vincenzo Perna noted, "in Naples and in the rest of

Italy, D'Alessio is as loved by working-class audiences as he is hated by listeners who identify with 'quality' popular music" (2014:200).

Overall, Italian cultural system is portrayed as characterized by a symbolic opposition between "serious" and "light" music, constructed and perpetuated by institutions and media, also within the field of popular music. However, the contributions mentioned above are mainly based on historical research and archival work. They did not investigate empirically the actual perception of hierarchies of cultural and aesthetic legitimacy among Italian music publics. For this reason, borrowing Simone Varriale's words, a "proper analysis of cultural stratification in Italy is indeed long due" (2016b:199).

2.6.2 Italian listeners: taste, consumption, persistent inequalities

Few rigorous sociological investigations about musical taste have been conducted in Italy. Gasperoni and colleagues' contribution is undoubtedly one of the richest (2004). The authors exhaustively covered a variety of dimensions regarding music reception (Ibid.:16-17), through qualitative interviews (21 subjects aged 15-24 years old) and a questionnaire distributed to 1210 adolescents attending upper secondary school. Results showed the presence of both gender-based and generational differences in musical preferences, as well as the existence of a clear correlation between social origin, musical competences and taste. Likes for dance, techno and Latin American music were significantly associated with low endowments of family-based cultural capital and low musical competences (Ibid.:65). As the Italian National Statistical Institute documented in 2006, similar trends characterize the Italian population as a whole (Magaudda, 2014:190). A cross-national comparison by Katz-Gerro (2002) reported the strong impact of education and class on high art participation in Italy. Yet, since this latter study is based on survey data dated 1985, its relevance for the interpretation of current trends in cultural consumption is limited.

A recent book edited by sociologist Roberta Sassatelli and colleagues (2015) deals with the identities, symbolic struggles and consumption practices characterizing Italian middle class during the post-2008 economic crisis. The main purpose of this research was to investigate middle classes' social representation of the decline of their economic status and purchasing power, with a focus on different domains of cultural consumption (e.g. food and the arts)[27].

[27] Between 1997 and 2009, expenditure for culture and leisure has averagely decreased of 20 percent among Italian middle class families, and of more than 50 percent for young working class singles (Sassatelli et al., 2015:36-37). This figures must be read in the context of an overall reduction of family incomes across social classes after the crisis (Ibid.:265). Although statistics do not indicate a growth in economic inequality, surveys about citizens' perceptions portray a shrinking middle class and a rising deprivation in Italy (Ibid.).

This study, through semi-structured interviews and focus groups involving 150 participants, highlights the central and persistent role of cultural taste as an identity-making tool for middle class consumers, particularly among those richest in cultural capital. Not differently from what Bennett and colleagues' found in the UK few years before (2009), this study portrays cultural taste in Italy as more fluid and fragmented than what an orthodox Bourdieuian scholar would expect (see Lamont, 2012a). The authors reported a rising omnivorous attitude to the detriment of cultural snobbishness (see Peterson and Kern, 1996), as well as the decline of a unitary model of cultural legitimacy – with a plurality of subcultural capitals linked to niche artistic scenes – and the complex overlap of class-, generational- and gender-based cultural boundaries (see Sassatelli et al., 2015). Still – remarkably – their findings show also the diffusion of forms of "cultural goodwill" (Bourdieu, 1984), symbolic tensions between fractions of the middle class characterized by a prevalence of either cultural or economic capital and, lastly, the persistence of a sense of distinction regarding objectified and – especially – embodied taste (Sassatelli et al., 2015).

Italy is stably one of the eight largest music markets in the world, and its figures have been constantly growing in the last years (Magaudda, 2014). By the early 2000s, music listeners were about 80 percent of the population (Gasperoni et al., 2004). One out of two Italians listens to music every day. This latter proportion raises to three out of four among people aged 16-23 (D'Amato, 2014). However, participation to live music is lower in Italy than in most of European countries (Montecchi 2014:130). Moreover, data show that only 18 percent of Italians associate "culture" to the arts – four-times lower than in Scandinavian countries, three-times lower than in Austria and Germany (Ibid.:138). Considering musical education in Italy – which is scarcely diffused as well as poorly supported by the state – figures are even more striking, particularly in comparison with Germany (Ibid.:151-155). Thus, as Giordano Montecchi concluded, the social and cultural impact of music in the individual as well as collective experience of Italian citizens is dramatically lower in comparison to other European countries (Ibid.:153).

The roots of the cultural inequalities characterizing the Italian field of music consumption lie also in the educational system. Educational attainment in Italy is lower than in most of western countries (see OECD, 2016)[28]. Such a restricted access to education, together with its humanities-oriented vocation, is likely to reinforce cultural hierarchies (DiMaggio, 1987; Janssen et al., 2011). For sure, educational inequalities affect citizens' cultural participation:

[28] This gap is even more pronounced considering the south of Italy (see Ballarino et al., 2014).

while 93 percent of Italians who hold a university or secondary school degree are music listeners, this percentage drops to less than 69% among those having only five years of schooling or no education at all[29] (D'Amato, 2014:73).

Social mobility represents another key explanatory factor in the analysis of artistic classification systems (Janssen et al., 2011). Italy is currently one of the least mobile countries in Europe[30], as the impact of parental class on educational trajectories witnesses:

> "the probability of not attaining any upper secondary school diploma is much higher for the lowest social-origin group, and despite selection effects in operation up to the end of secondary education, additional inequalities that manifest at this point are still sizable: children from advantaged backgrounds are more likely to continue to higher education even within the group of students who have attained the same type of diploma" (Contini and Scagni, 2013:175-176).

Low levels of social mobility are likely to perpetuate prestige differences between art forms (Janssen et al., 2011:144). Similarly, stratified repertoires of aesthetic evaluation, public-broadcasters-dominated media systems as well as state support for the arts are all societal factors that contribute to reinforce cultural hierarchies at the national level (Ibid.). Considering Italy, the historical genesis of an aesthetic cleavage between "art" and "entertainment" has been sketched above in Section 2.6.1. For what concerns the Italian media system, radio and television have been state monopolies until, respectively, mid-1970s and 1980s. Last, opera and classical music have traditionally been largely supported by both the state and local governments (Montecchi, 2014).

Overall, given this portrait of the Italian societal system, it is reasonable to expect empirical data to show a widespread logic of distinction. Still, the popular reception of consecrated national genres such as opera and *canzone d'autore* suggests that cultural hierarchies do not necessarily produce forms of social exclusion in Italy – at least in the case of music (see Section 2.6.1). Furthermore, it must be considered that Italy has experienced a relatively recent shift from a mainly state-promoted cultural sector to a market-oriented and financially-weak one (see Montecchi, 2014). Public funds to the arts have been shrinking since 2000, and figures are now significantly lower than in the case of France and Germany (Ibid.). Moreover, since 1980s, Italian media industries have mutated in the direction of

[29] It must be noted that the percentage of 25-34 year-old adults with below upper-secondary education in Italy is higher than in most European countries, around 25 percent (OECD, 2016:32). Only one out of five 25-64 year-olds owns (at least) a bachelor degree (Ibid.:37).

[30] See here for recent data based on European Social Survey https://essconf2016.wordpress.com/2016/07/12/intergenerational-social-mobility/ [Accessed: 20 January 2017].

globalization and neoliberalism, epitomised by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's media empire (see Boni, 2016; 2005; Splendore, 2017).

Also, digital media usage in Italy is of particular interest here. As Section 2.1.1 anticipated, Internet and related digital services may contribute to disrupt hierarchies of cultural legitimacy, since they foster intergroup sociability, make available an enormous variety of artistic forms and promote the disintermediated circulation of cultural knowledge. Still, the impact of digital reception on musical taste, cultural capital formation and distinction mechanisms remains a largely understudied topic (Tepper and Hargittai, 2009).

Following a recent global trend, music consumption in Italy is now prevalently digital (IFPI, 2016a). In the first semester 2016, revenues from digital music constituted 51 percent of the total market[31]. 20 percent of music listeners use streaming services – such as, for instance, Spotify and Deezer –, generating 40 percent of total revenues. Music is increasingly immaterial. Furthermore, music consumption has become further mobile and ubiquitous. Two thirds of Internet users in Italy access music via smartphone – more than in Spain, Sweden, US, UK, Germany and France (IFPI, 2016b).

Several online platforms allow Italian users to download or stream digital music, with YouTube playing a key role (Magaudda, 2014:181). As also Francesco D'Amato remarked

> "the relevance of YouTube reveals another feature of the Italian context, where the use of social network websites to share music, information, and opinions is among the highest recorded. Precisely because of its integration with other social media, YouTube is now one of the main channels for music search and consumption in Italy" (2014:74).

In Italy, YouTube is currently the second most-visited website[32]. Italy is the third world-largest music market in terms of YouTube usage for music: 9 out of 10 visitors access the platform for music-related activities (IFPI, 2016b). Amongst them, 63% do so for discovering new music – more than in any other European country (Ibid.). This latter finding is particularly relevant, concerning the potential role of YouTube's recommendation system in algorithmically influencing one's cultural taste and knowledge (see Section 2.1.1).

Having saying that, Internet usage is on average less widespread in Italy than in other Western countries. Data from November 2015 indicate that, while Internet users are 73.5

[31] See http://www.fimi.it/news/il-mercato-discografico-italiano-cresce-dell1-nel-primo-semestre-2016 [Accessed: 29 November 2016].

[32] See http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/IT [Accessed: 30 November 2016].

percent of European population, in Italy Internet penetration is significantly lower (62%)[33]. More detailed figures from other sources observe that, in September 2016, 29,5mln Italians have navigated online, corresponding to 40.3 percent of men and 42.3% of women[34]. Furthermore, subtle digital inequalities exist also at the level of internet use. For instance, an empirical study involving Italian teenagers has shown that differences in socioeconomic background are associated to distinct (and distinctive) styles of digital engagement – more concerned with capital enhancing activities in the case of the upper-middle classes, mostly interested in social media in the case of teens from less advantageous social contexts (Micheli, 2015).

In sum, Italy appears as an ambivalent country: long-lasting hierarchies of artistic legitimacy are diluted in a changing cultural and institutional environment, where nevertheless strong societal and educational inequalities persist. The following chapters aim to empirically clarify this ambiguity, at least in the case of the field of music consumption.

[33] See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm [Accessed: 30 November 2016].

[34] Navigation via mobile is largely more common than via computer, particularly among women. On average, Italians spend about two hours online per day. Interestingly, the proportion of Internet users is higher in the age cohort 35-54 (61%) than among the young (18-24, 56%). Source: http://www.audiweb.it/news/total-digital-audience-del-mese-di-settembre-2016/ [Accessed: 30 November 2016].

Chapter 3. Mapping the field of music consumption on YouTube

"Jazz' is only a word and really has no meaning" [Duke Ellington, cited in Levine, 1988:244]

Introduction

This chapter presents the necessary starting point of my work. In order to study the distinctive uses of musical taste, I needed to identify first the elements constituting the researched cultural system, as well as the relations among them (Mohr, 1998:352). In Bourdieuian terms, I reconstructed the "space of possibles" where listeners "position-takings" in the field of consumption are enacted (Bourdieu, 2002).

Contemporary music consumers with an Internet connection have at their disposal an unprecedented amount of music content in digital format, ubiquitously accessible at low or no cost. On YouTube, users can find nearly every popular music album published in Italy since music has become a widespread commodity. A blend of official and unofficial musical contents, uploaded by both labels and common users, is archived on the platform, which currently is the most popular online music service in Italy and in the world (IFPI, 2016b). Therefore, on and through YouTube data, I attempted to map the supply side of the field of Italian music consumption – that is, the songs Italian listeners encounter in their everyday music reception, which constitute the "cultural matter" that animates taste disputes (Lizardo, 2016) as well as the raw materials enabling identity construction (DeNora, 2000). I inductively explored the patterns of association among artists "from below" (Knoop et al., 2016), as they emerged from aggregated consumption practices and music listeners' classificatory imagination (Beer, 2013, Airoldi et al., 2016; Silver et al., 2016). Although literature suggests that the culture-scape of Italian popular music is fractured along specific aesthetic and symbolic cleavages (see Section 2.6), this work does not postulate them. I did not identify *a priori* contents, systems of classification and boundaries of the field. Conversely, I "followed" the recommender algorithm featured by video sharing platform YouTube through a digital methods approach (Airoldi et al., 2016). This way, I generated a dataset of about 17k music videos, uploaded by 8,478 YouTube accounts based in Italy. Subsequently, I collected about 2mln comments to the selected videos, then filtered through various data mining techniques. Following those contributions that stress the relational character of cultural fields (e.g. Bottero and Crossley, 2011; van Venrooij, 2009; Mohr,

1998), I analysed these digital data through network and cluster analyses, aiming to describe the structure of a significant portion of the field of Italian popular music "from the ground-up" (Beer, 2013). My sample revealed the presence of 876 artists, mostly well-known and Italian, organized in three main music clusters corresponding to the following genres: vintage Italian music, contemporary pop/rock and rap. The large-scale "cartography of taste" (Sassatelli, 2007:94) produced through this research step has been the basis for the subsequent, fine-grained analyses presented in the following chapters.

3.1 Music reception in the age of algorithmic culture

Imagine to be in a small music store, surrounded by shelves full of albums, scrupulously classified with sticky plastic labels. Metal and jazz are placed at the opposite sides of the room, as they normally are in playlists. Each customer inspects a different corner, and the shop owner is there to recommend artists you may like. It is in this kind of contexts that the majority of people chose and bought music up to fifteen years ago. That was before digitization disrupted the materiality of music supports – whose recent revival, led by rising vinyl sales worldwide (IFPI, 2016a), it is nothing but an evidence of their current vintage, niche status (see Leguina et al., 2015).

Since 1999, when Napster first enabled peer-to-peer exchanges of small-size music files free of charge, listening to music has become an intangible, digital and mobile consumption practice (Prior, 2014). Largely, music is not even stored in our devices anymore. Online platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer and – with some differences – YouTube permit the streaming of large music catalogues at a price scale that goes from low to no cost. On Spotify, more than 30mln songs are available to both subscribers and common users, and nearly 20k new songs are added every day[35]. In the case of YouTube, figures are less clear. However, it is enough to search for the generic keyword "music" to retrieve 679mln results. One of my young interviewees, a twenty years old musician, told me he is frustrated about the fact that, although he spends nights and days exploring new music, he simply cannot listen to everything (see Chapter 5). Digital consumers like him are now experiencing a cultural overload. The small shop has become enormous. The available music genres have multiplied, with a "long tail" (Anderson, 2006) of previously rare local underground scenes from all around the world now instantaneously accessible, from everywhere, for free.

[35] See http://www.digitaltrends.com/music/apple-music-vs-spotify/ [Accessed: 30 November 2016]

Moreover, the shop owner has been substituted by an algorithm, which automatically suggests you what "you may also like" (Vanderbilt, 2016). Indeed, the unprecedented availability of digitized content impacts not only music circulation and consumption, but also music discovery (Baek, 2015; Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). As Rimmer points out, "there now exist a range of interactive resources through which Internet users may become (digitally) converted to new or other musical forms" (2012:303). In most of the cases, they are not human. The digital traces left by listeners' online consumption practices are systematically stored and processed by algorithms, in order to provide customized suggestions of songs, artists and genres (see Section 2.1.1).

This phenomenon is evident in the case of YouTube, which features a recommendation system that automatically produces "a ranked list of related videos shown to the user in response to the video that she is currently viewing" (Bendersky et al., 2014:1). According to Google, this algorithm "makes it easier to decide what to watch next"[36]. An empirical study by Zhou and colleagues demonstrated that automated video recommendations are the most important view source on YouTube (2010). In sum, music on YouTube is free, almost unlimited and automatically tailored to one's taste. Furthermore, it is interactive. Amateur musicians can upload their own music, get feedbacks about it and, very seldom, enlarge their audience and become professionals. Users can use the "like" and "dislike" buttons to easily make their opinion public. Videos can be shared via other social media platforms, and their "popularity" remains publicly objectified in the view count. In case profiles' settings enable this function, it is also possible to exchange private messages on the platform. Last, videos can be publicly commented. Thus, music consumption and judgements of taste collapse in a public social domain where, in the case of particularly popular videos, comments can be thousands and visualisations billions[37].

Taken together, these features dramatically redefine the everyday experience of music reception, as well as the very notion of "consumption", which – according to George Ritzer – online incorporates an active, productive process, turning into "prosumption" instead (2013). This shift is evident in Italy, where the digital market has surpassed the physical one in terms of revenues and YouTube is the main music provider (see Section 2.6.1). A recent inquiry by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry has shown that 91 percent of Italian visitors use the platform for music consumption, with 63 percent of them

[36] See https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6172631?hl=en [Accessed: 30 November 2016].
[37] The most viewed music video of all times is currently Psy's "Gangnam Style", with over 2.7 billion views as of December 2016. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0 [Accessed: 7 December 2016].

searching for new music (IFPI, 2016b). For what concerns the penetration of YouTube usage among the whole population, some indications are provided by the survey I distributed to the users of a local network of public libraries in the North-West of Milan (see Chapter 6). More than a half of my 1591 respondents listens to music via YouTube. 16 percent stated that they have commented a YouTube video at least once, while 22 percent affirm to discover new music by navigating related videos. As Table 14 in Appendix 4 shows, music listening, commenting and discovery on YouTube are now widely diffuse across age cohorts, educational levels and professions. These figures confirm that YouTube represents a privileged *locus* for the study of musical taste in Italy. On the one hand, the digitization of music reception could have possibly fostered the emergence of a novel cultural ecosystem in the fields of music consumption (as hypothesized in Section 2.4). On the other, it must be noted that digitized music leaves digital traces. Users' aggregated viewing patterns on YouTube become manifest in the algorithmic "relatedness" of two music videos (Davidson et al., 2010). Similarly, listeners' social discourses about music are persistently objectified in the textual form of YouTube comments (see Thelwall and Vis, 2012).

Thus, now that the small music shop has become an enormous, researchable digital environment, the possible position-takings and the systems of classification constituting the Italian field of music consumption can be sociologically reconstructed through the analysis of digital data – in a large-scale, relational and inductive way (see Chapter 2). This is precisely what recent contributions in sociology of culture suggest. Moving from a critique to the use of standard qualitative and quantitative methods for the study of everyday forms of art categorisation, David Beer (2013) proposes to take advantage of the enormous amount of user-generated data publicly available on social media for the study of "ground-up" music reception patterns. Together with Davide Beraldo and Alessandro Gandini, I myself explored music classification through the network analysis of related music videos on YouTube (2016). Similarly, Daniel Silver and colleagues studied music categorization by analysing the network of genre pairings indicated by some 3 million musicians and bands on their Myspace profiles (2016). In brief, these contributions stress different facets of music on digital platforms: the digital materialization of the relational character of systems of classification; the objectifying power of user-generated tags and textual communications; the impact of non-human agents in the circulation of digital content. The next section moves from these points, dealing with the musical field "going digital".

3.2 The digital field of music consumption as an (actor-) network

According to Bourdieu (2002; 1984), the field is the abstract representation of a domain of social life – like, in this case, music consumption (see Section 1.3.3). Music listeners' practices ("position-takings") are defined in relation to the fluctuations of the "space of possibles" (Bourdieu, 1983:313), that is, the types of music available given one's coordinates in the field. The field of music consumption is a relational system whose equilibrium is the transient manifestation of the aggregated actions of its entities (Bourdieu, 1984). Also, a field is a multidimensional space. The practices and representations shared by different agents in a field constitute its "symbolic space" (Bourdieu, 1989). In Bourdieu's theory, this visible surface it is nothing but the product of hidden social mechanisms (1984), the *opus operatum* of an underlying *modus operandi* which is – essentially – class habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Hence, according to Bourdieu, a field's "symbolic space" must be interpreted in relation to its homologous "social space"[38] – that is, the "structure of objective relations which determines the possible form of interactions and of the representations the interactors can have of them" (Bourdieu, 1984:578). In sum, the concept of field combines a structuralist perspective and a phenomenologist one (see Savage and Silva, 2013). Meaning, a cultural realm such as music can be seen as a "field of forces", but also as a field of symbolic struggles "tending to transform or conserve this field of forces" (Bourdieu, 1993:30).

Now, what if the field's symbolic space, from being the statistical abstraction of survey data visualised through multiple correspondence analysis (Bourdieu, 1984), becomes inscribed in online metrics, recommendations and platformed interactions (Beer, 2013)? What if the relational structure linking the elements of this cultural system (Mohr, 1998) is already recorded in the form of "native" digital data (Rogers, 2015)? According to Bruno Latour, "information technologies allow us to trace the associations in a way that was impossible before", since "they make visible what was before only present virtually" (2005:207). This chapter illustrates the inductive mapping of these associations on and through the platform (see Rogers, 2013; Latour et al., 2012). The present section attempts to revise and operationalize the Bourdieuian notion of field, considering the widespread digitization of music reception and the specificities of my research setting – that is, video-sharing platform YouTube.

[38] Differently, my research strategy is to first map the symbolic space and, after that, reconstruct its underlying social space (see Chapter 2).

3.2.1 A networked field

As Nick Prior argues, "in Bourdieu's hands, then, the field becomes a network of objective relations between agents, but also larger groupings and institutions distributed within a space of possible positions" (2008:304-05). These two sociological concepts, "field" and "network", are generally intended as pointing to two distinct levels of social life, respectively, structure and interaction (see Savage and Silva, 2013). However, considering the diffuse acknowledgement of a need for more interactional and situational approaches to cultural taste (see Section 1.4.1), field and network – far from being incompatible – can be seen as bringing complementary points of view on social worlds.

Wendy Bottero and Nick Crossley (2011) made a valuable attempt to combine the concept of network and the Bourdieuian notion of field. By noting that objective relations in the social space manifest themselves in concrete social networks, they studied professional and friendship relationship in a specific field of music production – namely, late1970s UK punk and post-punk scenes. This way, they effectively portrayed a musical field as a network of social relations among artists (see Bottero and Crossley, 2011:108). However, in this work – since the main focus is on consumption – relevant relations among artists are those perceived by listeners themselves, through the lens of shared systems of cultural classifications. For a customer entering the small music shop introduced above, Oasis are implicitly associated to Blur, Muse to Radiohead, Rihanna to Beyoncé – just like coffee to tea, burger to chips and bread to jam (see Shepherd, 2011). These networks of symbolic associations are based on different logics of similarity (see Airoldi et al., 2016), such as a common musical milieu, the same genre or an analogous function (e.g. "for running", "for relaxing", etc.). They are crystallized in systems of classification, historically constructed within the field of music production by critics and institutions. But, above all, they live in the practices and perceptions of music publics[39] (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Frith, 1996; DiMaggio, 1987; Mohr, 1998).

This is the principle of "subjective similarity" (Mohr, 1998). That is, "two cultural items can be said to be similar to one another to the extent that individuals make a cognitive judgement that they are of 'the same sort'" (Ibid.:353). For instance, John Sonnett's study of musical boundaries and classification (2016), based on the inductive analysis of survey data about

[39] For this reason, in the present work, artists, cultural institutions and intermediaries' position-takings in the specular field of music production are left in the background. As stars in the sky orient sailors' routes in the sea, the types of music available in a field – together with the symbolic meanings socially attached to them – orient everyday consumer choices. Here, the Italian field of music production will be intended as the mere supply side of the field of music consumption, a cultural atlas, as it is in *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984).

listeners' likes and dislikes, tacitly assumes this principle, proposing a synthesis between field and social network analyses. The author calls it "netfield approach", applied to map the relational structure of the field of music consumption. This chapter, though using ontologically different data, shares a similar methodological perspective, as well as a comparable purpose.

Here, the digital field of music consumption has been operationalized as network linking, on the one hand, listeners to musical works and, on the other, musical works to each other. This two-mode network, composed by two ontologically different kinds of entities, is called "bipartite network" (see Lambiotte and Ausloos, 2005). For instance, imagine that listener A, fond of classical music, listens to Mozart, Bach and Beethoven on YouTube. Thus, in the network, three directed edges are drawn from A to the artists in question. If many listeners, like A, are connected to Mozart, Bach and Beethoven, these three artists will represent a specific cluster of nodes in the network, since they share the same connections/audience[40].

In analytical terms, the first type of connections, among listeners and artists, inform us about "taste publics" acting in the field (Gans,1966:551). For instance, Vlegels and Lievens (2016) analysed a survey-based network of artist preferences, in order to investigate omnivorous taste patterns in a ground-up way. Once in the digital field of YouTube, I studied interactions between publics and artists in two main ways: directly, through the commenter-artist network, where an edge is established once user A comments a video of artist X; indirectly, through the detection of music clusters based on listeners' viewing practices and/or commenting styles.

Clusters of artists in the field's "semantic space" shed light also on the perceived "folk" classifications structuring the field (see Fabbri, 2008). For instance, given that aesthetic classification systems consist of ''the way that the work of artists is divided up both in the heads and habits of consumers and by the institutions that bound the production and distribution of separate genres'' (DiMaggio, 1987: 441), Alex van Venrooij studied the genre structure of popular music by applying network analysis and multidimensional scaling to music critics' aesthetic judgements (2009). Here, I followed his methodological approach in a different, digital research context. On YouTube, listeners' "habits" turn into viewing patterns, which are influenced by cultural intermediaries acting on the platform (e.g.

[40] A bipartite network based on listeners' online consumption practices has been analysed by two physicists, Lambiotte and Ausloos (2005). The authors examined the large graph linking the users of the websites with artists featured on online shared music libraries. They detected clusters of artists characterized by the same audience, thereby showing that many of the "islands" in the network corresponded to "standard, homogeneous style groupings" (2005:6).

promoting artists or labels), as well as inscribed in the network of related videos (Davidson et al., 2010). As a result, they can be studied through a network analysis approach (Wasserman and Faust, 1994), aiming to reveal the field's "crowd-generated music categories" and taste publics (see Airoldi et al., 2016). Then, the classificatory imagination "in the heads" of Italian consumers is objectified in the vocabulary employed in YouTube comments (see Beer, 2013). Thus, listeners' discourses have been analysed via unsupervised clustering techniques (see Everitt et al., 2011), in order to visually reveal the main aesthetic groupings structuring the field of Italian popular music from below.

3.2.2 Algorithmic intermediation

I have conceived the digital field of music consumption as a network including both sides of the music market, that is, listeners and artists. However, the non-human, incessant activity of recommender algorithms lies between the two (Morris, 2015; Barile and Sugiyama, 2015). This complicates the picture drawn by Bourdieu (1983; 1993).

His general lack of attention to technology has been underlined, for instance, by Nick Prior, who analysed the case of "glitch music", having in random electronic sounds its peculiarity:

> "After all, glitch is glitch (and not grunge, hip hop, trip hop or drum and bass) not just because of its field position as conventionally understood by Bourdieu; not just because of the habitus-derived uses its protagonists have made of hard- ware and software; but also because of these technologies themselves" (Prior, 2008:314).

Prior dealt with this case study by proposing a "temporary alliance" between the concepts of field and "actor-network" (Prior, 2008). This latter term, primarily developed by Bruno Latour and other colleagues working in the domain of STS (Science and Technology Studies), highlights the relational character of reality and, particularly, the centrality of non-human "actants" in the processual production of the social world (see Latour 2005).

Prior wrote about the role of technology in scene-based music production. Differently, in the present work, technological intervention is evident in music circulation and consumption. The technical "affordances" (Baym and boyd, 2012) of YouTube shape music reception in significant ways, particularly in the case of the related-videos algorithm (see Zhou et al., 2010). According to Morris, recommendation systems (or "infomediaries") are active agents in the field, having a quasi-creative "generative force" (Lash, 2007):

> "The drum machine programmers provided the raw materials on which a series of genres and styles were built; they did not make the songs but the sounds with which songs could be made. Infomediaries take this

organizational quality one step further. They provide the databases upon which new services can be built, new data can be mined and new audiences can be manufactured" (Morris, 2015:459).

Online, the implicit associations among music artists that may come to mind while visiting our small music shop are automatically objectified and reinforced by automated suggestions[41] – generally based on the computational analyses of metadata, or of users' collective behaviour[42]. Our everyday online experience, either as users or as researchers, is constantly shaped by the invisible power of algorithms (Beer, 2009). Several theoretical contributions dealt with this topic from a critical perspective. For instance, Richard Rogers wrote about the "algorithmic authority" of search engines such as Google and Bing, considering them as "socio-epistemological machines" which determine the visibility of web pages according to arbitrary, business-oriented definitions of popularity and relevance (Rogers, 2013:97-100). Studying the software platforms used by US companies for employing workers based in India, Aneesh (2009) coined the term "algocracy", referring to the specific global labour integration through programming code. Cheney-Lippold (2011) focused on online algorithms' user profiling practices, interpreting them as a new frontier of Foucauldian bio-power, assigning "algorithmic identities" to "a 'free', but constantly conditioned, user" (Ibid.:178). What these as well as other contributions have in common is the idea that the invisible work of online algorithms not only mediates but also constitutes users' everyday digital realities (see Beer, 2009:987). This algorithmic construction of digital realities is largely opaque, due to the policies of private companies such as Google – that is, the owner of YouTube. The consequences, nonetheless, are visible and "real" – for instance, in the form of automated recommendations of news, products, movies and, particularly, music (Celma, 2010).

The social dynamics underlying the transformation of collective taste described by Blumer in the realm of fashion (2007), introducing "order in a potentially anarchic and moving present" (Ibid.:244), see now the widespread intervention of non-human agents, particularly in the musical field. Hence, Barile and Sugiyama argue that we have entered the era of the "automation of taste":

[41] See, for instance, http://www.mtv.com/artists/muse/related-artists/?filter=similar [Accessed: 6 December 2016].

[42] Collaborative filtering is the most diffuse method in online recommendation (Celma, 2010). It "predicts user preferences for items by learning past user-item relationships" (Ibid.:23). For instance, collaborative filtering is employed in the section "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought…" featured by any Amazon product page and, as Davidson and colleagues clearly suggest (2010), by the related-videos algorithm of YouTube.

"If one's taste is fabricated by the bricolage of machine-selected elements of taste, his/her taste, and by extension, his/her identity, can also be considered as machine-generated at least partially. In this sense, the automation of taste, facilitated by the smart phone and its applications and algorithms, leads to the human carrying some traces of robots" (2015:415).

The ubiquity of recommendation systems does not affect solely individual tastes and identities. In a way, it limits the possibility of researching how the circulation of cultural information currently works. While the activities of human cultural intermediaries are largely visible and researchable – for instance, in music magazines (see van Venrooij, 2009; Varriale, 2014) – the effects of individually-tailored algorithmic suggestions are not easily detectable on this side of the screen, given the opacity of their functioning (Beer, 2009). For this reason, the impact of technology on musical taste and reception will be inquired qualitatively, relying on YouTube users' accounts of their individual experience with digital music (see Chapter 5).

3.3 Data and methods

My overall approach has an inductive, relational and large-scale character. As Section 2.1.2 anticipated, a major source of methodological inspiration can be found in the digital methods perspective (Rogers, 2013). Digital methods are defined by Richard Rogers as

"techniques for the study of societal change and cultural condition with online data. They make use of available digital objects such as the hyperlink, tag, timestamp, like, share, retweet, and seek to learn from how the objects are treated by the methods built into the dominant devices online" (2015:1).

My work shares with this methodological outlook the ambition to overcome the mythicized "digital dualism" between online and offline social worlds (see Rogers, 2009; Jurgenson, 2012), as well as the key idea of taking advantage of the ways digital platforms produce and organize data. The "digital objects" I made use of in order to explore the Italian field of popular music consumption are YouTube's related-videos algorithm (see Davidson et al., 2010) and user-generated comments (see Thelwall and Vis, 2012).

A second, inspiring approach is the structural analysis of meaning relations, as proposed by sociologist John Mohr (1998). The quantitative techniques applied here to map the Italian musical system – as practised and perceived by digital listeners – are precisely those

suggested by Mohr: network analysis, multidimensional scaling and clustering (see Section 3.3.3).

3.3.1 Data collection and sampling

As anticipated in Section 2.5, I followed YouTube's recommendation system in order to build a relational dataset of music videos. Differently from a previous empirical study conducted on YouTube (Airoldi et al., 2016), where seeding sample was based on a generic keyword-search ("music"), here the data collection starting point are nine songs[43]. I selected them considering the Italian annual top-100 singles digital charts of three distinct years – 2014, 2013 and 2010[44]. More precisely, I included three music pieces per chart, given the following criteria: a) authored by Italian artists b) closest, respectively, to the #1, #50 and #100 positions in the ranking[45]. These criteria aimed to increase the heterogeneity of the seeding sample within the realm of Italian popular music. After having individuated on YouTube the official versions of these nine songs, the platform's API were queried for music related videos[46] – 25 related video per each of the seeding sample, as by default. Then, this procedure was iterated five times, removing both duplicates and videos uploaded by non-Italian users. Through this sort of snowball logic (see Browne, 2005), I ended up with a relational dataset featuring a wide range of metadata about 17,734 music videos, uploaded by 8,478 YouTube accounts[47]. Subsequently, by means of the same software, I collected all the user-generated comments to each of the 17k videos. This way, a second large dataset featuring 2,145,857 YouTube comments (texts and relevant metadata) was created.

[43] This procedure aimed to avoid potential biases due to the a priori selection of keywords, as well as to the opacity of YouTube's search algorithm.

[44] Given the digital research context, I decided to consider charts related to digital downloads, published by the Italian music industry federation (FIMI). I selected the top-100 annual digital charts closest in time to the beginning of data collection, which was conducted during the first two weeks of April, 2015. For 2012 and 2011 was only available the top-20 digital chart. For this reason, I decided to include 2010 instead. See http://www.fimi.it/classifiche#/category:digital [Accessed: 7 December 2016].

[45] Seeding songs are indicated in Appendix 1, Tab. 9.

[46] An API (Application Programming Interface) is a set of methods used to programmatically access a system (see Thelwall and Vis, 2012). In this case, YouTube Data API allowed me to query YouTube's servers for metadata related to related music videos, by using a custom-built Python-based software (see Airoldi et al., 2016). By using the YouTube APIs, I did not incur in biases due to the machine's search history on the platform, which may impact on the algorithmic selection of recommended videos (see Bendersky et al., 2014), since data collection does not require any sort of authentication method. YouTube Data API version 2.0 has now been replaced by version 3.0. The documentation is still available here: https://developers.google.com/youtube/2.0/developers_guide_protocol_api_query_parameters [Accessed: 10 December 2016].

[47] The videos-dataset featured the following metadata: video title, uploader's username, date of publication, video description, view count, URL.

3.3.2 Data processing

From the raw comments-dataset, a subset of relevant data about the current tastes and aesthetic discourses of Italian music listeners was extracted. First, in order to capture a very specific societal moment, solely comments, published between January 2014 and April 2015 (458,809) were selected. Second, comments shorter than three words each were filtered out, assuming them being irrelevant in analytical terms (283,973). Third, comments written in Italian (254,326) were isolated using a specific tool[48]. Last, only those comments specifically regarding musical content were selected. Music on YouTube is rarely detached from video and, very often, the visual component is predominant (Holt, 2011). For this reason, a large portion of comments to music videos does not normally include aesthetic judgements about music. This last filtering-step was possible by employing a k-nearest neighbour supervised text classifier (kNN), trained through 23,420 hand-coded comments[49]. The final textual corpus featured 97,910 comments posted by 67,185 YouTube users. Before proceeding with the analyses described in Section 3.3.3, the resulting corpus of comments has been further treated, following standard procedures in quantitative text analysis (see Krippendorff, 2013) – such as stop-words removal, tf-idf weighting and, in case, word stemming[50].

A second data processing phase regarded the videos-dataset instead. By hand coding words and bigrams (couples of words) frequently occurring in the videos' titles, I identified for each video the corresponding music artist(s). Overall, 876 singers, musicians and bands were detected, for the largest part Italian, plus three residual categories: "ranking" (videos presenting user-generated rankings of best songs), "tutorial" (videos teaching how to play a given song) and "other" (music videos whose artist was not identified because of lacking information in the metadata). Excluding these three categories, the average number of videos

[48] In order to detect comments' language, I employed R package "textcat". See http://www.jstatsoft.org/article/view/v052i06 [Accessed: 7 December 2016].

[49] K-nearest neighbour supervised text classifiers compare the hand-coded documents with the un-coded ones and assign to the seconds the same value of their most similar hand-coded "neighbours" (see James et al., 2014:39). Similarity is determined by comparing word occurrences, treating documents as vectors in a multidimensional space. In my case, values were J (judgement of musical taste) and non-J. The algorithm was run on R using package "FNN", after having removed stop-words in Italian from the corpus (see Krippendorff, 2013). Training, testing and classification were executed in 13 different subsets, corresponding to different modules in the related-videos network (see Section 3.4.1), in order to reduce internal lexical variability and improve the model's performance. The average accuracy, precision and recall for the overall dataset are, respectively, 76.4%, 80,5%, 69,3% (see James et al., 2014).

[50] Stop-words are words to be excluded from a text analysis because they are judged irrelevant to the research questions. Tf–idf (term frequency–inverse document frequency) is a common term-weighting factor in text mining. The tf-idf value increases proportionally to the number of times a word appears in the document, but is offset by the frequency of the word in the corpus. This aims to adjust for the fact that some words appear more frequently in general. Stemming is the process of reducing grammatical variations of words to their stems, bases or root forms, used to simplify the corpus and the resulting "document-term matrix" (see Krippendorff, 2013).

per artist is 19. 383 artists (44%) compare just once, while the ten most occurring artists[51] account for one quarter of the 17,734 music videos (see Tab. 1 below).

Table 1 Top 10 music artists in the dataset for number of videos

Music Artist	**N. Videos**	**Av. N. Views**	**N. Comments**
Nomadi	1081	49,376	1777
Ligabue	1005	289,732	1889
Marco Mengoni	400	322,685	1318
Laura Pausini	357	987,493	1531
Davide Van de Sfroos	343	45,466	171
Elisa	296	442,538	1352
Jovanotti	289	574,332	895
Antonello Venditti	253	379,386	729
Vasco Rossi	241	398,907	820
Modà	224	1,449,983	1727

Having individuated the music artist(s) involved in the field, I constructed second-level datasets aggregating videos and comments by artist. From now on, I will use the term "discursive repertoire" to refer to the aggregated comments regarding a single artist[52]. In order to enhance the comparability of results as well as the interpretability of visualisations, in the analyses presented in this chapter I mainly focused on artists whose discursive repertoires feature more than 1000 words each (excluding stop-words). These most-commented artists are 134 in total, and cover a wide range of Italian popular music, both stylistically and historically speaking[53]. As already stated above, in this work I do not assume artists' genre *a priori*, but I inductively derive it from empirical data about listeners' practices and discourses. Hence, here artists were coded solely based on the decade of release of their first official album (see Tab. 10, Appendix 1).

[51] Nomadi are characterized by an exceptionally long and productive music carrier and by a very large and active fandom, with fans themselves normally uploading songs on YouTube. This may explain their outstanding number of videos in the dataset. The strength of "the Nomadi people" (that is how fans define themselves) is witnessed by the fact that, although Nomadi's average number of video views is low (about 50k), the corresponding number of comments in the monitored time spam is comparably high. Overall, these ten artists are all habitués of Italian music charts.

[52] After the filtering procedure of the comments-dataset illustrated above, only 687 artists over 877 actually have a discursive repertoire. The others have no comments included in the final dataset.

[53] The sole non-Italian artist in the most-commented dataset is Mika, who is particularly popular in Italy after his participation as a judge in the Italian version of TV talent show "X-Factor" (see Tab. 10, Appendix 1).

3.3.3 Networks and clustering

The mapping of the field has been concretely possible thanks to unsupervised quantitative techniques, employed to represent the retrieved elements (videos, artists, commenters) in a relational space which is interpretable in terms of distances and similarities (Mohr, 1998). Borrowing John Mohr's words, the main task here is "to find structure-preserving simplifications that may allow the complexity of the system to be more easily understood. Ideally, one hopes to identify some deeper, simpler, structural logic—that is, a principle or set of principles that account for the arrangement of parts within the cultural system" (1998:356). More concretely, the list presented below aims to describe in plain words how this empirical investigation has been methodologically conducted and organised.

a) Related-videos network.

First, I considered the overall dataset of 17,734 related music videos, assuming the social logic underlying YouTube's algorithmic suggestions (see Airoldi et al., 2016). As illustrated in Section 2.5, the related-videos algorithm is believed to work by computing patterns of shared viewership (Bendersky et al., 2014; Davidson et al., 2010). Meaning, if many users watch video A right after video B, these two videos are likely to then be "related". This implies two things: first, YouTube videos can be seen as nodes in a network, with related videos inducing a directed graph[54] in which an edge can be established between each pair of videos (Davidson et al., 2010: 295); second, the weight of the edges in question is mainly determined by the users' sequential consumption practices on the platform (Bendersky et al., 2014). The resulting network of recommendations was analysed using a community detection algorithm[55] in software Gephi[56], aiming to reveal tightly connected clusters of music videos in the graph. I subsequently interpreted their content, by considering the most occurring artists in each of them (see Section 3.4.1).

[54] Here, I decided not to treat the related-videos and related-artists graphs as directed networks, since I am interested in the overall logic of aggregation, and adding directionality to the edges would unnecessarily complicate the analysis.

[55] Community detection is a network analysis technique aimed to identify sub-groups of nodes that are internally denser and externally less dense (see Blondel et al., 2008; Van Meeteren et al., 2010). In the case of software Gephi, community detection is possible through an algorithm computing a "modularity score", which can be interpreted as the indicator for the "goodness of fit" of this decomposition (Newman, 2006).

[56] See https://gephi.org/ [Accessed: 9 December 2016].

b) Related-artists network.

Second, I focused on algorithmic relations among my subset of 134 most-commented artists (see Tab. 10, Appendix 1). With respect to the related-videos network, here the nodes are specific artists, while an undirected edge is established if at least one of the videos of artist A is related to a video of artist B and vice versa. In this second-order network, an edge's weight corresponds to the sum of weights at the lower level of music videos. Again, relations ultimately derive from users' crowd-based viewing patterns (Davidson et al., 2010). I inductively explored and interpreted the resulting inter-artist associations mainly by inspecting the visualisation of the network (see Venturini et al., 2014), produced using a standard layout in Gephi (see Fig. 2 and Section 3.4.2).

c) Commenter-artist network.

Third, another type of network was generated – more specifically, a bipartite graph (see Lambiotte and Ausloos, 2005). Commenter-artist network has two types of nodes, namely, artists and YouTube users who commented them. A directed edge from commenter A to artist B is established any time A commented a music video authored by B. The patterns of relations reveal how about 67k listeners interacted with music content (687 artists) on the platform during the monitored time spam (Jan 2014-Apr 2015). The visualisation of the structure of the network (Fig. 3) allowed me to map and interpret the overlaps between taste publics and categories of music artists (see Section 3.4.3).

d) Aesthetic discourse clustering.

Last, I analysed the distribution of a dictionary of positive and negative words across the most-commented artists' "discursive repertoires" (see Section 3.4.4). I identified through hand coding all the terms in my corpus a) characterized by undoubtedly negative and positive meanings b) occurring at least 10 times[57]. Then, I computed an "artist X term" matrix and calculated cosine distances among artists' discursive repertoires based on patterns of weighted word frequencies[58]. First, I applied k-means clustering and, then, multidimensional

[57] In total, coded words are 1029. 413 are characterized by a negative sentiment, 616 by a positive one. The coding procedure has been conducted in a context-sensitive way, taking into account the specific meanings assumed by words in relation to different musical contents. I decided to focus on this small subset of the over 25k terms in the corpus aiming to erase the effect of artists' names and discursive peculiarities (e.g. Italian mainstream songs are normally about love and feelings, thus listeners' related discourses are likely to be so too). Indeed, I am interested in exploring the relational structure emerging exclusively from publics' aesthetic ways of evaluating music.

[58] I used cosine instead of standard Euclidean distances, aiming to reduce the impact of documents' length on the results. I stemmed the words and employed standard tf-idf weighting for highlighting discursive

scaling analysis. K-means clustering allowed me to partition the observations into a pre-specified number of clusters in an unsupervised way (see James et al., 2014:10). Through multidimensional scaling I visualized and interpreted the vocabulary-based relations among the resulting clusters in a two-dimensional space (see Mohr, 1998; van Venrooij, 2009).

3.4 Results

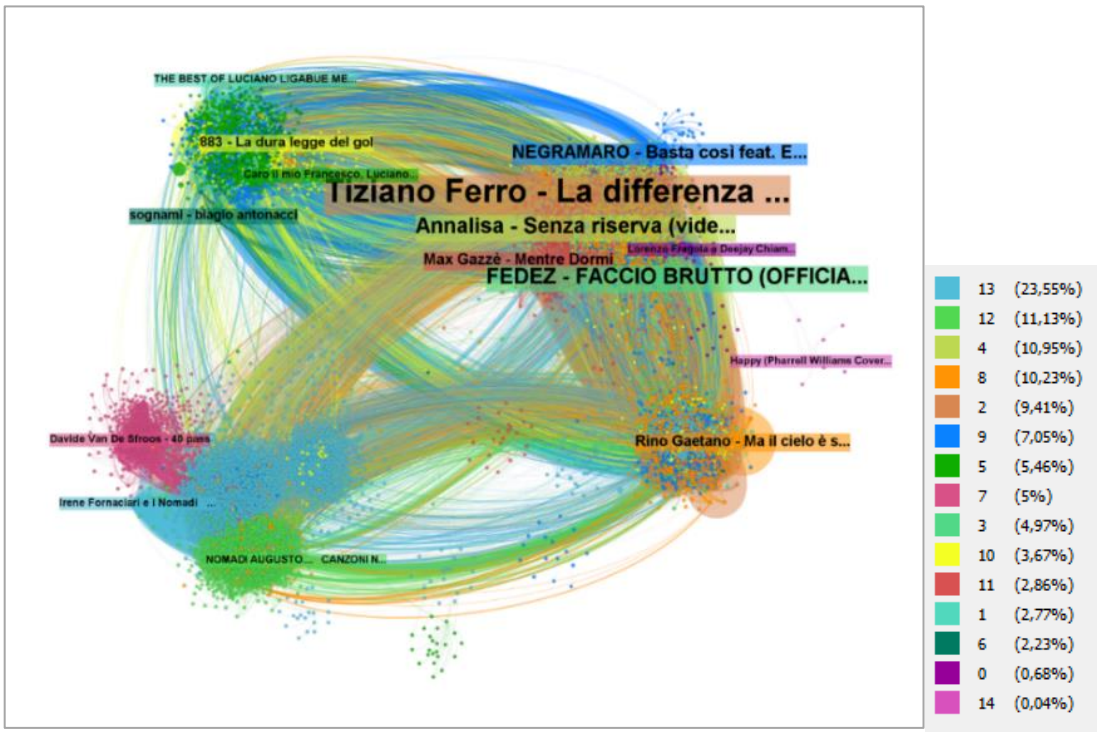
This section illustrates the main results of the analytical strategy described above. The maps and findings presented below represent the relational structure of the wide culture-scape characterizing the Italian field of popular music consumption. Given the unsupervised character of the methods employed, data interpretation came after data analysis (Mohr, 1998). The broad research question guiding this analytical step, as anticipated in the introduction, can be formulated as follows: what are relevant entities, relations and ground-up classifications in the cultural system of Italian popular music? A coherent answer emerged by "following" the everyday practices and discourses of music listeners on YouTube (see Airoldi et al., 2016).

3.4.1 Related-videos network

The related-videos network is composed by 17,734 nodes – the music videos – connected by 69,988 undirected edges – established once video A is recommended to viewers of video B, and vice versa. The average number of connections for each video – that is, its average degree – is 7.9. I ran a community detection algorithm, which identified 14 distinct clusters of tightly associated videos. The related modularity score is equal to 0.66 (see Newman, 2006), not particularly high if compared to similar but more heterogeneous YouTube networks (see Airoldi et al., 2016:6). Still, the interpretation of the resulting clusters remains useful in order to shed light on the overall contents and relations structuring the network. Fig. 2 below shows the connections among videos organized in clusters, which are characterized by different colours. Nodes and labels' sizes are proportional to view count. Labels indicate the most central video in each cluster – meaning, the one with the higher in-degree.

differences (see Krippendorff, 2013). This and further steps were possible using R packages "tm", "ggplot2", "cluster" and "MASS".

Figure 2 The related-videos network. Different colours indicate different clusters. Layout: OpenOrd.



The size of the clusters is approximately of the same magnitude, with the exception of cluster 14, featuring only 7 videos – i.e. covers of international pop songs made by a non-professional singer. For this reason, this latter cluster was excluded from the analysis, which focused on the remaining ones. Fig. 2 shows that – with the exception of clusters 7, 13 and 12, whose tinge is relatively homogeneous – inter-cluster connections are many. This suggests that, for what concerns the aggregated viewing practices of music listeners on YouTube (as inscribed in automated recommendations), no clear "crowd-generated music categories" emerge at the level of music videos (see Airoldi et al., 2016).

Then, I analysed the distribution of music artists across clusters. The five most recurrent artists per cluster are listed in Tab. 11, Appendix 1, together with some background information about them (main genres, decade of debut, nation)[59]. Apart for clusters 1, 5 and 12 – dominated by the two main bands in the dataset, namely, Ligabue (1, 5) and Nomadi (12) – the others are internally heterogeneous.

On the one side, since I focused on popular music, it is no surprise that most of the clusters feature a majority of pop/rock artists – except for cluster 3 (rap), 8 (*canzone d'autore*) and 11 (indie rock and "new" *canzone d'autore*). On the other, interesting indications about the

[59] The main source of this information is the online database provided by Allmusic.com [Accessed: 8 December 2016]. The present interpretation of clusters' content is based also on an in-depth, qualitative inspection.

logics of similarity conveyed by patterns of shared viewership are provided by the decades of debut. On average, clusters tend to include artists of contiguous ages. Given the behavioural principle explaining the formation of groups of tightly related videos, this suggests the salience of a generational cleavage in terms of music listening (Bellavance, 2008).

3.4.2 Related-artists network

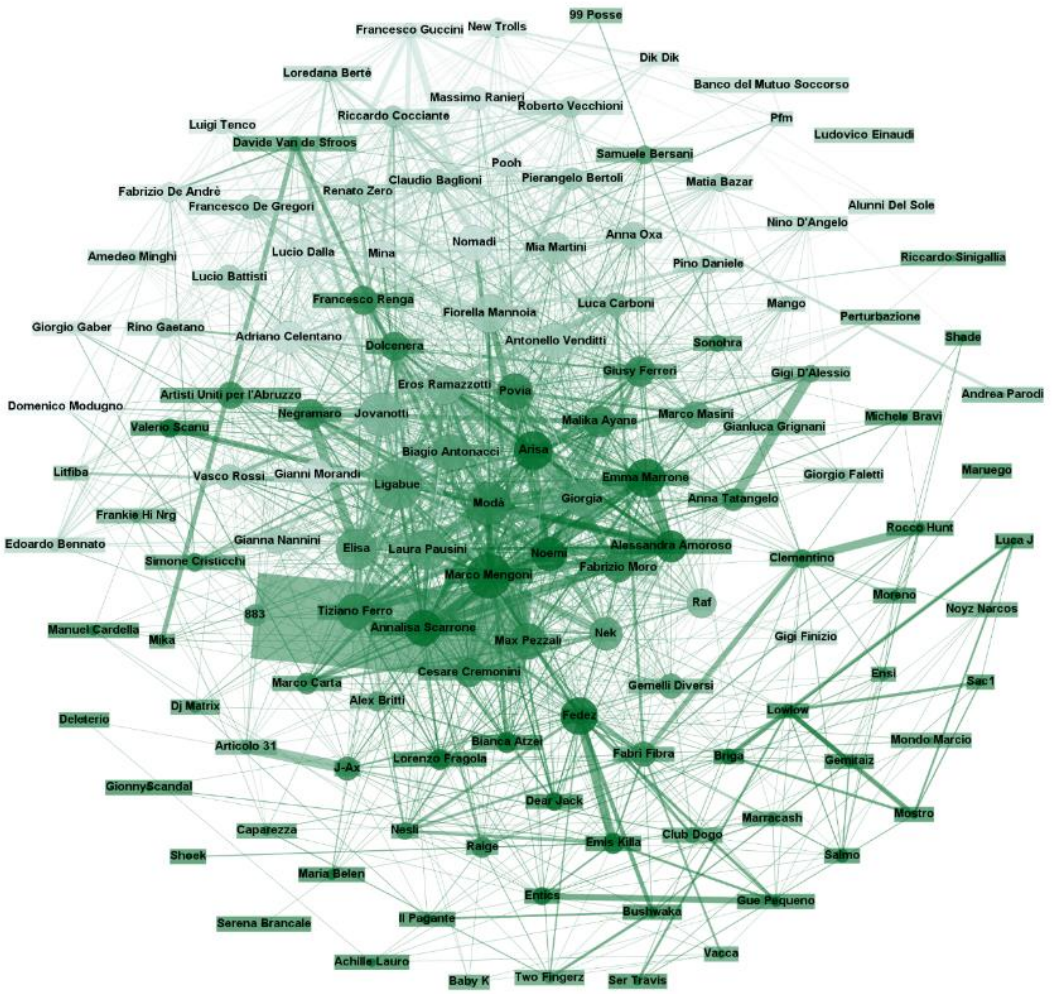
After this descriptive overview, a more fine-grained approach is needed. Hence, I studied the "relatedness" of the 134 most-commented artists in my dataset (see Tab. 10, Appendix 1). A network analysis similar to the one presented in the previous section was conducted, having artists rather than videos as nodes. Fig. 3 below shows the connections among artists[60]. This network is constituted by 134 nodes linked by 1665 edges. Considering the decade of debut (ranging from 1950s to 2010s), it is possible to notice from Fig. 3 that the upper region of the visualisation is dominated by artists who published their first album during the 1950s, 60s or 70s (in lighter colour). Some of them are famous female singers of the past, such as Mina, Loredana Bertè and Mia Martini. Others are "beat" and prog-rock Italian bands of the 1960s-70s, like, for instance, Banco del Mutuo Soccorso, Pfm, Alunni del Sole, Pooh and Dik Dik. However, most of them are icons of *canzone d'autore* (Santoro, 2013; Tomatis, 2014), such as Francesco Guccini, Roberto Vecchioni, Luigi Tenco, Fabrizio De André, Francesco De Gregori, Lucio Dalla and Rino Gaetano (see Section 2.6.1). Differently, in the centre of the network there is a cluster of contemporary, mainstream pop artists, such as, for instance, Ligabue, Modà, Emma Marrone, Marco Mengoni, Laura Pausini, Eros Ramazzotti, Alessandra Amoroso, Jovanotti. Interestingly, "older" artists closer to the central region are "lighter" *cantautori*, lower in symbolic value if compared with the more prestigious artists mentioned above[61]. Symmetrically, contemporary singer-songwriters such as Samuele Bersani and Davide Van de Sfroos are closer to old *cantautori* than to current pop stars.

[60] Since the variable "decade of debut" appeared to be non-randomly related to patterns of associations (see Tab. 11, Appendix 1), I employed it in order to inductively interpret the structure of the related-artists network.

[61] Domenico Modugno, Gianni Morandi, Antonello Venditti and Claudio Baglioni are particularly involved in the "semantic ambiguity" issues described by sociologist Marco Santoro in the domain of canzone d'autore (2002). The former is the author of "Nel blu dipinto di blu", an internationally well-known example of Italian musica leggera (literary, "light music"). Morandi, Venditti and Baglioni, given the sentimental lyrics characterizing most of their songs, tend to be perceived more as pop singers than as "serious" *cantautori* (Tomatis, 2014).

A specular picture characterizes the lower area of the visualisation, where Italian rap is the largely prevalent genre. Mainstream "pop-rap" artists like Fedez, J-Ax and Gemelli Diversi are closer to the central, pop-area of the network. Conversely, in the lower periphery there are relatively more underground rappers, such as Achille Lauro, Ser Travis, Two Fingerz, Vacca, Salmo, Mostro, Marracash, Noyz Narcos (see Santoro and Solaroli, 2007). Also, tightly associated artists in the graph often share a common musical milieu (see Airoldi et al., 2016; Webb, 2007). This is the case of Anna Tatangelo and Gigi d'Alessio – performing together and coming from the same geographic area, that is, Naples – and, also, of rappers Clementino, Rocco Hunt and Moreno (from Campania), as well as of Guè Pequeno, Marracash and Club Dogo (Milan).

Figure 3 The related-artists network. The darker the colour of the artist, the more recent her debut. The largest the node, the highest its in-degree. The thicker the edge, the higher its weight. Layout: Fruchterman-Rheingold.



The present related-artists network offers a thicker interpretation of the field's cultural system, further confirming that algorithmic relatedness on YouTube is not a meaningless computational outcome (Airoldi et al., 2016).

Overall, this inductive exploration reveals that patterns of associations in my sub-sample of Italian music artists follow both a generational logic of similarity and a genre- or scene-based one. Three main music categories clearly emerge from the ground-up (Beer, 2013), conveyed by the co-viewing practices of digital listeners. That is: "vintage" Italian music (including *canzone d'autore*), contemporary mainstream pop and, last, Italian rap. Their distinct positions in the network structure indicate the existence of different, corresponding taste publics. This finding has been triangulated through the analyses presented in the following sections (3.4.3 and 3.4.4). Also, by focusing on specific artists, it has been possible to grasp within-genre differentiations in a fine-grained way. In general terms, the more peripheral the node is in the graph, the farthest that artist is from the sub-field of large-scale production (see Bourdieu, 1993) – as variations in the average view count per artist indicated in Tab. 10 witness (Appendix 1).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that, statistically speaking, these data are not representative of Italian music videos on YouTube. In order to assess the reliability of the sampling process and, consequently, the quality of the present results, I analysed a second sample of music videos, obtained through a different procedure. That is, the same snowball process (see Section 3.3.1) was performed starting from a distinct seeding sample, constructed by searching the generic keyword "musica" (as in Airoldi et al., 2016). This alternative dataset revealed the presence of 125 out of the 134 most-commented artists. Further analyses showed that patterns of association in the alternative related-artists network accurately resemble those characterizing Fig. 3. This comparison proved the robustness of the present results (see Fig. 23, Appendix 1).

3.4.3 Commenter-artist network

On YouTube, there are different levels of user agency (see van Dijck, 2009). One can be a passive spectator and, simply, consume. The networks presented above are precisely based on consumption practices, recorded by the algorithm at the level of the aggregate. However, YouTube users can also be more active. They may do digital activities considerable as forms of "prosumption" – that is, the interrelated process of production and consumption (Ritzer, 2013). This is the case, for instance, of commenting videos. YouTube commenters are a sub-portion of the platform's overall public. As Section 3.1 briefly mentions, among my survey

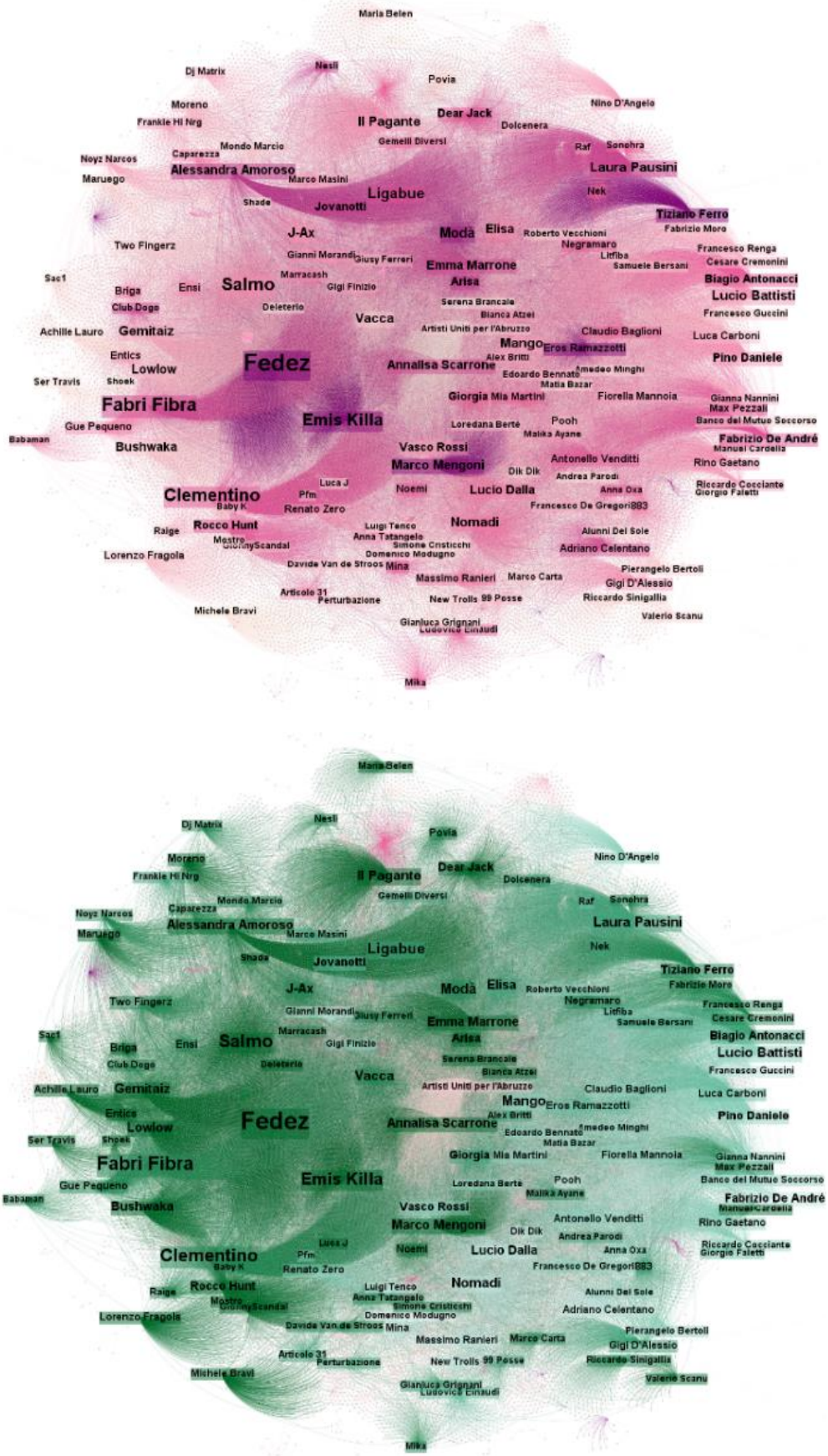
respondents, music listening on YouTube is more common than music video commenting – respectively, 51 percent versus 16 percent (see Tab. 14, Appendix 3).

Here, the bipartite network based on comments is presented. Commenter-artist network has two types of nodes, namely, artists (687) and YouTube users who commented them (67k). Edges, based on comments, are 86,750. Differently from relations grounded in viewing practices, edges here can assume multiple meanings. If it is true that comments to YouTube music videos normally carry a positive sentiment (see Thelwall and Vis, 2012), still, it is also possible to comment a video that one dislikes. Nevertheless, on average, the overall structure of the network reveals overlaps between specific music communities (Fabbri, 1982) and specific categories of music artists they are likely to encounter on the platform.

In the following visualisation I compare the commenter-artist network in relation to two different variables: maximum number of views totalized by the artist (Fig. 4a) and decade of debut (Fig. 4b).

The visualised labels are solely those of most-commented artists, in order to reduce the complexity of the maps. Edges form clouds of different colours, departing from the small dots in the background (the users) and directed to the artists. The darkest clouds in Fig. 4a surround artists having videos with several millions of views. They are Fedez, Emis Killa, Marco Mengoni, Alessandra Amoroso, Eros Ramazzotti, Laura Pausini, Tiziano Ferro, Emma Marrone, Arisa, Modà, Jovanotti, Ligabue – which are all big names of contemporary Italian music market. In the neighbourhoods, there are relatively less popular artists, characterized by a lighter tinge. Interestingly, in the left side of the map there are only rappers, while in the opposite side there is a higher concentration of famous *cantautori*. Although Santoro and Solaroli (2007) underlined the interconnections and similarities between Italian rap and *canzone d'autore*, this map suggests that they are now characterized by distinct, non-overlapping publics. As in Fig. 3, pop artists are closer to the centre, since they interacted transversally with a multitude of publics. Also rappers such as Fedez and Emis Killa are attracted in the centre – probably because they are enough mainstream to be commented by a wider, less subcultural audience. Conversely, artists with a low view count tend to be peripheral in the graph, regardless of their genre. This means that they are commented and followed by more niche publics, not shared by other artists.

Figure 4 Commenter-artist networks (a, b). The bigger the label, the higher the number of comments the artist received. The darker the edges, the more popular (a)/recent (b) the artist they are directed to. Layout: OpenOrd.



On top of genre-based clusters and of a nuanced mainstream vs. underground cleavage, Fig. 4b clearly shows a generational difference in terms of music video commenting. New Italian artists, debuting in the 00s-10s, form a large, dark cloud comprising the whole north-west half of the map. "Vintage" Italian music, in lighter colour, dominates the other half. Their opposite positions in the network structure witnesses a homologous clustering of commenters. The related-artists network in Fig. 3 indicated the presence of a similar pattern among "passive" digital music consumers too.

3.4.4 Aesthetic discourse clustering

Different maps, based on co-views and user-generated comments, portray the cultural system of Italian popular music in similar ways. In both cases, the emerging relational space where artists and music publics on YouTube are positioned is structured according to three overlapping cleavages: a genre-based one – drawn along three main music categories, that is, Italian music of the past, contemporary mainstream pop and Italian rap; an old vs. new one (see Bellavance, 2008); a mainstream vs. underground (or centre vs. periphery) one (see Hammou, 2016). Here, following Alex van Venrooij's study of music reviews and classification (2009), I assess whether a comparable picture emerges from variations in the aesthetic vocabularies employed by YouTube commenters, which – according to Bourdieu – reflect distinct embodied tastes (1984).

As already described in Section 3.3.3, I first applied a k-means clustering to the 134 most-commented artists' discursive repertoires – more specifically, to the "artist X term" matrix, based on an aesthetic dictionary of frequent positive and negative words. After some attempts, the number of clusters k was set to 3, that is, the one that best favoured the interpretability of the solution, as well as the comparability of the size of the resulting groupings of artists. Then, I visualized distances among artists on a bi-dimensional "evaluative space" (van Venrooij, 2009:323) generated through multidimensional scaling analysis, highlighting clusters through different colours in the map (Fig. 5). This way, by combining these two techniques, I could visually detect eventual distortions due to the two-dimensional configuration[62] by simply looking at k-means clusters of artists, which render a third dimension of vocabularies' patterning.

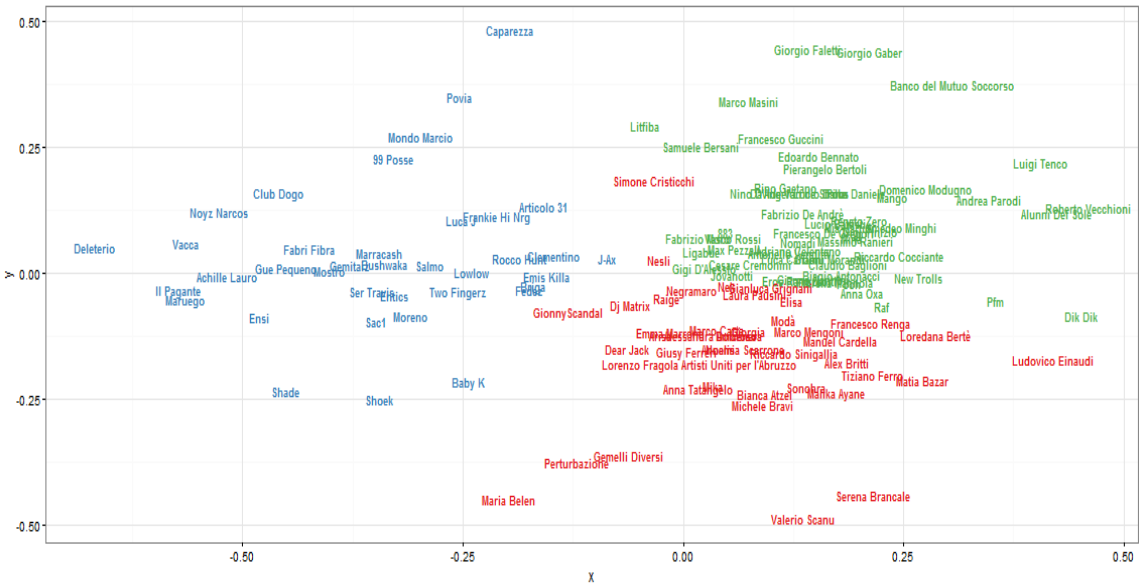
[62] The reliability of the 2D reduction is acceptable, with a stress value equal to 17.17 – comparable to van Venrooij's six-dimensional solution (2009:323).

A first, striking result is that k-means clustering applied to aesthetic vocabularies assigns most-commented artists to the very same music categories emerging from the analyses of the related-artists and commenter-artist networks. Fig. 5 is clearly divided in three homogeneously-coloured areas. It is sufficient a quick glance to the map to see that contemporary mainstream pop artists belong to cluster 1 in red, Italian rappers form cluster 2 in blue and classic *cantautori* – together with singers and bands debuting in the 1990s or before – reside in a third, green cluster. The twenty terms that characterize each cluster most are presented in Tab. 12 (Appendix 1)[63]. The mainstream pop cluster is built on words pointing to beauty and personal skills, such as "bell*", "brav*" and "bellissim*" ("beautiful", "good", "very beautiful"). A sole critical word occurs among the top twenty ones, that is, "schifo" (the Italian equivalent of "sucks"). Then, not surprisingly (see Hammou, 2016), Italian hip hop listeners use "slang" terms in expressing their aesthetic judgements, as well as several references to the underground/mainstream issue – for instance, "merd*" ("shit"), "bomb*" ("bomb"), "commercial*" ("commercial") and "vendut*" (sell-out). This explains the evident genre-homogeneity of cluster 2. Last, Italian "classic" singers, bands and – particularly – *cantautori* are frequently appealed with words such as "poesi*" ("poetry"), "artist*" ("artist"), "unic*" ("unique") and "poet*" ("poet"). This finding suggests that the historical process of intellectualization that invested *canzone d'autore* (Santoro, 2013) is reflected by listeners' terminology. References to emotions are also particularly central in cluster 3 ("emozion*") – as they are in cluster 1 – but here no term with negative meanings appears to be discursively relevant.

In sum, publics interacting with these three broad categories of artists on YouTube, on average, employ distinct vocabularies. Chapter 4 assesses whether this difference represents the distinctive manifestation of an aesthetic hierarchy of embodied tastes.

[63] Given that adjectives in Italian agree in gender and number with the nouns they refer to, words have been pre-emptively stemmed.

Figure 5 Two-dimensional MDS solution. Different colours indicate different k-means clusters.



Still, the semantic space visualised through multidimensional scaling needs to be interpreted. The most extreme points characterizing the x-axis are represented by the discursive repertoires of, respectively, rapper Deleterio (X = -0.667) and *cantautore* Roberto Vecchioni (X = 0.46). The first one is a producer and rapper belonging to the hip hop scene of Milan and linked to music label Roccia Music, who debuted in 2014 with his first solo album. He is quite marginal in my video sample, with two feats totalizing less than 700k views in total. Conversely, Roberto Vecchioni is a well-known *cantautore* who published his first album in 1971 (see also Santoro, 2002:124). He appears in my dataset with 102 music videos, totalizing more than 10mln views. A comparison of the terminologies employed by commenters to connote these two artists reveals that the x-axis in Fig. 5 can be interpreted along the "new vs old" or "subcultural vs cultural capital" cleavage – emerging also in the analyses presented above and remarked, for instance, by Bellavance (2008), Bennett and colleagues (2009) and Thornton (1995). In the case of Deleterio, commenters' display a particularly slang and subcultural vocabulary – exemplified by the terms with the highest tf-idf score, that is, "bomba" ("bomb") and "spacca" ("scores", "rocks"). Differently, the prevalent words in comments to Roberto Vecchioni's video are the following: "amo" (first person of the verb "to love") and "poeta" ("poet"). In sum, these two artists are the objects of young and old, subcultural and conventional styles of commenting and appreciating music, discursively employed by different taste publics closer to distinct genres – namely, Italian rap and *canzone d'autore*.

An analogous procedure served me to interpret the logic of similarity underlying the y-axis of the map. On the one extreme, Valerio Scanu (Y = -0.49) is a young pop singer, finalist of TV talent show "Amici di Maria De Filippi" in 2009. 23 videos in my dataset feature his songs, with slightly less than 4mln views in total. On the opposite side, Caparezza (Y = 0.48) is one of the few rappers invited to participate to "Premio Tenco", the official prize of Italian *canzone d'autore* (see Santoro and Solaroli, 2007:484). He appears twelve times in my dataset, scoring more than 20mln total views. The terms characterizing these two artists' discursive repertoires most are, respectively, "fresca" ("fresh"), "complimenti" ("compliments") and "allegra" ("happy") in the case of Scanu, "maliconia" ("melancholy"), "critica" ("critic") and "genio" ("genious") for Caparezza. Rather than confirming the underground vs. mainstream cleavage emerging in the previous network analyses, these data suggest the presence of a more general distinction between "light" (Scanu) and "serious" (Caparezza) modes of appreciation – and, consequently, artists. Furthermore – given those studies stating the cultural legitimacy of *canzone d'autore* in the Italian musical field (see Section 2.6.1) – the present interpretation would also explain the high concentration of *cantautori* in the "serious" part of the map.

Conclusion

In this quantitative mapping of the cultural system of Italian popular music, part of the broader field of music consumption, three types of relational data have been analysed through various unsupervised techniques. While the overview of the related-videos network, organised in 13 main clusters, did not return a clear picture of the relational structure of the field's symbolic space (see Section 3.4.1), the more fine-grained network analyses of the algorithmic associations among most-commented artists – analogously based on YouTube listeners' aggregated consumption patterns – provided more interesting details (see Section 3.4.2). The way the graph is structured (Fig. 3) has been interpreted on the basis of three main logics. That is, a generational logic – evident in the non-casual distribution of the artists along an old vs. new cleavage; a genre-based logic, witnessed, for instance, by the presence of three macro-clusters corresponding to "vintage" Italian music, contemporary mainstream pop and Italian rap; an underground vs. mainstream logic, visible considering artists positioned in the core and in the periphery of the network.

Commenter-artist network (Fig. 4), though based on ontologically different data, revealed a very similar tripartite pattern, showing the presence of distinct music publics (see Section 3.4.3). Last, the ground-up exploration of the "aesthetic discourse space" (van Venrooij,

2009) – derived from the vocabularies used by YouTube commenters – confirmed once again the classification of Italian music artists in three main macro-genres, emerging from the different discourses of corresponding categories of listeners (see Section 3.4.4). Furthermore, the inductive interpretation of the relational space in Fig. 5 supported the presence of an old vs. new cleavage opposing, in particular, the audiences of *canzone d'autore* and rap – this latter genre being marked by a subcultural commenting style. Also, this analysis shed light on another, potential fracture characterizing the cultural system of Italian popular music. Meaning, the one dividing "serious" from "light" artists, within and among genres.

This chapter portrays the Italian field of music consumption as crossed by multiple aesthetic boundaries, as depicted also by the literature cited in Section 2.6.1. Still, the distant, "macro" points of observation adopted above can hardly assessed whether this "folk" system of classification (Fabbri, 2008) – as it is practised and perceived by digital listeners – simply consists in the horizontal, non-conflictual co-existence of different music categories and tastes, or – vice versa – hides shared cultural and aesthetic hierarchies, as well as forms of distinction. The following chapter will investigate the symbolic struggles and distinctions crossing this peculiar digital field.

Chapter 4. On justifying musical taste: aesthetic judgements and distinction on YouTube

"Disgust must be accompanied by ideas of a particular kind of danger, the danger inherent in pollution and contamination" [William Ian Miller, 1997:8]

Introduction

Last chapter's relational analyses portray the Italian field of popular music consumption as composed by different taste publics positioned along multiple aesthetic boundaries. Here I aim to go further, by investigating the styles of music evaluation employed in judgements of taste, the symbolic meanings discursively attached to music artists and, in particular, the distinctive uses of taste displayed in public social interactions. Once again, this has been possible without *a priori* assumptions about the hypothetically hierarchical character of the field, through the inductive, unobtrusive, relational analysis of digital data collected on YouTube.

More specifically, I computationally selected and in-depth, qualitatively analysed a sub-sample of my comments-dataset, featuring almost 5k "critical comments" to music videos (see Section 3.3). YouTube commenters' aesthetic evaluations and justifications were studied in a ground-up way (Beer, 2013), in order to inductively inquire the shared perceptions and distinctive power of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies in the Italian field of music consumption. This has been done by embracing both the macro level of symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) and the "micropolitics of everyday social interaction" (Holt, 1997a:115) – namely, distinctions.

First, moving from Boltanski and Thevenot's work (2006;1999), justifications employed in critical comments were analysed (see Section 4.4). By means of coding the evaluative repertoires used by commenters in such digitally-mediated social situations, I aimed to shed light on the aesthetic criteria perceived as socially legitimate in the field.

Second, the most-liked and disliked artists in my sample were individuated (see Section 4.5.1). Furthermore, I analysed the network of positive and negative analogies among artists and genres, as they were mentioned in critical comments (4.5.2). This way, I reconstructed culturally (and sub-culturally) shared notions of "musical worth" circulating in the Italian field of music consumption in a fine-grained way.

Third, the social, distinctive uses of music have been naturalistically studied (see Section 4.4). By following a discourse analysis approach, I explored the practical ways YouTube commenters narrated their (and others') musical tastes in front of the platform's "invisible audience" (boyd, 2011). Hence, I examined and coded definitions of purity and authenticity associated to things, practices and persons (see Lamont, 1992), as well as explicit forms of stigmatization and symbolic exclusion.

In sum, these three empirical passages allowed to inductively assess whether contemporary Italian music publics reproduce a logic of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) or, on the contrary, share a tolerant, non-hierarchical perspective on music consumption (Peterson and Kern, 1996). The results illustrated in the following pages, though hardly generalizable from a statistical point of view, aim to answer to research questions A, B, C and D, as presented in Section 2.4. That is, in plain words: A) What are (if any) the legitimate aesthetic criteria employed for evaluating music in the Italian field of music consumption? B) What is widely perceived as "worth listening"? C) Do eventual hierarchies ranking music artists produce forms of symbolic distinction based on objectified taste? D) Do eventual hierarchies ranking more or less legitimate styles of aesthetic perception and appreciation generate socially-meaningful, practical distinctions rooted in embodied taste?

4.1 Evaluative repertoires between Bourdieu and Boltanski

In Section 2.4, I presented four main hypotheses, based on contributions in the literature criticising one or more aspects of Bourdieu's social theory of taste (1984). One of them, called "Boltanski's hypothesis", is particularly relevant for this chapter's empirical investigation (see Section 4.4).

In their theoretical works in the broader realm of sociology of worth, Boltanski and Thevenot proposed an interpretation of the social processes of evaluation openly critical of Bourdieu's structuralist view:

"For classical sociology the plurality of values is an outcome of the plurality of social groups. But in this framework, the question of the agreement between people belonging to different groups is difficult to answer without having recourse to an explanation grounded mainly on domination, power or force. […] In this model, then, the different forms of equivalence are not related to different groups – as they are in classical sociology – but to different situations. It follows that a person must – in order to act in a normal way – be able to shift, during the space of one day or even one hour, between situations which are relevant in relation to different forms of equivalence. The different principles of equivalence are formally incompatible with one another, since each of them is recognized in the situation in which its validity is established as universal. It follows that the

persons must have the ability to ignore or to forget, when they are in a given situation, the principles on which they have grounded their justifications in the other situations in which they have been involved" (1999:364).

Instead of considering evaluative criteria as internalized in the form of stable cultural schemes enabling individual judgement, as argued by Bourdieu (1984), the two French authors stressed the variability of evaluative repertoires employed by agents across social situations. Inspired by ethnomethodology, Boltanski and Thevenot focused on a missing piece of Bourdieu's theoretical puzzle, that is, social interactions (1999). Considering organizational settings during "critical moments" – that is, scenes when criticism produces disputes where judgements need to be justified (see Section 2.3) – they described six main "orders of worth", competing sets of evaluative criteria used by agents, pointing to mutually incompatible definitions of social value (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). In the following sub-sections, both Bourdieu's "pure" and "naïve" styles of artistic evaluation (1984) and Boltanski and Thevenot's "orders of worth" (2006) are discussed. Then, by inductively analysing the evaluative principles employed by YouTube users in critical comments, I assess whether my data support either a Bourdieauian structural logic of aesthetic hierarchization or Boltanski's situational account of evaluation.

4.1.1 Taste of reflection and taste of the senses

According to Bourdieu (1984), the aesthetic criteria governing cultural evaluation are inscribed in individual habitus (see Chapter 1). Inherited from class socialization and formal education, they represent a peculiar form of cultural capital embodied in one's cognitive schemes (see Holt, 1998). In 1960s French society, Bourdieu identified two main aesthetic views – meaning, modes of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation – corresponding to the opposite poles of a clear hierarchy overlapping social stratification. They are bourgeois' "Kantian", highbrow aesthetic view and working class' lowbrow functional attitude towards symbolic goods. Petit bourgeois were described as somewhere in the middle, involved in the painful effort of distinguishing from lower classes' while striving to compete in vain with elites' "cultural ease" (Bourdieu, 1984). Once immersed in the fields of social life, bourgeois' "aesthetic disposition" carried a "practical" distinctive power (see Section 1.2), based on "how" to legitimately consume, regardless of "what" (Jarness, 2015). Conversely, lower social classes, suffering their lack of familiarity with the grammars of culture, experienced a (naturalized) symbolic domination.

In the postscript of *La Distinction*, Bourdieu describes the legitimate aesthetic view as a "taste of reflection" which "expects the work of art, a finality with no other end than itself, to treat the spectator in accordance with the Kantian imperative, that is, as an end, not a means" (1984:488). Bourgeois' approach to art was seen as based on the "refusal of what is easy in the sense of simple, and therefore shallow, and 'cheap', because it is easily decoded and culturally 'undemanding'" as well as "of what is facile in the ethical or aesthetic sense, of everything which offers pleasures that are too immediately accessible and so discredited as 'childish' or 'primitive'" (Ibid.:486). Conversely, "popular" artistic perceptions were guided by a "taste of the senses", privileging content over form and function over distance. Such distinction between "right" and "wrong", "intellectual" and "popular" attitudes towards artistic works has been perpetuated also by music critics, even decades after the publication of *La Distinction* (see Washburne and Derno, 2004). Everything that lies outside music's sound and formal aspects is seen as a source of contamination and corruption. This is the case, for instance, of "extra-musical factors" such as practical functions – like dancing or relaxing (see Dahlhaus, 2004: 263) –, sentimentality (Wilson, 2014:123) or spurious, background listening (Fabbri, 2003).

Sociologists researching music evaluation have tried to operationalize in a systematic way the notions of "pure" and "naive" styles of artistic appreciation, both for the analysis of qualitative interviews (see van den Haak, 2014; Bachmayer et al., 2014) and in the study of music reviews by critics (see van Venrooij and Schmuz, 2010). Intellectual criteria for assessing the value of music are mainly based on the following aesthetic principles: form, disinterest, quality (or refinement), originality (or innovativeness), creativity (or intelligence), prestige (or timelessness), seriousness. Differently, popular evaluative repertoires refer precisely to what is neglected by a Kantian approach, namely: content, function, immediate pleasure, emotions, everyday experiences, popularity, entertainment.

4.1.2 Digital situations and orders of worth

Boltanski and Thevenot's theoretical framework has never been systematically applied to cultural evaluation, at least in sociology of culture. Nevertheless, in their 1999 paper, the authors exemplify the interactional practices of negotiation around worth presenting the case of the cultural good *par excellence*, that is, a book:

"Let us call to mind a situation very familiar in our own milieu, for instance, a controversial discussion about the worth of a book recently published by a colleague. One can argue that this book is very well known or that

it sells very well. But one can counteract these praises by arguing, for example, that such a book is not the result of really systematic work or, from another stance, that it is not really creative. The worths or sizes attributed to persons or objects become especially salient when the situation turns into a dispute, so that the study of such situations is a very good occasion to detect them" (Ibid.:364-66).

In the example, judgements about the value of the book are supported by justifications based on different evaluative principles – namely, respectively, renown, popularity, quality, creativity. In Boltanski and Thevenot's jargon, these four criteria belong to distinct "common worlds" or "orders of worth" (2006; 1999). These can be defined as coherent modes of evaluation circulating in the social imaginary, historically constructed and implicitly employed in the everyday struggles to make sense and justify social experience. The authors individuated six main orders of worth (see Tab. 2), extracted from canonical texts of political philosophy (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006:67). Also, through the reading of six management textbooks, they aimed to identify how these formal guidelines are practically implemented in different daily situations. Since judgements presuppose comparisons and analogies, each of these evaluative regimes subsumes a general "principle of equivalence", necessary for "bringing together different items or different facts" and clarifying "what they have in common" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999:361).

Table 2 Boltanski and Thevenot's common worlds (2006).

Order of worth	Description
World of Inspiration (St. Augustine)	"In the world of inspiration, the relevant beings are, for example, spirits, crazy people, artists, children. These beings are worthy and great when they are odd, wonderful, emotional. Their typical way of acting is to dream, to imagine, to rebel, or to have living experiences"
World of Renown (Hobbes)	"The measurement of people's worth depends on conventional signs of public esteem. This kind of worth is based on nothing other than the number of individuals who grant their recognition. It is hence entirely unrelated to the realm of personal dependencies and it is not linked to the person's self-esteem"
The Civic World (Rousseau)	"The peculiarity of the civic world is to lay stress on beings who are not individual beings but collective ones. Individual human beings can be seen as relevant and worthy only as they belong to a group or as they are the representatives of a collective person. In this world, important persons are, therefore, federations, public communities, representatives or delegates"
The Market World (Smith)	"In a market world, important persons are buyers and sellers. They are worthy when they are rich. Their main qualities are to be opportunistic in spotting and seizing the opportunities of the market, to be unhampered by any personal link and to be emotionally under control"
The Domestic World (Bossuet)	"In a domestic world, people's worth depends on a hierarchy of trust based on a chain of personal dependencies.[…] important and worthy persons are chiefs, bosses, or even relatives. Their main qualities are to be distinguished, straightforward, faithful and to have character"
The Industrial World (Saint-Simon)	"In an industrial world the great persons are the experts. The words used to describe their personal qualities can also be used to qualify things. They are said to be worthy when they are efficient, productive, operational"

The authors specified that this list is not necessarily exhaustive (Ibid.). Indeed, other works by Luc Boltanski hypothesized the presence of alternative, emergent orders of worth (see Wagner, 1999). Furthermore, Boltanski and Thevenot underlined that not all social situations can be interpreted through the lens of this framework (for instance, those involving love or violence), since not every social situation respects its main axiom, meaning, that persons are considered as "equal with regard to their common belonging to humanity" (1999:367). Should I expect YouTube comments to follow such a principle of justice? I seriously doubt it. Nevertheless, Boltanski and Thevenot's model represents a valuable starting point for my interpretation of music listeners' evaluative repertoires[64]. According to this theoretical perspective, justification "takes place in public space, a space at least inhabited by those who are in dispute, but possibly also by others, by judges and observers", that is, a "public" (Wagner 1999:347). Not differently from "critical moments" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999), critical comments on YouTube, being manifestations of disputes taking place in front of the platform's "invisible audience" (boyd, 2011), allowed me to access and study music consumers' public justifications and evaluative logics in an unobtrusive way.

4.2 Cultural evaluation in a digital field

In *La Distinction*, cultural consumers of different classes and social backgrounds were portrayed as recognizing – often against their own interests – common notions of artistic worth in both objectified and embodied tastes (1984). Agents were depicted as agreeing not only on what was to be considered "good" and "legitimate" in the fields of cultural consumption – that is, in the case of music, difficult, complex classical composers – but also on "how" to appreciate it legitimately – namely, by adopting an aesthetic, formal attitude (see Jarness, 2015; Holt, 1998).

Far from being "natural", these shared evaluations of cultural and aesthetic worth corresponded to the tastes of the dominant classes. In Bourdieu's account, the resulting cultural and aesthetic hierarchies, having popular, "vulgar" goods and styles of appreciation at the very bottom, homologously overlapped existing social hierarchies (1984). In the rigged game of culture described in *La Distinction* (Ibid.), dominated classes were the inevitable victims – lacking the language and *savour-faire* of legitimate arts. Conversely, as

[64] Other comparable approaches, like neo-institutionalism (see Thornton et al., 2012) could have been considered here. However, Boltanski and Thevenot's stress on the situational character of evaluative repertoires (1999) makes it a powerful theoretical ground for criticizing and, eventually, falsifying, Bourdieu's theory of habitus and embodiment (1984).

empirically shown by the "beautiful photographs" survey (Ibid.:516), agents richest in cultural capital had enough symbolic power to escape conventional definitions of cultural legitimacy and aestheticize non-consecrated practices and things – a "quasi-creative power which sets the aesthete apart from the common herd" (Ibid.:31).

Also, Bourdieu's work underlined the central role of institutions and critics in cultural fields, historically determinant in reinforcing and perpetuating dominant tastes, as well as in consecrating new artistic forms once they believed to be adequate for the realm of cultural nobility (Bourdieu, 1993; 1983; 1980). This is currently an established point of view in sociology of culture. Recent empirical literature studying cultural valuation and evaluation processes has prevalently focused on critics' articles on magazines and newspapers (e.g. Johnston and Baumann, 2007; van Venrooij and Schmutz, 2010; Schmutz, 2016; Varriale, 2016b; 2014) as well as on institutional systems (e.g. Santoro, 2002; 2010; Hammou, 2016) and other cultural intermediaries (see Lizé, 2016). In the musical field, studies have documented the selective intellectualization of previously popular genres and artists by professional critics (for an overview, see Varriale, 2014). In the Italian context of the late twentieth century, this process of consecration of popular music invested, in particular, *canzone d'autore* (Santoro, 2013) and international pop-rock (Varriale, 2016a), both seen in opposition to "light" Italian music (*musica leggera*).

Nevertheless, in the last decades, the mechanisms governing the formation and circulation of public opinion and knowledge have dramatically changed (see Meyrowitz, 1985). For instance, in the mid-2000s, Benkler optimistically wrote about the fact that, with the diffusion of blogging and newsgroups, everyone could become a pamphleteer (2006:214). Although this metaphor has been criticized just few years later (see Moe, 2010), other scholars, in the age of social media platforms, wondered whether everyone could become a critic (see Verboord, 2011). More broadly, Michele Lamont pointed out that "we need to better understand the impact of information and information technology on evaluation and expertise" (2012:215). Although Mark Verboord found that Internet had a limited effect on the perceived legitimacy of book critics in the Netherlands and Flanders (2009), Hanrahan (2013) argued that, in the musical field, professional criticism has been increasingly replaced by technologically-mediated forms of cultural ranking and judgement by common users. According to this latter author, the outcome of this digitization process is a "consensual culture" of aesthetic evaluation, based – essentially – on popularity (Ibid.). Similarly, writing about Italy, Addessi and Agostini argued that mass media have transformed not only musical tastes, but also the aesthetic judgments concerning artistic production (2004). Nevertheless,

these conclusions are not empirically-grounded in the evaluative discourses of online music consumers[65]. On this matter, Simone Varriale recently remarked that "an emerging research agenda about criticism and new media – that is, about criticism in contemporary popular culture – might be fruitfully informed by a field perspective" (2014:144). This means to study user-generated perceptions and evaluations in a relational way (see Allington, 2016; Kirchner and Mohr, 2010), taking into account the fact that the musical field, "together with its internal relationships, is never still – it is always in movement" (Middleton, 1990:7).
Hence, this chapter focuses on music consumers' own criticisms, formulated in the public context of YouTube videos. As also Section 2.3 argued, negative aesthetic evaluations on YouTube are thick empirical materials for the study of the social uses of taste, especially for the reasons that follow:

a) *Aesthetic hierarchies revealed*. The act of evaluating implies at least the following elements: 1) a subject (the evaluator); 2) an object (what is evaluated); 3) a set of general evaluative criteria or "hierarchies of worth" (Lamont, 2012b:202); 4) a final judgement. According to Boltanski and Thevenot, once evaluations are situated in the peculiar social context of "critical moments" (1999), they normally need a fifth element, that is, a socially intelligible justification (see Sections 2.2 and 4.1). Justifications make explicit the underlying evaluative repertoires employed by evaluators – or, better, a social representation of them, aimed to support their judgements of taste in front of an audience (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). Social actors must be conceived as endowed with "an ability to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate ways of rendering criticisms and justifications" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999:364). Here, I intend "critical comments" as manifestations of digitally-mediated "critical moments" (Ibid.). Hence, I expect justifications inscribed in YouTube comments to reveal those aesthetic criteria perceived to be socially acceptable and legitimate in music evaluations. This means that, through critical comments, is possible to study eventual aesthetic hierarchies ranking legitimate and illegitimate styles of music appreciation (see Section 4.4).

[65] The digital investigation of the practices of Italian One Direction's fans on Twitter, by Arvidsson and colleagues (2016), is one of the few examples of online analyses researching the relationship between platformed sociality and value creation, though not focused on cultural evaluation.

b) *Mapping cultural worth*. According to Bourdieu, aesthetic judgements are "always implicitly based on reference to 'typical works', consciously or un consciously selected because they present to a particularly high degree the qualities more or less explicitly recognized as pertinent in a given system of classification" (Bourdieu 1984:52). This is even more true when musical evaluations are communicated to the hardly predictable audience of the platform, through critical comments. As also Boltanski and Thevenot noted, "in order to criticize and to explain to somebody else what is going wrong, one has to bring together different sets of people and objects and to make connections between them [...] with reference to a principle of equivalence which clarifies what they have in common" (1999:361). Logically, artistic references must be widely shared and intelligible. The "play of cultured allusions and analogies endlessly pointing to other analogies" (Ibid.:53), once inscribed in persistent and researchable digital discourses, allowed me to explore shared perception of cultural worth in the field of music consumption (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). The distribution of dislikes across artists, as well as the webs of positive, neutral and negative analogies made by commenters, shed light on shared understandings of cultural legitimacy by Italian music publics (see Section 4.5).

c) *Distinctions in practice*. Online comments on YouTube consists in a form of asynchronous communication, directed to the author of the video and, particularly, to the platform's "invisible audience" (boyd, 2011). Hence, critical comments about music – by bringing classificatory systems, boundary-works and judgements of taste in digitally-mediated social situations (see Meyrowitz, 1985) – shed light on processes of distinction immersed in the practice of social interaction (Holt, 1997a). Anthropologist Fredrik Barth argued that a core component of any culture is an inherent evaluation system – i.e. the "standards of morality and excellence" by which judging the others as well as oneself (Barth, 1981:203). If we accept that taste classifies the classifier (Bourdieu, 1984), we assume that music consumption carries salient social meanings (see Schmutz, 2009; Griswold, 1987; Douglas and Isherwood, 1979). Indeed, the field of music consumption is a battleground where different definitions of "authentic" and "inauthentic", "right" and "wrong" and, ultimately, "us" and "them" are constantly in play (Lamont, 1992). This is true also for popular music evaluations, as recent studies have shown – for instance, in the cases of rap (Hammou, 2016; Gibson, 2014), electro (Thornton, 1995) and salsa music (Bachmayer et al., 2014). As a consequence, a potential outcome of hundreds of

music listeners – characterized by different tastes, social backgrounds and endowments of cultural capital – being digitally co-present, commenting the same popular music video, is stigmatization. As Bourdieu noticed,

"The logic of the stigma reminds us that social identity is the stake in a struggle in which the stigmatized individual or group, and, more generally, any individual or group insofar as he or it is a potential object of categorization, can only retaliate against the partial perception which limits it to one of its characteristics by highlighting, in its self definition, the best of its characteristics, and, more generally, by struggling to impose the taxonomy most favourable to its characteristics, or at least to give to the dominant taxonomy the con ten t most flattering to what it has and what it is" (Bourdieu 1984:476).

Are forms of symbolic violence practiced by Italian digital music consumers on YouTube? This is a first research question, regarding those explicit forms of distinction here I call "symbolic distinctions" (see Section 1.2). A second, subtler issue concerns "practical distinctions" instead, based on the exercise of embodied cultural capital in aesthetic evaluations – which is not necessarily intentional, but similarly exclusionary in its social consequences (Lizardo, 2014; Holt, 1997a). The discourse analysis of critical comments presented in Section 4.6 aims to deal with these two core aspects of Bourdieu's legacy (1984).

4.3 Data and methods

The empirical analyses presented in this Chapter are based on a subset of the large comment-corpus, featuring "critical comments", that is, YouTube comments criticising one or more elements involved in the discursive context – such as the video, the music, the artist, other commenters or music publics[66]. This subset has been selected according to the following procedure. In Section 3.3.3, I briefly illustrated how I manually constructed a dictionary of 1029 terms occurring at least 10 times in the corpus, characterized by undoubtedly negative or positive meanings in the specific semantic context of music reception. Through this dictionary, each comment's rate of negative and positive words was computed. Then, only those comments featuring more negative than positive words were selected, in order to quantitatively isolate critical comments. The resulting 4739 comments have been analysed as follows.

[66] Thelwall and Vis' contribution empirically shows that, within the category "music", comments to YouTube videos mostly carry a positive sentiment (2012:619).

4.3.1 Analysing justifications

I coded aesthetic judgements in a grounded way (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967), that is, by constructing and adjusting the coding scheme throughout the analytical process of classification. First, I distinguished critical comments expressing a dislike directed towards the artist in the music video from those criticising other discursive objects, such as mentioned artists, commenters or music publics. This way, I assigned comments to two main categories: "dislikes" and "defences". This latter label stands for comments aiming to defend the music artist in the video from commenters' critiques. Second, I individuated the main aesthetic focuses of the judgements of taste featured by each comment – meaning, what evaluations referred to. Third, I qualitatively derived and quantified the evaluative principles employed by commenters in order to justify their critical judgements. The emerging coding scheme of aesthetic focuses and evaluative principles, inspired by both Boltanski and Thevenot (2006) and Bourdieu (1984), will be illustrated in Section 4.4. The analysis of justifications allowed me to test whether the distribution of evaluative repertoires across situations and commenters followed a Bourdieuian or Boltanskian pattern (see Section 4.2). This was possible by adopting an unsupervised statistical technique known as hierarchical clustering (see Everitt et al., 2011), which is useful to inductively describe relations between variables. In my case, I applied it to a matrix featuring the frequency of evaluative principles (columns) per each commenter (rows).

4.3.2 Measuring cultural legitimacy

The second purpose of this chapter is to map how music artists are perceived by Italian listeners on YouTube. What are the artists and genres positively narrated as "good" and "legitimate" in critical comments? What is disliked or stigmatized in the realm of musical taste instead? Aiming to answer these research questions, I measured artists' perceived cultural legitimacy in two main ways. First, I computed the percentage of "dislikes" over the total number of comments, for each artist included in my video-dataset. The lower the incidence of negative comments, the higher the artist's reputation in the field of music consumption. My assumption is that, if an artist is widely consecrated, YouTube users will not publicly express their eventual distaste, being involved in a sort of "spiral of silence" (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

Still, we know that comments about music on YouTube normally have a positive sentiment (Thelwall and Vis, 2012) and that the related-video algorithm on the platform tend to suggest music content which is similar to what one already listens to (Airoldi et al., 2016). This

means that users may be more likely to encounter and comment artists they like. Thus, particularly in the case of niche genres, the percentage of dislikes may say something about how artists are perceived by their specific music publics (see Chapter 3), and not, broadly, by the whole spectrum of Italian music listeners. Hence, I employed also a second methodological strategy, which is less appropriate to systematically assess the reputation of the artists featured in my dataset, but better able to render the symbolic universes (Berger and Luckmann, 2016) and webs of meanings (Geertz, 1973) implicit in the Italian field of music consumption. That is, I manually coded each music artist, band or genre mentioned in critical comments, indicating the positive, negative or neutral sentiment of the mention. 1274 critical comments (27%) feature at least one artistic mention. Then, each relation between the artist in the music video and the corresponding mentions was represented as an edge in a network, as visualized in Fig. 9 and 10. This allowed me to inductively map the structure and sentiment of artistic references across music publics (see Section 4.5)[67].

4.3.3 Interpreting distinctions

Last, in order to study distinctions – that is, taste-related classificatory practices which (intentionally or not) draw symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) excluding social categories that are seen as less desirable, unworthy or illegitimate (Schmutz, 2009:299) – I conducted a close, qualitative reading of each of my 4739 critical comments, using a discourse analytical approach (see Fairclough, 2003). In the sociological and anthropological literatures, the qualitative study of online conversations is now an established strand of research (for an overview, see Caliandro and Gandini, 2017). Goodman and Rowe's qualitative study of racism in online forums (2014) and Williams' ethnographic research on the negotiation of authenticity in Internet communities dedicated to straightedge subculture and music (2006) are two valuable examples of how to naturalistically investigate symbolic struggles (Bourdieu, 1989) and boundary-works (Beer, 2013) in digital environments. Following these contributions, I identified and in-depth analysed comments regarding a) the negotiation of authenticity (Barth, 1969) and worth in the musical domain and b) forms of social stigmatization and symbolic exclusion pointing to stereotypical social

[67] Here I pursued in the musical field Bourdieu's appeal for a "methodical analysis of the variations in the function and meaning conferred on the different sporting activities" which would "enable one to escape from abstract, formal 'typologies' based (it is the law of the genre) on universalizing the researcher's personal experience; and to construct the table of the sociologically pertinent features in terms of which the agents (consciously or unconsciously) choose their sports" (1984:211).

categories (see Lamont, 1992). This way, I studied distinctions "in practice" (see Section 4.6), aiming to identify shared cultural patterns in the narrations of musical taste and distaste.

4.4 Aesthetic judgements and evaluative principles

The corpus of "critical comments"[68] features aesthetic judgements pointing to six main discursive objects, here called "aesthetic focuses". They are the following: the video's musical content; the video's visual content; the artist's personality; music listeners; music's artistic value; music's subcultural value (i.e. artistic value within the aesthetic boundaries of a specific music scene).

The evaluations of aesthetic focuses' worth have been socially justified by means of eighteen main evaluative principles, detected through a thick reading of comments' texts. They are described in Tab. 3 below. Column "%" reports the relative frequency of each evaluative principle, considering that, in total, they occur 6225 times, 3969 in justifications to dislikes and 1988 in support of defences (see Section 4.3.1). Columns "Gaze" and "World" lead evaluative principles back to, respectively, Bourdieuian and Boltanskian theoretical schemes (see Section 4.1).

These competing theoretical outlooks have been *ex post* applied to the already-coded data, following an inductive rather than deductive approach. As Tab. 3 shows, each of these eighteen evaluative principles can be interpreted either as grounded in music listeners' embodied aesthetic views (Bourdieu, 1984) or, conversely, in situation-based orders of justifications (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). By analysing the distribution of evaluative principles across commenters' evaluative repertoires, I empirically tested whether commenters individually employed coherent sets of aesthetic criteria across critical comments or, on the contrary – assuming the social evaluation of worth being a transient, contextual outcome – no clear individual patterns of music evaluation emerged. This latter scenario, here called "Boltanski's hypothesis" (see Section 2.4), would logically reject a Bourdieuian perspective, which assumes the dichotomy between intellectual and popular embodied tastes instead.

Through hierarchical clustering (Everitt et al., 2011) applied to a "Commenter X Evaluative principle" matrix (see Section 4.3.1), I detected four main clusters of evaluative principles,

[68] Out of 4739 comments in my dataset, 758 comments (16%) are "false positives" (see James et al., 2014) misclassified by the dictionary in the data selection process. They have been manually detected and removed from the final dataset.

visualized in the dendogram presented in Fig. 6 below[69]. The higher the position of an object on the map's y-axis, the later it forms clusters with others[70].

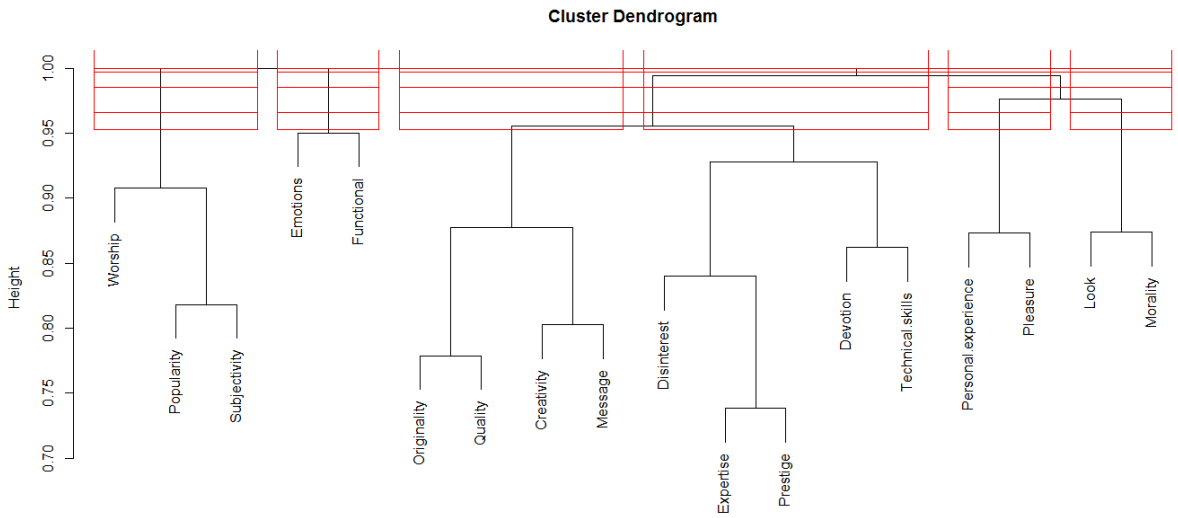
Table 3 Evaluative principles in critical comments. Bourdieu's "gaze", Boltanski and Thevenot's "world"

Ev. Princ.	Description	%	Gaze	World
Technical skills	Justifications pointing to singers/musicians/producers' technical skills. Music is good when makers are skilled.	12.80%	Pure	Industrial World
Prestige	Justifications referring to the artist's carrier, awards, timelessness. Music is good when is recognized as such.	11.60%	Pure	World of renown
Pleasure	Implicit justifications expressing immediate enjoyment or disgust. Music is good when gives pleasure.	10.10%	Naive	World of inspiration
Message	Justifications considering the social relevance of the lyrics. Music is good when carries a meaningful message.	8.70%	Naive	Civic World
Subjectivity	Justifications appealing to the subjectivity of taste and the common humanity shared by both artists and commenters. There are no such things as good and bad music.	7.60%	Naive	Domestic World
Morality	Justifications about the artist's moral character and personal behaviour. Music is good when its authors respect moral norms.	7.50%	Naive	Civic World
Expertise	Justifications regarding listeners/critics' (lack of) expertise in judging and consuming music. Music is good when listeners are competent.	7.50%	Pure	Industrial World
Quality	Justifications referring to the fineness and complexity of the work of art. Music is good when properly made.	6.20%	Pure	Industrial World
Originality	Justifications pointing to the originality, authenticity and innovativeness of music. Music is good when it is not banal.	5.50%	Pure	World of renown
Creativity	Justifications referring to the artist's creative force, autonomy, intelligence. Music is good when it stems from the artist's inspiration.	5.30%	Pure	World of inspiration
Disinterest	Justifications implicitly or explicitly disregarding popularity and economic success. Music is good when disinterested.	5.10%	Pure	World of inspiration
Personal experience	Justifications mentioning the commenter's life and relation with music. Music is good when enters one's everyday life.	4.10%	Naive	Domestic World
Popularity	Justifications positively referring to visibility, economic success, money. Music is good when best-selling.	2.40%	Naive	Market World
Devotion	Justifications evoking the artist's hard work, dedication and formation. Music is good if it is a devotion.	1.70%	Naive	Industrial World
Worship	Justifications where the artist is compared to a god or an idol, whose music is good a priori.	1.40%	Naive	Civic World
Emotions	Justifications regarding the emotional power of music. Music is good when provokes emotions.	0.90%	Naive	World of inspiration
Look	Justifications pointing to the artist's (lack of) beauty or outfit. Music is good when the artist looks good.	0.90%	Naive	Domestic World
Functional	Justifications related to the situational or functional purpose of music listening. Music is good when useful.	0.40%	Naive	Market World

[69] The very same structure and clusters are found analysing a subset of my data including only commentators featuring at least two comments in the dataset. Hierarchical clustering and dendogram visualisation have been made using statistical software R.

[70] James and colleagues nicely explain how to interpret a dendogram: "for any two observations, we can look for the point in the tree where branches containing those two observations are first fused. The height of this fusion, as measured on the vertical axis, indicates how different the two observations are. Thus, observations that fuse at the very bottom of the tree are quite similar to each other, whereas observations that fuse close to the top of the tree will tend to be quite different" (2014:391-92).

Figure 6 Evaluative principles X commenters hierarchical clustering, visualized as dendogram. Four main clusters (from left to right): A, B, C and D



Cluster A includes "popularity", "subjectivity" and, to a lesser extent "worship". Cluster B features "emotional" and "functional" evaluative principles. Cluster C includes the following four sub-clusters: "originality" and "quality"; "creativity" and "message"; "expertise", "prestige" and "disinterest"; "devotion" and "technical skills". Cluster D features, on the one side, "personal experience" and "pleasure" and, on the other, "look" and "morality".

The most striking result is that "pure" aesthetic criteria all belong to cluster C (see Tab. 3). Thus, music listeners' evaluative repertoires employed for justifying critical comments are not randomly distributed, as a Boltanskian situational logic would imply. Aesthetic judgements discursively displaying what Bourdieu considered as an intellectual style of music appreciation (1984) – that is, praising songs' originality and quality, publics' expertise as well as artists' creativity, disinterest, prestige and technical skills – are statistically likely to be authored by a coherent set of commenters who hardly use popular evaluative principles, characterizing cluster A, B and D instead[71].

In cluster C, the sole presumably "naive" evaluative principles are "message" and "devotion". This latter finding can be interpreted considering the centrality and cultural legitimacy of *canzone d'autore* in the Italian field of popular music (see Santoro, 2013). As

[71] Moreover, this pattern is not the outcome of an intermediate clustering of commenters and artists/musical works, as one might hypothesize. Though given musical contents may hypothetically foster the use of specific evaluative criteria (for instance, "schmaltzy" songs and emotions), data about the association between evaluative repertoires and artists do not reveal any clear relation in this sense (see Figure 24, Appendix 2).

Santoro clearly remarks, both lyrics' "serious" social and political contents and singer-songwriters' "authentic" artistic commitment are key traits characterizing this genre (2002) and, partly, Italian rap music – now invested by an ongoing process of canonization (Santoro and Solaroli, 2007). Hence, the historical transition of bourgeois' aesthetic disposition in the Italian music-scape may have led to the consecration of these two aesthetic criteria. The analysis of critical comments featuring such evaluative principles substantially validates this interpretation, as in the examples below.

"One of the few Italian singers whose songs have a meaning [...]. Caparezza's album is never banal or predictable" (Artist: Caparezza; evaluative principles: message, originality);

"I don't understand these singers who believe to be rappers only because they use rhymes. In my opinion, they don't know what living in shitty troubles means and they rap only to become famous" (Artist: Low Low; evaluative principles: devotion, disinterested).

Still, it is necessary to inquire why popular evaluative principles do not form a second, coherent cluster, but three groupings instead. Several hypotheses can be formulated by qualitatively comparing critical comments, in order to show the contextual uses of justifications. Subjectivity, popularity and worship get together in cluster A, probably because they are often employed by fans who need to defend the pop artists they love from commenters' critiques, as in the case below:

"You are amazing, you're my life, DON'T LISTEN TO THEIR CRITIQUES, WHILE THEY CRITICIZE YOU HAVE MORE SUCCESS!" (Artist: Emma Marrone; evaluative principles: worship, subjectivity, popularity).

Emotional and functional criteria (cluster B), despite being not particularly close to each other (as their "height" in Fig. 6 witnesses), are similarly used in defences, as in the following comment, regarding an Italian mainstream pop band called Dear Jack:

"We are so used to criticize others' tastes, although we are astonished when other people don't understand us. Perhaps it is time to stop insulting and, if you really need to criticize, doing it judiciously, respecting other people, since this is the only way for growing up in a better society. Given that, I am a boy and I shamelessly admit that I like this song, because every song we listen to reminds us who we are and who we were. This song reminds me of last summer, having been the soundtrack of my holiday in Puglia, a place that I love. I don't care if it is commercial or whatever, it reminds me great memories. If songs serve a purpose, this is precisely

reminding us our past" (Artist: Dear Jack; evaluative principles: personal experience, subjectivity, emotions, functional).

Last, judgements of taste justified by referring to personal experiences and (lack of) immediate pleasure represent a first branch of cluster D. 44 commenters over 3665 have employed both aesthetic criteria, often coupled within single comments. For instance, in the following case, the disgusted reaction toward the song is further supported by an anecdote regarding everyday life:

"What a shitty song! That's a true nightmare for commuters like me. Every radio continues to play it incessantly" (Artist: Perturbazione; evaluative principles: pleasure, personal experience).

The second branch of cluster D (see Fig. 6) brings together critical evaluations based on the artist's look and morality. In terms of language and commenting style, differences from more intellectual aesthetic judgements – disregarding the commercial, futile, banal character of songs as well as listeners' lack of expertise – are evident, as in the following examples.

"I'm waiting here for all the fans of this fatty nymphomaniac, I'll kill all of them! You can feel that she's dirty" (Artist: Giusy Ferreri; evaluative principles: look, morality);

"Horrifying commercial song for ignorant infants. Maybe the instrumental version is better" (Artist: Il Pagante; evaluative principles: disinterest, expertise, quality).

Although Friedman and Kuipers, in their study of distinction in the field of comedy, noted that high-cultural-capital respondents "frequently draw hierarchical taste boundaries on the basis of morality" (2013:186), here critiques based on moral justifications appear to be characterized by a popular imaginary and language. While a consistent part of commenters had enough "cultural ease" (Bourdieu, 1984) for formulating formal aesthetic judgements, another fraction did not. This is evident comparing the use of evaluative principles across different types of digital critical moments (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999), namely, dislikes and defences.

In justifying one's dislikes, whereas most commenters relied solely on the popular evaluative principles constituting cluster D (see Fig. 6), another part predominantly used the following "pure" criteria: technical skills, prestige, disinterest and originality. Hence, on the one side, we see critiques based on personal memories, immediate "sensorial" reactions or artists'

personal features and behaviours; on the other, commenters' justifications disclose something similar to a Bourdieuian aesthetic disposition, grounded in a distant style of music appreciation (1984). This is even more clear when listeners intervene in digital disputes in order to defend the music video from a diffuse criticism perceived as unfair. While popular criteria characterizing defences most are those featured by clusters A and B (see Fig. 6), "intellectual" defences stress artists' creativity and devotion, lyrics' message and commenters lack of competence. Thus, on the one hand, critiques are seen as unfair because taste is subjective; because that song communicates emotions, or is good for dancing with; because that music artist is an idol, or has millions of views on YouTube. On the other, critical commenters are wrong because they are not enough expert to judge properly. They do not understand the serious meaning of the lyrics, or the artists' creativity and vocation. In plain words, they are (implicitly or explicitly) regarded as culturally inferior.

In conclusion, this asymmetry reveals something more than the peaceful, horizontal co-presence of two main styles of music evaluation. The tight association between aesthetic judgements based on artistic prestige – which presuppose the cultural capital necessary to make formal comparisons and analogies – and those referring to listeners' (lack of) musical expertise (see Fig. 6), suggests that intellectual criteria are perceived as more socially legitimate and distinctive than popular ones. In other words, this indicates that an aesthetic hierarchy ranking "pure" and "naive" embodied tastes is currently salient in the Italian field of popular music consumption, and it fairly resembles Bourdieu's original description (see Section 4.1.1).

Still, as Boltanski and Thevenot suggested (1999), listeners' evaluative styles tend to vary also depending on the type of critical moment they need to copy with. Some aesthetic approaches, both in the popular and intellectual domains, are more associated to the act of defending the artist than others. The same happens in the case of dislikes. However, as Stephen Vaisey theoretically pointed out and this analysis shows, "people bring something with them from one interaction to another" (2009:1705; see also DiMaggio, 1997). YouTube commenters brought with them their styles of evaluations, together with their perception of what evaluative repertoires are to be considered socially legitimate and what are not.

According to Bourdieu, "people's image of the classification is a function of their position within it" (1984:473). As far as I could grasp the individual behind the text, three main categories of music evaluators on the platform, characterized by different classificatory imaginations (Beer, 2013), can be drawn from my data. A first group owns an aesthetic disposition, and knows that it represents the legitimate way to approach cultural goods.

Thanks to this implicit self-assurance, these commenters often justify their judgements by publicly remarking the cultural inferiority of other tastes. The second group is guided by a "taste of the senses" (Bourdieu, 1984). It hardly manages the language of music expertise. Once attacked, these listeners normally appeal to the subjectivity of musical taste – perhaps, because they implicitly know that their taste is often regarded as bad. The third group, though (apparently) not familiar with intellectual evaluative criteria, attempts to use them anyway to justify comments, probably aiming to make judgements more sound and socially acceptable. Of course, an in-depth analysis of the distinctive uses of objectified and embodied tastes by music commenters on YouTube is necessary in order to maintain these considerations. It will be presented in Section 4.6. After having dealt with criteria of music appreciation, the next section focuses on the objects of aesthetic evaluation. That is, on music artists and their perceived cultural worth.

4.5 Mapping cultural legitimacy on YouTube

One of the research questions guiding the investigation presented in this chapter regards listeners' perceptions of "good" and "bad", "fine" and "vulgar" objectified tastes in the Italian field of popular music consumption. This section deals with this issue by analysing two distinct types of data (see Section 4.3.2) – namely, artists' dislike-count (Section 4.5.1) and commenters' musical analogies (Section 4.5.2). Through the present macro overview of digital music consumers aggregated preferences and semantic associations, I aim to provide a third dimension to the maps of the field's symbolic space illustrated in Chapter 3. That is, a fine-grained measure of artists and genres' perceived position on a multidimensional hierarchy of cultural legitimacy. Then, the degree of universality of the resulting symbolic ranking will be further inquired in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.5.1 The distribution of musical worth

Critical comments featuring negative judgements directed to the musical content of the videos, here called "dislikes", are 2663, corresponding to 2.7 percent of my whole comment-dataset[72]. By computing the proportion of dislikes per each artist, I aimed to measure digital music consumers' aggregated perceptions of their cultural value.

[72] As Thelwall and Vis have documented, negative sentiment is particularly low in the case of music on YouTube (2012).

Fig. 7 below shows the relative distribution of perceived negativity (y-axis) across most-commented artists' decades of debut (x-axis). At a first inspection, an evident correlation between the two variables suggests that contemporary artists are largely more stigmatized and less consecrated than older ones. Although it is true that listeners' narrations frequently praise the value and authenticity of Italian popular music of the 1960-70s as well as of "old school" Italian rap of the early 1990s (see Section 4.5.2), the relative distribution of dislikes across artists' decades of debut hides also something else. Among the top 50 most-negatively commented artists (see Fig. 8), 33 are contemporary Italian rappers (eg. Vacca, Achille Lauro, Maruego, Moreno), while the remaining ones are current mainstream pop Italian artists (e.g. Arisa, Povia, Dear Jack).

Figure 7 Percentage of relative negativity per most-commented artists' decades of debut

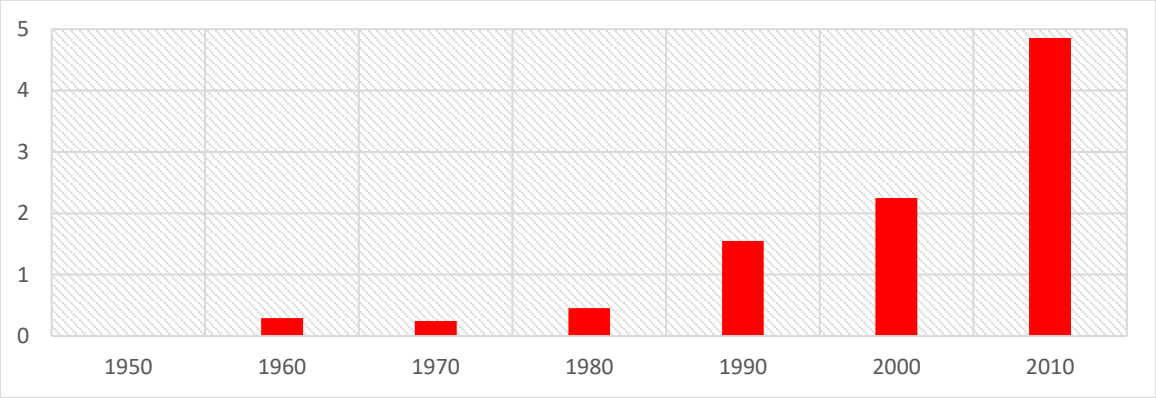
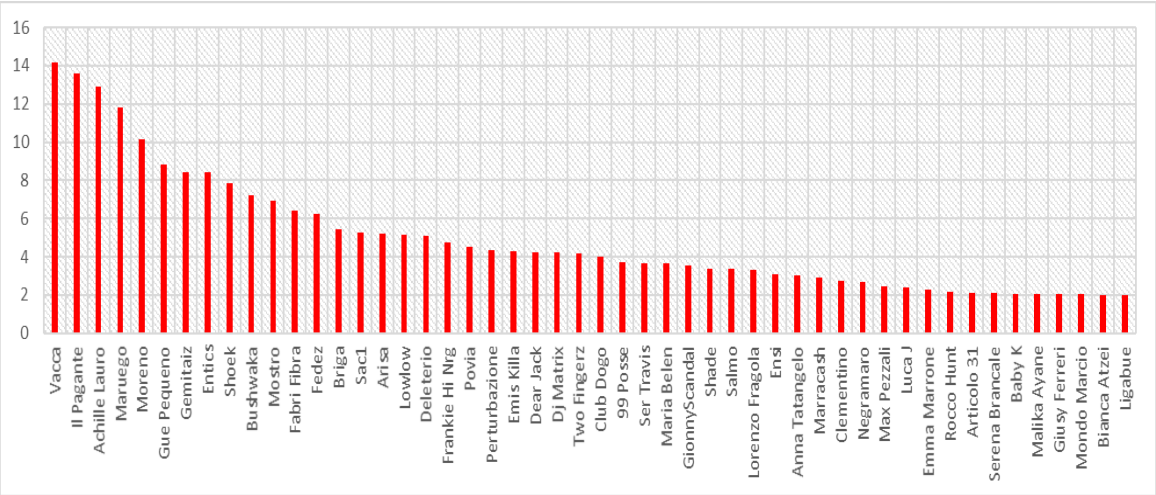


Figure 8 Top 50 most-commented artists per relative negativity (%)



As the analysis of commenters' vocabularies presented in Section 3.4.4 denoted, the audience of Italian hip hop is characterized by a subcultural language and, often, by an aggressive commenting style. More generally, contests and disputes involving both artists

and their publics are historically central in hip hop culture, as in the case of rap battles (see Harkness, 2012). For instance, Italian rappers Vacca and Fabri Fibra – who are, respectively, in 1st and 12th positions in Fig. 8 – explicitly attacked each other through several diss tracks[73] included in my dataset. As a result, commenters joined the fight, heavily insulting and criticizing the opponent they disliked most, thus making the negativity of the two artists rise. Hence, the outstanding proportion of negative comments in rappers' discursive repertoires is partly explained once the cultural specificities of the genre and of its publics are taken into consideration[74].

Conversely, the discursive repertoires of "vintage" Italian artist and bands rarely feature commenters' dislikes (see Fig. 7). On the one hand, their audience is probably less used to express musical distaste publicly on the platform. On the other, we know from the literature presented in Section 2.6 that classic *cantautori* have been increasingly canonized in recent times (see Santoro, 2013; Santoro, 2002). Indeed, Fabrizio De André, Lucio Dalla, Domenico Modugno, Luigi Tenco, Francesco De Gregori, Francesco Guccini and Rino Gaetano are all below 0.3 percent of negativity. It happens the same in the case of other big names of *musica leggera* of the 1960-70s like Mina, Adriano Celentano, Massimo Ranieri, Mia Martini.

To sum up, descriptive analyses show that, the more recent a given artist is, the more negative comments to videos on the platform are. A second approach, presented below (Section 4.5.2), will serve as a means of triangulation.

4.5.2 A networked symbolic universe

I manually coded the 1818 musical analogies made by critical commenters, associating the artist featured in the music video to other ones mentioned in the comment (see Section 4.3.2). By considering how mentioned artists and genres have been discursively used as positive, negative or neutral examples of musical worth (see Bourdieu, 1984:52), I intended to grasp the symbolic value socially attached to them by listeners, corresponding to their perceived cultural legitimacy[75]. Furthermore, the resulting list of semantic relations between artist X

[73] Songs intended to disrespect someone, normally other artists. They are particularly common in hip hop music (see Gibson, 2014).

[74] This view has been confirmed by one of the YouTube users I interviewed (M37C, see Chapter 5), who underlined that the platform had a crucial role in the recent development and diffusion of a rap scene in Italy. As he literally said, YouTube is seen by rap listeners as reproducing a sort of enlarged hip hop battle, where everyone can participate by freely manifesting personal tastes and distastes, even in a strong and explicit way.

[75] I used the following formula: symbolic value = (number of positive mentions – number of negative mentions)/total number of mentions.

(featured in the music video) and Y (mentioned in the comment) has been analysed as a directed network (see Wasserman and Faust, 1994). This made possible to relate the measure of artists' perceived cultural worth to their contextual position in the structure of listeners' "webs of meaning" (Geertz, 1973).

Overall, 503 nodes (artists and genres) are linked via 977 edges of average weight 1.94. Fig. 9 is a visual representation of a portion of the resulting network of musical analogies. Only artists mentioned at least two times are shown. Colours indicate each artist's average sentiment: from dark red (all negative mentions) to dark blue (all positive mentions), with white in-between the two.

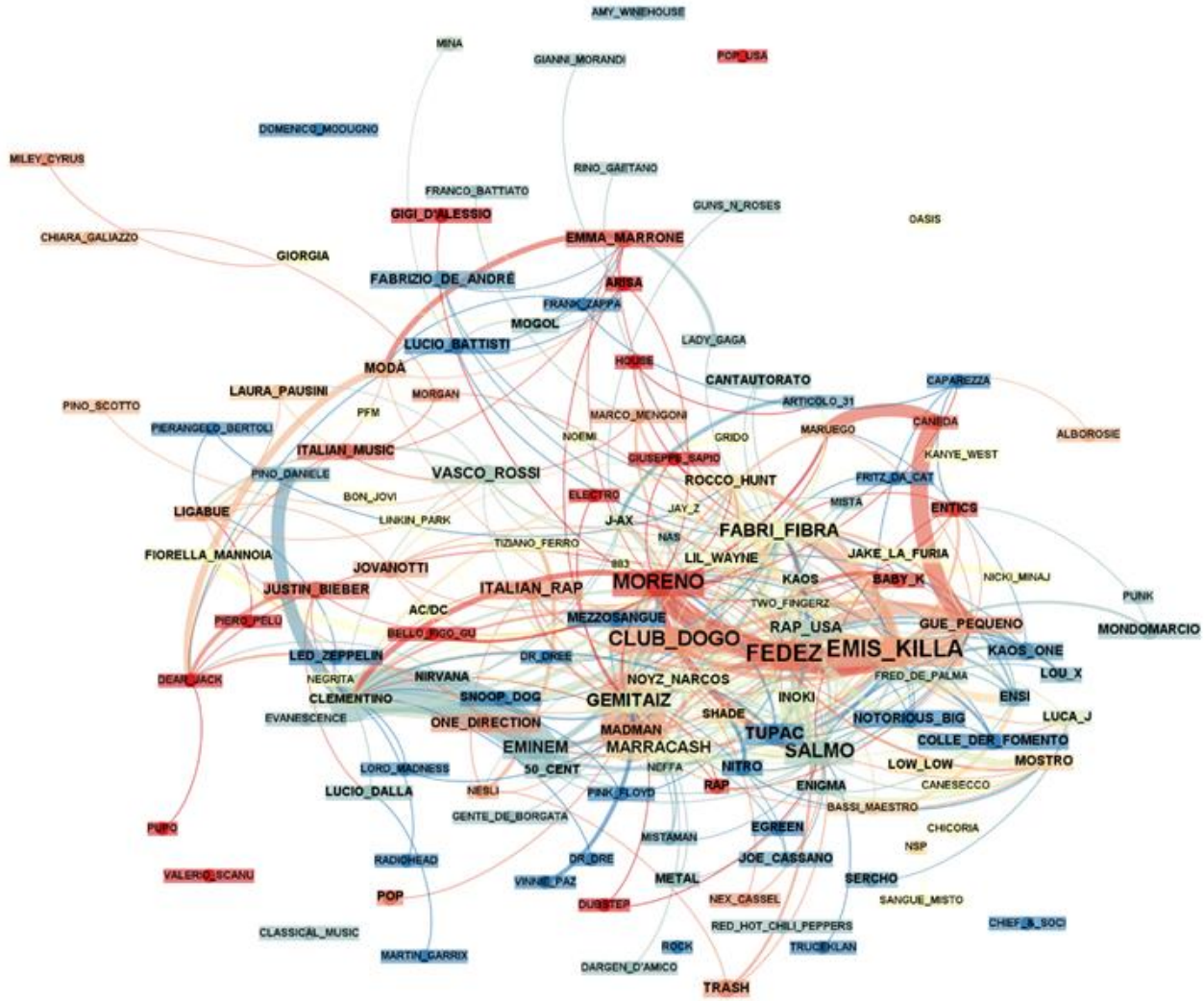
It must be noticed that rap is the predominant genre in the map. Nearly all the artists in the right half of Fig. 9 are Italian or American rappers. This evident overrepresentation of rap music is due to the relevance of this genre in the critical-comments-dataset[76] – which is itself an outcome of the already stated aggressive attitude of hip hop listeners commenting on the platform (see Section 4.5.1). What rap-related analogies reveal is that contemporary, mainstream Italian rappers such as Fedez, Club Dogo, Emis Killa and Moreno are mentioned very frequently and, nearly every time, in a negative way. For hip hop publics, these artists carry a clear, negatively distinctive value.

"Some years ago I believed that Fabri Fibra was the best, now I say the contrary. You've become a sellout. You were a giant of Italian rap and now you're a sellout, you're like a bitch. We've too many commercial rappers like Emis Killa, Fedez and, now, you too" (Artist: Fabri Fibra; evaluative principles: prestige, disinterest);

"So this should be rap [...] you're humiliating 25 years of rap, which names like SANGUE MISTO KAOS ONE LOU X OTIERRE CHIEF AND CO THE NEXT DIFFUSION have built. You and other commercial assholes like Fedez, Emis Killa, Moreno, Baby K, Club Dogo and so on, you're the ruin, you're a degeneration, and who likes this stuff and say 'oh bro you rulez' [...], I disgust them. Go listen to teletubbies' songs, idiots" (Artist: Lady D; evaulative principles: prestige, disinterest, technical skills, expertise).

[76] 17.3 percent of critical comments feature aesthetic judgements regarding the subcultural value of the music in the video. The large majority of these comments is about rap music.

Figure 9 The network of musical analogies. The bigger the label, the more frequently the artist has been mentioned. Nodes' colours indicate the average sentiment of each artist's mentions (light blue = positive, red = negative). Layout: Yifan Yu



Conversely, two main categories of rap artists are frequently employed by commenters as symbols of subcultural worth: Italian "old school" rappers of the 1990s (e.g. Colle Der Fomento, Kaos One, Lou X, Joe Cassano, Mezzosangue, Fritz Da Cat) and American rappers (mainly Tupac, Notorious Big, Egreen, Snoop Dog, Eminem and 50 Cent). Fabri Fibra, Rocco Hunt, Marracash, Noyz Narcos, Low Low, Mostro as well as Lil Wayne (in white) are contested cultural objects, surrounded by symbolic struggles between publics having opposite opinions about them. Last, Salmo, Caparezza, Mondomarcio, Ensi and Nitro appear to be among the few contemporary Italian rappers characterized by a good musical reputation.

If rap-related musical references form a coherent subcultural cluster in the network, this is not the case of the rest of Fig. 9. Nevertheless, the marked symbolic power carried by "vintage" Italian artists characterizes also the scattered realm of pop-rock, as Section 4.5.1

already suggested. Indeed, Emma Marrone, Dear Jack and Valerio Scanu are well-known names in contemporary Italian mainstream pop, recently rose to fame thanks to talent shows on Italian television. They are all narrated as extremely negative musical examples, together with an artist in particular, Gigi D'Alessio, a famous *neomelodico* singer widely criticized also by critics (see Section 2.6.1).

"I'd rather like Gigi D'Alessio than this putrefying shit" (Artist: Moreno; evaluative principle: prestige).

On the contrary, classic Italian artists of the past like Mina, Domenico Modugno, Gianni Morandi, Rino Gaetano, Franco Battiato, Pierangelo Bertoli, Pino Daniele, Lucio Dalla and – particularly – Fabrizio De André have been all mentioned uniquely in the guise of standards of musical excellence.

Is it just a matter of how far in time an artist debuted? Not really. We must reflect about what is not mentioned by commenters, since many other names and genres could have been used as alternative benchmarks of musical worth. Still, in the pop-rock area of Fig. 9, *canzone d'autore* dominate positive mentions, whereas negative mentions all regard "schmaltzy" mainstream pop singers of 2010s. Like in the case of "commercial" vs. "old school" rap, these two genres are discursively used in comments as synonymous of – respectively – "bad" and "good", "inauthentic" and "authentic" Italian music (see Gibson, 2014; Barth, 1981).

"Another meaningless dirge, 'pseudo-talent-show-singers' style. Poor Italian music" (Artist: Alessandra Amoroso; evaluative principles: pleasure, message, prestige);

"Have you ever listened to Mina, Lucio Battisti, Fabrizio De André. Franco Battiato? Have you ever listened to true music? I can imagine the answer: 'that is old stuff, these guys are young like us instead'. My gosh, how could we sink so low? [...] (Artist: Negramaro; evaluative principles: prestige, expertise).

Fabrizio De André, the most iconic of Italian *cantautori* (see Tomatis, 2014), was mentioned ten times in total, twice neutrally and eight times positively. Interestingly, three out of ten mentions are in comments regarding Italian rappers. As also the mid-ground position of "cantautorato" (light blue) in the network indicates, this genre appears to be a fairly transversal standard of musical excellence across distinct taste publics. The same happens, in opposite terms, for talent-show artists like Moreno and, particularly, Emma Marrone, who was negatively mentioned ten times out of a total of twelve – three times in the context of rap music videos. Hence, these artists and music categories carry symbolic meanings that

are transversally intelligible by distinct audiences. In other words, they work as "boundary objects", defined by Star and Griesemer as

> "objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. They may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation" (1989:393).

Discussing about music in general, commenters frequently draw another symbolic boundary (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) between Italian and international artists. The positive connotation generally given to international singers and bands (with the exception of Justin Bieber, One Direction and Miley Cyrus) and the parallel stigmatization of broad categories such as "Italian rap" and "Italian music" highlights the presence of a cosmopolitan attitude, essentially based on diffuse hostility towards domestic music (Meuleman and Lubbers, 2014).

Fig. 10, by considering solely those analogies made in comments having "prestige" as evaluative principle (see Tab. 3), offers a more limpid picture of Italian listeners' networked "symbolic universe" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The artists appearing in this graph are solely those intentionally used as benchmarks of artistic value by commenters. If no collective agreement on the cultural legitimacy of these artists existed, I would have expected nodes in the network to be largely white, as a result of the random distribution of positive and negative mentions. Still, both Fig. 9 and 10 show a clear, within-genre polarization between "good" (blue) and "bad" (red) artists.

In brief, in the Italian field of popular music consumption I observe a cultural hierarchy made of three nested dimensions. For what concerns music in general, international pieces normally carry a higher symbolic value than Italian ones. Then, in the specific domain of Italian music, vintage and disinterested artists – that is, working in a restricted subfield of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993) – are perceived as worthier than young, mainstream ones. Last, within Italian hip hop's subcultural scene, "old school" and "underground" rappers are narrated as more valuable than contemporary and "commercial" ones. In-between these three intertwined hierarchical dimensions, we have symbols of worth discursively working as "boundary objects" (Star and Griesemer, 1989), that is, carrying social meanings understandable by various taste publics. They are, particularly, well-known consecrated *cantautori* like Fabrizio De André – perceived as an undoubtedly "authentic",

“disinterested”, “creative”, “serious” music artist – and talent-show pop singers like Emma Marrone – who, according to many critical commenters on YouTube, exemplifies “commercial”, “banal” and “inauthentic” music (see Fig. 11 for an overview).

Figure 10 The network of musical analogies under the category of prestige (min. 2 mentions each). The bigger the label, the more frequently the artist has been mentioned. Nodes’ colours indicate the average sentiment of each artist’s mentions (light blue = positive, red = negative). Layout: Yifan Yu

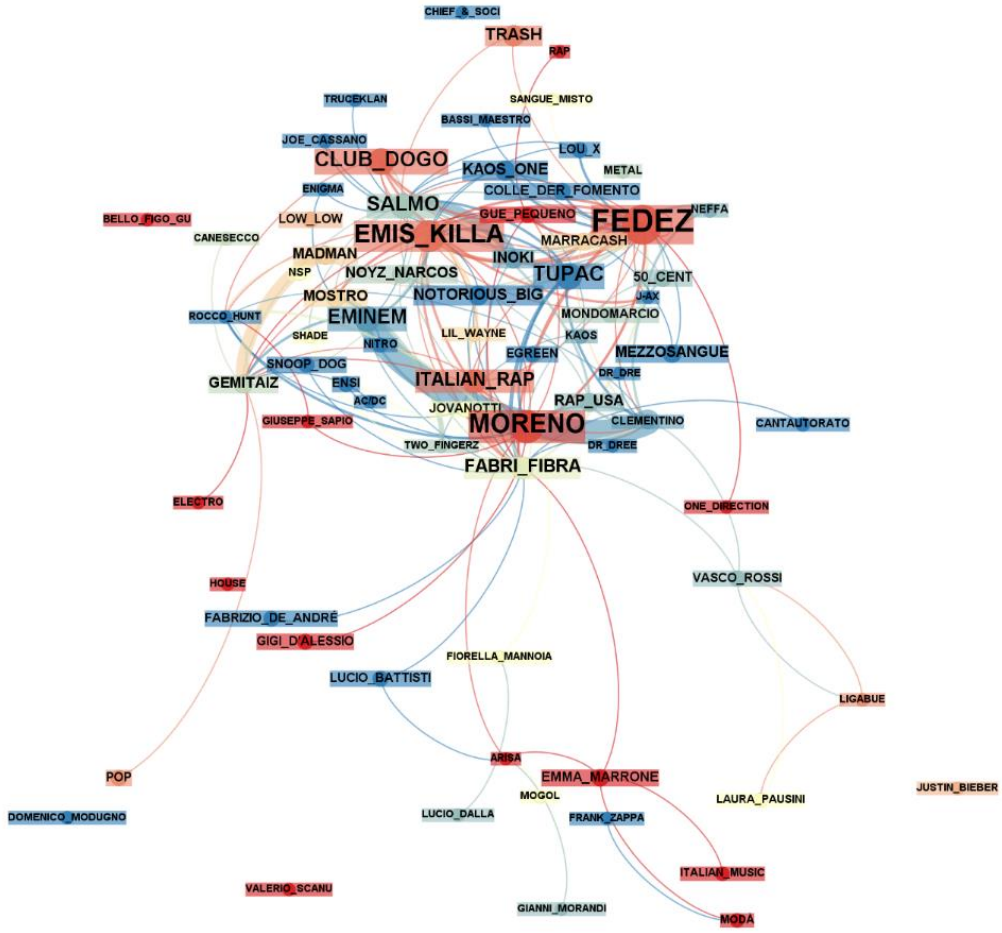
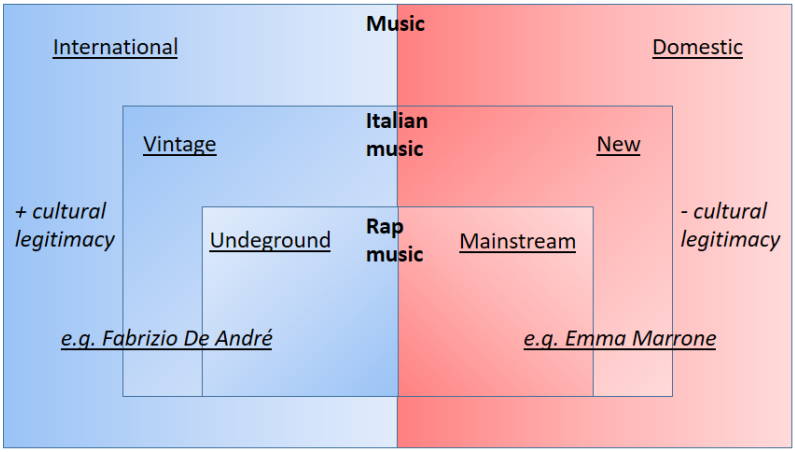


Figure 11 A representation of the multidimensional cultural hierarchy characterizing the Italian field of music consumption



4.6 Narrating distaste: Italian music listeners and digital distinctions

Anthropologist Fredrik Barth painstakingly studied the interactional negotiation of an "authentic" ethnic identity (1969), ethnographically looking at social categorization processes by Pathan tribes in Afghanistan. Similarly, the final purpose of this chapter is to comprehend how socially constructed differences between "good" and "bad" music (objectified taste) as well as "intellectual" and "popular" styles of music appreciation (embodied taste) are practically used by Italian music listeners on YouTube as distinctive signs displayed in digitally-mediated social interactions, which themselves classify culturally dominant and dominated listeners (Bourdieu, 1984). This purpose deserves a closer, qualitative look to users' critical narrations on the platform (see Fairclough, 2003). For this reason, I focused on boundary-works (see Beer, 2013) – revealing the social uses of situated notions of authenticity (Section 4.6.1) – and discursive forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989) – shedding light on shared connections between cultural and social worth (Section 4.6.2).

4.6.1 Music, authenticity and distinction

Taste, according to Bourdieu, is "an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate'" (1984:466). Almost 40 percent of critical comments in my dataset feature boundary-works negotiating authenticity, aiming to differentiate between what is "true" music and what is not. As I shown in the previous section (4.5), the types of music YouTube commenters discuss about are socially perceived as being more or less legitimate. International, vintage, underground and, more generally, disinterested musical works carry a higher symbolic value in the Italian field of music consumption in comparison to domestic, young, mainstream, commercial artists. By displaying their knowledge of what is to be regarded as "authentic" and "inauthentic", commenters communicate to the platform's "invisible audience" (boyd, 2011) that they are competent music listeners and, ultimately, worthy persons (Lamont, 1992). This self-presentational use of musical expertise is manifest in the data. For instance, let me consider the example below.

"Guys forgive my arrogance, but open your ears and listen to some SERIOUS music from the PAST before judging and believing that people like Ligabue and Vasco are the number ones. Ligabue still is a good artist in the Italian ["italiota"] music-scape but it is 25 years that he carries on using the same arrangements, his

songs have always been the same and, when he does not copy from himself, he takes ideas from someone else [...]" (Artist: Ligabue; evaluative principles: prestige, originality, creativity).

This music listener intervened in the online discussion essentially because she did not agree with other commenters' opinions. Though in a relatively polite way, she reminded that the two mentioned pop-rock artists cannot be considered as "SERIOUS music", which – on the contrary – is normally "music from the PAST". By using the pejorative adjective "italiota" instead of "italiano", she swiftly alluded to a supposed cultural decline affecting Italian music. Furthermore, she doubted about other commenters' cultural capital and, then, justified in more details her critical judgement by using intellectual aesthetic criteria, pointing to music's originality and creativity.

Indeed, this comment exemplifies both a symbolic form of distinction – based on objectified taste and producing derogatory forms of cultural rejection – and a practical logic of distinction, unconsciously grounded in the embodied mastery of a legitimate, intellectual style of aesthetic evaluation. Another distinctive critical comment in a Bourdieuian sense is the following, directed to the video of a well-known contemporary-classical composer. Here, conventional distinctions between "art" and "non-art" as well as, homologously, "experts" and "profanes", are practically put forward without giving way to explicit manifestations of symbolic exclusion.

"I must acknowledge that I do not know Allevi well and that I don't like banal controversies, but I tell you this story: a friend, musician, presented me this piece without saying who the author was. I asked if the author was him, aiming not to offend with eventual negative judgements. He said no, adding that the author was a successful musician. Candidly, I asked 'in the ringtones genre, you mean?'. Saying that this is not music is a meaningless debate. But it is flat, no thickness, no depth. Melody and the rest remain on a superficial libello, with passages which are catchy only for profanes. [...] I believe that the stage of a serious orchestra is too much for it, then everything can happen, of course. It can happen that light music becomes successful as well as that Mozart, the true Mozart, in a period of his life was listened only by few" (Artist: Giovanni Allevi; evaluative principles: personal experience, prestige, quality, expertise).

Interestingly, the practical display of a "pure" gaze is particularly widespread in aesthetic judgements about rap (see examples in Section 4.5.2). Comments regarding hip hop music tend to emphasize listeners' familiarity with a shared "subcultural capital" (Thornton, 1995) through the display of niche artistic references, a strong attention to the musical work's disinterest and formal aspects, as well as the use of a scene-specific musical jargon (e.g.

"flow", "diss", "metrics"). Boundary-works aiming to preserve "true rap" from inauthentic "impostors" are extremely common in critical comments (see the examples below) and follow a within-genre logic of distinction essentially based on an ingroup-outgroup dynamic (see Bachmayer et al., 2014). Given the American roots of hip hop culture, US artists such as Eminem and Tupac are repeatedly mentioned as examples of "authentic rappers". Some commenters, claiming the autonomy of the Italian rap scene, discursively propose "old school" Italian rappers (see Santoro and Solaroli, 2007) as alternative "standards of excellence" (Barth, 1981). Yet, almost everybody agrees on what rap "must not be". That is, a commercial and mainstream genre (see excerpts below).

"THIS IS NOT RAP, IT'S SHIT! RAP EXISTED IN THE US DURING THE 90s, THIS IS MAINSTREAM SHIT" (Artist: Salmo; evaluative principles: prestige, disinterest);

"[...]I can't believe it, I think I've just seen the shittiest rap shit, and this is the umpteenth evidence that Italian hip hop is dead. I bet that these two fucking babies don't even know who bassi maestro, colle [Colle Der Fomento], inoki, joe cassano and so on are. I'm neither criticising nor teaching something, I'm INSULTING you because people like you, spoiled 12yrs old assholes that believe to already know how life works, you are ruining the few remaining serious Italian rap. As a person I say, good work, you've made an attempt. As a listener and lover of true HIP HOP I say go away, since you're fucking this up" (Artist: other artist; evaluative principles: pleasure, prestige, expertise, personal experience);

"Saying that this stuff is rap is blasphemy. Nowadays the title of rapper is given to people like Fedez and Emis Killa, but Moreno is even worse. Pop beats, copied rhymes and, above all, he's not able to write more than 5 verses in a row [...]" (Artist: Moreno; prestige, quality, creativity).

Although quantitatively marginal in my dataset, comments about Italian indie music show that also relatively niche taste publics foster comparable classificatory practices and boundary-works, like in the case of alternative rock band Marlene Kuntz below:

"Marlene's decline becomes evident simply by reading the comments. Pelù, Club Dogo, Negrita..how have we ended up here? Why have I never read such comparisons below Sonica's videos [i.e. a 1994 Marlene Kunt's album]? Oh, right, maybe because that was music of another level, which worked as a natural repellent against that kind of artists you're now part of too" (Artist: Marlene Kuntz; evaluative principles: prestige, expertise).

Digital distinctions, intentionally or not, classify the classifiers too (Bourdieu, 1984). This is even more true when they challenge conventional cultural hierarchies. A first, worth-noting case is represented by the (rare) intellectual defences of otherwise discriminated

artists. Rhetorically, such defences work by shifting the paradigm of evaluation. That is, without really questioning an implicitly recognized symbolic cleavage between "serious" and "entertainment" music, commenters contextualise the aesthetic focus differently. For instance, according to the author of the following YouTube comment, art music is not the appropriate semantic area for evaluating Italian 1970s pop-rock band I Cugini di Campagna, which is, rather, "pop-trash". The "trash music" frame (Goffman, 1974) represents a diffuse justification motif.

"I Cugini di Campagna belong to pop- trash and I must say that, within that genre, they're very good. It is pointless to use as terms of comparison more refined musical genres. I personally listen to blues rock, but I believe it is pointless to insult them, they're still a pop music icon" (Artist: I Cugini di Campagna; evaluative principles: prestige, personal experience).

The rare comments that criticize musical works perceived as legitimate using a popular style of artistic evaluation offer a second, particularly informative point of view on the relation between symbolic power and distinction. If analysed in comparison to the self-confident writing style of commenters narrating themselves as musical *conoisseurs*, "profane" musical dislikes justified through popular, illegitimate evaluative principles exemplify a non-symbolic form of cultural rejection. It is described by Omar Lizardo as "an implicit 'acknowledgment' of the existence of objective, non-negotiable barriers to that person's own ability to enjoy a coherent experience outside of the realms that he or she has mastered" (2014:351). This appear to be the case, for instance, of the comment presented below, which criticises *cantautore* Lucio Dalla first by offensively questioning the morality of his private life and, then, by expressing puzzlement about his music. Although the moral critique is formulated through a particularly vulgar and disrespectful language, the subsequent aesthetic judgement is different. It seems to reveal awe and implicit respect for a music which is hard to appreciate, given a distant cultural background.

"what a fucking faggot. He does not even leave his millions to his relatives, giving them to his fucking gay partner instead. This is not music ["musika"]. Martin Garrix is MUSIC. How can you listen to this old, boring music?" (Artist: Lucio Dalla; evaluative principles: morality, prestige, pleasure).

In general, taste-related narrations on YouTube recognize, often implicitly, culturally legitimate notions of "authentic music", whose characteristics must ultimately respect the standards of worth established by intellectual evaluative criteria, regardless of the genre in

question. As by means of Noelle-Neumann's "quasi-statistical organ" guiding the process of the "spiral of silence" (1974), listeners know how to discursively move around a widely recognized, multidimensional cultural hierarchy (see Section 4.5). They know what needs to be publicly justified, as well as what tastes are enough symbolically powerful to be undisputable. Some commenters practically master, also, how to justify nonconformist judgements in a symbolically powerful and, as a result, distinctive manner. Some others do not and, for the most part, prefer to remain silent – as the low relative negativity of *canzone d'autore* witnesses (see Section 4.5.1). Hence, even in the semi-anonymous digital environment of the platform, in front of an unknown and hardly predictable audience, a cultural order is socially established and perpetuated. Boundary-works follow predictable, recurrent patterns underlying a social logic of distinction, both in the realm of Italian *canzone* and in music scenes with subcultural roots – i.e. rap *in primis*. Yet, then, what happens if the music I love is insulted and regarded as inauthentic? What if I do not know the right words and prestigious analogies for intellectually defending and aestheticizing what I actually like? The self-presentational use (Goffman, 1959) of distinctive objectified and embodied musical tastes on YouTube is counterbalanced by attempts of rebellion against the intellectual game of culture. In particular, these occur in defences authored by the victims of digital distinctions. Both the violent forms of symbolic exclusion put forward by the "guardians of good taste" and the implicit admissions of cultural inferiority hidden in popular defences shed light on the exercise of symbolic domination in the Italian field of music consumption. This will be the subject of the following section.

4.6.2 Symbolic violence and social worth

The multidimensionality of contemporary cultural legitimacy makes Italian listeners' discursive pursuit of an objective idea of "authentic music" end up in mere local approximations. With the current unlimited, instantaneous, free availability of digital music the game of distinction has ideally no end, since there's always a more refined and symbolically powerful musical work to discover and, consequently, to cite in cultural talks (Lizardo, 2016)[77]. Conversely, a collective agreement about what are the musical "marks of infamy" (Bourdieu, 1984:482) is, paradoxically, easier to reach. They tend to correspond to songs and artists "for the masses", which are, as a result, highly visible on mass media as

[77] Also Bourdieu briefly highlighted the multidimensionality of cultural hierarchies, arguing that "legitimate works of art, [...] while distinctive in general, enable the production of distinctions ad infinitum by playing on divisions and sub-divisions into genres, periods, styles, authors" (1984:16).

well as on YouTube – where they are objectified in "trending" contents characterized by rising view counts[78]. The symbolic opposition between the "commercial" and the "non-commercial" described by Bourdieu decades ago (1980: 268) still characterizes the Italian music-scape, with large-scale-production genres (Bourdieu, 1993) laying at the very bottom of the multidimensional cultural hierarchy described in Section 4.5. Pop-rap artists like Fedez as well as talent-show stars like Emma Marrone, Alessandra Amoroso and Marco Mengoni dominate today's Italian music industry[79]. As a consequence, they are transversally criticized by listeners with distinct musical tastes (see Section 4.5.1), having in common solely the snob posture of the music expert. Very often, snob critiques feature explicit manifestations of symbolic exclusion pointing to mainstream artists' listeners, as in the following, emblematic case:

"[...] GOD PLEASE SAVE US FROM SHITTY MUSIC AND FROM SHITTY LISTENERS OF SHITTY MUSIC who praise incompetent, average singers and have practically erased the small amount of art and music still existing. Do you think it is right that an incompetent singer like Emma Marrone earns million euros for singing, yelling, horrifying songs, which obviously she hasn't written by herself? Of course, she can't even formulate an understandable sentence. And this is why you're totally ignorant about music" (Artist: Emma Marrone; evaluative principles: technical skills, creativity, expertise, prestige, quality).

Such forms of symbolic violence are not exceptional on YouTube. 21.6 percent of my sample of critical comments feature some form of stigmatization towards stereotypical social categories. These are of two main kinds, roughly corresponding to evaluative principles "expertise" and "subjectivity".

On the one side, the targets of symbolic violence are inexpert, "stupid", "average" listeners of culturally illegitimate music. Particularly frequent are references to the so-called "bimbiminkia" – literally, "dumbabies", that is, preteens narrated as stupid fans of mainstream singers, teen idols (e.g. One Direction and Justin Bieber) or inauthentic pop-rap artists[80]. Commenters criticising music publics' (lack of) expertise are likely to discursively employ intellectual aesthetic criteria – namely, in particular, "prestige" and "disinterest" (see Section 4.4).

[78] See https://www.youtube.com/feed/trending [Accessed: 07/01/2017]

[79] For instance, it is worth noting that about a half of participants to 2010s editions of Festival di Sanremo became famous professionals thanks to talent shows such as X-Factor Italy, The Voice of Italy and Amici di Maria De Filippi. This trend has caused a further decrease in the perceived cultural legitimacy of Festival di Sanremo, witnessed also by dozens of critical comments on YouTube.

[80] As Bourdieu noted, "native concepts concentrate the maximum number of sociologically pertinent properties in a particularly evocative form" (1984:338).

"[...] What a shame, guys...I wonder how can you do...you must be mentally poor to listen to this crap" (Artist: Fedez; evaluative principle: expertise);

"Unfortunately, the golden age of Italian rap now is over. At that time dumbabies listened to something else, and, especially, they weren't poisoning this genre" (Artist: Frankie Hi Nrg; evaluative principles: prestige, expertise);

"What a boring and horrifying song. Only the homologated masses that identify with it can like it" (Artist: Emma Marrone; evaluative principles: pleasure, expertise).

On the other side, comments justified through the principle of subjectivity are mostly a form of self-defence from whom criticised first, that is, those alternatively labelled – often in an anti-intellectual guise – as "haters", "professors", "experts", "moralists", "pseudo-experts" or "music critics". The key idea is that, since musical tastes are subjective, criticism is pointless and critical commenters are immoral, resentful, arrogant people, ultimately jealous of pop artists' success. If this may sound as the omnivorous rejection of a snobbish attitude (see Peterson and Kern, 1996), a closer reading of such defences materializes the symbolic domination experienced by listeners who do not master the language of legitimate culture and, as a result, have an interest in escaping and denouncing hierarchies' symbolic violence. As Section 4.4 showed, taste justifications appealing to subjectivity are frequently coupled with other popular evaluative principles such as "popularity", "worship", "functional" and "emotions".

*"[...] Music should be lived, understood and not just listened to. WORDS REACH THE HEART, TRY TO WRITE SUCH A POETRY YOURSELF, GO FUCK YOURSELF F****ING MUSIC EXPERTS" (Artist: Enrico Ruggeri; evaluative principles: emotions, subjectivity);*

"This song is beautiful, and people who say this is crap, go fuck yourself, you're all jealous because he made himself known thanks to Amici [an Italian talent show] *(Artist: Moreno; evaluative principles: subjectivity, popularity);*

"I'm a 14 years old girl that listens to them, and I think it's absurd that you adults criticise us for our musical tastes. [...] I mean, everybody is free to listen to what he wants. We're in a FREE STATE and we listen to what we want. Stop it, I'm a girl that listens from One Direction to Red Hot Chili Peppers. I listen to everything but I don't criticise, because I believe that who doesn't give a fuck lives 100 years [Italian proverb]. *Goodbye" (Artist: Low Low; evaluative principles: subjectivity, personal experience).*

A number of defences, by desperately attempt to challenge a ubiquitous symbolic boundary between highbrow and lowbrow musical taste, allow us to grasp the sense of puzzlement and cultural inferiority endured by victims of digital distinctions, as in the following cases:

"I don't understand why people hate Gigi [D'Alessio]. Still, in the musical show "Questi Siamo Noi" he reached a 20% TV share. That is, more than 6 million people. Now, I wonder..are these 6 million people all from Naples? Stop it, please [...]" (Artist: Gigi D'Alessio; evaluative principles: popularity, subjectivity);

"It is really a beautiful song. Someone says that it's banal; well, maybe I'm ignorant, but I don't find it banal at all" (Artist: Modà; evaluative principles: quality, originality).

Other forms of music-related symbolic violence are closely linked to broader social struggles about gender, race, conspiracy theories, political belonging (left-right) and area of residence (North-South). Especially, the critical narration of femininity by male hip hop listeners and the diffuse stigmatization of Neapolitan culture (see excerpts below) are worth noting examples of the interrelations between musical taste and long-lasting social boundaries (see Schmutz, 2009).

"[...] that sucks, baby girls always writing silly, empty, and superficial sentences about every single rapper, because rap is cool now. That sucks! they are not even able to say something which makes sense, and comment just because they're in love with cool rappers. And they're unable to rationalise, since they personalize and fall in love with singers rather than with songs [...] When rap wasn't trendy there was no girl interested in it, now that is cool bimbos appear everywhere saying superficial bullshits [...]" (Artist: J-Ax; evaluative principles: expertise);

"Neapolitan music is awful just like you" (Artist: Clementino; evaluative principle: pleasure).

In general, listeners characterized by culturally illegitimate objectified and embodied tastes are stereotypically narrated as inauthentic, inferior persons. Digital distinctions in the Italian field of cultural consumption portray social worth as a function of one's endowment of cultural capital (see the following examples).

"[...] in Italy, singing in English makes lyrics less banal simply because nobody understands them, at least in [Lorenzo] Fragola's target" (Artist: Lorenzo Fragola; evaluative principles: originality, expertise);

"unreadable comments of the average baby girl, with grammar as well as spelling and conceptual errors, not simple typos. Awesome song, sad public" (Artist: Guè Pequeno; evaluative principle: expertise).

In return, stigmatized taste publics try to discursively change order of worth (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999), shifting the evaluation from an aesthetic to a moral ground. Yet, such popular defences often underlie the implicit awareness of a tacit symbolic domination, while intellectual critiques and nonconformist aestheticizations unfold the self-assured ease of who knows to be "right".

According to Lamont and Molnar, "symbolic and social boundaries should be viewed as equally real: the former exist at the intersubjective level whereas the latter manifest themselves as groupings of individuals" (2002:169). The present investigation of the social uses of musical taste on YouTube clearly indicates that the symbolic boundaries dividing "authentic" and "inauthentic" taste publics overlap existing social boundaries, such as the one between expert and inexpert individuals. The following research steps, illustrated in Chapter 5 and 6, will serve to understand to what extent such digital distinctions correspond to actual material differences.

Conclusion

In Section 2.4 I presented four hypotheses, each based on a piece of literature rejecting a different aspect of Bourdieu's social theory of taste (1984). It is now possible to discuss the preliminary empirical indications provided by my digital field analysis and, particularly, by this chapter's results.

Lamont's hypothesis implies the absence of a single, salient, universal definition of cultural legitimacy in the Italian field of music consumption, with the presence of a fragmented plurarchy instead. The fine-grained analyses of musical dislikes and artistic analogies (Section 4.5) show neither a rigid cultural hierarchy univocally ranking more or less consecrated music genres, nor the cohabitation of a number of incompatible notions of illegitimate and legitimate objectified taste. A multidimensional cultural hierarchy characterizes the Italian field of music consumption instead. In brief, different, nested musical areas have internal hierarchies based on similar criteria of worth, largely rooted in a Kantian, disinterested attitude and differentiating between artists recognized as "good" or "bad". First, international music is generally more legitimate than Italian music. Second, discursively entering the realm of Italian music, "vintage" artists such as classic *cantautori* have a higher symbolic value than young pop singers. Last, within the aesthetic boundaries

of rap, both Italian 1990s "old school" and classic US rappers are at the top of a subcultural hierarchy featuring "commercial" Italian pop-rappers at the bottom. Still, although the public of Italian *canzone* may not know the genre-specific notion of cultural legitimacy shared by hip hop listeners and vice versa (see Chapter 3), some artists – for instance, an iconic *cantautore* of the past like Fabrizio De André and a mainstream talent-show star like Emma Marrone – work as boundary-objects (see Star and Griesemer, 1989). That is, they represent transversally intelligible standards of cultural "excellence" (Barth, 1981) or "infamy" (Bourdieu, 1984) practically employed in disputes, as sorts of "reality tests" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 1999). Interestingly, almost no users in my sample criticized or negatively mentioned *cantautori*. Hence, this study corroborates the thesis that *canzone d'autore* has become a "discursive benchmark according to which one might define the cultural value of a song while constituting the device through which, in Italy, popular music has been drawn closer to 'high' culture" (Santoro, 2002:112).

The analysis of YouTube commenters' styles of music evaluation revealed a Bourdieuian-like hierarchy of embodied tastes, distinguishing a "pure" aesthetic disposition from a symbolically dominated "naive" style of artistic appreciation (see Section 4.4). While Boltanski's hypothesis suggested that evaluative repertoires are not hierarchically associated to social groups but, rather, act as transient situational properties, the inductive study of taste-justifications unveiled that "people bring something with them from one interaction to another" (Vaisey, 2009:1705). Embodied cultural capital is precisely that "something". Italian digital listeners – far from developing alternative, emergent online cultures of music evaluation (see Hanrahan, 2013) – keep on referring to intellectual evaluative principles based on artistic disinterestedness as the legitimate grammars of musical worth, not differently from 1970s Italian popular music critics (see Varriale, 2016b).

Then, the naturalistic study of the social uses of musical taste in digital interactions on the platform substantially falsify the other two hypotheses. Instead of having lost its distinctive power, as Holt's hypothesis entails, objectified musical taste is at the root of diffuse forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989), connected to various social boundaries and mostly directed to listeners represented as "ignorant" and inexpert. Yet, the practical mastery of the language of legitimate culture, manifest in the narrative negotiation of musical authenticity, undoubtedly remains the primary source of distinction (see Holt, 1998). Last, Bauman's hypothesis, implying the postmodern dehierarchiazation and hyper-individualization of musical taste, is clearly rejected by the ubiquity of digital distinctions. The Italian field of music consumption is a symbolic battleground where appeals for omnivorous "openness"

(Peterson and Kern, 1996) and cultural taste's subjective character, rather than coming from cultural elites (see Bauman, 2011), seems to be put forward mainly by the stigmatized victims of distinction.

Nevertheless, the several limitations characterizing this analysis must be acknowledged. First, I do know nothing neither about the nearly 68k YouTube commenters tracked in Chapter 3, nor about the 3665 authors of the critical comments analysed here, apart for the content and form of their digital narrations. The resulting map of the field's "symbolic space" (Bourdieu, 2002) inductively derived from YouTube users' consumption practices and social discourses, informed us on perceived cultural and aesthetic hierarchies as well as music-related distinctive patterns. Yet, without information about taste publics' differentiation by age, gender, cultural and economic capitals, we grasp nude "position-takings" (Bourdieu, 1984) and symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) detached from social cleavages. Though this partial knowledge is sufficient to delineate a fine-grained, descriptive portrait of the Italian field of music consumption, the extent to which the resulting symbolic space homologously overlaps an underlying social space – that is, the core Bourdieuian issue of the social origins of taste (1984; see Lizardo, 2014) – still needs to be addressed.

Second, what about the representativeness of my digital results? What about the degree of universality of the classificatory practices naturalistically observed on the platform? After all, critical comments are less than 5 percent of my overall comment-dataset, which itself represents a relatively small and non-probabilistic sample of aesthetic judgements about music by Italian users on YouTube. Furthermore, what about YouTube users that, rather than commenting music videos, preferred to remain silent? And, again, what about listeners who do not use online music streaming services at all? In sum, how can I be sure that what I attempted to draw through my data-driven methodological strategy is not the detailed account of an *a priori* biased sociological universe?

Third, where is individual subjectivity? Up to this point, this work has focused on the aggregate. Even the "micropolitics of everyday social interaction" (Holt, 1997:115), unveiled through the close, context-sensitive reading of critical comments, have been examined using a Bourdieuian lens (1977). That is, conceiving them as singular manifestations of broader social discourses – in a Foucaultian sense (1971). Still, musical taste is also a creative, individual matter, linked to idiographic life experiences and taste biographies (DeNora, 2000). Moreover, taste is practised in everyday life, in a tight relation with other consumption habits and contexts. Hence, the more personal and material aspects

of individual taste in music cannot be inferred by simply analysing online self-presentations (see Nowak, 2016; Varriale, 2016a).

Last, technology has an active role in contemporary music consumption (see Nowak. 2016), particularly in the case of YouTube. Far from being neutral, the platform's "affordances" (Baym and boyd, 2012) and recommender algorithm (see Morris, 2015) influence current music discovery, circulation, reception and evaluation (see Sections 3.2 and 4.2). Yet, in my digital field analysis, the medium has remained in the background, being primarily exploited as a research tool to be "followed" in order to produce sociological knowledge (Rogers, 2013; Airoldi et al., 2016). A window on listeners' practical usage of and perceptions on music technologies – studied from behind the screen – is a necessary complement of this work.

Through a mixed-method approach I aim to copy with these limitations, by observing the same, multidimensional social phenomenon – that is, musical taste – from different angles (see Mason, 2006), integrating complementary methodological perspectives. Consequently, the second empirical part of the present dissertation will deal with more conventional data, collected through semi-structured interviews (Chapter 5) and an *ad hoc* questionnaire (Chapter 6).

Chapter 5. Taste biographies. Interviews with Italian digital music consumers

"Social subjects comprehend the social world which comprehends them" [Pierre Bourdieu, 1984:482]

Introduction

The picture of the Italian field of music consumption drawn in the last two chapters, with its inherent systems of cultural classification, hierarchies and forms of distinction, is necessarily a partial one. Through the unobtrusive study of aesthetic judgements on YouTube, it was impossible – and it would have been ethically unacceptable anyway (see boyd and Crawford, 2012) – to give the tastes, classificatory practices and symbolic struggles inhabiting online textual interactions sociological coordinates such as gender, age or social class. Moreover, the active role of technology in shaping contemporary music reception has remained unexplored (see Nowak, 2016), as well as the material interconnections between musical taste and everyday life (DeNora, 2000).

Digital platforms have constraints, for researchers too. Hence, in this chapter, I go beyond the screen. I present the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 Italian YouTube users who have commented or uploaded music videos featured in my dataset. This way, I aimed to give voice to the persons behind the nicknames. In addition, this methodological strategy gave me the chance to assess the effect of the interview setting on music listeners' reported taste – since I could systematically compare interviewees' answers and their public online behaviour, in order to individuate eventual discrepancies between the two.

In brief, the main purpose of this research step is to qualitatively shed light on musical taste in contemporary Italy from the point of view of digital music listeners. Three main research questions guided the present investigation: 1) How does music consumption relate to technological affordances and everyday life situations? (see Section 5.4.1); 2) How are musical taste and cultural capital intertwined at the individual level? (see Section 5.4.2); 3) Are the cultural and aesthetic hierarchies emerged in Chapter 4 perceived as intersubjectively real and distinctive among interviewees? (see Section 5.4.3). These issues will be in-depth inquired and systematically discussed considering the socio-demographic characteristics and taste biographies of my small sample of Italian digital music consumers.

Results served me to both triangulate and complement the findings illustrated in the previous chapters (3 and 4), as well as, also, to inform the design of the questionnaire analysed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Music consumption and individual agency

Social discourses about taste in music present regularities. Such recurrent patterns of justifications, position-takings and distinctions give the idea of a clearly structured field of cultural consumption, made of homogeneous clusters of listeners characterized by more or less legitimate embodied and objectified musical tastes, as well as – *ergo* – by a more or less marked symbolic power in this matter (Bourdieu, 1989). It is easy, then, to fall into the sociological temptation of reducing taste and its social uses to social stratification – as a dependent variable explained by a set of causal factors. Yet, the contributions of Tia DeNora (2000) and Antoine Hennion (2007; 2001) dissuade us against assuming music consumption being a mere, mechanic output of the social fabric. According to their theoretical outlook,

> "while music may be, seems to be, or is, interlinked to 'social' matters – patterns of cognition, styles of action, ideologies, institutional arrangements – these should not be presumed. Rather, their mechanisms of operation need to be demonstrated. If this demonstration cannot be achieved, then analysis may blend into academic fantasy and the music-society nexus rendered 'visionary' rather than 'visible'. Indeed, a grounded theory of the music-society nexus allows conventional distinctions between musical and social materials to be dissolved; in their place, musical and social matters are understood to be reflexively linked and co-produced" (DeNora, 2000:4).

In the influential book "Music in everyday life" (Ibid.), DeNora offers interesting ethnographic insights about the various, creative ways listeners interact with music, practically employed as both a "technology of the self" and an ordering tool in daily life situations. Nevertheless, she goes beyond "not presuming" the social roots and consequences of music consumption (see quote above). Indeed, in her empirical investigation, DeNora systematically avoided to deal with the "social", producing what can be interpreted as a de-sociologization of the experience of music listening[81]. The same can be said about Hennion's perspective, as the following excerpt witnesses:

[81] Ironically, this very same process of "naturalization" is precisely what Bourdieu aimed to denounce and critically analyse (1984).

"Tastes are not given or determined, and their objects are not either; one has to make them appear together, through repeated experiments, progressively adjusted. [...] It is tasters that produce, reinforce and elaborate what determines them, and not the abstract determinisms produced by sociologists or cognitive scientists, who would underhandedly regulate a taste that ignores the taster" (2007:101-102).

The works of DeNora and Hennion are criticized for overemphasizing individualistic patterns of listening, neglecting collective forms of music consumption and overestimating individual agency (Nowak, 2016:6). Is music listeners' "reflexive work" (Hennion, 2007) entirely independent from their cultural capital and musical socialization, as these two authors pretended to demonstrate? Obviously, Bourdieu's answer would be a blunt "no!". The truth, probably, lies somewhere in the middle, in a theory of practice able to effectively reconcile agency and structure, serendipities and social constraints (see Chapter 1). Mark Rimmer's proposal of a concept of "musical habitus" goes in this theoretical direction:

"musical habitus affords room for the sometimes serendipitous and unexpected nature of actors' engagements with music, while never allowing them to drift completely beyond the limits of reasonable expectation. The quasi-unpredictability of individuals' musical preferences, whose underlying grounds (social aesthetics) are largely unknown to actors themselves, can, through the concept of musical habitus, be seen to obey a certain logic of practice, however complex" (2012:308).

The key idea underpinning the concept of musical habitus is that the unconscious practice of the embodied traces of family-based cultural capital and further musical socialisation (see Ibid. and Reeves, 2015) is not incompatible with situated taste experimentations and unexpected music consumption traits. Bourdieu himself stressed – without much success (see Lizardo, 2014) – the dynamic character of distinctions (1984). Indeed, the presence of a homological relation between symbolic and social space does not imply a perfect overlap between the two, given the potentially creative mediation of habitus' generative action (Bourdieu, 2002). This point is underlined by several non-superficial readers of Bourdieu's work (e.g. Lizardo, 2014). For instance, according to Douglas Holt's post-structuralist perspective,

"Individuals are creative and industrious enough to individualize their consumption and even construct innovative way of consuming, but, when they do so, they are always working with the existing frameworks of tastes in which they have been socialized" (1997b:344).

Thus, having the same social coordinates does not necessarily mean consuming the same cultural goods. Nevertheless – and this is a hyper-deterministic aspect of *La Distinction* (1984) – taste serendipities are ultimately regarded by Bourdieu as manifestations of a bourgeois aesthetic disposition rooted in class habitus (see Section 1.3.1). This is because cultural capital works as a lens through which we observe and classify the world. Taste is ultimately embodied (see Section 1.2 and 1.3). Hence, a highly educated person's appreciation for a popular, "schmaltzy" singer like Celine Dion (see Wilson, 2014) would not sound bizarre at all if it is driven – or, simply, justified (see Chapter 4) – by a formal reflection on trash music or by an ironic, distant frame of consumption (see Holt, 1998; Jarness, 2015; McCoy and Scarborough, 2014). However, the opposite, hypothetical case of an uneducated agent that perfectly masters the legitimate language of taste is hardly interpretable through a Bourdieuian theoretical model (1984). As Lizardo remarked in his thought-provoking interpretation of *La Distinction*, taste for Bourdieu follows a crude "fit like a glove" logic:

> "Liking and preferring (as well as disliking and rejecting) are just the explicit reflection of an already realised act of submission to the necessity that is inscribed in the match (and non-negotiable coupling) between our embodied minds and the world." (2014:356).

Yet, in order to soften the Bourdieuian theoretical cage, it is mandatory to consider factors other than class habitus (see Section 1.4.1). If we assume that our embodied taste in music depends on primary and – to a lesser extent – secondary musical socialization (see Rimmer, 2012), it is fundamental then to consider the intersectionality of variables other than education, occupation and family-based cultural capital – such as, for instance, gender, age[82] and ethnicity (Bennett et al., 2009; Sassatelli, 2007), which all contribute to shape taste biographies. It is in the complex, perhaps contradictory combinations of a multitude of social factors, emotional inputs and personal experiences that we have to situate individual trajectories in music consumption (see Nowak, 2016). This is what I aim to do in the present inquiry. Italian listeners' accounts of their position-takings in the field of music consumption will be interpreted considering consumption as a social practice which is, at the same time, relatively autonomous from and interconnected to social stratification (see Sassatelli et al., 2015:17).

[82] It must be noted that "age" hides the sum of three distinct effects on cultural engagement: namely, age, cohort and period effects (see Reeves, 2014).

5.2 Taste, technologies and contexts of music reception

Listeners' "constrained agencies" (Nowak, 2016:52-53) interact with music in a variety of everyday life situations, through a number of technological means. For instance, the experiences of – on the one hand – distractedly hearing background Christmas music from a shop's speakers and – on the other – seating on the sofa, eyes closed, with David Bowie's very last record streaming in the headphones are distinct, for several reasons. First, while in this latter case music is actively chosen by the listener, in the shop it inevitably comes to one's hears. Second, technology makes the difference. A standard shopping mall's internal radio produces a diverse type of musical engagement in comparison to the individualised combination of headphones plus personal playlist. Third, the context of reception influences music consumption, in terms of what sound is culturally perceived as appropriate for each situation – just think of "Blackstar" echoing in the crowded shop – and of the extent to which a listener is (or can be) attentive to the music played.

More specifically, the first point mentioned above regards the *continuum* between "chosen" and "not-chosen" music (Nowak, 2016:62). If background recorded music in public spaces can be intended as an ideal-typical example of not-chosen music, chosen music is exemplified by the individual act of looking for "that song in particular" instead. Between these two poles, there is a fuzzy set of practices which require a variable degree of agency. They range from listening to a (chosen) radio station to the semi-automated act of "going with the algorithmic flow" on streaming platforms like Spotify or YouTube. Logically speaking, the notion of "taste" applies solely to the realm of – more or less socially determined (see Section 5.1) – consumer choices. Yet, the digitization and increasing automation of musical taste, with digital platforms recommending artists and songs on the basis of past or collective consumption behaviours, further complicates the picture (see Section 3.2.2). Technology has always been intertwined with music reception, but never as much as today. The immaterial character of digital music, together with the widespread use of smartphones and mobile Internet, have transformed recorded music markets and listeners' consumption practices, in Italy as well as elsewhere (see IFPI, 2016b; IFPI, 2016a). Given the portability and diffusion of digital music technologies (Nowak, 2016:32), both chosen and not-chosen musical contents have become "ubiquitous" (Kassabian, 2013). The availability of nearly unlimited online catalogues at low or no cost has affected the distribution, fruition and, in particular, discovery of music (see Section 3.2.2). Unsurprisingly, in a such largely digitized field of consumption (see Chapter 3), another type

of digital distinction, different from what this dissertation is specifically about, becomes relevant – that is, the distinction between high- and low-status individuals' uses of online platforms (Zillien and Hargittai, 2009). Indeed, one's digital skills – meaning, familiarity with digital technologies – significantly affect the style of Internet usage (Hargittai, 2010; Micheli, 2015) and, ultimately, of digital music reception (see Tepper and Hargittai, 2009).
Nonetheless, traditional forms of music consumption are far from disappearing. In the last two decades, live music has been experiencing an economic boom (see Holt, 2010), while rising vinyl sales worldwide (IFPI, 2016a) – +43% in Italy in 2016, accounting for 5 percent of the overall music market[83] – witness that materiality still "bites back" in the age of dematerialization (see Magaudda, 2011). Thus, as Raphael Nowak noted in his qualitative study of young digital music consumers in Australia, listeners currently face a multiplication of both analogue and digital music sources as well as, at the same time, a situational fragmentation of consumption means:

> "The profusion of music technologies resonates with two main tenets that underpin contemporary modes of music consumption. First, there is a greater array of options available to individuals to access content and compose their music listening practices. There is an underpinning principle of 'music the way I want, when I want, where I want' to heterogeneous modes of consumption. However, the access to technologies is also constrained by the context in which it can be used, and by the affordances of technologies themselves. This is the second tenet of contemporary modes of consumption" (2016:30).

According to Nowak, music consumption must be interpreted considering the everyday contexts where it practically takes place. Digitally-skilled listeners are described as developing "heterogeneous practices of music listening through different media and technologies" (Ibid.:20) and choosing the mode of consumption best suited to a given situation in a "utilitarian way", on the basis of its "affordances" (Ibid.:31). This means, for instance, using Spotify on the phone only where a Wi-Fi connection is available, or listening to CDs just in the car, where the "last" CD player is.
Together, reception contexts and technological affordances mediate consumption practices, affecting what musical content is consumed in a given moment, as well as how. As both DeNora (2000) and Nowak's (2016) studies witness, listeners reflexively account for their situational music choice mainly through the following motif: mood. Thus, music choice is frequently based on contingent emotions associated to a specific moment/setting, often

[83] See http://www.fimi.it/classifiche#/category:album/year:2015 [Accessed: 18 December 2016].

linked to "mediated memories" conveyed by musical content (see Ibid.:76). Furthermore, music can be linked to everyday situations also in more pragmatic, functional ways, as DeNora pointed out:

"Music is active in defining situations because, like all devices or technologies, it is often linked, through convention, to social scenarios, often according to the social uses for which it was initially produced – waltz music for dancing, march music for marching and so on. Genre and conventional formulations as they accrue over time in musical practice can in turn be used to impart conventional understandings to the settings in which they occur. They are part of the materials with which scenic specificity is constructed and perceived. Music can be used, in other words, as a resource for making sense of situations" (2000:12-13).

Such a "situational use" of music appears to be particularly relevant in the digital age. Given the constant, omnipresent availability of recorded music on multiple technological devices (Kassabian, 2013; Nowak, 2016), every activity or moment of one's daily life has, potentially, an *ad hoc* soundtrack (DeNora, 2000). This phenomenon is evident, for instance, on YouTube, where a significant portion of music videos are framed with reference to a "situational purpose", meaning, the function music is expected to have in a given context of reception (see Airoldi et al., 2016). Examples are music for relaxing or meditating, religious worship music, party music and music for keeping babies calm. As my colleagues Davide Beraldo and Alessandro Gandini and I argued,

"the value of this 'situational music' seems to depend more on its duration – which of course has to be long enough to musically support what listeners are doing at the time – than on its perceived quality or on the reputation of the performers" (2016:9).

These considerations lead us back to the social uses of taste. Since both "foreground" and "background" styles of listening are ubiquitous (see Kassabian, 2013:7-9), consumers can constantly identify the "adequate music" that suits a particular activity or mood (Nowak, 2016:81). However, as musicologist Franco Fabbri clearly denounced (2003), the Adornian legacy keeps on reverberating also today. That is, the background consumption of situational music is often distinguished from a legitimate, foreground "structural listening" (see Dell'Antonio, 2004; Dahlaus, 2004).

"as gifted listeners – who can instantly decrypt all underlying structures in the perceived sounds – are obviously able to distinguish 'bad music' from 'good music', 'low level' listening becomes synonymous with 'low level' music. Music which is received inattentively, not just unwillingly, is considered to be 'music pollution'. Some say this is 'passive music', heard by inattentive listeners just like non-smokers inhale passive smoke. So many

discourses about back-ground listening are full with contempt against 'bad music you can listen to everywhere'"(Fabbri, 2003:1).

Such a hierarchy of modes of consumption resonates with listeners embodied cultural capital and aesthetic disposition, reflecting the opposition between "distant" and "functional", "pure" and "naive" styles of artistic appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984; Holt, 1998). Unfortunately, recent qualitative investigations on cultural consumption either concentrate on the interplay of music, everyday life and technology without paying much attention on distinctions and social status (e.g. Nowak, 2016; DeNora, 2000) or focus on cultural and social stratifications while entirely ignoring the technological and situational aspects of music listening (e.g. Bachmayer et al., 2014; van den Haak, 2014; Atkinson, 2011; Bellavance, 2008). The present chapter is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature, by taking into consideration the multifacetedness of music consumption.

5.3 Research design

The present study is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 YouTube users who have commented (N =13) or uploaded (N = 2) music videos included in my dataset (see Chapter 3). Given the small number of cases, my purpose here is primarily exploratory. On the one hand, I used them as informants about issues otherwise undetectable through digital data, such as how YouTube and other music technologies are embedded in everyday life. On the other, interviews served me to triangulate the interpretation of my digital results (see Chapter 4). That is, I qualitatively compared interview data and YouTube comments, examining the distinctive uses of music also from a person-centred perspective. This allowed me to encompass the socio-biographical trajectories and individual contradictions of digital music listeners. In this section I will briefly illustrate how cases have been selected (5.3.1) and how interviews have been designed and conducted (5.3.2).

5.3.1 Going beyond the screen

It was mid-January 2016 when I created a brand new YouTube profile. In the public description field, I presented myself as a Ph.D. candidate interested in investigating YouTube users' musical taste. Through this profile, during the following months, I contacted a sample of commenters and uploaders extracted, respectively, from my comments-dataset and videos-dataset (see Chapter 3). To start, I selected the most active commenters (at least 10 comments, N = 381) and uploaders (at least 10 videos, N = 218). This sampling criterion

served to maximize research participation, assuming that prolific commentators would have been on average more willing to contribute to the present study[84]. Hence, I attempted to track down each of them, manually searching for nicknames on the platform's internal search engine and, eventually, using Google. Then, insofar as profiles' privacy settings and media affordances allowed it[85], I sent to the correctly identified users a message asking for participation to a virtual interview (see Appendix 3), one by one. This way, six users accepted to be interviewed – five males and one female. In order to increase the number of participants and improve the gender balance of my sample, I kept on contacting users regardless of their degree of activity on the platform, selecting cases according to a theoretical logic. More specifically, I aimed to privilege "information-rich cases" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:73) – for instance, the authors of emblematic critical comments – and female listeners – generally, more reticent to answer. Overall, I succeeded in contacting 309 commenters and 65 uploaders – corresponding, respectively, to the 0.5% and 0.8% of commenters and uploaders included in my datasets. Out of these 374 YouTube users, 15 have been actually interviewed (4 percent response rate). As Tab. 4 shows, my small sample of YouTube users covers a broad range of ages (18-61), a variety of geographic areas (though the South of Italy is evidently underrepresented[86]) and a wide spectrum of the social space. Again, a first limit regards the gender distribution of the sample, since – in spite of my aforementioned efforts – only four interviewees are females. A second limit consists in the absence of ethnic minority individuals, though Italy is an increasingly multi-ethnic country. Acknowledging these limitations, I used the resulting interviews as means for exploring a small-scale reproduction of the consumption practices, imaginaries and taste biographies of Italian digital music consumers, considering their distinct social and cultural backgrounds. Out of 15 interviews, 7 have been conducted via phone call, 5 via Skype or Google Hangouts

[84] This pragmatic methodological choice is due to the absence of concrete incentives for participants.
[85] I contacted most of the users through YouTube private messages. Yet, since this was possible solely for profiles enabling this function, a second strategy consisted in using private messages on Google+. Indeed, YouTube profiles are often connected to social network Google+, being both platforms based on a Google account [see https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2663685?hl=en, Accessed: 19 January 2017]. In few cases, I contacted users via other communication channels, such as by writing to social network accounts and email addresses eventually indicated on the YouTube profile, by publicly replying to YouTube comments or posting in Google+ communities.
[86] This asymmetry can be partly explained considering the significantly lower penetration of Internet usage in southern Italy in comparison to the northern part of the country [see www.audiweb.it, Accessed: 19 January 2017].

call and 3 via Skype's synchronous chat[87]. Interviews lasted, on average, 68 minutes each, ranging up to more than three hours.

Table 4 Interviewees' socio-demographic characteristics. Educational level: high (university attendance or above); middle (upper secondary school); low (lower secondary school and below). Occupational status: high (entrepreneur/executive/professions); middle (clerk, teacher, small entrepreneur, cultural or social worker); low (manual worker, low-skilled worker).

Code	**Gender**	**Age**	**Educational level**	**Occupational status**	**Parent's ed. level**	**Parents' occ. status**	**Area of residence**
F18S	Female	18	Middle	Upper-secondary school student	Middle	Low	South of Italy
M19NW	Male	19	Middle	Upper-secondary school student	Low	Low	North-West of Italy
M20NE	Male	20	High	University student	Middle	Middle	North-East of Italy
M20C	Male	20	High	University student	Middle	Middle	Centre of Italy
M22NE	Male	22	Middle	Low	Middle	Middle	North-East of Italy
M23NE	Male	23	Low	Low	Low	Middle	North-East of Italy
M29S	Male	29	Middle	Middle	High	High	South of Italy
M37C	Male	37	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	Centre of Italy
F39C	Female	39	High	Middle	Middle	Middle	Centre of Italy
M48C	Male	48	Low	Low	Low	Low	Centre of Italy
F50NE	Female	50	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	North-East of Italy
M53NW	Male	53	Low	Middle	Low	Low	North-West of Italy
M57NE	Male	57	Low	Low	Low	Low	North-East of Italy
F60NW	Female	60	High	Middle	High	High	North-West of Italy
M61C	Male	61	Middle	High	High	High	Centre of Italy

5.3.2 A qualitative investigation

Qualitative methods and, especially, interviews have become increasingly common in sociology of culture, often employed in the context of mixed-method investigations (see Sections 1.5 and 1.6). As proponents of a field-analytical perspective on consumption remark (e.g. Silva and colleagues, 2009; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Bennett et al., 2009) qualitative interviews are a means of articulating at a micro-level the relational structures of meanings

[87] Three users accepted to be interviewed only via Skype's synchronous chat – namely, M19NW, M20C and M22NE. Interestingly, their socio-demographic profile is similar: males, under 23 years old, at least 6 comments in my dataset (far above an average of 1.5 comments per user). Also, they justified their request through a common motif – which is not concern about privacy. That is, in their own words, they felt more "self-confident" writing in a chat than speaking in a microphone.

and clusters of position-takings revealed by inductive, large-scale mappings – like those illustrated in chapters 3 and 4.

My semi-structured interview design pointed to the following topics: engagement with music, musical habitus, everyday life situations and musical choice, music technologies and digital practices, music discovery and recommendation systems usage, most and least favourite artists, overall musical preferences, cultural capital and styles of music appreciation, taste trajectories over the life course, perceived salience and universality of cultural and aesthetic hierarchies, symbolic and practical distinctions (see Appendix 3). On top of this, detailed socio-demographic information has been collected (gender, area of residence, age cohort, educational title, last occupation, parents' educational title, parents' last occupation). In addition, interviewees' digital traces left on YouTube (e.g. their comments) represented another source of information about their taste biographies and, interestingly, left room for addressing a key methodological issue. That is, the impact of the interview setting on respondents' accounts of socially undesirable behaviours, like the exercise of symbolic violence (see Holt 1997a:105-106).

I intentionally conducted the interviews in a flexible way (see Marshall and Rossman, 1999), following respondents' spontaneous narrative paths. Still, I aimed to systematically address the specific issues raised by my theoretical puzzle. The following three research questions guided the analysis: how does music consumption relate to technological affordances and everyday life situations? How are musical taste and cultural capital intertwined at the individual level? Are the cultural and aesthetic hierarchies emerged in Chapter 4 perceived as intersubjectively real and distinctive among interviewees?

5.4 Results

Here, I present my findings distinguishing three main analytical focuses, corresponding to the aforementioned research questions. That is: listeners' everyday practices of music reception (Section 5.4.1); cultural capital, taste repertoires and styles of music appreciation (Section 5.4.2); hierarchies of legitimacy and distinctions (Section 5.4.3). In each analytical focus, I look at my empirical materials from a distinct angle, contextualising them on the basis of interviewee's socio-demographic characteristics and, when possible, digital behaviour. By comparing listeners' reflexive representations of the field of music consumption and situated understandings of their and others' position-takings, I aimed to deepen my comprehension of current processes of cultural distinction in a ground-up way.

5.4.1 Digital music reception and everyday life

YouTube is the most popular music service in Italy (IFPI, 2016b). Furthermore, YouTube usage is what my interviewees have in common most. They live in different areas of the country; they are in their twenties, forties or sixties; they discovered music when they were babies, in cultural-capital-rich families, or later, on their own. Yet, all my interviewees commented or uploaded music videos on the platform. All of them are digital music consumers, and YouTube is one of their main music sources.

M: Do you often listen to music via YouTube?
R: A lot, a lot. Look, 80 percent of the music I currently listen to, I listen to it via YouTube (M37C);

M: How do you normally listen to music?
R: YouTube is the main, if not the unique, music source I have. All my mp3s come from there. I use Spotify solely as long as YouTube does not have recent songs yet (M19NW);

M: How do you listen to music? Do you use the radio, CDs...
R: Mainly via CDs, through YouTube I create CDs where I select what I like most...(M57NE).

For some listeners, YouTube is more than a digital place where listening to music for free. It is an enormous and flexible music catalogue whose contents are easily downloadable in (low quality) mp3 format and, eventually, transported on material supports such as CDs. This testifies the extent to which distinct music technologies are intertwined in the everyday practices of digital music consumers. As Raphael Nowak found in Australia (2016), instrumentality represents the prevalent criterion mentioned by interviewees when asked about their music technologies usage. Meaning, the choice between technology A or B fundamentally depends on whether their affordances fit the specific moment and context of music reception or not.

M: You mentioned that you listen to music on YouTube during lunch break, at work...
R: Yes, because I don't have a computer at home...so, since I have a two-hours lunch break, I have a look around [on YouTube]...then, well, during the weekend I use my smartphone, but that's not the same, obviously...and if I go walking I use a mp3 reader with my playlists (F50NE);

M: In what situations of your daily life do you habitually listen to music?
R: Look, I listen to a lot of music at work, because I'm connected to Internet and my job consists in staying in front of a computer, so I listen to music on YouTube a lot...I can use nothing but YouTube [...] then when I'm back home it's different, I mean, I listen to vinyl records or other things that I have (M37C).

With few exception, my respondents use a number of different music devices and formats, both analogue and digital, depending on the context of reception and on technologies' affordances (see also Nowak, 2016). Unsurprisingly, such a technological eclecticism is particularly evident among young, highly educated listeners grown up in families of music lovers. For instance, respondent M20NE is a 20 years old university student living nearby Padua. He plays the guitar in an instrumental post-rock band and shares with his parents – both working as photographers – a strong interest in music. This is how he describes his music listening practices:

M: When do you normally listen to music? In what situations?
R: I often listen to music without doing anything else...also, while I go to university by train, for instance, I always wear earphones and listen to music from Spotify...or, rather, I spend many nights just listening to music on YouTube, Spotify, Bandcamp, also 4chan, in the music section, you know...or I use Discogs [an online physical music marketplace], I discover things, I try to listen to as much music as I can and, often, I stay awake all night [...]
M: Do you have CDs?
R: yes, I've lots of CDs collected year after year, partly by my father and partly by myself...but now I never use them, they're almost useless...(M20NE).

For most of my interviewees, music is a constant, ubiquitous presence in daily life, both in background and in foreground (see also Kassabian, 2013)[88]. According to the large majority of respondents, music is chosen mainly on the basis of mood variations and contingent emotions, as also DeNora (2000) and Nowak's (2016) qualitative studies documented.
Yet, several listeners associate certain types of music to specific kinds of everyday situations and activities – mentioning, for instance, a preference for "relaxing", "energising", "party" music, depending on the moment and context of reception. Interviewees revealing such a functional, situational consumption (see also Airoldi et al., 2016) are, especially, digitally-skilled and young. The emotional and situational logics underlying musical choice are tightly intertwined in listeners' accounts, as the following excerpts witness.

M: How do you choose the music you listen to in a given moment? What are the reasons making you select one song or another?

[88] Such a strong engagement with music must be interpreted considering respondents' self-selection for interviews.

R: Normally I listen to what I've never listen to before, but if I listen to something I already like, I do it essentially to refresh my memory (if it's a long time that I don't listen to a song), to relax if I search for something relaxing or to wake me up if I search something rhythmic (M20C);

M: Tell me, does the music genre that you listen to change depending on what you do in a given moment?
R: well, yes...so, for instance [...] when I feel angry I listen to rhythmic and noisy music, or when I feel relaxed, the contrary (F18S).

While narratively making sense of their consumption practices, respondents spontaneously distinguish between more or less attentive forms of music listening, which essentially depend on the context of fruition. Some respondents, particularly the most educated and passionate about music, attach to this distinction a symbolic connotation. Meaning, the Adornian cleavage between "structural" and "low-level" modes of music listening resonates also in consumers' words and imaginary (see Section 5.2). Nevertheless, both foreground and background musical contents are disseminated across listeners' daily habits, their choice depending on emotional contingencies as well as on contextual and technological affordances (Nowak, 2016). Such a "situational omnivorousness" is apparent in the words of young, technologically eclectic listeners. Also, as the following excerpts show, it hides an implicit hierarchy of legitimate and illegitimate modes of consumption (see Jarness, 2015). I will deal in-depth with the distinctive implications of this issue in Section 5.4.3.

M: When do you habitually listen to music in your daily life?
R: When I listen to music, I follow a sole, simple rule: I must be alone. [...] Often late in the night.
M: Do you listen to music while doing activities like studying, running, etc.?
R: While surfing the Internet or walking on the streets. That's wrong. That's not a serious attitude, I lose my concentration, I know that. This matters for some types of music, but generally 'multitasking' must be avoided.
M: And, how do you choose the music you listen to in a given moment?
R: I choose on the basis of the emotions that I feel, or of those [emotions] that I want to stimulate or diminish [...] There are people more regular than me that simply 'separate the waste': music for studying, for running, for the gym, for the supermarket (M19NW);

M: How do you choose the most appropriate music for the different moments of your daily life?
R: If I'm in the car, I listen to very 'ignorant' music, without any problem, while if I'm in 'discovery mode' I prefer to have earphones and I try to pay more attention. Of course, while I'm working I don't listen to things that I should discover, I just listen to what I've already acquired (M20NE).

The majority of my interviewees is extremely reflexive and aware of their music consumption habits. Those who markedly represent themselves as music lovers describe their everyday engagement with music as a sacred ritual – which requires a solemn attitude as well as quality music technologies. Listener M29S perfectly exemplifies this trend. Living in Sicily, his father working as a manager in a private company, in the spare time he curates a successful YouTube account featuring more than one thousands music videos by Italian female singers of the past.

M: When do you normally listen to music in your daily life? In what situations?
R: The day begins well if you start listening to some music in the morning, obviously using good, high-quality speakers, because that's important, since just with a high-quality sound you can really grasp all that joy, the emotion a record can bring...so, the morning is very important and then, of course, while commuting to work, always, music is essential...so...in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening [laugh]...In practice [music] is...it is something that follows me all day [...](M29S).

Music lovers narrate the practical exercise of individual taste as a manifestation of one's expertise, identity and inner personality. For them, knowing what music piece perfectly suits a transient feeling or mood, as well as being able to capture and appreciate its nuances, means, simply, "being themselves". Perhaps, this narrative leitmotif explains the unexpected hostility directed towards digital platforms' automated recommendations, characterizing 5 out of 15 respondents, regardless of age differences. Since algorithmic suggestions outsource the labour of curation underlying music consumption (see Morris, 2015; Barile and Sugiyama, 2015) – that is, in Bourdieuian terms, the creative power of one's embodied aesthetic disposition (Bourdieu, 1984) – they are ultimately perceived as neglecting one's identity, one's status of "authentic" music lover.

M: Do you use music platforms' automated recommendations, like related videos on YouTube?
R: well, I don't do that because, YouTube's related videos [laugh]...they're not particularly...I don't like them.
M: Why?
R: Because I think they're stupid, quite silly...meaning, if you suggest me the most popular videos then it's normal that I don't like them (F18S);

M: How do you discover new music?
R: [...] I discover new music on the Internet, through social media, surely. [...] recently, with Spotify, I must say that [laugh], I've even subscribed to it, it's my personal musical mine, I can't help without it...it's my second source after YouTube, which, objectively, gives you the possibility to encompass everything without constraints [...]

M: Do you explore music through automated recommendations, such as YouTube's related videos?
R: I don't use them much, to be honest [...] I'm more a serendipity-person [...](M29S);

M: How do you discover new music?
R: You must look for it, and you do it on your own [...]
M: What do you think about automated music suggestions, like those on YouTube?
R: I don't use them, for goodness sake! (F60NW).

Still, Spotify and YouTube's recommendation systems are frequently used by the large majority of respondents, both in attentive and distracted ways – that is, respectively, for exploring unknown music-scapes and as mere playlist-generators. Interestingly, following automated music suggestions is a very common practice also among interviewees older than 50 years (with the sole aforementioned exception of F60NW).

R: [...] I let YouTube "walk" and I walk with it, with its proposals. This is what YouTube does, isn't it? YouTube follows you, sees what you search and then proposes it to you in a selective way...if you use it in automated mode, it chooses the following videos [...](M61C);

M: What do you think about YouTube's automated suggestions, aside music videos? Have you ever used them?
R: When he proposes videos, you mean? Yes, absolutely, absolutely yes, when I see something interesting I go there...(F50NE).

Among my interviewees, digital platforms are by far the most used music sources, regardless of their gender, age and social class. YouTube and, to a minor extent, Spotify are represented as, at the same time, immense music catalogues to be attentively explored and automated music players one can eventually leave in the background on, while working or relaxing. Yet, respondents' social coordinates significantly affect the degree of familiarity with music technologies (see also Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). Unsurprisingly, young listeners feel at ease when talking about a variety of digital means of consumption, while older interviewees present a sort of "technological goodwill" – which emerges when they justify themselves for having limited digital skills.

M: Do you use Spotify too?
R: No, no...again, I'm not particularly skilled in technologies, I'd like to be more, for some aspects, but I've no computer at home [...] (F50NE).

Moreover, listeners' social and cultural backgrounds affect music consumption practices and how they are narrated. The technological eclecticism, the refined attention directed to even the most banal everyday musical choice, the voracity and ubiquity of music consumption, as well as the hyper-reflexive attitude shown by most of the respondents cited above do not characterize the totality of my sample. The case of M48C, a low-skilled worker living in Rome, exemplifies well the constrained character of listeners' agencies (see Section 5.1). An amateur keyboard player with a declared love for music, he admittedly suffers for not having had the possibility to cultivate his interest when he was young, being raised in a working-class family. He narrates that his current job does not leave him enough time for listening to music and, when it does, he just listens to anything he finds. Furthermore, for what concerns music technologies, his verbalizations reveal a poor understanding of digital platforms' properties and functioning.

M: How important is music in your life?
R: I always wanted to study music but I couldn't do it as much as I wanted...because, in practice...partly, it was because of the expenses, at that time my parents didn't have much money [...]
M: When do you habitually listen to music during the day?
R: Very rarely...do you know why? In the morning I'm stuck in a place, well, then I must rush back home [...] I cannot dedicate much time to music [...]
M: Sometimes, do you listen to music via Internet, for instance, on YouTube?
R: Look, I rarely access the computer, but because...because of my job [...] because, even if I don't do anything mechanic, I mean, I don't need to be focused on something in particular, I can have some time for, perhaps, stopping and having a look to something on the phone, I prefer not doing it [....] perhaps I listen to, you know what, I just quickly listen to anything I find, or to the music I made [...] I don't know if you've seen my page, I have, I don't know if it's true what is written there, 4000 followers, you know...[he speaks about his Google+ profile view count] (M48C).

This interviewee stands out in his constant, explicit reference to everyday life material constraints and resigned acceptance to a "taste for necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984:372). The sense of an inevitable cultural domination conveyed by his narrations and justifications permeate, to a minor extent, the majority of the interviews I collected. A closer look to the (apparently homogeneous) answers of the other respondents cited above reveals subtle, distinctive differences. What distinguishes low-, middle- and high-cultural-capital listeners most lies in the declared styles of music appreciation and evaluation, in the implicit sense of self-assurance or, on the contrary, inferiority in matter of music. The logic of distinction lives on in the languages of musical taste.

5.4.2 Cultural capital and the languages of taste

Let me start this section with a comparison. Respondents M57NE and M23NE are, at the same time, similar and different. Males, living in small towns located in the north-east of Italy, they grew up in families characterized by low amounts of cultural and economic capitals. Their educational qualification is lower secondary school. M57NE is a manual worker, while M23NE has an unskilled, part-time job. Given a lack of primary musical socialization (see Rimmer, 2012), their marked interest in music has not been inherited early in life from parents or relatives. Instead, their musical taste has been cultivated individually, over the years.

M: Did your parents listen to music when you were a child?
R: yes, they listened to...something...I mean, my parents listened to, I don't know, Festival di Sanremo or liscio-style music [liscio is a folk genre derived from Austrian waltz, diffuse among lower social strata in northern twentieth-century Italy], then I, well, found my way...(M57NE);

M: Where does you love for music come from?
R: From myself.
M: So, it doesn't come from your parents, friends, or from school...
R: No, because...I once liked aphorisms, you know, sayings...so I started to like the music...the songs that have good lyrics, I like them, and I started listening to them...[...]
M: Did you start listening to music when you were a child?
R: Around 15 years old I think, later (M23NE).

If we assume a perfect overlap of the field's symbolic and social spaces, we would expect these respondents to have close, popular position-takings – albeit with substantial differences in music preferences due to age and cohort effects. In such a deterministic parallel universe, given their common social origins, our two listeners would be undoubtedly confined to a "taste for necessity" and characterized by a "naive" style of artistic perception and a limited musical expertise (see Bourdieu, 1984). Conversely, their taste biographies are extremely distant.

On the one hand, we have respondent M23NE. He started consuming music during his early adolescence, through the songs of Italian pop-rock artists such as Vasco Rossi, Ligabue and Tiziano Ferro. At present, he mainly listens to mainstream Italian rap. Club Dogo and Fedez – who are amongst the most stigmatized artists on YouTube (see Fig. 8, Chapter 4) – are his favourites. Overall, his musical knowledge is limited to domestic artists – The Beatles and Bob Marley are the sole international names mentioned during the interview, in spite of my

insistence on the topic. Interestingly, respondent M23NE is also fond of iconic *cantautori* like Fabrizio De André and Lucio Dalla. The reason of this mix of illegitimate and legitimate preferences lies in a "naive" aesthetic view (see Section 4.1.1), which privileges the literal meanings of the lyrics over formal musical properties, immediate pleasure over distant contemplation.

M: What do you like in music?

R: well...

M: For instance, concerning the sound, the musical style of a song...

R: I'm not an expert on these matters...as long as it has rhythm, that's enough for me! [...]

M: What do you think about today's Italian music?

R: [...] I listen to Italian rap, I think...I like the lyrics...in my opinion, they have good meanings.

M: So, what meanings do you like?

R: for example, there's a music that gets me the adrenalin flowing, like bragging rap, stuff like this, I like it 'cause it thrills me [...]

M: which of the music genres you mentioned [Italian rap and cantautorato] do you prefer?

R: in this period, rap, I think. But, in the end, in my opinion, rap and cantautorato don't differ much, in my opinion...[...] because...they talk about...more about concepts, I mean...lyrics are important for both rap and cantautorato (M23NE).

On the other hand, respondent M57NE is perfectly at ease discussing about a broad range of domestic and international music. He spontaneously mentions a number of niche bands related to the 1970s cosmic music and krautrock scenes in Germany, such as Embryo, Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream. Indeed, when young, he curated a dedicated local radio show and several music festivals. He knows very well and appreciates classic, legitimate *cantautori* – in particular, given his early participation to 1970s social movements, politically engaged ones like Claudio Lolli and Francesco Guccini. Also, he likes jazz music and has a fairly good familiarity with contemporary Italian pop singers, though he is admittedly more competent and affectively linked with the music of his generation. Hence, the musical habitus of respondent M57NE has been mainly cultivated through secondary musical socialization among peers. His objectified musical preferences, far from corresponding to a "taste for necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984), are refined and omnivore, in contrast with the limited taste repertoire of respondent M23NE. Yet, by comparing M57NE's embodied aesthetic criteria with those displayed by high-cultural-capital interviewees, it is possible then to notice some discrepancies. While respondent F60NW – dance teacher and music critic, educated daughter of a surgeon/musician – evaluates musical works according

to “intellectual” criteria such as prestige (timelessness), disinterest, quality and technical skills (see Section 4.1.1), M57NE reveals a “mixed” aesthetic approach which, in a way, resembles the contradictory development of his musical habitus. Indeed, he focuses on artists’ personality and creativity, as well as on songs’ socio-political message and relaxing power, instead.

R: [...] Look, those who work in the musical field only think about audience share and money.
M: What’s your opinion about that?
R: It sucks; I cannot have a different opinion about it [laugh] [...] music should be distinguished from sales. Is bestselling music good music? Absolutely not, it doesn’t work like that. [...]
M: Do you think there are fairly objective criteria for distinguishing good music from bad music?
R: Yes, music’s lifetime decides if it is more or less good. I mean, when music lasts for centuries, when 70 or even 80 years old American singers continue to sing, this means that they weren’t particularly stupid, this means that theirs were quality songs. [...]
M: Imagine that you are listening to a song, right now, for the first time. What criteria would you use in order to decide whether it is good or bad?
R: The timbre, the sound, it is not something I can...there are songs that you hear for the first time and you say, wow...[...] because they touch specific strings of your soul [...] the singer’s technical skills may impress me, the topic may impress me, I mean, it’s the whole thing that catches me, because...I don’t know, it’s like when you see a beautiful landscape [...] (F60NW);

M: More specifically, what do you like about canzone d’autore? Why do you like it so much?
R: First...ehm...first they were close to the reality of that period, when they emerged...another important thing is that, anyway, I followed their evolution, which partly was also mine, so, from the years of political engagement to a sort of detachment [...] I don’t just consider music in itself, I like...I think that behind [a song] there’s a person that needs to express something [...] I like all music...I’ve a secret love for jazz and crooners...
M: Why is it secret?
R: Because...when I need some bliss, I listen to some jazz I like...it relaxes me, in a way, like electronic music did before...It allows me...maybe not to dream, but...it moves something in me...
M: So, is it secret because you don’t talk about it? Why?
R: Well, I don’t understand much of it, so I don’t go too far about it talking with people [...] (M57NE).

The excerpts presented above aim to illustrate a social mechanism observed in the totality of my cases. That is, the long lasting effect of social origin on taste in music. I intentionally presented a case that, at first, seemed to disconfirm the Bourdieuian theory of habitus (see Chapter 1). The omnivorous and niche musical preferences of listener M57NE, in theory, should not fit his position in the social space (low cultural capital, low economic capital). His taste biography reveals a strong expertise in the realm of popular music, developed

through secondary musical socialization (Rimmer, 2012). Still, the traces of a lack of primary artistic socialization live in his style of music appreciation, in the criteria of artistic evaluation, in a sense of cultural inadequateness displayed towards jazz, classical music and some *cantautori* ("I don't like [Roberto] Vecchioni much [...] maybe because he's smarter than me on some matters, so I struggle to follow him"). In other words, his working class origins still resonate in his embodied taste. Conversely, the answers of respondent F60NW unveil a "pure", Kantian-like aesthetic disposition, which reverberates also in the aesthetic judgements of younger but equally educated music lovers, like those cited below.

M: What do you like most about Fabrizio De André's songs?
R: The music, absolutely, the poetry, I mean, they are not just lyrics but poetry. So, his poetics is amazing [...] then, his voice, the way he sung, the use of music instruments, then, the guitar...the arrangements, too [...]
M: In general, what do you dislike most in music arrangements? What types of sound disturb you?
R: Marked dissonances disturb me. I mean, dissonances are ok but, when too marked, no. Schmaltz disturbs me [laugh], you know, too mushy stuff, you know what I mean...too sentimental things (F39C);

M: So, you said that you don't listen to talent-show artists...
R: Yes, because I don't see any musical innovation [...] I personally like to find something new in the music I listen to, otherwise it doesn't interest me...or high-quality things instead [...]
M: Is there any contemporary Italian hip hop artist that you dislike?
R: I hate...all that stuff...what's his name...that sentimental stuff, I can't really stand it (M20NE).

Overall, interview data (see Tab. 4) show that listeners' endowments of cultural capital – both in the institutional form of educational qualifications and in the embodied form rooted in early cultural socialization – significantly affect objectified and, particularly, embodied taste in music (see Section 1.2)[89].

For what concerns objectified taste – that is, musical likes and dislikes –, cultural capital impacts especially on taste repertoires' breadth. On average, the higher one's cultural capital, the broader and more variegate one's genre preferences. This finding supports an interpretation coherent with Peteron's omnivore-univore thesis (2005), confirmed also by a previous qualitative fieldwork on cultural consumption recently conducted in Italy (see

[89] Tab. 5 illustrates a simplified overview of respondents' objectified taste (columns "Like" and "Dislike") and embodied taste ("Aesthetic view"), which must be interpreted considering listeners' coordinates in the social space, summarized as of Tab. 4. The genres labels reported in the table have been either spontaneously named by interviewees, elicited by questions or attached ex post by myself considering eventual artists and songs mentioned in answers.

Sassatelli et al., 2015)[90]. However, patterns of liked and disliked genres are not randomly distributed in the social space. Instead, they reveal two main underlying social logics – based, respectively, on listeners' cultural capital and age.

On the one hand, the former logic is evident considering that contemporary Italian pop, pop-rock and pop-rap are disliked by the large majority of interviewees, except for low-cultural-capital ones – who are precisely those who like them (see M23NE; M48C; M53NW). At the same time, none of these mainstream genres dominating Italian music charts is appreciated by high- and middle- educated consumers. This finding, in line with Bethany Bryson's research on musical dislikes in the US (1996:895), evidences that omnivorousness and distinction are not necessarily "mutually exclusive" (see Bellavance, 2008:212). Hence, the contested symbolic boundary separating "dominant" and "dominated" tastes as well as "expert" and "non-expert" listeners (see Section 4.6) appears to be grounded in a corresponding social boundary (see Lamont and Molnar, 2002), dividing high- and low-cultural capital fractions of the field.

On the other hand, the generational clustering of musical taste, first witnessed by the digital analyses presented in Chapter 3, is manifest also in my interviews. While older respondents tend to detest electronic music[91], hard rock, metal and rap, these genres are among young listeners' musical preferences. Yet, again, the non-perfect overlap of the field's symbolic and social spaces allows for taste serendipities (see Section 5.1). The most striking case in this sense is respondent M29S, whose entire taste repertoire is made of 1950-60-70s music, in spite of his young age.

Conversely, the tight relation between cultural capital and embodied taste leaves no space for exceptions – and this corroborates Bourdieu's theoretical view (1984). Indeed, while all interviewees with a high educational level – that is, university degree or attendance – display an "intellectual" aesthetic view (M20NE; M20C; F39C; F60NW), all those having a lower secondary school qualification, on the contrary, present either a "popular" (M23NE; M48C) or "mixed" (M53NW; M57NE) attitude. Then, among respondents with a middle educational level (upper secondary school, see Tab. 4), family-based cultural capital and primary musical socialization make the difference. That is: those with graduate parents

[90] Nevertheless, even omnivore listeners like M37C and M57NE, who both show an openness to appreciate every genre (Peterson and Kern, 1996:904), draw within-genre differentiations between good and bad artists (see Bachmayer et al., 2014). This issue that has clear methodological implications in sociology of culture (see Section 1.6).

[91] Listeners over 40, poor in subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995), often associate electronic music as a whole to specific genres like techno (M61C) and house (M53NW), or onomatopoeiacally evoke it as "bum bum music" (M48C).

display a “pure” gaze (M29S; M61C), as well as those with middle educated parents and an early musical socialization (M37C; M50NE) – F18S excluded (“mixed”).

Table 5 Interviewees and their tastes

Code	**Like**	**Dislike**	**Goodwill**	**Aesthetic view**
F18S	International pop-rock*; canzone d’autore*	Rap; electro/dance; contemporary Italian pop	Classical; jazz	Mixed
M19NW	International punk; eurodance; old school Italian rap	Contemporary pop; Italian pop-rap	*Canzone d’autore*; rock; jazz; classical	Intellectual
M20NE	Instrumental rock; trap music; Italian indie-rock; hardcore; metal; electro; ambient;	Contemporary pop; *canzone d’autore*; mainstream Italian rap; classic rock	Classical; jazz; vintage Italian music	Intellectual
M20C	International electro; international rock and metal; old school rap; classical music	House music; contemporary Italian rap	Canzone d’autore; jazz	Intellectual
M22NE	Contemporary rap; house music	Italian pop-rap; Italian pop; *canzone d’autore*; Italian indie-rock	/	Mixed
M23NE	Contemporary Italian rap; Italian pop-rock; *canzone d’autore*	Italian talent-show artists; movie soundtracks	Classical; jazz	Popular
M29S	Vintage Italian pop; *canzone d’autore*; vintage Neapolitan music; vintage rock ‘n roll; opera; classical	Contemporary Italian pop; rap; hard rock; metal; *neomelodico*	International music; jazz; classical	Intellectual
M37C	Italian rap; vintage Italian pop; *canzone d’autore*; punk; post-punk; techno; jazz	/	International rap; classical	Intellectual
F39C	*Canzone d’autore*; jazz; classical; Italian indie-rock	Contemporary Italian pop; Italian rap	/	Intellectual
M48C	Italian pop-rock; *canzone d’autore*	Metal; disco music	Classical; jazz	Popular
F50NE	*Canzone d’autore*; rap; jazz; classical; soul; rhythm and blues; latin-american music	Contemporary Italian pop; rock; metal	Opera	Intellectual
M53NW	Vintage Italian pop; jazz swing; dance; pop-rock; talent-show artists; classical; *liscio*	Rap; house; metal; free jazz	Canzone d’autore	Mixed
M57NE	Vintage Italian pop; *canzone d’autore*; International rock; vintage electro; synthpop; jazz	/	Jazz; classical	Mixed
F60NW	International rock; classical; *canzone d’autore*; dance	Contemporary Italian pop; rap	Jazz	Intellectual
M61C	*Canzone d’autore*; jazz; vintage international rock; US country and folk; chill out music; classical	Rap; techno; Neapolitan music	Classical; opera	Intellectual

The two remaining middle-educated cases are of particular interest here. On the one side, respondent M22NE is what Richard Peterson would call “univore” (see Peterson, 2005). Despite his middle-class origins, the sole genres he likes and discursively masters are hip hop and, to a minor extent, house music. A lover of Italian rap, he mentions contemporary

artists Marracash and Salmo as his favourites. His "mixed" evaluative repertoire mirrors the firm adherence to a subcultural capital, whereas his musical preferences reveal the resolute rejection of *canzone d'autore*. Thus, we are in front of a sort of deliberate subcultural resistance (see Hall and Jefferson, 1996) to a consecrated artistic form (see Santoro, 2013) – which, besides, it is liked by the two thirds of my interviewees, regardless of age and social stratification.

M: Do you like Italian music of the past?
R: No, I don't listen to music of the past, I don't go earlier than Articolo 31 [a well-known mid-1990s Italian rap band].
M: Have you ever heard about cantautori like De André, Guccini, De Gregori? Have you ever listen to them?
R: I've heard about them and listened to something, yes, but I don't like them...perhaps there's an important meaning, but I don't like the musical style, I find it outdated (M22NE).

On the other side, respondent M19NW is a listener guided by the search for innovative, original, disinterested musical content. Being raised in a working class family, he narrates himself as an intellectual who proudly privileges cultural over economic capital – as in the following YouTube comment:

"For those who don't understand, this song is against sons of rich parents, people with money [...] that are too snob to follow this music, which comes from a working class context. And I'm proud not to be rich, famous or powerful. 'O amore de povertate' is the title of a beautiful middle-age poem, I recommend it" (M19NW; Artist: Articolo 31).

As M22NE, he is affectively connected to subcultural music scenes – that is, punk, 1990-2000s eurodance and Italian rap – and dislikes contemporary Italian pop and pop-rap (a music category spontaneously associated to mainstream rappers such as Fedez and Moreno). However, differently from his peer, in the interview he manifests a marked cultural reverence for *canzone d'autore*, rock, jazz and classical music. Thus, in Bourdieu's terms, interviewee M19NW unveils an "unworthiness ('paintings are nice but difficult') commensurate with the respect that is accorded" (1984:321), which he reflexively articulates as it follows:

M: Have you ever listened to cantautori like De André; Guccini, De Gregori? What do you think about them?
R: Undisputed poets who deserve a page of history. I would add Rino Gaetano to the list. However, I apologize for my poor knowledge and I would like a lot to find the time to know them more.
M: You did not mention the following genres: jazz, classical music and rock. You don't know them or you don't like them?

R: I tried to force me to like them, but I failed. My ear is incompatible with jazz, rock and classical too. I do admire who appreciate it. Generally, who loves this genre has a considerable musical culture [...]. Unfortunately, I'm just a YouTube user and I like the guitar only when it sounds punky. I'm not proud of it, but this is me (M19NW).

Though apparently distant, these two taste biographies exemplify two sides of the same coin, that is, symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1989). While it is manifest in the case of M19NW's frustrated cultural goodwill (see Bourdieu, 1984:321), it underlies also the subcultural rejection of *canzone d'autore* displayed by respondent M22NE (see Lizardo, 2014:351). Indeed, the very same *cantautori* he dislikes are recognized as culturally legitimate also among his young peers.

M: Do you think that a distinction between high- and low-art music is perceived by the people?
R: High-level music can be considered...niche music that not everybody likes, or stuff like old Italian cantautori, but, then, it may change from generation to generation...
M: In your generation, what is considered as "high-level music"?
R: Singers like [Fabrizio] De André and others from that period. Current generations almost don't listen to them anymore, but they are considered important for Italian music (M22NE).

Hence, respondent M22NE, observing the field of music consumption from within the "comfort zone" of his subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995), perceives what YouTube data already told us (see Chapter 4). That is, although the commodification and digitization of music – multiplying the number of potentially-distinctive signs available to and exploitable by any average listener – may well have diluted objectified tastes' symbolic power in comparison to 1960s France (see Holt, 1998), some genres and artists continue to work as transversal benchmarks of cultural legitimacy (see Santoro, 2002:112). Once implicitly recognized the silent rules of legitimacy governing musical taste, consumers' agency can omnivorously range – seemingly free – across an enormous variety of contemporary or past, domestic or international types of music. Nevertheless, the effect of social origin on listeners' taste will resonate anyway in how music is appreciated and evaluated (Jarness, 2015; Holt, 1998) – that is, in the practical knowledge conveyed by one's embodied taste, in the invisible, naturalized social constraints inscribed in one's musical habitus. In sum, cultural capital, institutionalized in educational qualifications or inherited from family socialization – shapes the languages of musical taste, also in Italy, also today.

5.4.3 "Good" and "bad" music, "serious" and "easy" listening

The multidimensional cultural hierarchy reconstructed in Chapter 4 portrays international, "vintage" and "autonomous" (Bourdieu, 1993) music artists as more legitimate and symbolically powerful than their counterparts. More specifically, in the rising sub-field of hip hop music consumption, listening to "pop-rap" (e.g. Fedez, Moreno) is a universal "mark of infamy" (Bourdieu, 1984:482), while old-school Italian rappers like Kaos One and US legends like Tupac Shakur, on the contrary, are perceived as symbols of quality and authenticity. In the broader field of Italian popular music, contemporary talent-show artists like Emma Marrone and pop-*neomelodico* singer Gigi D'Alessio are depicted as "commercial", "bad" music "for the masses", whereas classic *cantautori* like Fabrizio De André are widely respected for their creativity and autonomy. Vintage *canzone d'autore* and mainstream Italian pop symbolically work as boundary-objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) whose distinctive value is recognized across diverse taste publics. Moreover, listeners commenting on YouTube often emphasize a cosmopolitan taste for international artists and genres, distancing themselves from Italian music as a whole. Overall, this picture is confirmed by interview data, as the following excerpts clearly witness:

M: In your opinion, what artists and types of music are normally associated to "good" and "bad" music?
R: Everything that made history is praised, regretted and acclaimed, and everything present is constantly compared to the "music of the past". That's an ignorant and unfair comparison. Who knows and loves music knows that trash exists today as well as yesterday, and that it's the same in the case of good music. [...] people tend to overrate the past and persecute the present. In the end, that's fast and easy. Cliché always work and being ignorant it's very easy [...]. Conversely, regarding the rap scene, rules are different. Everything that is underground is true music, it's worthy, everything that is mainstream means poor quality and inauthenticity. Well, it's not always like that. Caparezza docet. [...] (M19NW);[92]

M: Why do you think Italian music is currently experiencing a cultural decline? What has changed?
R: I believe that the problem are songs' topics...they're...repetitive, I mean...there's no real innovation [....] there's no....how can I say it...like [Fabrizio] De André, you know, he invented a particular genre, in practice he marked a musical era...while all these [singers] rose to fame thanks to those various [TV shows], I don't know, X-Factor, Amici [Italian talent shows] etc., etc., they don't have any personality, it's like if they are always the copy of a copy (F18S).

[92] Although respondent M19NW narrates this aesthetic judgement as the nonconformist, original, distinctive expression of his own taste, the narrative use of Caparezza as a symbol of current musical worth is particularly common among YouTube commenters, as the network of musical analogies shows (see Section 4.5.2).

Interviewees tend to agree about what musical contents are symbolically associated to legitimate and illegitimate music, which – not by chance – correspond to those frequently mentioned, respectively, as positive and negative terms of comparison in YouTube comments (see Section 4.5.2). I asked interviewees whether they believed that common notions of legitimate and illegitimate music are intersubjectively shared among Italian listeners. 10 out of 15 respondents actually think so – interestingly, five of them are under 30 years old. "Good" and "bad" musics work as signs in a language that fosters, alternatively, admiration or visceral disgust for those "classified by the classifier" (Bourdieu, 1984). The larger one's musical expertise, the narrower is the line between what is legitimate and what is not, which is diffusely perceived as transversal to genre classifications (see Bachmayer et al., 2014).

M: In the past, a distinction between high art music and popular music ("for the masses") was particularly common. In your opinion, is there nowadays a music that people sees as "bad", shameful music?
R: [laugh], yes, absolutely, absolutely...many people loathe neomelodici, Neapolitan musica neomelodica, and I think they are not entirely wrong, because it is something embarrassing, something...repugnant [...] many others hate Gigi D'Alessio, sometimes even in an exaggerated, extreme way [...] that world is entirely different from classical Neapolitan song, which is something high, noble...however, many people...for many people Neapolitan music is just today's musica neomelodica [...] (M29S);

M: Do you think that there are artists universally considered "shitty music" in Italy?
R: It is meaningless to universally talk about it [...]. I mean, in my opinion, "high" and "low" musics are still there, but, I mean, balances have changed, classical music is not necessarily good while the rest sucks [...] everything is more diverse and fragmented, [...] within the same genre you can find both "high" and "low" musics [...] (M20NE).

As in the case of "defences" on YouTube (see Section 4.6), the visible traces of a tacit cultural domination become manifest in the accounts and justifications of the victims of distinction – that is, low-cultural-capital listeners with a "popular" musical taste. For instance, respondent M53NE spontaneously justifies himself for his pop-oriented taste, reflexively relating it to his education. At the same time, in order to defend his music preferences, he stresses the personal, subjective character of taste. As Friedman and Kuipers pointed out in their study of comedy taste, such an "open and tolerant attitude" of low-cultural-capital consumers "may be a result of necessity, rather than ideology" (2013:189).

M: In general, what do you like in music?

R: [...] I'm not into "high art" and refined music, perhaps since my educational level is not high; I listen to pop in particular, but I don't disregard a classical music piece or, rather, a liscio piece...I don't intentionally look for it, but if I hear it I'm not disgusted as many of...many of my colleagues or neighbours, I mean...first of all music must give me an emotion…if also a liscio piece moves me, who cares, it's not just because other people loathe it that...[...]

M: Thinking of what you just said, about your colleagues...what is considered "highbrow" music, today, in Italy?

R: Well, I think it is still cantautore-style music, I mean, songs made by cantautori like [Francesco] De Gregori, like...well, those people...which is, however...undoubtedly it is refined music, nobody can neglect it. [...]

M: So, do you like "classic" cantautori?

R: You mean [Fabrizio] De André...well...no, not particularly...as I told you I'm quite...how can I say it...maybe, let's say, superficial in music, because I've never delved deeper [...] (M53NW).

In addition, the omnipresent forms of "cultural goodwill" (Bourdieu, 1984) underpinning interviewees' narrations of classical and jazz music reveal the long-lasting legitimacy of these genres in the field[93]. As column "Goodwill" in Tab. 5 indicates, respondents either know well and like classical and jazz music, or they revere them – with the sole subcultural exception of rap lover M22NE (see Section 5.4.2)[94]. It is sufficient to compare low- and high-cultural-capital interviewees' narrations on this matter to grasp the Bourdieuian "gap between knowledge and recognition" which, according to the French sociologist, stood at the core of petit bourgeois cultural taste (1984:319). Here, it characterizes lower educated listeners most. For instance, when asked about classical music and jazz, interviewee M48C enthusiastically asserts to like them. Still, he does not remember any composer or jazz player's name, apart for Mozart – whom he knows exclusively thanks to a well-known movie, "Amadeus". Differently from such a blind recognition of highbrow culture, high-cultural-capital listeners manifest either a nonconformist, aesthetic rejection of legitimate genres – like in the case of respondent M20NE with *canzone d'autore* – or a profound expertise, practically displayed through fine-grained boundary-works. In general, the eventual confession of a lack of competence in matter of classical or jazz music needs to be immediately justified, as in the case of respondent M61C and M20NE below.

[93] Though younger, subculturally-oriented respondents witness, on the contrary, a declining interest in classical music, like M20C, who "very often" heard from "many persons" that classical music is "boring". See also Savage and Gayo on the shifting symbolic meanings socially attached to classical music in UK (2011).

[94] Interestingly, also *canzone d'autore* tends to instil a similar admiration in the few listeners who do not know or appreciate it (see Tab. 5).

M: Do you like also classical music?
R: Yes, I like classical music too...unfortunately I did not have a proper musical education so, I like classical music but Opera, less. And, I like orchestral music, I like all Beethoven's symphonies...I like Bach's music, Wagner's a little less [...] Probably I did not receive a proper musical education...that counts, I acknowledge it...(M61C);

M: What about jazz?
R: Jazz...in this period I was thinking of starting [listening to it]...since I play the guitar I've played some standards, that's it...yes, I can mention Coltrane, Thelonious Monk...well, the problem is that, in my opinion, in order to listen to jazz you must have a culture, that I surely don't have yet (M20NE).

Although the discursive traces of a latent symbolic boundary selectively separating "legitimate" from "vulgar" music are disseminated throughout the interviews, music experts do not openly recognize it – and, in four cases (M20C; M20NE; M37C; F60NW; M61C), firmly neglect it – even though, unsurprisingly, their tastes perfectly overlap the realm of cultural legitimacy. At first glance, high-cultural-capital listeners' narrations are imbued with an omnivorous tolerance towards the music they dislike, an "openness to appreciating everything'' (Peterson and Kern, 1996:904). Taste is generally depicted as an expression of one's subjectivity, which cannot be reduced to absolute, universal categories.

R: I distinguish between music that I like and music that I don't like, you can't say in an absolute way 'that sucks because I don't like it'...(F50NE);

M: You mentioned that you do not love Gigi D'Alessio, Marco Carta [a pop singers rose to fame thanks to a TV talent show], Fedez. What do you think about their fans?
R: Look, I am very democratic...these are my tastes, not everybody's tastes [...]. I share, sometimes I also write, articles about authors that do not interest me, but I approach them with profound humility...since...to each his own. I always wear black, but I do not say to whom wears yellow that he has no taste. The same with music (F60NW).

Albeit openly claiming that cultural hierarchies do not exist and that taste is a personal, subjective matter, even tolerant omnivores implicitly recognize that some artists are socially regarded as more or less legitimate than others. This is particularly clear, for instance, in the case of the "guilty pleasures" (see McCoy and Scarborough, 2014) of respondents M37C and M20NE.

M: So, from what you say it seems that you do not loathe any music genre or artist in particular...
R; no, no, look, I tell you, I can listen even to, sometimes, even to neomelodico, to be clear...no ideological pressure, not at all...[...]
M: Isn't there any type of music that you like, but that you feel a little ashamed of?
R: [laugh] yes, sometimes I listen even to [Guè] Pequeno [a contemporary Italian mainstream rapper], secretly...[...]
M: Any other example?
R: [...] I would not publicize also Gigi D'Alessio, if I would listen to him, to be honest (M37C);

M: Isn't there any artist you listen to that you feel a little ashamed of?
R: Perhaps, in this moment, I Cani [an Italian electro-indie band], yep...[laugh]...[...] because they have...I liked them a lot, but now they have an awful fanbase, in my opinion, all those indie...indie extremists, I would say, who wear vintage stuff, that hipster thing [...] all about emotions and other bullshit [...] yes, because I would be associated to a circle of people that, frankly, I don't like (M20NE).

Overall, in terms of objectified taste, high- and middle-cultural-capital respondents display a sort of "distinctive tolerance". If directly asked about the artists they dislike and their fans, they emphasize an "omnivorous openness" (Peterson and Kern, 1996), stressing the subjective character of taste. However, when forced to compare their preferences with those of an "average listener", they unintentionally reveal an inner sense of cultural superiority, which hides symbolic forms of distinction – as the following excerpts show.

M: Do you think that your tastes resemble those of an average Italian listener of your age?
R: I'm substantially the opposite of an "average Italian"! XD (essentially because I listen to unknown songs). In my opinion, he [the "average Italian"] listens to best-selling music, what is played on the radio [...] (M20C);

M: Do you think that your tastes resemble those of an average Italian listener?
R: No, absolutely [laugh]...I don't think so...[...]. It is not because I'm more...because my taste is better than his...it is because, also talking with other people within...when I attend jazz festivals there are always the same people...young people rarely come, in my opinion they don't want to look around and learn new things...they go to the club and dance to a song, [they say] 'this is beautiful', not to use other words, and you say: "hey boy, this is just the sample of a great song I danced to in the 80s" [...]
M: So, do you believe that between your taste and young listeners' taste there's a gap?
R: yes...yes...
M: What about your peers?
R: well...with my peers [...], guys are more into rock...that genre, I told you, it's far from me...[...] and with girls I find it more difficult to talk, with women, I mean...
M: Why?
R: Because some things they do not even know what they are, some artists, they don't know them [...] (F50NE).

By comparing respondents' accounts with their own comments to YouTube videos, it becomes clear that the interview setting fostered socially desirable answers – or, vice versa, that digital anonymity favours symbolic violence. While nearly absent from interviews, aggressive stigmatizations directed to artists and stereotypical categories of listeners appear on the platform instead. 5 out of 12 commenters in my sample, all young males (M19NW; M20C; M20NE; M22NE; M37C), authored critical comments. Apart for respondent M19NW – openly critical towards "little girls who're happy with any music they find on TV" – all the others' answers to interview questions are remarkably more tolerant than their own YouTube comments. This finding corroborates the idea of an enduring, tacit logic of distinction, whose main targets are "non-expert", "superficial" listeners of "mainstream" artists. Also, as the words of respondent F50NE above witness, in some cases, female music consumers are stereotypically represented as lacking musical expertise. This happens, especially, in young rap lovers' accounts (M19NW; M22NE), where "bad", "commercial", "Italian" music is often labelled as "music for girls", intended in a pejorative sense[95].

Overall, interview data confirm that: a) the multidimensional cultural hierarchy reconstructed through the analysis of YouTube data (see Section 4.5) emerges, more or less openly, also from the words of my respondents, who witness also the enduring symbolic power of jazz and classical music; b) the resulting hierarchy of legitimacy, albeit opposed and neglected by high-cultural-capital interviewees, appears to be implicitly salient and symbolically powerful across social strata; c) objectified musical taste acts as a distinctive sign, often producing forms of symbolic violence – evident in the accounts of low-cultural-capital respondents, whose sense of cultural inferiority resemble the popular "defences" collected on YouTube (see Chapter 4).

Being embodied taste the nearly direct manifestation of one's cultural capital (see Section 5.4.2), the practical forms of distinction based on how music is consumed are of particular interest here. Still, it is challenging to study the social uses of cultural taste through researcher-provoked data (Silverman, 2006). As in the case of symbolic distinctions above, the social consequences of embodied taste are more evident from the victims' point of view than from dominators' one.

On the one hand, few middle-educated respondents spontaneously narrate their cultural goodwill towards a "pure" aesthetic approach. This is the case, for instance, of listener M19NW who, reflecting upon his perceived upward mobility in terms of style of music

[95] The critical narration of femininity by male hip hop listeners emerged also in the analysis of critical comments (see Section 4.6.2).

appreciation, materializes the socially-taken-for-granted illegitimacy of a "naive" taste of the senses (see Section 4.1.1).

M: My attitude towards music listening has changed. When very young, I only listened to what was easy-listening [literally, in English], what gave me energy. Well, also today the ear, at least my ear, matters. However, these last years have been an ongoing search for authentic, true music, with lyrics at my level, both in the form and in the content (M19NW).

On the other, lower-educated respondent M57NE narrates the disgusted reactions of intellectual listeners to Italian pop song's "normal", sentimental topics – which lie at the core of a content-based, popular appreciation.

M: Do you think that a shared distinction between "high" and "low" music exists in contemporary Italy?
R: yes, yes [...], like "this is music with a capital M, the other one is not" [...]. That [attitude] is trendy, particularly in leftish contexts...I mean...I've always voted left, just to say...but, what the hell, if in order to be happy I must sing "donna felicità" [a 1972 pop song by I Nuovi Angeli] I'll do it, who cares [...]
M: What are the characteristics of the music pieces that bother this people you're talking about?
R: They bring out things that belong to everybody...and, particularly among those that consider themselves better than others...they talk about normal feelings [...] (M57NE).

Several respondents, especially high-cultural-capital ones, distinguish between "serious" and "easy" modes of music listening. As, I anticipated in Section 5.4.1, the common representation of "serious" music consumption corresponds to a foreground listening, based on carefully selected music and attentive to the formal aspects of musical works – that is, what Adorno defines "structural listening" (see Dell'Antonio, 2004).

M: Do you like classical music?
R: yes, so...classical music...obviously I don't always listen to it, but...well, I like it...I mean, I appreciate it [...], it's a means for your mind...too many people don't listen to it because it's truly complex, it challenges you, mentally, right? So they don't...I don't listen to it because I should be in a calm, peaceful moment of my life in order to, let's say, be committed to listening to classical works (F18S).

Conversely, an "easy" approach consists in the background, distracted listening of non- or semi-chosen music – for instance, played by a recommender algorithm or a radio station (see Section 5.2) – whose most important feature is the mere being situationally appropriate for a given activity or context of reception (see Airoldi et al., 2016). These findings lead us to two main points. First, the context of reception affects the mode of music consumption,

which might be more or less attentive ("serious"), depending on the situation. Second, "serious" listening requires refined music (and vice versa), while "easy", distracted listening is so only when music is enough "frivolous" or – using respondent M20NE's definition quoted in Section 5.4.1 – "ignorant"[96].

M: How do you select the music you listen to in a given moment?
R: Well, look, I don't know…depending on a specific mood I could choose something more…more emotional or frivolous […]. Personally, when I'm in the car with my friends I do not play old music, I just play old music that has become classic […], ear-catcher or already known songs...rather, when I'm on my own, I like to listen to what other people don't listen to.
M: Is this what you meant when you said that you distinguish between "serious" and "frivolous" listening?
R: Well…yes, it is unlikely that I start singing on my own a commercial song, I do it rarely…what I…the things I listen to most are those that require a research (M29S);

R: […] light songs [canzonette] are perfect if you're with other people, you're eating a pizza, you start singing merrily…but substance, the musical substance in the lyrics of other songs is clearly another, distinct thing…
M: So, does this substance make the difference?
R: Yes, yes…look, if there's a party and you must party hard, also New Year's Eve "pepepepepepe" [she refers to "Disco Samba" by Two Man Sound] works, you know…still…(F50NE).

More broadly, these results suggest that, behind the patterns of questionnaire responses abstractly defined as "omnivorousness", there might be something else: the variety of contexts of receptions and related consumption practices constellating everyday life; an implicit hierarchy of "serious" and "easy" modes of music reception, which both coexist in music experts' consumption habits; a tacit, enduring but revisited symbolic boundary between high art music – suited for serious listening – and light, or trash music[97] – which fits a distracted, ironic, situational enjoyment (see McCoy and Scarborough, 2014). In plain words, being a "high-status omnivore" may not mean just having a wide range of musical likes (Peterson, 2005). Differently, it might consist in practicing both "serious" and "easy" forms of music listening, depending on the situation, and – as a consequence – consuming both highbrow and lowbrow, difficult and popular types of music. Low-cultural capital listeners, lacking an aesthetic disposition, will tend to experience only an "easy" functional

[96] This finding corroborates the interpretation of the aesthetic discourse clustering presented in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4.4). Indeed, the y-axis of Fig. 5 revealed a similar opposition between "serious" and "light" music.
[97] Respondent M20NE's mention of "ignorant" music – opposite of the serious "discovery mode" – is the semantically closer reference to trash music made by my interviewees (see Section 5.4.1). However, a "trash music" justificatory frame clearly emerged from the analysis of critical comments, as of Section 4.6.1.

listening, or the unconsciously "naive" appreciation of illegitimate music – as in the case of "schmaltz" (see Wilson, 2014). Therefore, the observed breadth of their objectified tastes will be lower (see Section 5.4.2).

From this perspective, the picture looks more complex, since hierarchies of legitimate and illegitimate embodied and objectified tastes underlie what, at first sight, would look as a mere list of equivalent musical preferences. What I hypothesize here – given the limited number of respondents, this can be no more than a research hypothesis to further develop in the future – is that observed high-status omnivorousness in cultural taste is just the consequence of such a deeper "situational omnivorousness", depending on the everyday practices and enduring hierarchies shaping music consumption.

Conclusion

Music consumption is conceived by some scholars as the individualistic, reflexive exercise of listeners' unconstrained agencies (e.g. DeNora, 2000; Hennion, 2007). This is not what my interview data show. My respondents' taste biographies reveal the enduring influence of primary cultural socialization on their musical habitus (Rimmer, 2012), as well as the tacit signs of a widespread cultural domination.

Implicitly shared notions of legitimate and illegitimate, "good" and "bad" music orient listeners' perceptions of theirs and others' tastes. They are not immediately evident. They become so when focusing on the embarrassed justifications to "guilty pleasures", on the taken-for-granted character of marks of musical infamy, on the manifest cultural goodwill towards symbolically-powerful artists and genres. Objectified taste acts as a classifying device – though expert music consumers deny it, showing a "distinctive tolerance" instead. The cultural hierarchy underlying respondents' representations of the Italian field of music consumption substantially corresponds to the multidimensional ranking presented in Chapter 4, with the addition of classical and jazz music at the top of the cultural ladder.

Also sociologists Marco Santoro and Paolo Magaudda, in a recent qualitative fieldwork conducted in Italy, recorded middle-class listeners' boundary-works about "serious" and "less-serious" music (see Sassatelli et al., 2015:165). Yet, when commenting their results, they stressed the currently fragmented, multi-faceted character of cultural legitimacy. Of course, the overall picture is much more complex in contemporary Italy than in 1960s France (Bourdieu, 1984). Subcultural and niche music scenes have internal ranks of cultural worth unknown to most of common listeners (Thornton, 1995). Distinctions are more and more within-genre ones (see Bachmayer et al., 2014), given music experts' "selective acceptance"

which “manifests the universality of their culture and their aesthetic disposition” (Bourdieu, 1984:55). As a consequence, the symbolic boundary separating legitimacy from vulgarity looks transversal to classifications, fine-grained and scattered. Still, in its general traits, it appears to be universally recognized, and runs along high-cultural-capital consumers’ musical preferences. This does not imply that lower educated respondents cannot like legitimate artists or, on the contrary, that a cultivated musical habitus necessarily rejects “ignorant” songs (see Section 5.4.1). At first sight, my interviewees’ objectified tastes are perfectly interpretable using the theoretical lens of omnivore-univore thesis (see Peterson, 2005). However, in spite of the breadth of music experts’ cultural repertoires, some artists are widely regarded as social stigmas – recognized as such, in particular, by their own publics, i.e. the dominated victims of distinctions.

The socially constrained nature of listeners’ agencies is particularly evident considering embodied taste. Cultural capital, both in the inherited form of family socialization and in the institutional form of educational qualifications, affects listeners’ styles of music appreciation, evaluative repertoires, practical modes of consumption. As the case of respondent M57NE and M19NW illustrate, the impact on secondary musical socialization on taste biographies seems to be limited, compared to primary socialization. In these two examples, the results have been, respectively, an omnivorous musical expertise coupled with a mixed aesthetic view and a subcultural expertise coupled with a frustrated cultural goodwill.

Also age and cohort, predictably, influence listeners’ musical preferences as well as technological eclecticism. Still, the intellectual and popular aesthetic criteria employed in music evaluation are constant across age cohorts. Even among subcultural publics, variations in embodied taste can be interpreted using the Bourdieuian distinction between “pure” and “naive” gazes (see Section 1.2), as the analysis of critical YouTube comments indicated (see Section 4.4). Eventually, the ironic appreciation of trash music, mentioned by high-cultural-capital respondent M20NE, indicates an emerging trend characterizing younger consumers most (see also McCoy and Scarborough, 2014), but – due to the small size of my sample – this no more than a speculation. Perhaps for the same methodological limitation, no remarkable gender-based and economic-capital-based differences in musical taste have emerged.

The most striking and unexpected finding of this exploratory study regards the interconnections of music consumption, everyday life situations and embodied taste. The distinction between “serious” and “easy” listening, spontaneously mentioned by a number

of my respondents, has been interpreted taking into account the manifest intertwined-ness of contexts of reception and musical choice. A “first-class”, attentive, “structural” listening (see Dell’Antonio, 2004) requires music “with substance”, as well as a cultivated aesthetic disposition. Conversely, a “second-class”, distracted consumption simply needs a musical flow situationally appropriate for the specific context of reception (Airoldi et al., 2016). Background listening is not “taboo” anymore (see Fabbri, 2003), being increasingly embedded in the everyday consumption habits of listeners of all social strata. The ubiquity of music consumption (Kassabian, 2013) – favoured by portable music technologies and large, freely accessible online catalogues such as Spotify and YouTube – necessarily produces broader, omnivorous taste repertoires (Peterson, 2005). Still, behind the longer lists of musical preferences recorded by questionnaires, there are a hierarchy of “serious” and “easy” modes of consumption and a corresponding ranking of high art and “second-class” situational music – for relaxing, partying, running, etc. (Airoldi et al., 2016). Serious listening is reserved to those endowed with a “taste of reflection” (see Section 4.11), who master the language of legitimate taste and know how to appreciate the formal aspects of musical works. Low-cultural-capital consumers, on the contrary, appear to be confined either to an “easy”, functional listening or to the “naive”, inadvertently kitsch appreciation of seemingly-serious music which is not socially perceived as such.

Hence, a logic of cultural distinction – based on “when” consume “what”, as well as “how” (Jarness, 2015; Holt, 1998) – lives on in the Italian field of music consumption. My interview data lack the explicit forms of symbolic violence I previously observed on YouTube (see Section 4.6.2). As one of my respondent (M37C) reflexively noted, the snob attitude characterizing aesthetic judgements on YouTube is softened in people’s daily life, since – according to him – it is online communication that “makes you to align with others’ opinions even when it is not necessary”. Yet, despite not present in “tolerant” omnivores’ accounts, the distinctive uses of musical taste clearly resonate in the anecdotes of respondents raised in low-cultural-capital families.

In sum, the exploratory results illustrated here contribute to the substantial rejection of the anti-Bourdieuian hypotheses presented in Section 2.4 and previously discussed in the conclusion of the Chapter 4. Digital music consumers’ taste biographies, perceptions and representations witness long-lasting symbolic boundaries with profound social roots. Although 15 interviews are probably not enough to draw general conclusions, they indicate that digital technologies have not transformed much neither the social origins nor the social uses of musical taste (see Lizardo, 2014). Music is increasingly perceived as a free good –

both “free as in speech” and “free as in beer”. This means that, potentially, once endowed with a digital device and an Internet connection, one can freely access hundreds of millions of music tracks, everywhere, in any moment, for free. Recommender algorithms automatically suggest the music “you may also like” (Vanderbilt, 2016), accelerating and individualizing the process of music discovery. New and old cultural intermediaries facilitate the free circulation of musical knowledge online (Morris, 2015). Still, family-inherited cultural capital and educational qualifications remarkably affect the languages and practices of taste. Even in our digital and postmodern era, taste works as a form of social communication (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979). On the one hand, this is likely to happen because the very same social roots that underpin differences in musical taste produce specular differences also in digital media usage (see Zillien and Hargittai, 2009; Micheli, 2015; Tepper and Hargittai, 2009). On the other hand, as the old logic of distinction in Bourdieu’s France (1984), contemporary “digital distinction” is grounded in strong social inequalities that have all but disappeared.

Chapter 6. Musical taste in Italy. Symbolic struggles and social roots

"What is surprising is […] the fact that variations tend to cluster at all" [Fredrik Barth, 1969:29]

Introduction

This chapter presents a study of musical taste in Italy, based on an *ad hoc*-designed questionnaire distributed via email to users of a network of public libraries in the north-west of Milan. The main purpose of this final research step is to map the social space where Italian music listeners' "position-takings" take place (see Bourdieu, 2002). According to Bourdieu's field analytical perspective, cultural tastes and consumption practices are nothing but the naturalized manifestations of the "objective relations" among agents residing in different areas of a common social space (1984). In his view, lifestyles represent the *opus operatus* of a hidden *modus operandi*, that is, the generative power of habitus' "structuring structure" (Ibid.:170). Without *a priori* assuming such theoretical ground, the present study adopts an inductive approach, aimed to add a second, structural layer to the picture of the field's symbolic space drawn in Chapters 4 and 5. A major research question guided this empirical investigation: to what extent different taste patterns (objectified and embodied) and boundary-works correspond to specific areas of the space of social positions?

I used multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), which is a statistical technique originally employed in *La Distinction* (Ibid.) and recently rediscovered in a number of empirical studies conducted in various European countries (Savage et al., 2013; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Bennett et al., 2009; Roose et al., 2012; Prieur et al., 2008). The main limitation of this recent strand of research in sociology of taste lies in the fact that, in spite of its inductive character, MCA is applied to answers to close-ended questions whose categories risk to be derived directly from researchers' own "social unconscious" (Bourdieu, 1984:21). The present contribution proposes a different mixed-method approach. Here, questionnaire design is informed by both the unobtrusive mapping of online aesthetic judgements (see Chapter 4) and the qualitative insights emerged through in-depth interviews (see Chapter 5). Hence, what my 1591 survey respondents agreed or disagreed with were actual position-takings circulating in the Italian field of music consumption. In addition, through open-ended questions regarding favourite and least favourite, legitimate and illegitimate music artists, this study attempts to overcome the widely recognized biases due to the exclusive use of genre labels in survey questions (see Section 1.5).

On the one hand, this contribution shows the current relevance of education, occupation, gender and age along three main dimensions structuring the field, that is, intellectual vs. popular, engagement vs. detachment, new vs. old generations (see Section 6.4). Overall, a Bourdieuian logic of distinction is homologously connected to individuals' social background, though in a relatively loose way. Respondents who present a distinctive use of musical taste are mainly male, highly educated and high-class, while the victims of distinctions are likely to be – conversely – lower educated, low-class and female. Young age is associated to a cosmopolitan preference for international music and an exclusionary attitude, while older respondents are likely to be more culturally tolerant (see Peterson, 2005), as well as remarkably disengaged from music consumption – especially from "new" cultural forms. On the other hand, network analysis applied to open-ended responses unveils in a ground-up and fine-grained way the shared musical boundaries characterizing distinct fractions of the social space (see Section 6.5), confirming that transversal notions of "good" and, especially, "bad" music inhabit Italian listeners' classificatory imagination (Beer, 2013). Albeit being based on a different sample of population, survey results substantially confirm the empirical indications disseminated in the previous chapters. As a matter of fact, digital distinctions appear to have solid, "real" social roots.

6.1 From symbolic to social boundaries (and vice versa)

"Authentic" and "inauthentic" artists, "serious" and "easy" modes of listening, "good" and "bad" music. These are some of the numerous binary oppositions used by Italian digital music listeners in order to make sense of their and others' tastes and consumption practices (see Chapters 4 and 5). Within the Italian field of music consumption, listeners' "position-takings" (Bourdieu, 2002) encounter underlying symbolic and social constraints. Judgements of taste are spontaneously justified or implicitly taken for granted, depending on their more or less legitimate content. The symbolic value of specific artists and genres is written in tacit cultural norms inscribed in a multidimensional hierarchy of artistic worth, widely recognized across social strata, though hardly outspoken. Some consumers have enough "cultural ease" (Bourdieu, 1984) to actively negotiate and, eventually, challenge existing notions of cultural legitimacy. Others, who do not properly master the languages of legitimate culture, suffer a silent domination which transcends the domain of music consumption, involving broader symbolic struggles about social worth (see Bourdieu, 1989). Early acquired dispositions to approach music in a disinterested, intellectual way affect consumers' taste biographies, favouring the "serious" appreciation of difficult artists and

genres (e.g. consecrated *cantautori*, classical and jazz) as well as the disgusted rejection – or, alternatively, ironic, "easy" listening – of illegitimate music (e.g. *musica neomelodica*, "commercial" pop-rap, "schmaltzy" songs). Lower educated interviewees raised in working-class families either recognize (against their own interest) or vehemently contest crystallized distinctions between "good" and "bad" music, claiming that taste is a personal, subjective matter. Defences of popular taste are openly put forward also by high-cultural-capital listeners with refined musical preferences. However, such an observed "omnivorous openness" (Peterson, 2005) is often in contradiction with the silent signs of a perceived cultural superiority. In brief, the Italian field of music consumption is traversed by a number of intersubjectively real boundaries and symbolic struggles. The present investigation aims to assess to what extent they are intertwined with underlying social cleavages.

The relation between social inequalities and the distinctive attribution of "honour" to social groups is a complex process (Warde, 2008:328). Part of this complexity lies in the fact that, according to Bourdieu, this process works "outside of any intention of distinction, of any conscious search for 'conspicuous consumption'" (1989:20). The centrality of class-based habitus in Bourdieu's analysis of cultural taste (1984) is one of the most contested points of *La Distinction* (see Section 1.4.1). As the author explained elsewhere, his work deals with "classes on paper", which are not necessarily groups of people that actively recognize themselves as members of a specific class. Hence, in Bourdieu's view, class distinction is a mainly unconscious process.

> "The misunderstanding that the analyses proposed particularly in Distinction elicit are thus due to the fact that classes on paper are liable to being apprehended as real groups. This realist (mis)reading is objectively encouraged by the fact that social space is so constructed that agents who occupy similar or neighboring positions are placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, and therefore have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing practices that are themselves similar" (Bourdieu, 1989:17).

According to Bourdieu (1984), being differences in social position internalized in the form of cognitive schemes practically guiding and constraining individual agencies (see Section 1.3.1), the social reproduction of cultural stratification works as a nearly automated mechanism. Thus, in *La Distinction*, symbolic boundaries in matter of taste are seen as simply freezing a particular state of social struggles (Ibid.:476-77). Differently, Lamont and

Molnar (2002) underline the biunivocal relation between symbolic and social boundaries[98]. Indeed, according to them, symbolic boundaries can be strategically used also by dominated social groups "to contest and reframe the meaning of social boundaries" (Lamont and Molnar, 2002:186; see also Lamont and Fourier, 1992), like in the case of working classes' subcultural resistance (Hall and Jefferson, 1976).

The implicit social determinism characterizing the Bourdieuian theorization of culture has been criticised also by Tony Bennett and colleagues (2009). They regard the "postulate that habitus operates in an integrated way to stabilise simultaneously both social and cultural hierarchy" as "neither theoretically nor empirically plausible" (2009:257). This sharp consideration appears in the conclusion of a rich mixed-method investigation conducted in 2000s UK across several cultural domains, whose empirical findings disconfirm key assumptions of *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). Indeed, even if respondents' class and educational level were significantly associated to distinct types of objectified taste and, in particular, to a more or less strong engagement with cultural goods and activities, such differences were not interpreted as distinctive. Overall, in the case of music, an omnivorous "denial of a cultural hierarchy of value" characterized British middle classes (Ibid.:255). Higher classes' mastery of legitimate culture had a "primary local value", while "the working class did neither emphasise the unfairness of a cultural hierarchy" nor "believe that command of legitimate culture is a source of privilege to which it is denied access" (Ibid.:253). Hence, in the authors' own words:

> "Although it still matters, legitimate culture has rather less importance in the UK than Bourdieusian interpretations would expect. [...] Bourdieu's account of the system of cultural domination in France hung first and foremost on the combination of command of legitimate culture and the operation of a Kantian disposition of disinterestedness. While both can be found to some extent in the UK at the beginning of the twenty-first century, they do not play a central role in cultural order, the latter especially" (Bennett et al., 2009).

Rather than class-based symbolic struggles about highbrow and lowbrow arts and styles of appreciation, "new" cleavages proved to characterize cultural taste in the UK. That is, those opposing established ("old") to emergent ("new") cultural forms and – as the authors called them – "inward" and "outward" dispositions (e.g. soap operas vs. history documentaries, romantic fiction vs. sports). The resulting position-takings were significantly associated to variables other than education and class – namely, age and gender (Bennett et al., 2009).

[98] Social boundaries are defined as "objectified forms of social differences manifested in un-equal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities" (2002:168)

Several other empirical investigations have stressed the significant impact of these two social factors on patterns of cultural consumption (e.g. Christin, 2012; Bellavance, 2008). For instance, a study conducted in the early 2000s showed that both gender and age differences produced extremely diverse sets of musical preferences among upper-secondary-school Italian students (Gasperoni et al., 2004)[99]. Nevertheless, as both recent literature in sociology of taste (see Section 1.5) and my own data indicate (see Chapter 4 and 5), such alternative sources of taste differentiation do not necessarily substitute a class-based logic of distinction. A field analysis of musical taste in the UK authored by Savage and Gayo (2011) – based on the same dataset and methodological approach of Bennett and colleagues' work (2009) – clearly highlighted the persistence of distinctive practices in the realm of music consumption. According to this study, given "marked avoidances and dislikes" in their musical tastes, middle-class British listeners cannot be considered as "omnivores" (see Peterson, 2005) but, rather, as "music experts" characterized by a selective, distinctive mode of appreciation (Savage and Gayo, 2011:342). Similarly, recent qualitative studies conducted in Western Europe (e.g. Friedman and Kuipers, 2013; Bachmayer et al., 2014; Atkinson, 2011; Jarness, 2015) have shown that: a) symbolic boundaries dividing legitimate from stigmatized objectified and embodied tastes – as well as categories of consumers – lie across cultural fields; b) negatively- and positively-distinctive position-takings are associated, respectively, to low- and high- endowments of cultural and economic capital.

As Section 1.5 argues, contradictory empirical results in sociological literature on cultural taste and distinction may be partly due to a methodological reason, concerning how cultural legitimacy and "highbrow" taste are operationalized in survey research. The complex relation between social class and lifestyle needs to be investigated taking into account the processual, fine-grained, relational dynamics of what Bourdieu calls "symbolic space" (2002). This means that, as many scholars pointed out and my own digital fieldwork suggests (see Chapter 4), the notion of "good taste" is subjected to an ongoing transformation (Atkinson, 2011; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Holt, 1997a; 1998) – further accelerated by the commodification and digital circulation of cultural goods (see Rimmer, 2012). In other words, it is pointless to "substantially" (see Kirchner and Mohr, 2010) interpreting the like for classical music as an indicator of cultural legitimacy, unless this assumption is adequately supported by empirical indications – and this is not the case, for instance, of UK (see Savage

[99] More precisely, overall, female respondents indicated *canzone d'autore*, Latin music, pop and opera as favourite genres, while their male peers liked techno, punk, metal and rock instead. Older respondents favoured rock, *canzone d'autore* and reggae/ska, whereas younger students appreciated rap most.

and Gayo, 2011). Once considered the symbolic fluctuations and within-genre differentiations characterizing cultural fields' reputational markets, the (otherwise hidden) homologous link between cultural boundaries and social background may well become visible (see Section 1.3.2). For instance, "emerging" forms of cultural legitimacy (see Savage et al., 2013), such as cosmopolitan taste in Denmark (Prieur et al., 2008) and in the Netherlands (Meuleman and Savage, 2013), have come up beside traditional highbrow culture as distinctive signs among young and privileged fractions of these social spaces. Of course, such symbolic shifts make contemporary fields of cultural consumption much more complex and harder to investigate than in the past. As Bennett and colleagues noted, "Bourdieu was able to identify a positive list of cultural practices that constituted cultural capital that reliably delivered profit. Such a list would be very difficult to compile for the UK now" (Bennett et al., 2009). Here, such a list has been previously compiled throughout the research steps illustrated in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Thus, having the background knowledge needed for interpreting the patterns of musical preferences displayed by Italian listeners, it is now possible to map the other face of the field, that is, its social space (see Bourdieu, 2002). As the following section anticipates, this will be done taking into consideration the mediating role of embodied styles of artistic appreciation, which – according to Bourdieu (1984; 1977) – represent the "generative principle" underlying clustered variations in the symbolic space. Furthermore, since also "the vision that every agent has of the space depends on his or her position in that space" (Bourdieu 1989:18), Section 6.5 will specifically assess to what extent distinct segments of the population recognize similar notions of cultural legitimacy (and illegitimacy) and draw comparable musical boundaries (see Sonnett, 2016).

6.2 Social space, homology and embodiment

In Bourdieu's terms, the social space consists of a set of "objective relations" among "agents endowed with different properties" (1989:19). Some of these properties act as forms of capital in the field (Bourdieu, 1986). Capitals are of three main guises (see Section 1.3.3): economic capital (financial resources), social capital (social networks) and cultural capital (educational qualifications, inherited aesthetic dispositions and material cultural objects)[100]. As Savage and colleagues remarked in their influential study of social class in UK,

[100] Furthermore, a fourth type of "symbolic" capital, which roughly corresponds to the Weberian notion of "social honour" (1978), is at stake in the fields of social life (see Section 1.2.4).

"although these three capitals may overlap, they are also subtly different, and that it is possible to draw fine-grained distinctions between people with different stocks of each of the three capitals, to provide a much more complex model of social class than is currently used. This recognition that social class is a multi-dimensional construct indicates that classes are not merely economic phenomena but are also profoundly concerned with forms of social reproduction and cultural distinction" (2013:223).

Within the realms of consumption investigated in *La Distinction*, economic and cultural capitals contributed most to differentiate taste clusters. In cultural fields, social space "is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed in it according to their position in the statistical distribution based on [...] two differentiation principles [...]: economic capital and cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 2002:271).

First, the overall volume of capital (i.e., economic + cultural) explained primary differences in terms of lifestyle among social classes. While "practices designated by their rarity as distinguished" were appropriated by privileged social strata most, "practices socially identified as vulgar because they are both easy and common" characterized lower classes' "taste of necessity" (Bourdieu, 1984:176). Second, relative capital composition produced a further polarization of position-takings, internal to upper regions of the social space. Economic-capital rich consumers endowed with relatively poor amounts of cultural capital preferred "bourgeois", "right-bank", luxury tastes (e.g. boulevard theatre), whereas cultural-capital rich fractions lacking economic capital were associated to "intellectual", "left-bank" activities (e.g. avant-garde theatre) (see Bourdieu, 1984:292). Considering the subject of the present research – that is, musical taste in contemporary Italy – it is possible to hypothesize that capital composition will not be as relevant as in *La Distinction*. Since listening to recorded music is currently a low cost, widely accessible activity, economic capital will hardly affect individual taste, which may be influenced by cultural capital instead, as results illustrated in Chapter 5 suggest[101].

Then, Bourdieu took into account also the trajectory of capital composition during the life course, which proved to be particularly relevant for the interpretation of within-class taste differences (1984:262). As his empirical analyses showed, regardless of one's social position, social origin significantly affected cultural taste. This means that upward social mobility did not entirely erase the effect of inherited capitals on French consumers' position-takings. Such persistency of social inequalities was particularly evident in the case of

[101] Still, differences may persist for what concerns the consumption of live music and the technological modes of music consumption (e.g. vinyl rather than YouTube). For this reason, variables "live_music" and "music_monthly_expense" have been included in the analysis (see Tab. 7).

discrepancies between educational capital and overall cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1984:81), due to early, family-based cultural socialization.

For what concerns the Italian social space, Section 2.6.2 briefly discussed the (limited) literature addressing the impact of social position on musical taste and consumption. In general, empirical studies document the significant association between educational qualifications, musical participation and taste. More specifically, regarding the effects of social origin, Gasperoni and colleagues showed that adolescents raised in high-cultural-capital families, on average, had a better knowledge of both high art and popular music (2004:50). Furthermore – in accordance with Bourdieu (1984) – the same trend was observed in the case of music-playing competences (see Gasperoni et al., 2004:43).

Italy is a country fractured by long-lasting social boundaries, witnessed by a low level of social mobility (see Section 2.6.2). To what extent inherited and acquired social inequalities are linked to distinct types and styles of music consumption? As interviews with digital music consumers suggest, the very same musical expertise represented by YouTube users as discriminating between audiences of "good" and "bad" music essentially depends on differences in musical socialization (see Chapter 5). The effects of diverse social backgrounds are particularly evident in the languages of musical taste – that is, in the ways it is narrated and evaluated (see Section 4.1.1). In my small sample of interviewees, the discursive traces of an "intellectual" embodied taste are normally coupled with high educational qualifications and/or a cultivated musical habitus (Rimmer, 2012), developed through primary musical socialization in high-cultural-capital families. On the contrary, references to "popular" criteria of aesthetic appreciation are common exactly among those listeners raised in working class contexts (see Section 5.4.2).

This latter finding goes in the direction indicated by Bourdieu's theory of a homologous relation between social and symbolic spaces (1984). Following Lizardo's accurate reading of *La Distinction* (2014), structural homology does not imply that, as Coulangeon and Lemel put it, "social class structure is linked to the structure of aesthetic preferences through a one-to-one correspondence, a kind of isomorphic relation" (2009:47). On the contrary, "the 'same' habitus can manifest itself in superficially distinct practices" (Lizardo, 2014:346). Moreover, as Jarness remarked in the conclusion of his Norwegian case study,

"Since goods are apprehended in qualitatively different ways by people located in different classes and class fractions, practices and preferences that may be shown to be common in a statistical sense are perhaps not that common after all. What at first sight may seem like inter-class common ground is, when the ways in which the

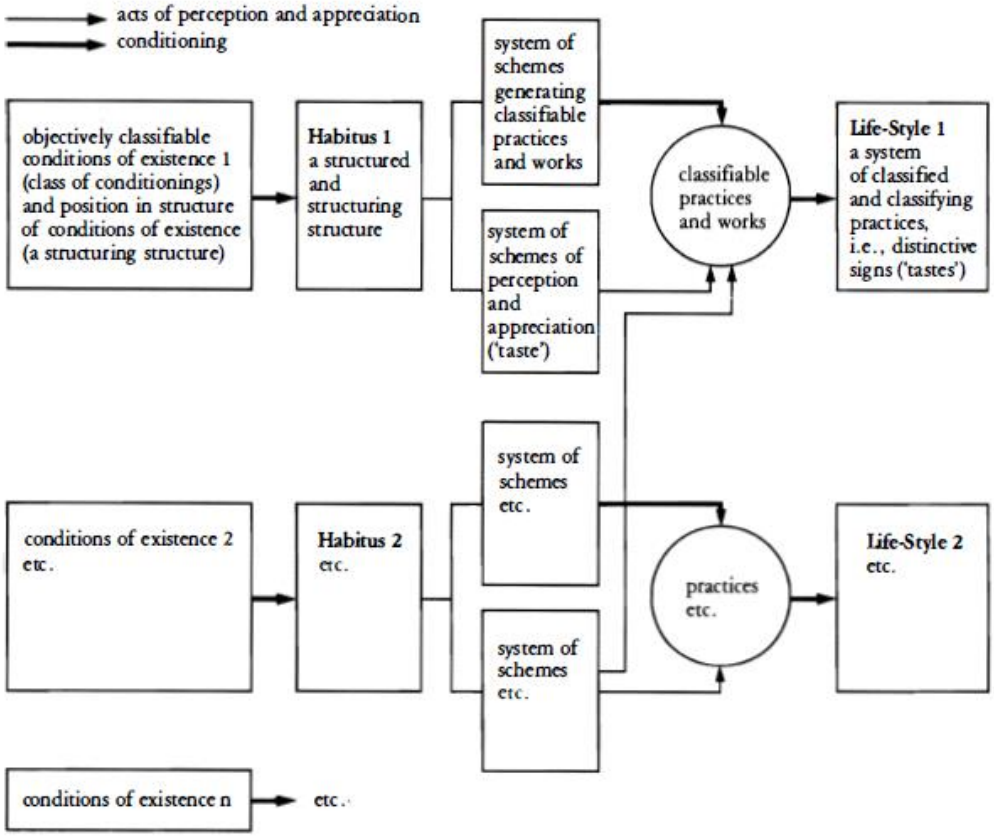
goods are appropriated are taken into account, shown to be highly differentiated. For instance, frequent attendance at performances by the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra is reported by interviewees across the class structure. Yet the ways in which they classify and evaluate these performances, as well as their reported motives for attending them, are highly different" (2015:77).

Hence, given the processual mediation of embodied aesthetic views developed through differential class-based socialization, different social positions are likely to correspond to specific taste clusters, but these two layers (social and symbolic) do not necessarily overlap in a systematic way (see Section 5.1). Furthermore, the same cultural practices may be framed, evaluated and justified in radically distinct ways, depending on one's social background. These theoretical points are clear, for instance, in the description of French bourgeoisie's aesthetic disposition, providing the "quasi-creative power" (Bourdieu 1984:31) of aestheticizing popular or even kitsch cultural goods (see Section 1.2). In the author's words,

"the aesthetic disposition is one dimension of a distant, self-assured relation to the world and to others which presupposes objective assurance and distance. It is one manifestation of the system of dispositions produced by the social conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence when they take the paradoxical form of the greatest freedom conceivable, at a given moment, with respect to the constraints of economic necessity. But it is also a distinctive expression of a privileged position in social space whose distinctive value is objectively established in its relationship to expressions generated from different conditions. Like every sort of taste, it unites and separates. Being the product of the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others" (1984:86).

Fig. 12 below summarizes Bourdieu's account of the social origins of taste (see Lizardo, 2014), highlighting the mediating role of habitus' "schemes of perception and appreciation" – namely, embodied taste – in determining the (objectified) taste for "classifiable practices and works" (Ibid.:171).

Figure 12 Conditions of existence, habitus and life-style. Taken from *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984:171)



In order to disentangle agents' social background from its embodied consequences and ultimate, objectified manifestations, a third analytical layer can be posited in-between social and symbolic spaces[102]. In the present chapter, the different criteria of evaluation and styles of appreciation displayed by music listeners will be conceived as a sort of middle-ground "aesthetic space". This notion is directly inspired by van Venrooij's relational analysis of

[102] This theoretical disentanglement is necessary, especially given the various interpretations of the notion of cultural capital in post-Bourdieuian literature (see Holt, 1997a; Bennett and Silva, 2011; Bennett et al., 2009). As of Section 1.2.2, cultural capital is described by Bourdieu as a multidimensional concept, partly institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications, partly objectified as cultural goods (e.g. paintings, books), partly incorporated in the form of inherited cultural knowledge (1986). As a consequence, the concepts of taste and cultural capital risk to conflate. It is mainly for this reason that the notions of "embodied cultural capital" and "embodied taste", as well as of "objectified cultural capital" and "objectified taste", are often used in an interchangeable way (e.g. Holt, 1997a). In this work, following the analytical framework of *La Distinction*, two main types of cultural capital are considered: "inherited from the family" and "acquired at school" (Bourdieu, 1984:14). Also, this investigation uses the number of books owned by the respondent as a proxy of objectified cultural capital. The operationalization of these and other core concepts will be illustrated in detail in Section 6.3.1.

music critics' evaluative repertoires (2009)[103]. Following Bourdieu's theory, these three spaces – social, aesthetic and symbolic – are to be considered as concatenated in a sort of causal chain (see Fig. 12)[104]. Within cultural fields, agents' objective "conditions of existence" become manifest in the differential volume and composition of capitals characterizing distinct regions of the social space. Also, they determine one's position in the aesthetic space, being "pure" and "naive" gazes essentially the outcome – respectively – of high- and low- endowments of family-based and school-based cultural capitals (see Section 1.2). Last, position-takings in the field's symbolic space – that is, objectified tastes, cultural practices, boundary-works – are ultimately affected by consumers' "schemes of perception and appreciation" (Bourdieu, 1984:171).

This tripartite conceptualization aims to allow for a more detailed interpretation of the Italian field of music consumption. As the ground-up analysis of aesthetic judgements on YouTube shows, a clear polarization between "intellectual" and "popular" embodied tastes segments Italian listeners (see Section 4.4). The contents of these two opposite aesthetic views substantially resemble Bourdieuian "pure" and "naive" gazes (see Section 4.1.1). Moreover, their distinctive power is far from being equal. Indeed, both digital data and in-depth interviews reveal that "intellectual" aesthetic approaches are perceived as legitimate. The resulting aesthetic hierarchy manifests itself not only in the form of embodied repertoires of evaluation, but also in how music listening is practised and framed, as "easy" or "serious" (see Section 5.4.3) – this latter mode being narrated with reference to the Kantian "value of the work of acquisition, the 'slow effort to improve the mind'" (Bourdieu 1984:74). Moreover, it appears to be tightly intertwined with the widely perceived, multifaceted symbolic boundary distinguishing "good" from "bad" objectified taste (see Section 4.5).

Given the centrality of embodied tastes in Bourdieu's theoretical perspective, the present study embraces Roose and colleagues' suggestion "to take into account how people consume culture by also looking at their underlying dispositions" (2012:495)[105]. This methodological

[103] Van Venrooij's study locates music genres on a multidimensional map, on the basis of the aesthetic criteria used in newspaper articles to evaluate them (2009). In doing so, it applies a structural analytical approach (Mohr, 1998).

[104] As Bourdieu wrote presenting MCA: "To have as exact an idea as possible of the theoretical model that is proposed, it has to be imagined that three diagrams are superimposed [...]. The first [...] presents the space of social conditions [...]. The second [...] presents the space of life-styles [...]. Finally, between the two previous diagrams one ought to insert a third, presenting the theoretical space of habitus, that is, of the generative formulae" (1984:126).

[105] Differently from Roose and colleagues (2012), Bennett and colleagues did not include survey items regarding styles of aesthetic appreciation in their MCA, which, rather, relied on 17 questions on participation (e.g., "how often go to the theatre") and 24 on preferences (e.g. "how much like heavy metal") (2009:264-273).

choice, illustrated in detail in Section 6.3.1, also serves to address one of the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 2, named "Holt's hypothesis". According to Douglas Holt, embodied taste – i.e. how one consumes – now bears a stronger distinctive value than objectified taste – i.e. what one consumes (see Section 2.4). As a result, according to this hypothesis, I should expect empirical analyses to reveal a significant overlap between social space and aesthetic space, rather than between the former and symbolic space. In the following section (6.3), I will describe the methodological strategy employed to empirically test this specific scenario.

6.3 Data and methods

Between July and August 2016, a questionnaire has been distributed via email to 19.303 users of 50 public libraries, located in 33 cities in the north-west area of Milan[106]. 1591 users completed at least part of the questionnaire (response rate = 8.2%). The analyses presented in this chapter are based on a sub-sample of 985 cases featuring a number of missing responses minor than 5 each – 626 cases have been excluded from the analyses. A comparison between the final sample and the excluded cases indicates that there are no significant differences regarding gender composition, age distribution and library services usage (see Tab. 6)[107].

Respondents range from 18 to 71 years old. Though the final sample is not representative of Italian population, its average age is close to the Italian mean. Still, remarkable differences regard gender balance and educational qualifications. On the one side, the overrepresentation of females in the sample (+10%) is due to a more general prevalence among library users. On the other, as Table 6 shows, respondents' educational level is far above the Italian average, with 44.4 percent of them having a university degree (+30%). Such a self-selection of highly educated individuals is likely to be a joint consequence of email survey distribution (see Savage et al., 2013) and library usage.

Despite of limitations due to the composition of the sample, this work attempts to face the aforementioned methodological biases and epistemological issues regarding the study of cultural taste through survey data (see Sections 1.5, 1.6, 2.1 and 6.1). In doing so, it adopts a relational and inductive approach (see Kirchner and Mohr, 2010). The following sub-

[106] The present survey has been developed and distributed together with provider of library services CSBNO, see http://webopac.csbno.net/ [Accessed: 10 January 2017].

[107] Respondents' informed consent allowed to access and merge anonymized information stored in CSBNO's database.

sections will describe in details questionnaire design (6.3.1), application of multiple correspondence analysis (6.3.2) and open-ended questions analysis (6.3.3).

Table 6 Data representativeness. Final sample, excluded cases and Italian population along key variables.

Var. name	**Freq. % final sample (N = 985)**	**Freq. % excluded cases (N = 626)**	**Freq. % Italian population[108]**
Gender	M (38.5); F (61.5)	M (33.2); F (66.8)	M (48.6); F (51.4)
Age (mean)	44.2	46.5	44.6
Educational level	University degree (44.4); Upper-secondary diploma (50); Lower qualification (5.6)	/	University degree (10,9); Upper-secondary diploma (30.5); Lower qualification (58.6)
Av. number of items lent library (total)	417.3	424.2	/
Av. number of items lent library (Jan- June 2016)	27.7	25.5	/

6.3.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire featured eight main sections regarding: socio-demographic characteristics; cultural participation; genre preferences; taste-related boundary-works; distinctions; embodied taste; listening modes; cultural legitimacy and musical boundaries[109]. First, socio-demographic questions regard gender, age, education, parent's education, number of books owned, occupation. Gender distribution is reported in Tab. 6. Depending on their age, respondents have been divided in five cohorts: 1945-1959 (19.1%); 1960-1969 (28.2%); 1970-1979 (22.3%); 1980-1989 (17.5%); 1990-1998 (12.9%). Respondents' educational level has been dichotomized as follows: "high" (university degree or attendance, 54.9%); "low" (upper-secondary diploma or lower educational level, 45.1%). This latter variable has been employed as indicator of institutionalized cultural capital. Parent's educational level has been recoded focusing on the presence/absence of upper-secondary school diploma, owned by 41.2 percent of fathers and 38.4% of mothers. It has been interpreted as a proxy of family-based cultural capital. Also, the number of book owned aimed to measure objectified cultural capital in a domain of consumption other than music

[108] Figures refer to 2016 and have been retrieved from ISTAT's website, see http://dati censimentopopolazione.istat.it/Index.aspx [Accessed: 10 January 2017].
[109] Responses to other items included in the questionnaire are not covered in the present chapter. Further data about respondents' YouTube usage have been mentioned in Section 3.1 and are reported in Appendix 4.

(N < 200, 50.8%; N > 200, 49.2%). For what concerns occupational status, respondents have been classified using eight broad occupational categories, inspired by Bourdieu's own work (1984): Entrepreneur/Executive/Professions (13.9%); Teacher (10.3%); Clerk (38.7%); Other worker (8.6%); Student (10.3%); Retired (8.7%); Housewife (2.3); Unemployed (7.1%)[110]. This represents the sole indicator of economic capital available in the dataset. Distribution reveals a predictable overrepresentation of high- and middle occupational levels in the sample. Overall, the seven aforementioned socio-demographic items have been employed in order to map the field's social space (see Section 6.2).

Second, variables contributing to the operationalization of the field's symbolic space are of three main kinds, measuring – respectively – cultural participation, genre preferences and boundary-works (see Tab. 7). Eight genre categories were considered, being either relevant for analytical reasons (as in the case of *cantautorato*) or employed in previous survey researches conducted in Italy (e.g. Latin music, see Gasperoni et al., 2004). Following Sonnet's remarks about the centrality of indifference in musical evaluations (2016), the category "indifferent" has been included as an optional answer, together with "like", "dislike" and "don't know". Then, ten items about boundary-works (see Lamont and Monar, 2002) aimed to grasp respondents' position-takings with respect to two music videos embedded in the questionnaire – Fabrizio De André "Crêuza de mä" (V1)[111] and Fedez feat. Michielin "Magnifico" (V2)[112]. These specific songs were selected being positioned at the opposite poles of the multidimensional cultural hierarchy characterizing Italian popular music (see Section 4.5). Respondents indicated to what extent they agreed with two sets of five items referring to the legitimate (V1) and illegitimate (V2) videos in question (see Tab. 7), which have been designed on the basis of common trends emerging from aesthetic

[110] "Other worker" is a heterogeneous residual category comprising professions as diverse as the following: shop keeper, artisan, farmer, manual worker, other self-employed, other dependent worker. These categories have been aggregated given their low frequencies in the dataset. Overall, given constraints related to the composition of the final sample, the measure of occupational class is less accurate than Bennett and colleagues' one. (2009).

[111] Cantautore Fabrizio De André clearly emerged as a transversal symbol of cultural legitimacy in the field of Italian popular music (see Section 4.5). "Crêuza de mä" is the title track of one of his most difficult and consecrated records – see http://www.allmusic.com/album/creuza-de-m%C3%A4-mw0000336887 [Accessed: 10 January 2017]. The YouTube video in question is the following: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlukK5-WZN8 [Accessed: 10 January 2017].

[112] Fedez is an Italian mainstream rapper, particularly stigmatized by both common listeners and subcultural audiences (see Section 4.5). "Magnifico" is one of his most popular songs (nearly 80 million views on YouTube), and it features pop singer Francesca Michielin, who won the fifth edition of TV talent show X-Factor Italy. Being both pop-rappers and talent-show artists portrayed as "bad music" by digital listeners (see Chapters 4 and 5), the related set of survey questions aimed to capture respondents' position-takings with respect to shared symbols of cultural illegitimacy. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RELQXv8m_cc [Accessed: 10 January 2017].

judgements on YouTube. The idea was to virtually reproduce the setting of cultural evaluation on the platform. Furthermore, questions measuring, respectively, attitudes towards international music ("Cosmopolitan"; "Subcultural_domestic") and symbolic exclusion towards listeners of mainstream music ("Symbolic_distinction") also contributed to the interpretation of the field's symbolic space (see Tab. 7).

Third, the field's aesthetic space (see Section 6.2) has been mapped through a set of 11 "dispositional variables" (Roose et al., 2012) concerning how music is perceived and consumed (see Table 7). Variable "Practical_distinction" aimed to measure the unintentional – but, still, distinctive – exercise of a "pure" aesthetic disposition (see Section 1.2). The "intellectual" and "popular" aesthetic criteria detected through the analysis of justifications on YouTube (see Section 4.4) have been operationalized through eight survey questions designed in order to grasp respondents' embodied taste. Also, attitudes towards "serious" and "easy" listening modes (see Section 5.4.3) have been captured using *ad hoc* indicators (see Tab. 7).

Last, section 6.3.3 will illustrate eight open-ended questions about "good" and "bad" as well as "liked" and "disliked" artists, which have been analysed by means of a visual network analysis approach (Venturini et al., 2014).

Table 7 Active variables. Types, values and questions. Symbolic space in light blue; aesthetic space in grey

Var. type	Var. name	Values (recoded, freq. %)	Survey question
Cultural participation	Live_music	Never (29.4); 1-3 times (47.1); > 4 times (23.5)	How many times attended live concerts in the last 12 months
	Music_monthly_exp.	0 Euro (49.7); 1-10 Euro (34.4); > 10 Euro (15.9)	How much do you spend on average for recording music every month
Genre preferences	Pop	Like (61); Dislike (22.1); Indifferent (13.9); Don't know (2.9)	What is your opinion about pop music?
	Rap	Like (33.8); Dislike (51.7); Indifferent (10.8); Don't know (3.7)	What is your opinion about rap music?
	Electro	Like (32); Dislike (48.9); Indifferent (12.9); Don't know (6.2)	What is your opinion about electro music?
	Rock	Like (84.3); Dislike (9.1); Indifferent (4.3); Don't know (2.2)	What is your opinion about rock music?
	Cantautorato	Like (78.2); Dislike (10); Indifferent (7.8); Don't know (4)	What is your opinion about cantautorato?
	Latin	Like (36.2); Dislike (47.5); Indifferent (13.9); Don't know (2.3)	What is your opinion about latin music?
	Classical	Like (75.1); Dislike (12.7); Indifferent (5); Don't know (7.1)	What is your opinion about classical music?
	Jazz	Like (57); Dislike (26); Indifferent (8.7); Don't know (8.3)	What is your opinion about jazz music?
Boundary-works	V1_refined	Agree (81.2); Don't agree (11.8); Don't know (6.9)	"The best part of this piece is the refinement of arrangements and lyrics"
	V1_emotions	Agree (78.9); Don't agree (15.4); Don't know (5.7)	"The best part of this piece are the emotions it evokes"
	V1_boring	Agree (16.7); Don't agree (79.4); Don't know (4)	"This is a boring and outdated piece"
	V1_prestige	Agree (73.4); Don't agree (22.3); Don't know (4.2)	"De André represents the excellence of Italian music"
	V1_distinctive	Agree (51.8); Don't agree (37.3); Don't know (10.9)	"Who loves De André is, normally, more cultured and sensitive than the average"
	V2_simplicity	Agree (42.6); Don't agree (42.7); Don't know (14.7)	"Fedez expresses true emotions with simple words"
	V2_complexity	Agree (64.3); Don't agree (26); Don't know (9.7)	"I prefer more original and complex pieces"
	V2_subcultural	Agree (38.4); Don't agree (26.2); Don't know (35.4)	"Fedez's music is not true rap"
	V2_prestige	Agree (13.8); Don't agree (73.3); Don't know (12.9)	"Michielin, together with other talent-show artists, represents the excellence of contemporary Italian music"
	V2_infamy	Agree (40.6); Don't agree (41.6); Don't know (17.8)	"Fedez makes immature music for inexpert listeners"
	Cosmopolitan	Agree (21.3); Don't agree (75.9); Don't know (2.7)	"Italian artists, even the best, cannot compete with international ones"
	Subcultural_domestic	Agree (29.9); Don't agree (38.8); Don't know (31.2)	"I prefer Italian rap to American rap"
Distinction	Symbolic_distinction	Agree (19); Don't agree (76.4); Don't know (4.6)	"Artists that everybody likes normally make bad music"
	Practical_distinction	Agree (28.6); Don't agree (65.7); Don't know (5.7)	"Schmaltzy songs are, normally, bad music"
Embodied taste	Originality	Agree (68.4); Don't agree (27.2); Don't know (4.4)	"Good music is refined, original and intellectually stimulating"
	Disinterest	Agree (32.2); Don't agree (63.1); Don't know (4.6)	"Commercial music is bad music"
	Expertise	Agree (37); Don't agree (57.7); Don't know (5.3)	"Good music cannot be understood by everybody"
	Emotions	Agree (73.7); Don't agree (22.2); Don't know (4)	"Good music speaks with simplicity to people's hearts"
	Personal experience	Agree (43.5); Don't agree (52.1); Don't know (4.4)	"Good music has lyrics that deal with people's everyday experiences"
	Pleasure	Agree (16.5); Don't agree (77.6); Don't know (5.8)	"Too complex music is bad, ear-catchy music is good"
	Subjectivity	Agree (68.8); Don't agree (28.8); Don't know (2.3)	"There are no 'good' and 'bad' music: taste is subjective"
	Functional	Agree (65.4); Don't agree (30.7); Don't know (3.8)	"Good music changes from situation to situation, it is the most appropriate for a given moment"
Listening modes	Serious_listening	Agree (64.5); Don't agree (30.5); Don't know (5)	"I listen to good music to grow culturally"
	Easy_listening	Agree (37.7); Don't agree (43.7); Don't know (18.6)	"I listen to bad, trash music in specific situations, to have fun"

6.3.2 MCA

Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is a descriptive statistical technique that allows for the simultaneous analysis of relations among a wide range of categorical variables (see Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010). The method provides maps describing such relations on a Euclidean space, which enhance the interpretability of results (Bennett et al., 2009). Its consolidated use in sociology of taste is historically due to the implementation of MCA in *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu employed such technique to inspect the overlaps between symbolic and social spaces in a relational way (Bourdieu, 2002:271), in open opposition to conventional statistical approaches in sociology (Bourdieu, 1984:18). Two types of variables are employed in the analysis. "Active variables" – which regard consumers' tastes and practices – intervene in the inductive construction of the model, determining axes, distances, as well as individuals' coordinates on the maps (see Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010). Differently, supplementary variables consist in socio-demographic indicators superimposed on the picture at a later stage without affecting the model, serving solely for the *ex post* interpretation of the resulting cultural maps (Bennett et al., 2009:274). As a result, "the homology between the space of culture and the social space is thus no artifact of the analysis; both are constructed empirically as if they were autonomous" (Roose et al., 2012:496). Following Roose and colleagues' study of cultural consumption in Belgium, "dispositional variables" measuring embodied taste have been included here as active variables (Ibid.). This way, both the field's symbolic and aesthetic spaces contribute to define the structure of the model (see Section 6.2).

The present MCA is based on the 34 active variables illustrated in Tab. 7, for a total of 93 modalities[113]. 7 supplementary variables featuring 22 modalities have been subsequently added to the model. Results are presented in Section 6.4.

6.3.3 Open-ended questions

In the literature on cultural consumption, a common methodological approach is to employ close-ended survey questions measuring the like (or dislike) for specific genre categories (see Peterson, 2005). Items of this kind have been analysed also here, using MCA (see Tab. 7). Yet, such procedure presents several epistemological issues, already discussed in Section 1.5. For this reason, an emerging strand of research in sociology of culture proposes to "drop

[113] Modalities with relative frequencies below 5 percent have been removed and individuals randomly allocated. Differently from Bennett and colleagues' analysis (2009), sufficiently frequent "don't know" answers have been retained and interpreted as indicating a lack of cultural competences.

the label", using open-ended questions about music artists instead (Sonnett, 2016; Vlegels and Lievens, 2016). As Vlegels and Lievens suggest, this allows for a ground-up exploration of musical taste and classification:

> "music genres are too broad, while an open question for music works may be too specific to find any overlap and systematic links between respondents and their music taste. By asking respondents to consider specific artists in an open question, we avoid problems of interpretational variety and avoid measuring stereotypes and dispositions towards music genres instead of real listening patterns" (2016:3).

In accordance with these contributions, eight open-ended questions about music artists were included in the questionnaire. More specifically, two questions asked respondents to list at least three artists associated, respectively, to the notions of "good" and "bad" music. Given the normative character of the two adjectives, these items aimed to measure perceptions of cultural legitimacy, in order to inductively study their social roots as well as to triangulate digital findings (see Section 4.5). The remaining six questions served me to map individual taste and distaste in a fine-grained way. Considering three broad musical realms – that is, Italian contemporary music, Italian music of the past and international music – respondents were asked to list for each of them their favourite and least favourite artists.

Given the predictably high heterogeneity of responses to open-ended questions, results have been the object of an *ad hoc* exploration, conducted with the aid of visual network analysis (see Venturini et al., 2014). First, respondents have been classified on the basis of three dummy variables: education (high/low); age (young/old); gender (female/male)[114]. The resulting typology is composed of the following eight socio-demographic profiles: "LYF" (low educational level, young, female); "LYM" (low educational level, young, male); "LOF" (low educational level, old, female); "LOM" (low educational level, old, male); "HYF" (high educational level, young, female); "HYM" (high educational level, young, male); "HOF" (high educational level, old, female); "HOM" (high educational level, old, male).

Second, four bipartite networks of associations linking socio-demographic profiles to mentioned artists have been constructed (see Section 3.3.3; see also Vleigels and Lievens, 2016) – based on "good", "bad", "liked" and "disliked" artists[115]. This way, perceptions of

[114] University degree or attendance is intended as a high educational level. Respondents belonging to age cohorts 1980-1989 and 1990-1998 are considered as "young".

[115] Only artists mentioned by more than 3 percent of respondents within each socio-demographic profile are considered in the network representations. This relative threshold is due to the uneven size of socio-demographic profiles. For the same reason, edges linking artists and profiles are weighted on the basis of relative frequencies within each socio-demographic group.

cultural legitimacy (and illegitimacy) as well as objectified tastes (and distastes) are related to specific categories of respondents, corresponding to distinct regions of the social space. The resulting visual network analyses aim to provide fine-grained maps of the associations among perceived cultural hierarchies, "implicit musical boundaries" (Sonnett, 2016) and social structure (see Section 6.5).

6.4 Reassembling the field: symbolic, aesthetic and social spaces

The purpose of the present multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is to reassemble the Italian field of music consumption, shedding light on its social roots. As Table 8 below shows, the model presents three main axes, which jointly explain more than 80 percent of the total variance – considering modified rates (Benzecri, 1992:412)[116]. As indicated by Le Roux and Rouanet (2010:52), axes will be interpreted considering especially categories whose contributions exceed the average contribution (here 100/93 = 1.07% baseline criterion)[117]. A list of modalities meeting this criterion is presented in Table 15, Appendix 4. In the following pages, Euclidean maps of the field's symbolic, aesthetic and social spaces will be presented and interpreted. The spatial representation of active and supplementary modalities portrays a tripartite polarization: "intellectual" versus "popular" tastes (Section 6.4.1), engagement versus detachment (6.4.2), new versus old generations' position-takings (6.4.3). Overall, gender, cultural capital and age prove to be associated to significant variations in symbolic and aesthetic spaces (see Tab. 16, Appendix 4).

Table 8 Eigenvalues, raw variance rates and modified rates. First four axes

Axes	1	2	3	4
Eigenvalues	0.118	0.105	0.087	0.063
Raw variance rates (%)	6.850	6.120	5.018	3.651
Modified rates (%)	36.87	27.64	16.21	6.25

6.4.1 Axis 1: intellectual versus popular

The present section examines modalities significantly contributing to the orientation of axis 1, in order to provide an inductive interpretation of the main dimension highlighted by MCA. Fig. 13 shows how modalities regarding the field's symbolic space are spatially located on axes 1 and 2. On the left side of the map, we have respondents believing that "artists that

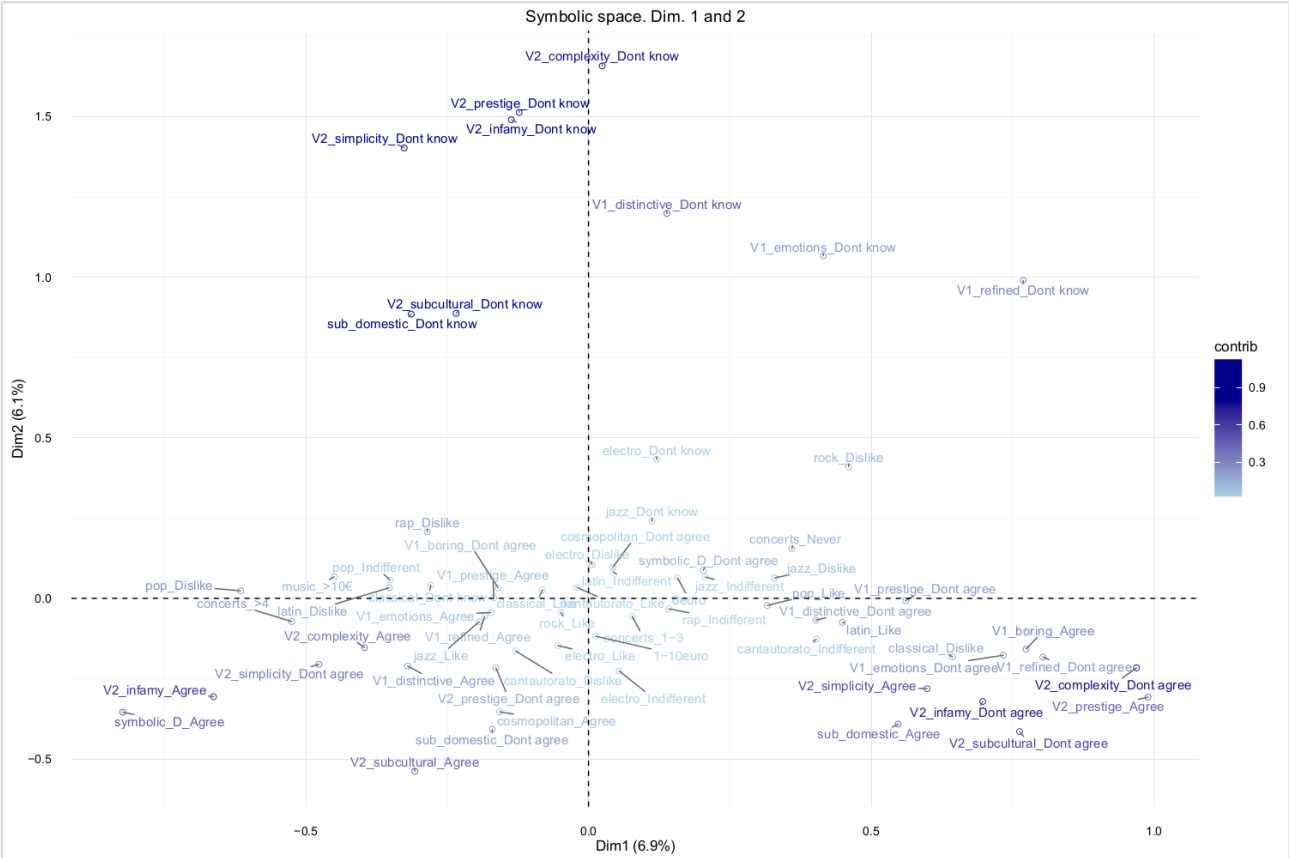
[116] Axis 4 explains little additional variance. For this reason, the analysis focuses on the first three dimensions (see Tab. 8).
[117] The contribution of modality k to the overall variance is the ratio of the amount of the variance of the cloud due to modality k to the overall variance (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010:38).

everybody likes normally make bad music" (Symbolic_D_Agree) and that "Fedez makes immature music for inexpert listeners" (V2_infamy) – which are both clear indicators of symbolic exclusion towards mainstream audiences. Modalities recording listeners' dislike for pop and Latin music (pop_Dislike; latin_Dislike), high cultural participation (more than 4 concerts in the last 12 months) as well as disagreement on Fedez's ability of expressing "true emotions with simple words" (V2_simplicity_Dont agree) are similarly close to the left pole of the map.

At the right end of axis 1, significant position-takings are the following: believing that talent-show artists represent the excellence of contemporary Italian music (V2_prestige_Agree); not preferring more original and complex works with respect to V2 (V2_complexity_Dont agree); questioning the refined character of V1's arrangements and lyrics (V1_refined_Dont agree); considering V1 boring and outdated (V1_boring_Agree); arguing that Fedez's music is "true rap" (V2_subcultural_Dont agree); feeling no emotions while listening to V1 (V1_emotions_Dont agree); disagreeing with the presumed "immature" character of Fedez's music and lack of expertise of his listeners (V2_infamy_Dont agree); disliking classical music (classical_dislike).

In the central region of Fig. 13, in light blue, there are active modalities that do not discriminate much between the two sides of the map, having being chosen by a large number of respondents regardless of their coordinates on axis 1. Hence, appreciating classical, rock or *cantautorato*, liking, disliking or being indifferent to electronic music, preferring international or domestic music (see "cosmopolitan_"), being indifferent to Latin music are all responses who do not produce relevant divisions along the first dimension.

Figure 13 Plane 1-2, symbolic space. The darkest the colour of the modality, the highest its contribution to axes

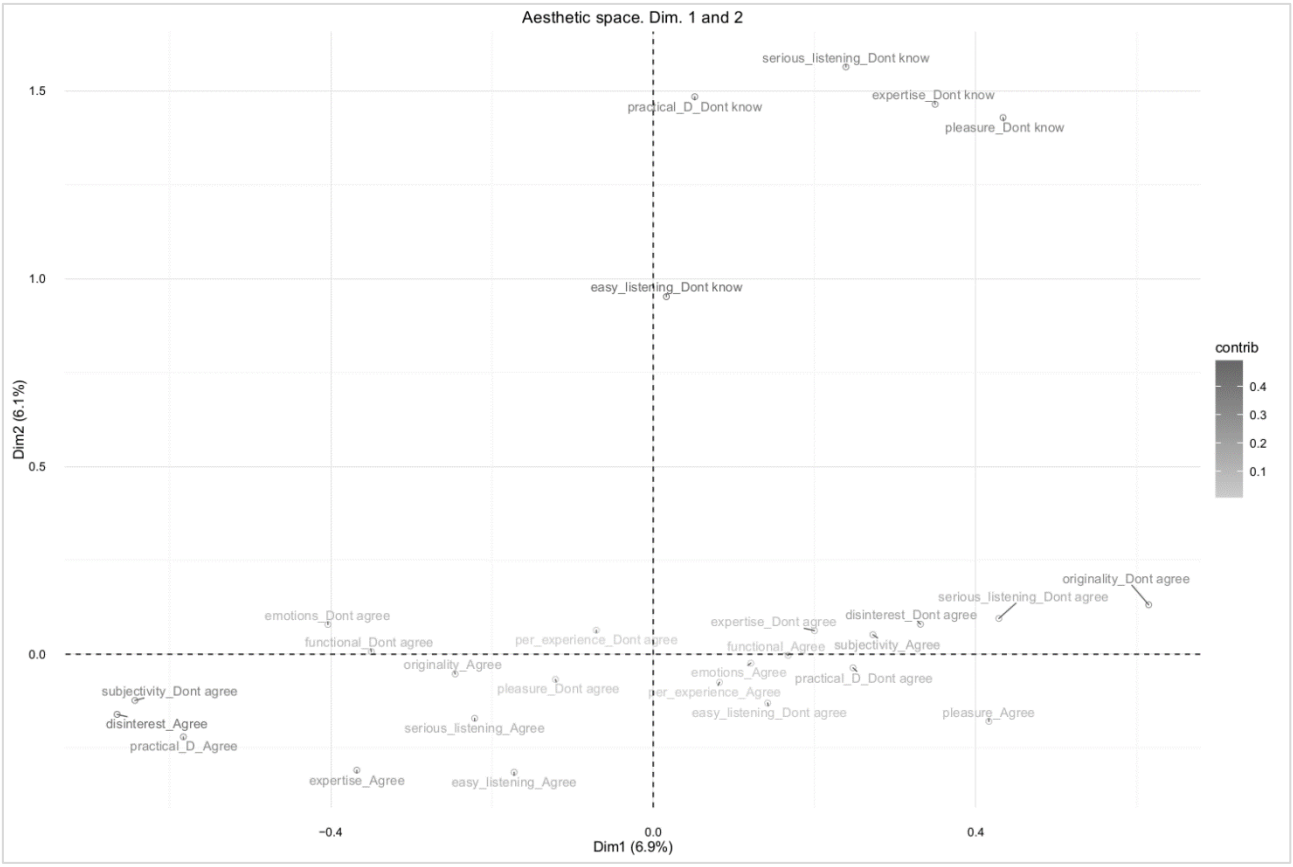


Axis 1 structures the field's symbolic space in a very familiar way. As in the case of aesthetic judgements on YouTube (see Chapter 4), music experts and their distinctive practices are diametrically opposed to listeners "defending" talent-show artists and mainstream rappers, as well as rejecting legitimate works and genres.

Since they measure how music is appreciated and consumed, dispositional variables foster a more nuanced interpretation. Fig. 14 portrays the aesthetic space along axis 1 as ranging from "intellectual" aesthetic views to "popular" styles of music perception. Indeed, on the left side of the map, one finds a disinterested aesthetic disposition (disinterest_Agree), disgust towards "schmaltzy songs" (practical_D_Agree), the belief that taste is not subjective (subjectivity_Dont agree), appreciation of "refined, original and intellectually stimulating" music (originality_Agree), as well as modalities indicating the refuse of functional and emotional aesthetic criteria (emotions_Dont agree; functional_Dont agree). On the right side, conversely, respondents disagree with "intellectual" evaluative principles such as originality and disinterest (originality_Dont agree; disinterest_Dont agree), claim

that taste is subjective (subjectivity_Agree) and dissent about the value of "serious" listening (serious_listening_Dont agree), preferring "ear-catchy" music instead (pleasure_Agree).

Figure 14 Plane 1-2, aesthetic space. The darkest the colour of the modality, the highest its contribution to axes



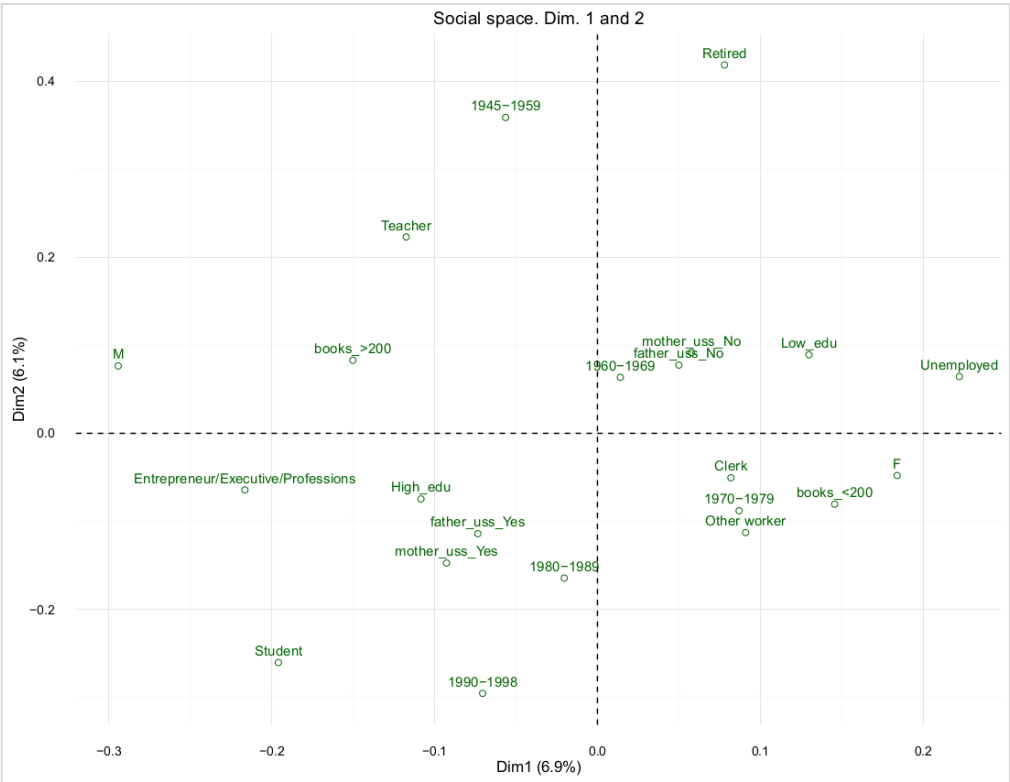
In sum, axis 1 reveals a clear opposition between distinctive distastes and illegitimate tastes, as well as between a Kantian "taste of reflection" and a popular "taste of the senses" (see Section 4.1.1)[118]. These results are of particular interest. They indicate that a Bourdieuian logic of distinction represents the primary principle of taste differentiation in the Italian field of music consumption, differently from what comparable empirical studies found in other European countries (e.g. Bennett et al., 2009; Roose et al., 2012).

Then, the superimposition of supplementary variables allows for the examination of the underlying social space. Figure 15 shows that a homologous polarization in terms of socio-demographic variables correspond to the one observed above in symbolic and aesthetic spaces. On the left, respondents characterized by intellectual and distinctive attitudes are

[118] Interestingly, in comparison with dislikes, boundary-works and, especially, embodied tastes, genre preferences play a minor role in this differentiation.

mainly male (M), either with a high occupational status (Entrepreneur/Executive/Professions) or students, possessing more than 200 books and highly educated (High_edu). On the right, in proximity to "popular" position-takings, one finds unemployed and female respondents, owning less than 200 books, who are likely to have an upper-secondary school diploma or below. To a slightly lesser extent, differences in social origin/inherited cultural capital (father_uss and mother_uss) follow this very same spatial logic.

Figure 15 Plane 1-2, social space



MCA shows that the main social cleavage characterizing music consumption in Italy follows a twofold principle. On the one hand, different objectified and embodied musical tastes are associated to different endowments of cultural and economic capital[119]. Hence, as in *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), the overall volume of capital represents a primary source of taste differentiation. On the other, an important dissimilarity emerges. Indeed, males are

[119] At first glance, the extreme coordinates of modalities "Entrepreneur/Executive/Professions" and "Unemployed" suggested a major centrality of economic capital. However, the neighbouring position of students in the left side of the map, together with the relevance of other indicators of cultural capital (i.e. supplementary variable "books"), highlights the key role of cultural capital. Perhaps, here economic capital can be interpreted as a factor that amplifies the effect of cultural capital.

much more likely than females to have a distinctive and "intellectual" attitude towards music. Females, vice versa, are markedly closer to position-takings indicating popular objectified and embodied tastes. Thus, such a gender-logic is tightly intertwined with a – less surprising – class-logic of taste differentiation[120]. If it is true that literature underlines the centrality of gender differences in cultural consumption, Italy appears to diverge from both the UK – where Bennett and colleagues found a gender-related "inward versus outward" taste differentiation (2009) – and the US, where, on the contrary, women participate to highbrow culture more than men (see Christin, 2012). At the same time, popular music is largely a male-dominated field (see Larsen, 2017), in Italy as well as elsewhere, and men are generally more involved in the consumption of music as a form of identity-formation. Although the social representation of female listeners as inexpert lovers of illegitimate music has emerged in several YouTube comments and interviews (see Sections 4.6 and 5.4.3), these limited data do not provide an adequate empirical ground for interpreting such an unexpected result. The counterintuitive combination of gender and class distinctions in the Italian field of music consumption needs to be address by further, *ad hoc* empirical investigations.

6.4.2 Axis 2: engagement versus detachment

The maps presented above allow also for the interpretation of axis 2 – which accounts for 27.6% of the total variance (see Tab. 8). As Figures 13 and 14 show, modalities contributing most to the definition of the second dimension are all "don't knows" located in the upper region of the map. Looking at the symbolic space first (Fig. 13), respondents located at the top of axis 2 do not have an opinion about the complexity (V2_complexity_Dont know), symbolic value (V2_prestige_Dont know; V2_infamy_Dont know) and content (V2_simplicity_Dont know) of Fedez feat. Michielin's song. On the contrary, modalities closer to the bottom of the map and significantly contributing to the axis are the following: on the left (i.e., intellectual), "V2_subcultural_Agree" (Fedez's music is not true rap) and "sub_domestic_Dont agree" (preference for US rap); on the right (i.e., popular), "V2_infamy_Dont agree" and "V2_subcultural_Dont agree" – that is, both defences of Fedez's music and listeners (see Chapter 4).

[120] As differences in scale between Fig. 13-14 and 15 indicate, supplementary modalities are relatively close to the centre of the map. This indicates that structural homology exists, but it is relatively loose. Perhaps, more precise indicators of economic capital would produce a better spatialisation of the social space.

Hence, what is at stake most in the case of axis 2 seems to be familiarity with contemporary, "new" musical forms. Listeners that know Italian pop-rap either stigmatize V2 or appreciate it, while those who are not familiar with it, simply, "don't know". This interpretation is supported also by the opposite locations in the map of categories "rap_Dislike" (coordinates: -0.29; 0.21) and "classical_Dislike" (coordinates: 0.64; -0.18).

Still, the right upper quadrant of the map presents "don't knows" referring to De André's video too (V1_distinctive_Dont know; V1_emotions_Dont_know; V1_refined_Dont know). The structure of aesthetic space (see Fig. 14) reveals a concentration of "don't knows" in the same region as well. Also, different responses in matter of easy listening[121] ("Dont know" versus "Agree") are strongly associated to opposite positions in the cloud of individuals. Indeed, it is no surprise that axis 2 clearly opposes young (-) to old (+) listeners in the social space (see Fig. 15).

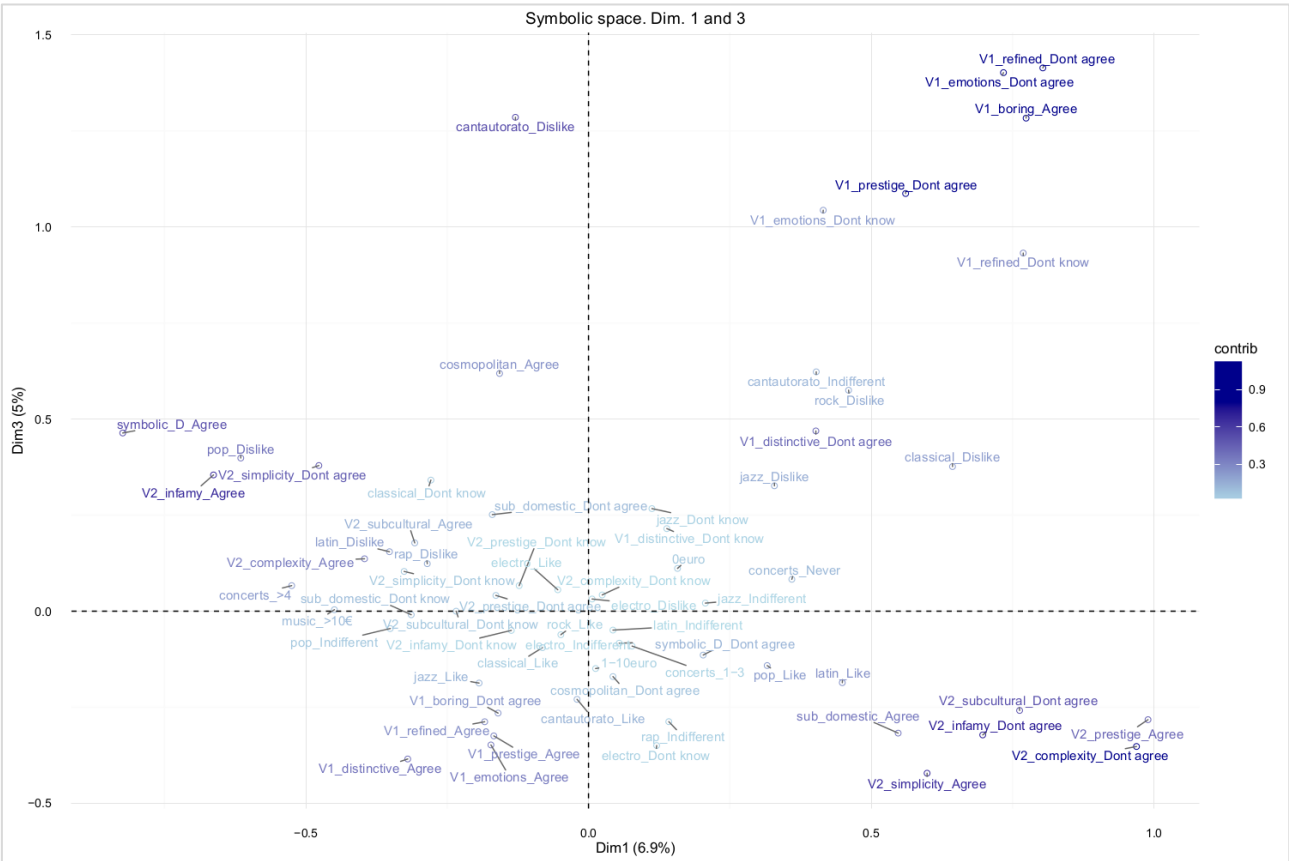
Thus, we can intend axis 2 as discriminating between engagement and detachment, especially in matter of "new" musical forms. A similar dimension emerged as main factor in Bennett and colleagues' MCA of cultural tastes in the UK (2009). However, in that case, cultural engagement was rooted in differential endowments of cultural and economic capitals, which here are not involved. Young listeners (26 years old or less, students) – who are, on average, digitally-skilled, well-informed about contemporary music and reflexive about their tastes – have an opinion, either "intellectual" or not (see Fig. 15). Conversely, older (at least 57 years old) and retired respondents did not know what to answer, being less up-to-date and quite detached from music consumption in general. Interestingly, as axis 2 intersects the main dimension of the present field, it is possible to observe that such detachment, in the "intellectual" area of the maps, is limited to rap music (see Fig. 13). On the contrary, older respondents with lower endowments of cultural and economic capitals appear to be marginalized across all genres. Interestingly, female listeners are slightly more "engaged" then their male peers (see Fig. 13, 14 and 15).

[121] A practice that characterized especially young and digitally skilled interviewees (see Chapter 5).

6.4.3 Axis 3: old versus new generations

Fig. 16 below presents the structure of symbolic space along dimensions 1 and 3. On the one hand, at the top of the map, modalities all contest the refined and distinctive character of De André's "Crêuza de mä", included in the questionnaire as symbol of cultural legitimacy ("V1_refined_Dont agree"; "V1_emotions_Dont agree"; "V1_boring_Agree"; "V1_prestige_Dont agree"; "V1_distinctive_Dont agree"). Since these categories are situated in the upper right corner of Fig. 16, they are particularly diffuse among female, lower educated and unemployed listeners. A more general distaste for canzone d'autore ("cantautorato_Dislike") and a cosmopolitan appreciation of international music ("cosmopolitan_Agree") are located in the upper-central region of the map instead. Interestingly, modalities "symbolic_D_Agree", "pop_Dislike", "V2_simplicity_Dont agree" and "V2_infamy_Agree" – all indicating a sense of cultural superiority toward mainstream music and its publics – are significantly and positively associated with axis 3, albeit in the cultural-capital-rich side of the map.

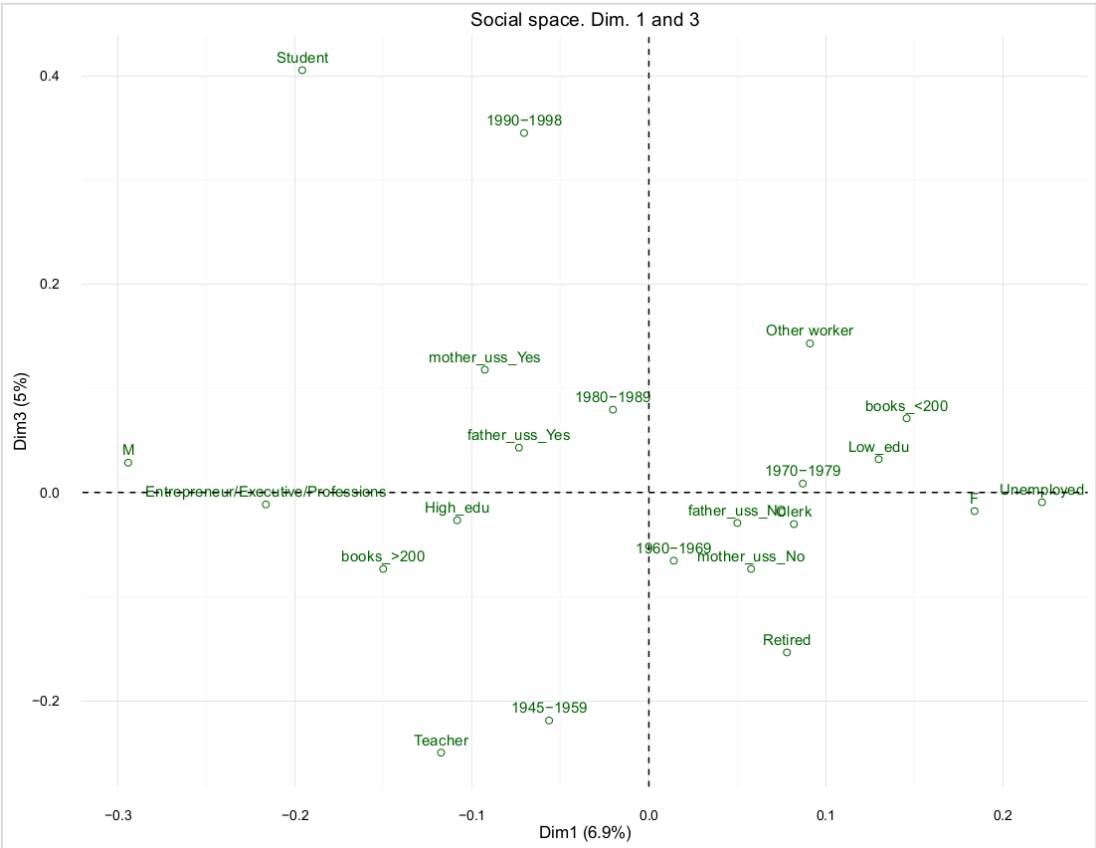
Figure 16 Plane 1-3, symbolic space. The darkest the colour of the modality, the highest its contribution to axes



On the other hand, categories situated at the bottom of axis 3 express a general “openness”. Overall, neither musical dislikes nor distinctive position-takings present negative y-values in Figure 16. More specifically, in the left half of axis 1, respondents appreciate De André’s work and recognize its cultural legitimacy (e.g. “V1_distinctive_Agree”; “V1_emotions_Agree”). A specular picture characterizes the lower right corner of the map, in the case of Fedez feat. Michielin’s music video (e.g. “V2_simplicity_Agree”; “V2_complexity_Dont agree”; “V2_infamy_Dont agree”).

The spatial distribution of position-takings in the symbolic space suggests that axis 3 discriminates between exclusionary (+) and culturally tolerant (-) attitudes. At first glance, this may be interpreted as signalling a “snobs versus omnivores” cleavage (Peterson and Kern, 1996). In reality, generational differences are at the root of this dimension. As the representation of the field’s social space shows, teachers and older respondents (1945-1959) are associated to the bottom of axis 3, while students and young respondents reside in the opposite region of the map (see Fig. 17 below). Gender, education and occupation do not relate to axis 3 at all.

Figure 17 Plane 1-3, social space

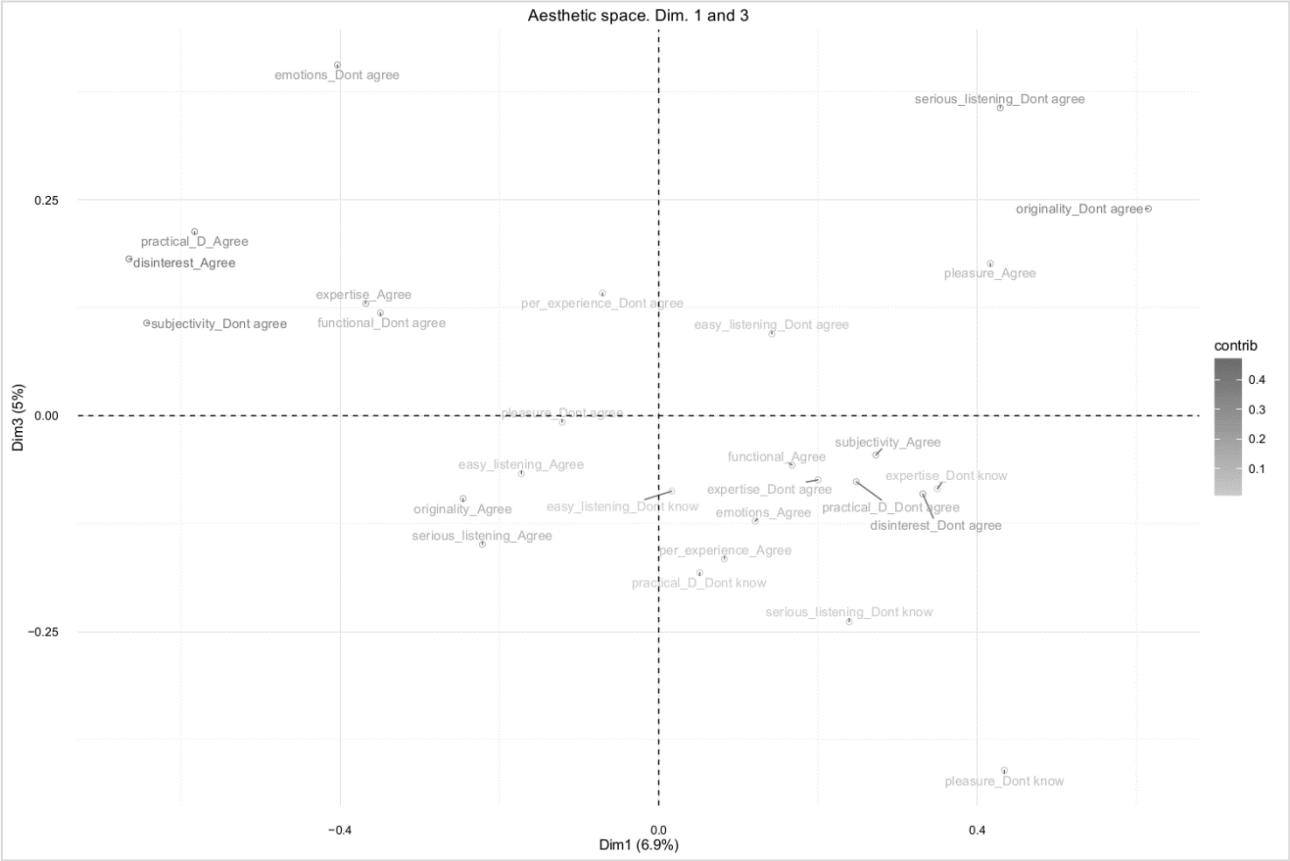


Hence, on average, younger listeners are more likely to use musical taste to draw symbolic boundaries than older ones. This is another counterintuitive result, considering, for instance, that – according to a study by Lizardo and Skiles – "individuals (in the United States and quite possibly in other settings) become increasingly less likely to express (in the survey interview situation) dislikes for any musical style" (2015:19). Given these premises, variations in styles of music evaluation and appreciation are of particular interest here. As Fig. 18 below illustrates, the generational-based spatialisation along axis 3 allows also for a more nuanced interpretation of the "intellectual" versus "popular" cleavage. A Bourdieuian opposition between "form" and "content", "disinterest" and "function" segments axis 1, regardless of substantial differences related to age cohorts. Yet, the "intellectual" refusal of simple emotions ("emotions_Dont agree") and the "popular" rejection of a "serious" approach to music consumption ("serious_listening_Dont agree") significantly contribute to axis 3, characterizing younger respondents' aesthetic views most.

In sum, these findings show that music-related forms of symbolic exclusion are manifest especially among new generations of listeners. In the Italian field of music consumption, the open, tolerant attitude normally associated to high-status omnivores (Peterson and Kern, 1996), rather characterizes older individuals, who are less likely to express musical dislikes. While practical and symbolic forms of distinction pointing to mainstream audiences are particularly common among males and educated students, their culturally deprived peers tend to reject legitimate artists instead, like in the case of Fabrizio De André. Furthermore, as Fig. 16 witnesses, modalities measuring dislike for established music genres such as rock, jazz and classical are similarly situated in the "young+popular" upper right quadrant. This suggests a declining legitimacy of consecrated musical forms among new generations, particularly evident in the case of lower educated fractions. What objectified tastes, if any, are perceived as legitimate among new generations of listeners? The significant contribution of modality "cosmopolitan_Agree" to axis 3 indicates what YouTube data already suggested (see Section 4.5) and studies conducted in other European countries have empirically demonstrated (see Prieur et al., 2008; Meuleman and Savage, 2013). Meaning, that international music is generally considered as symbolically powerful by young listeners, who tend to reject domestic artists instead.

However, such predictable shifts in the symbolic space mask a surprising stability in the aesthetic space, where the signs of a structural homology are more directly observable (see Section 6.2). Indeed, the polarization between "intellectual" and "popular" embodied tastes is even more marked among younger generations.

Figure 18 Plane 1-3, aesthetic space. The darkest the colour of the modality, the highest its contribution to axes



6.5 Cultural legitimacy and musical boundaries

Multiple correspondence analysis has revealed a clear taste differentiation related to multiple social factors such as class, gender and age. Nevertheless, taste clusters emerging through MCA are defined more by distinctive boundary-works and styles of music appreciation than by patterns of musical preferences. The broad genre categories employed so far play a minor role in shaping the structure of the field. For this reason, the relation between objectified taste and social background has remained partly unexplored. Moreover, as Section 6.4.3 suggests, the differential perceptions of cultural legitimacy and illegitimacy across social segments need to be further investigated.

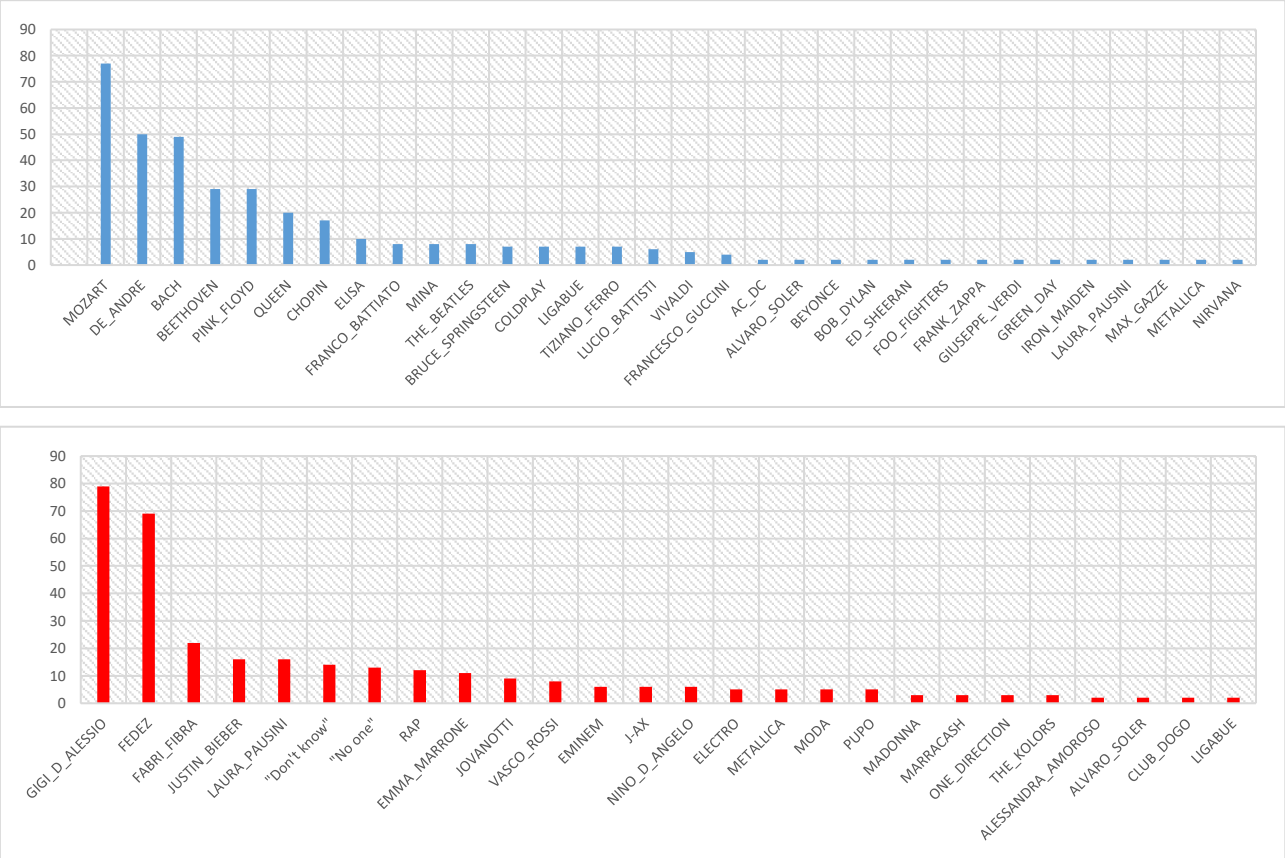
Responses to open-ended questions about “good” and “bad” as well as favourite and least favourite artists have been inductively analysed in order to shed light on these issues. Within this section, I first examine artists frequently associated to the notions of “good” and “bad” music by respondents – aggregated in eight distinct socio-demographic profiles (Section 6.5.1). Then, the same procedure will be applied considering open-ended questions about

liked and disliked artists (Section 6.5.2). In both cases, network analysis has been employed in order to enhance the interpretability of results (see Section 6.3.3).

6.5.1 "Good" and "bad" artists

Fig. 19 shows what artists are associated most to the notions of "good" and "bad" music by respondents[122]. In both cases, the distribution of absolute frequencies is fairly skewed. Mozart, Fabrizio De André and Bach are all mentioned more than 40 times in the guise of "good music". This witnesses a persisting recognition of classical music's symbolic value (see also Section 5.4.2), as well as the consecrated status of *cantautore* Fabrizio De André in the Italian social imaginary (Morin, 1962). In the case of "bad music", two artists in particular stand out for their high number of mentions (N > 60): Gigi D'Alessio and Fedez.

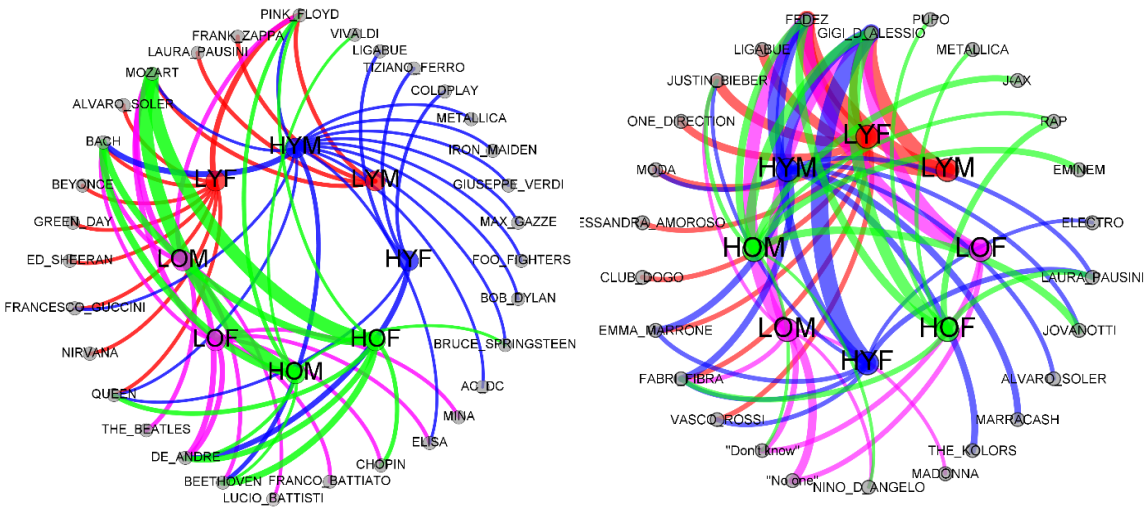
Figure 19 Artists associated to "good" (blue) and "bad" (red) music. Absolute frequencies, overall sample



[122] Only artists mentioned by more than 3 percent of each profile's respondents are considered in the analyses. 32 "good" and 26 "bad" artists actually meet the threshold (see Fig. 19).

These findings are coherent with the multidimensional cultural hierarchy depicted in Chapters 4 and 5. However, responses to open-ended questions about “good” and “bad” music are heterogeneous: on average, artists included in Fig. 19 account for 38.9% of the total answers in the case of “good music” and for 37% of the total answers in the case of “bad music” (see Tab. 17, Appendix 4). This means that, for any socio-demographic profile, there is a long tail of respondents that mentioned names other than those reported above. Nevertheless, a qualitative exploration of such a long tail of infrequent responses shows that “good” and “bad” music are two symbolic universes that rarely intersect. Classical composers, vintage *cantautori*, international rock bands and jazz players account for the large majority of the names spontaneously associated to “good music”. On the contrary, Italian mainstream pop, rap and metal are the genres characterizing “bad” artists most. The visual examination of the strongest relative associations between socio-demographic profiles and artists aims to inquire into the social roots of antagonistic perceptions of the field’s implicit cultural hierarchy.

Figure 20 Networks of associations among socio-demographic profiles and artists. “Good” on the left, “bad” on the right. Dual circle layout. Edges in red = LY; Edges in blue = HY; Edges in pink LO; Edges in green = HO. The thicker the edge, the higher the relative strength of the relation



The “good music” network in Figure 20 shows that Mozart, Bach and Beethoven are mentioned by all socio-demographic profiles but lower educated males and females under 37 years old. The same differential response-pattern can be detected in the case of Fabrizio De André. Relative associations to classical composers are particularly strong in the case of

older and highly educated respondents (see edges in green) – that is, those residing in fractions of the social space where the recognition of conventional highbrow culture is traditionally strong. The fact that young and educated listeners spontaneously mentioned classical composers while their lower educated peers did not, corroborates a trend detected by Lizardo and Skiles in the US – namely, that "younger entrants into the high-education stratum continue to share largely the same (high status) tastes as their parents and grandparents" (2015:19).

Interestingly, pop artists associated to "good music" – Ligabue, Tiziano Ferro, Coldplay, Elisa, Ed Sheeran, Green Day, Beyoncé, Alvaro Soler, Laura Pausini – are mentioned mainly by young female respondents (HYF and LYF in Fig. 20). Though similarly fragmented, their male peers' responses mostly point to international rock bands (e.g. Metallica, Foo Fighters). Such a pop orientation of Italian female listeners emerged also in Gasperoni and colleagues' study of youth music consumption (2004), and may partly explain the influence of gender on MCA's principal dimension (see Section 6.4.1).

The relational patterns highlighted by the "bad music" network are more homogeneous (see Fig. 20). As the thickness of the edges indicates, artists Gigi D'Alessio and Fedez are frequently mentioned by respondents from all socio-demographic profiles. To a lesser extent, young listeners transversally agree also on the illegitimate character of Emma Marrone – witnessed also by YouTube data (see Section 4.5). Rap, mentioned as a whole genre, is stigmatized solely by older respondents, who are authors of "No one" and "Don't know" answers too. This association between older generations and either tolerant ("No one") or detached ("Don't know") position-takings coincide with empirical indications provided by MCA (see Sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3).

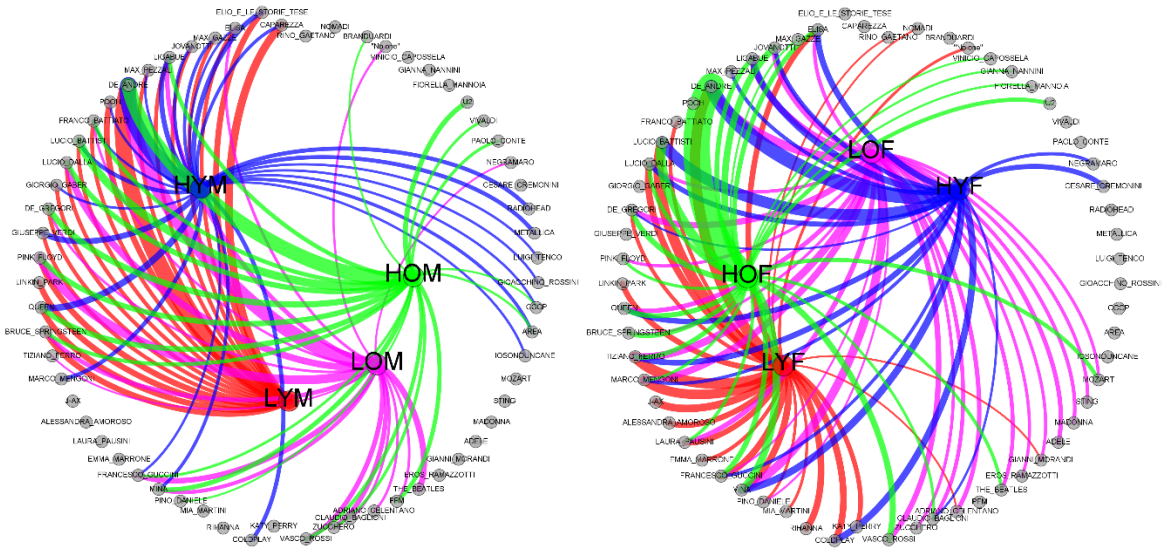
Overall, survey data substantially confirm the existence of a fairly universal intersubjective agreement on musical worth, as indicated by the digital field analysis (see Chapter 4). Few iconic names are mentioned by all socio-demographic profiles and, thus, work as universal symbols of either legitimacy or illegitimacy – what elsewhere I referred to as "boundary-objects" (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Traditionally highbrow or recently consecrated genres (e.g. *canzone d'autore*) tend to be transversally associated to "good music", while the realm of "bad music" is portrayed by respondents as mainly composed by mainstream pop Italian artists. Young listeners' responses are those which deviate most from the implicit cultural hierarchy portrayed in this research. This can be interpretable as a sign of ongoing, emerging shifts in the field's market of symbolic value.

6.5.2 Networks of likes and dislikes

The notions of "good" and "bad" music forced respondents to transcend their own taste and reflect on socially shared beliefs about musical worth. Conversely, open-ended questions about favourite and least favourite artists in three broad domains – contemporary Italian music, Italian music of the past and international music – aimed to measure implicit "musical boundaries" conveyed by socio-demographic differences in taste repertoires (Sonnett, 2016:41).

Artists occurring as "favourites" most are 59. In spite of the potentially infinite "space of possibles" (Bourdieu, 2002) at respondents' disposal, open-ended answers present clear regularities. Figure 21 shows differences and overlaps between socio-demographic profiles' musical preferences (see also Tab. 18, Appendix 4).

Figure 21 Network of most frequent favourite artists per socio-demographic profile, M vs F. Dual circle layout. Edges in red = LY; Edges in blue = HY; Edges in pink LO; Edges in green = HO. The thicker the edge, the higher the relative strength of the relation



In the case of male respondents (network on the left), it is possible to observe in the upper-left area of the circle a set of transversally appreciated artists. They are, in particular, Fabrizio De André – mentioned by nearly 30 percent of listeners throughout socio-demographic profiles – and contemporary pop-rock artist Ligabue – liked by about 8 percent of male respondents, regardless of their social background. No significant differences related to age or educational level emerge in the case of these two names. Similarly, De André is favoured by one third of female respondents, across all socio-demographic profiles. Yet, the

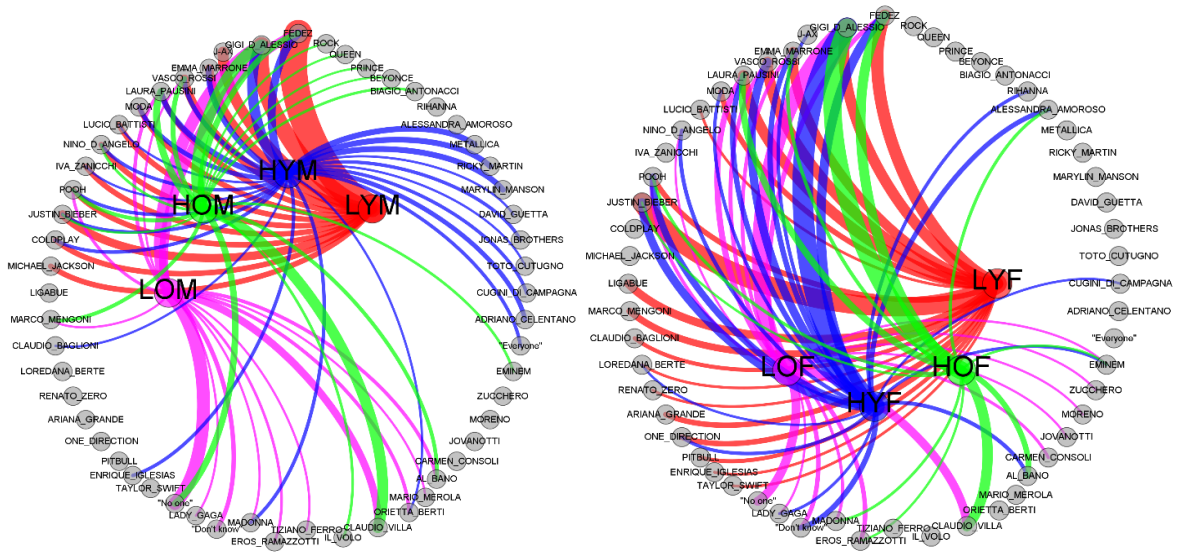
proportion of occurrences among highly educated females is notably higher than in the case of lower educated ones. Furthermore, while the appreciation of classic Italian singer Mina is unanimously shared 14 percent of female respondents (as well as by older and highly educated men), talent-show singer Marco Mengoni, albeit mentioned by women from all social positions, is significantly more appreciated by lower educated ones (16% versus 6%) – as well as almost ignored by male respondents. Hence, also considering transversally appreciated artists, it is possible to notice gender- and education-based differences in patterns of responses.

Considering education, for instance, two niche names like 1970s prog-rock band Area and 1980s punk rock band CCCP have been mentioned solely by highly educated males (HYM and HOM). Conversely, "No one" answers to open-ended question about favourite Italian artists of the past came exclusively from lower-educated young respondents. In general, lower educated listeners mainly indicated well-known *cantautori*, rock bands and, particularly, pop-rock singers as favourite artists. Differently, highly educated listeners, on average, displayed a more "underground" objectified taste. This is particularly evident in the case of young males (HYM, blue edges in the network on the left), who are the only ones mentioning Radiohead, composer Gioacchino Rossini, vintage *cantautore* Luigi Tenco and electro-indie artist Iosonouncane. Though it would have been unlikely to find these very same mentions in other profiles' responses, it must be argued anyway that lower educated listeners have not given comparable answers in terms of "nicheness".

For what concerns female listeners, the few remarkable differences between educational groups are not analogously due to the distinctive character of high-cultural-capital mentions but, rather, to the illegitimacy of low-cultural-capital ones (see Fig. 21). Indeed, widely stigmatized talent-show singers Emma Marrone and Alessandra Amoroso (see Fig. 20) as well as international pop stars like Rihanna and Katy Perry appear solely in the responses of this specific socio-demographic group. More generally, regardless of generational and educational differences, females tend to favour mainstream pop artists more than males.

Last, predictably, age affects artistic preferences. 1970s prog-rock band PFM, Pink Floyd, Bruce Springsteen as well as Italian pop-rock artists Zucchero and Vasco Rossi are mentioned by older respondents most. Conversely, rapper Caparezza and band Elio e le Storie Tese markedly characterize young males' preferences, while Coldplay, together with Italian pop singers Tiziano Ferro and Elisa, are mainly favoured by young females.

Figure 22 The network of most frequent least favourite artists per socio-demographic profile, M vs F. Dual circle layout. Edges in red = LY; Edges in blue = HY; Edges in pink LO; Edges in green = HO. The thicker the edge, the higher the relative strength of the relation



As Figure 22 illustrates, the 56 names significantly occurring in answers to open-ended questions about least favourite artists are very similar to those associated to "bad music" in Section 6.5.1. Gigi D'Alessio and Fedez lead this infamous ranking, being mentioned across all socio-demographic profiles by, respectively, an average of 20 and 15 percent of respondents. This finding is a further empirical evidence of them working as transversal symbols of cultural illegitimacy in the Italian field of music consumption – as it inductively emerged also in YouTube comments and qualitative interviews (see Sections 4.5, 5.4.3). Overall, either in the case of Italian music of the past, contemporary Italian music or international music, those indicated as least favourite artists are mainly mainstream pop singers. Vice versa, in accordance with the tacit criteria guiding "good taste", classical composers, canonized *cantautori* and niche bands are entirely absent from the picture.

Socio-demographic patterns in musical dislikes shed light on implicit musical boundaries in the field (see Sonnett, 2016; Bryson, 1996). First, distinct age cohorts tend to have different dislikes. This is manifest, for instance, in the case of Justin Bieber and Italian pop band Modà, both disregarded nearly exclusively by new generations. Conversely, vintage Italian singer Claudio Villa – ignored in young listeners' responses – is unanimously rejected by a considerable proportion of older respondents (13%). These differential response patterns are presumably due to a major familiarity with the music of one's own generation (see Roberts, 2012). Differently, the case of a consecrated artist like Lucio Battisti – disliked solely by

younger profiles of listeners (HYM, LYF, LYM) – appears to be related to a generational rejection of "outdated" Italian music. Indeed, generational differences in terms of tolerant and exclusionary attitudes, highlighted by the third axis of MCA (see Section 6.4.3), emerge also here. That is, while tolerant respondents disliking "no one" are all older than 37 years old (9% among HOM, 12.2% and 18% among LOF and LOM), those – ironically? – maintaining to dislike "everyone" are 4.8% of HYM (highly educated, young and males). By no chance, this is precisely the most elitist segment of the social space (see Section 6.4.1). Second, speaking about gender, differences in terms of dislikes are less manifest here than in the case of least favourite artists. The sole figures that clearly stand out regard lower-educated young males, who are more hostile than average towards pop-rappers Fedez and J-Ax (see Tab. 19, Appendix 4). This may be interpreted as a sign of subcultural distinction against "inauthentic rap" by hip hop lovers – as documented also elsewhere (see Sections 4.5 and 4.6).

Education discriminates especially within gender categories. This is the case, for instance, of talent-show singer Alessandra Amoroso. Favoured by a small percentage of young and lower educated females (see Fig. 21), she is disliked precisely by the high-cultural-capital fraction of the same social group (HOF = 4.3%; HYF = 6.6%).

In sum, the inductive analysis of open-ended answers about favourite and least favourite artists portraits a fragmented but, at the same time, coherent picture. On the one hand, responses reveal the complexity and variety of objectified taste and distaste, impossible to capture using broad genre labels. On the other, network analysis allows to detect otherwise hidden regularities in musical likes and dislikes, as well as to grasp underlying musical boundaries. Overall, data show that age, cultural capital and gender all contribute to diversify taste patterns. Older listeners are more tolerant and – unsurprisingly – fond of "vintage" music than younger ones. Highly educated music consumers are more likely to prefer legitimate and niche artists than their lower educated peers. Female respondents, on average, display a more pop-oriented taste, in comparison with males.

Conclusion

The digital field analysis presented in the previous chapters allowed me to unobtrusively explore Italian music listeners' position-takings from the ground-up. The survey data analysed here aimed to map the social space underlying them, without *a priori* assuming any causal relation between the two. The main result of the present investigation is that symbolic struggles about "good" and "bad" music, "intellectual" and "popular" taste and, particularly,

“expert” and “ignorant” listeners are not just comments on a digital platform. In the Italian field of music consumption, digital distinctions have “real” social roots. Differential patterns of objectified tastes, styles of aesthetic appreciation and music-related boundary-works are intertwined with listeners’ age, gender and, particularly, overall volume of cultural and economic capitals. In the field’s symbolic space, the main dimension revealed by multiple correspondence analysis discriminates between distinctive uses of legitimate taste and defences of stigmatized artists. At the intermediate level of the aesthetic space, “intellectual” embodied dispositions are opposed to a popular “taste of the senses” (Bourdieu, 1984). Below, in the space of objective relations, the same axis highlights a social cleavage between high-cultural capital, high-class, male and low-cultural-capital, low-class, female music consumers. A gender-based logic of taste differentiation intersects a Bourdieuian, “distinctive” polarization. The reasons behind the proximity of women to the dominated fractions of the social space need to be further investigated, though such an unexpected finding can be partly explained by empirical indications of an overall pop orientation of Italian female listeners.

Age differences are at the core of the other two salient dimensions detected through MCA. On the one side, older and retired listeners are more likely to be detached from music consumption – particularly in the case of contemporary musical forms – while young digital consumers are on average more engaged and up to date with music in general. On the other, new generations are associated to an exclusionary and cosmopolitan approach to music, whereas older cohorts of listeners tend to be more “respectful” towards cultural legitimate forms (e.g. *canzone d’autore*) – as well as, in general, more culturally tolerant.

These somehow counterintuitive findings are empirically supported also by the inductive analysis of open-ended responses. Also in this case, indications provided by digital data have been corroborated by a more conventional methodological approach, involving an entirely different sample. Despite for the insistent claims of a diffuse dehierarchization of postmodern societies (Bauman, 2000), of a pluralisation of cultural legitimacy (Lamont, 1992) and contingency of worth (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006), a relevant share of my respondents, when asked about “good” and “bad” music, mentioned the very same artists’ names. Few of them – such as Fabrizio De André on the one side and Gigi D’Alessio on the other – transversally work as positive and negative benchmarks of musical value (see Santoro, 2002), sorts of symbolical shortcuts crystallized in the shared imaginary of Italian listeners. Then, a predictable long tail of rarely occurring artists account for the majority of responses. Nevertheless, “good” and “bad” music are two symbolic universes that rarely

intersect, being spontaneously associated to different genres (classical music and *canzone d'autore* versus mainstream pop) and evaluative criteria. At the same time, given coordinates in the social space correspond to specific "points of view" on the field (Bourdieu, 1989:18). Young listeners, in particular, appear to be the more reluctant to recognize established notions of cultural legitimacy, though they enthusiastically contribute to perpetuate the stigmatization of already illegitimate artists anyway.

A closer look to objectified taste, based on open-ended questions about favourite and least favourite artists, unveils regularities and discrepancies across socio-demographic profiles' responses. Again, older listeners' cultural tolerance and vintage preferences are opposed to younger listeners' exclusionary attitude and taste for contemporary genres. Highly educated consumers tend to positively agree on either culturally legitimate or niche artists, while lower educated ones either recognize the very same idea of cultural legitimacy or display mainstream musical references. Female respondents are less afraid of showing a higher appreciation for Italian and international pop music – though internal differences in educational level coincide with more or less legitimate position-takings.

In sum, contrarily to Douglas Holt's expectations, objectified taste in music still counts in the "multidimensional status game" of social life (1998). In the specific case of music in Italy, a loose but significant relation between social stratification and what one likes and dislikes persists. Nevertheless, as Holt suggested (1998; 1997a) and Bourdieu *in primis* underlined (1984), it is embodied taste – that is, how one consumes (Jarness, 2015) – the primary, homologous sign of either a privileged or a deprived position in the social space. For this reason, it is indispensable to consider aesthetic dispositions in the sociological study of cultural taste (see Roose et al., 2012).

This investigation has several limits, which mainly derive from the fact that the analysed sample is not representative of the Italian population. If it is true that a relational methodological approach such as the one employed here is more focused on structural relations than on substantial figures (Mohr, 1998), still, it remains that the territorially-specific character of the surveyed population prevents any systematic attempt to generalize the present findings to Italy as a whole. Nevertheless, the mixed-method research design adopted in this dissertation allowed me to triangulate comparable findings emerged from different data sources and, thus, address the key issue of the robustness of results in a qualitatively-driven way (see Mason, 2006).

Concluding remarks

"Finisce qui. Il cane nel cerchio e il cerchio. Il ragazzo che immagina e l'uomo che prova a realizzare" [*Café Berlin*, Marco Maria Linzi, 2017]

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the "deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated" (2002:268). The present work has attempted to describe Italy in the 2010s – its music and, especially, its listeners. We plunged into an ambivalent societal context, characterized by a rich musical heritage, as well as by a general indifference towards the arts (Montecchi, 2014); by relatively low social mobility and educational attainment, as well as by an extremely diffused YouTube usage (see Section 2.6). Such a research context looks substantially different from the hierarchical and class-fractured society of 1960s France described in *La Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). However, my aim here was "to try to grasp the invariant" (Bourdieu, 2002:268), to shed light on the relational mechanisms that underlie the social uses and social roots of taste in music.

The main challenge of this research was to study distinction in an inductive and ground-up way, without postulating either the existence/content of shared hierarchies of cultural/aesthetic legitimacy, or a relationship between musical taste and social stratification. Given the current digitization of musical reception and the methodological opportunities offered by online platforms, a major part of the present investigation is based on digital data retrieved from YouTube, regarding music videos and their publics. These data, together with those coming from more "conventional" sources (i.e. semi-structured interviews, questionnaire), have been analysed using a variety of methods – such as network, cluster, discourse and multiple correspondence analyses. Overall, empirical findings all point to the following conclusion: a logic of distinction is currently in play in the Italian field of music consumption.

This result was not easily predictable. As the literature indicates (see Section 2.6), in Italy consecrated musical genres such as opera and *canzone d'autore* have always been part of the realm of *nazionalpopolare* in the original Gramscian sense, that is, a cultural terrain shared by both intellectuals and common people (see Scelsi, 2014). An aesthetic boundary between "serious" and "popular" culture was built (see Santoro, 2010), has been reworked in recent times (Varriale, 2016b; Santoro, 2013) and still is (Sassatelli et al., 2015). Also, actual changes can be connected to transitions taking place in the cultural, institutional and

media systems at the national level, as well as to more general societal shifts characterizing postmodern societies at a global level. Nevertheless, leaving aside substantial differences, there are many similarities between the social and symbolic processes described by Bourdieu (1984) and those surrounding musical taste in Italy, in the age of YouTube.

For what concerns the perception and universality of cultural legitimacy in the Italian field of music consumption (see RQ 1, Section 2.4), digital data, qualitative interviews and open-ended survey responses do not portray a universally-recognized, monolithic notion of "legitimate" objectified taste. Specific music scenes and genres have internal "subcultural hierarchies" unknown to most listeners. Furthermore, distinctions between "good" and "bad" music are often fine-grained, within-genre ones. Still, this does not imply that cultural legitimacy is entirely dissolved (Bauman, 2011), or that a plurarchy of mutually alternative cultural hierarchies has taken its place (Lamont, 1992) – as *Bauma*n's and *Lamont's hypotheses* in Section 2.4 imply. Rather, with the fragmentation and diversification of the music market, a multidimensional cultural hierarchy has emerged. Niche, genre-specific notions of "excellence" and "infamy" cohabit with a common ground of transversally intelligible artistic references. Conventionally highbrow genres like classical and jazz are stably associated to the notion of "good music", together with Italian popular music genre *canzone d'autore* – which acts as a "discursive benchmark according to which one might define the cultural value of a song" (Santoro, 2002:112). Being genre equal, "vintage" artists have a higher symbolic value than contemporary ones, whereas international music artists are normally perceived as more legitimate than domestic ones – especially among new, cosmopolitan generations of listeners (see Meuleman and Savage, 2013). Some well-known artists are universally recognized as symbols of legitimacy and illegitimacy – e.g. Fabrizio De André, Emma Marrone, Gigi D'Alessio, Fedez. For music listeners, they represent keywords, sorts of symbolic shortcuts. Borrowing a concept coined by Star and Griesemer (1989) in an entirely different field of research, they work as "boundary-objects" in the Italian field of music consumption. Overall, in the symbolic universe characterizing contemporary Italian society, "good" and "bad" music are two worlds that rarely encounter each other.

Also, an aesthetic hierarchy ranking "intellectual" and "popular" embodied tastes is perceived among Italian music listeners (RQ 2). The inductive analysis of taste-justifications on YouTube (Section 4.4) reveals that the aesthetic criteria employed by digital music consumers in "critical" judgements of taste are not the situational, interactional manifestation of a horizontal plurality of "orders of worth" (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006;

1999). On the contrary, regimes of evaluation are individually-based and cluster following a Bourdieuian opposition between "intellectual" and "popular" aesthetic views. The former is disinterested, reflective and attentive to the formal aspects of the musical work, while the latter focuses on "extra-musical factors" such as function, emotions and sensations (see Dahlhaus, 2004: 263). As qualitative interviews indicate, "intellectual" forms of aesthetic appreciation are narrated as the "correct" way for approaching music, while, using Carl Wilson's words, "sentimentality" represents a "cardinal aesthetic sin" for high-cultural-capital interviewees (2014:123). In everyday practices of music reception, these latter consumers differentiate also between "serious" and "easy" modes of listening, in an Adornian guise (see Fabbri, 2003; Dell'Antonio, 2004). However, albeit recognizing that the foreground, serious, intellectual consumption of "good" music is the preferable approach, they also admit to listen to "bad" music in an "easy" (i.e. background, ironic, functional) way. Interestingly, this practice is described by interviewees as situationally tailored to specific contexts of reception (Airoldi et al., 2016).

Forms of symbolic distinction based on objectified musical taste are manifest (RQ 3), especially in the semi-anonymous social context of YouTube. According to Douglas and Isherwood, artistic tastes "can be used as fences or bridges" (1979:12). Digital music listeners commenting on the platform largely prefer the former option. Discursive struggles about "authentic" music or "true" rap implicitly draw symbolic boundaries, and often give rise to explicit manifestations of symbolic violence (see Section 2.6). When defending their idols (and own tastes), fans of stigmatized artists either claim that taste is subjective or manifest a sense of puzzlement and rage. The same feelings emerge from the accounts of low-cultural-capital interviewees, who describe the exercise of symbolic exclusion in matter of music as a ubiquitous practice among acquaintances and friends. Yet, the logic of distinction does not necessarily entail symbolic exclusion (RQ 4). It mainly works in a "practical" way, "outside of any intention of distinction" (Bourdieu, 1989:20). As interview data show (see Section 5.4), a distinctive sense permeates also the unconscious mastery of the languages of legitimate taste displayed by openly tolerant high-cultural-capital listeners. Survey data presented in Chapter 6 allowed me to approximately situate in the social space the nuanced "position-takings" inductively explored through the digital field analysis (RQ 5). Differently from what recent studies using MCA have found in other European countries (e.g. Savage and Gayo, 2011), the main dimension structuring musical taste in my sample of 1591 individuals resembles *La Distinction*'s taste differentiation based on capital volume (Bourdieu, 1984). Proceeding from the neutral centre of MCA's spatial representation of the

field, on the one side, embodied taste becomes more "intellectual", objectified taste gets undetermined – or, more probably, particularly niche and sophisticated, as open-ended responses suggest (see Section 6.5.2) –, cultural participation rises and a distinctive, snobbish attitude appears. Such snob and "intellectual" position-takings are associated to high cultural capital and occupational status, as well as, significantly, to male respondents. The opposite side of the map presents an antithetical picture. That is, "popular" embodied and objectified tastes, rejection of complex or legitimate cultural forms and, in the social space, low-cultural-capital, unemployed and female listeners. The other two relevant dimensions – engagement vs. detachment, new vs. old generations – have been both interpreted considering age differences. A generational cleavage in terms of music preferences emerges also from the quantitative mapping of YouTube data (Chapter 3) and the visual network analyses of survey respondents' favourite and least favourite artists as of Section 6.5.2.

Considering the overall results of the present investigation, music appears to be at the core of a symbolic battleground opposing different views on artistic and – especially – social worth. The two dimensions intertwine: a "bad" taste is associated to "ignorant", "chav", "stupid" listeners, while those with a "good" musical taste are socially represented as intelligent and cultivated persons. This does not mean that agents strategically aim to convert their cultural mastery in material profits, deliberately acting as "status seekers" (Packard, 1960). One of my young interviewees, a voracious and expert consumer of niche music (M20NE), spontaneously pointed out that the spasmodic cultivation of his musical taste aims to a cultural grow, but that this is just a "personal" thing, pursued without any purpose of "feeling more cultured". Still, his refined tastes have a distinctive power and predictable social roots.

Reading this dissertation, one might object that everything is too smooth and straightforward. After all, there must be differences between 1960s France and 2010s Italy! Of course, there are. As survey data show, if a class cleavage is central in explaining taste differentiation, generational and – particularly – gender-based mechanisms are equally, if not more, important. Age is a strong predictor of music consumption in most western societies (see Roose et al., 2012; Bennett et al., 2009). Still, multiple correspondence analysis reveals that an exclusionary, snob attitude is associated to new generations of listeners most, while older cohorts tend to be more culturally tolerant. Considering the diffuse claims of a general "openness" characterizing contemporary music consumers (see Peterson, 2005), this is a rather counterintuitive finding. The same can be said for the gender-based polarization

as of Axis 1 (see Section 6.4.1). These issues deserve further, *ad hoc* empirical investigations. Also, music experts' "situational omnivorousness" represents a potentially fertile direction for future research (see Chapter 5). In brief, high-cultural-capital interviewees spontaneously distinguish between "serious" and "easy" modes of music reception, which require different types of music – difficult, innovative, intellectually stimulating versus pop, trash, energetic – and are based on different everyday-life situations (Airoldi et al., 2016). In a standard survey research using standard indicators, these listeners would probably be labelled as "omnivores" (see Peterson, 2005). However, here, omnivorousness does not point just to the types of music one consumes but, also, to the types of situations where consumption takes place. Again, there is no "openness" (Ibid.), since party tracks are inappropriate for a serious, contemplative, foreground listening experience and Radiohead's "In Rainbows", on the contrary, hardly fits a (fun) party. Moreover, since listeners attach a different cultural value to these two modes of music consumption, a stable hierarchy of legitimacy lies in the background. Hence, this work suggests that music reception cannot be interpreted without considering how listeners frame it in their daily life situations.

The present dissertation empirically and theoretically contributes to the sociological literature about taste, cultural classification and distinction. At the same time, it deals with the digital (inter)mediation of cultural and communicative processes. I in-depth examined justifications and evaluative processes in digitally-mediated social interactions, applying Boltanski and Thevenot's framework (2006; 1999) to the analysis of online communication (see Section 4.4). Furthermore, I attempted to operationalize the Bourdieuian concept of field as a network of relations intermediated by non-human "actants" (Latour, 2005), such as recommender algorithms (see Section 3.2). Still, on this matter, many questions remain unanswered, especially for what concerns the key issue of the "automation of taste" (Barile and Sugiyama, 2015). My survey data show that YouTube's recommendation system is largely used by Italian music listeners of different ages and social backgrounds (see Tab. 14, Appendix 4). As my interviews witness, automated recommendations are normally employed for exploring and discovering musical content (see Section 5.4.1). However, the long-term consequences of this technology on the formation and transformation of individual and collective tastes are hard to assess. Hypotheses can be formulated. For instance, if many people believe that Blur and Oasis are similar bands, the objectification of this cultural relation of similarity in the form of an automated recommendation will be likely to spread this belief even more and – in a never-ending loop caused by the logic of the algorithm

(Hallinan and Striphas, 2014:6) – perpetuate again and again the same recommendation process (see Airoldi, 2015). Perhaps, given the objectifying power of digital platforms, shared systems of cultural classification – instead of being "liquefied" (Bauman, 2000) – are now both socially and technologically reproduced. Still, digital platforms here have been treated more as research instruments than as research objects. The main goal of this dissertation is a methodological one. Moving from the numerous critiques to established methodological perspectives in sociology of taste (see Sections 1.5 and 1.6), I followed the general call for inductive, relational, unobtrusive, mixed-method, fine-grained, digitally-based investigations (e.g. Savage and Gayo, 2011; Peterson, 2005; Lizardo and Skiles, 2016; Savage and Silva, 2013; Beer, 2013). In this work, for the first time, large amounts of digital data have been employed for the study of cultural distinction. Mixing digital methods, interviews and survey data in a "qualitatively-driven" way (Mason, 2006), I aimed to capture the multifacetedness of musical taste, considering the macro level of the field's cultural classifications and structural relations, as well as the meso level of situated communicative interactions and the micro level of identities and taste biographies. The main limitations of this research are due to the small number of interviews and the non-representative character of my survey data, which do not allow me to produce general conclusions about the social roots of musical taste in Italy as whole. Conversely, I believe that my digital field analysis is representative – though in non-statistical terms – of the social discourses about music circulating among Italian digital listeners in the monitored time spam. As the examples in Chapter 4 show, my final sample of YouTube comments includes the voices of more than 67k users, representing both privileged and marginalized segments of the Italian population – clearly marked by different languages of taste.

Finally, the broader purpose of this work is showing that digital data can enhance our understanding of the social world. As digital data serve to sociology – to make it more empirical and quantitative without renouncing to its "necessary stress on particulars" (Latour et al. 2012:18; see also Mohr et al., 2015), sociology serves to digital data, in order to escape the naivety and lack of reflexivity characterizing most Big Data approaches (boyd and Crawford, 2012). The present research represented an attempt to put Pierre Bourdieu's theory of taste to the empirical test in an increasingly digitized world, crossed by substantially different digital distinctions hiding real social roots and consequences.

References

Airoldi, M. (2015). Potrebbe interessarti anche: recommender algorithms e immaginario , il caso YouTube. *IM@GO*, *1*(6), 132–150. http://doi.org/10.7413/22818138050

Airoldi, M., Beraldo, D., & Gandini, A. (2016). Follow the algorithm: An exploratory investigation of music on YouTube. *Poetics*, *57*, 1–13. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.05.001

Allington, D. (2016). Linguistic capital and development capital in a network of cultural producers: mutually valuing peer groups in the "interactive fiction" retrogaming scene. *Cultural Sociology*, 10(2), 267–286.

Anderson, C. (2006). *The Long Tail. Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*. New York: Hyperion.

Arvidsson, A., & Caliandro, A. (2016). Brand Public. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *42*(5), 727–748. http://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucv053

Arvidsson, A., Caliandro, A., Airoldi, M. & Barina, S. (2016). Crowds and value. Italian Directioners on Twitter. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(7), 921-939.

Atkinson, W. (2011). The context and genesis of musical tastes: Omnivorousness debunked, Bourdieu buttressed. *Poetics*, *39*(3), 169–186. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2011.03.002

Bachmayer, T., Wilterdink, N., & van Venrooij, A. (2014). Taste differentiation and hierarchization within popular culture: The case of salsa music. *Poetics*, *47*, 60–82. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.10.004

Baek, Y. M. (2015). Relationship between cultural distance and cross-cultural music video consumption on YouTube. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(6), 730–748.

Ballarino, G., Panichella, N., & Triventi, M. (2014). School expansion and uneven modernization. Comparing educational inequality in Northern and Southern Italy. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *36*, 69–86. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2014.01.002

Barile, N., & Sugiyama, S. (2015). The Automation of Taste: A Theoretical Exploration of Mobile ICTs and Social Robots in the Context of Music Consumption. *International Journal of Social Robotics*, *7*(3), 407–416. http://doi.org/10.1007/s12369-015-0283-1

Barth, F. (1969*). Ethnic groups and boundaries*. Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown and Company.

Barth, F. (1981). *Process and form in social life*. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2011). *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baym, N., & boyd, d. (2012). Socially mediated publicness: an introduction. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *56*(3), 320–329. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08838151.2012.705200

Beer, D. (2009). Power through the algorithm? Participatory web cultures and the technological unconscious. *New Media & Society*, *11*(6), 985–1002. http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809336551

Beer, D. (2012). Using social media data aggregators to do social research. *Sociological Research Online*, *17*(3), 1–12.

Beer, D. (2013). Genre, Boundary Drawing and the Classificatory Imagination. *Cultural Sociology*, *7*(2), 145–160. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975512473461

Beer, D., & Burrows, R. (2013). Popular Culture, Digital Archives and the New Social Life of Data. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *30*(4), 47–71.

http://doi.org/10.1177/0263276413476542
Bellavance, G. (2008). Where's high? Who's low? What's new? Classification and stratification inside cultural "Repertoires." *Poetics*, *36*(2–3), 189–216. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2008.02.003
Bendersky, M., Garcia-Pueyo, L., Harmsen, J., Josifovski, V., & Lepikhin, D. (2014). Up Next : Retrieval Methods for Large Scale Related Video Suggestion Categories and Subject Descriptors. In *KDD'14, August 24–27, 2014*. New York, NY, USA.
Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M., & Wright, D. (2009). *Culture, Class, Distinction*. London: Routledge.
Bennett, T., & Silva, E. (2011). Introduction: Cultural capital—Histories, limits, prospects. *Poetics*, 39(6), 427–443. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2011.09.008
Benzécri, J.P., (1992). *Correspondence Analysis Handbook*. New York: Mercel Dekker.
Benzecry, C., & Collins, R. (2014). The High of Cultural Experience: Toward a Microsociology of Cultural Consumption. *Sociological Theory*, *32*(4), 307–326. http://doi.org/10.1177/0735275114558944
Berger P., & Luckmann T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor.
Blondel, V. D., Guillaume, J., Lambiotte, R., & Lefebvre, E. (2008). Fast unfolding of communities in large networks. In *J. Stat. Mech*, pp. 1–12.
Blumer, H. (2007). Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection. In M. Barnard (Ed.), *Fashion theory: a reader* (pp 232–246). New York: Routledge.
Boltanski, L., & Thevenot, L. (1999). The Sociology of Critical Capacity. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *33*(10), 928–940. http://doi.org/0803973233
Boltanski, L., & Thevenot, L. (2006). *On Justification*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Bolton, G. E., Katok, E., & Ockenfels, A. (2004). How effective are electronic reputation mechanisms? An experimental investigation. *Management Science*, *50*(11), 1587–1602.
Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D. I., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, *489*(7415), 295–298. http://doi.org/10.1038/nature11421
Boni, F. (2005). *Media, identità e globalizzazione. Luoghi, oggetti, riti*. Roma: Carocci.
Boni, F. (2016). *The watching dead. I media dei morti viventi*. Milano, Udine: Mimesis.
Bottero, W., & Crossley, N. (2011). Worlds, Fields and Networks: Becker, Bourdieu and the Structures of Social Relations. *Cultural Sociology*, *5*(1), 99–119. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975510389726
Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bourdieu, P. (1980). The production of belief: contribution to an economy of symbolic goods. *Media, Culture & Society*, *2*, 261–293. http://doi.org/10.1177/016344378000200305
Bourdieu, P. (1983). The field of cultural production, or: The economic world reversed. *Poetics*, *12*(4–5), 311–356. http://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8
Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Bourdieu, P. (1985). The market of symbolic goods. *Poetics*, 14(1-2), 13-44.
Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, *7*(1), 14–25.
Bourdieu, P. (1993) The Field of Cultural Production, Cambridge: Polity Press.
Bourdieu, P. (2002) Social space and symbolic space. In C. Calhoun, J. Gerteis, J. Moody, S. Pfaff, I. Virtk (Eds.), *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 267-275.
boyd d. (2011). Social Networking Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics and Implication. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A Networked Self: Identity Community and Culture on Social Network Sites* (pp. 39–58). New York: Routledge.
boyd, d., & Crawford, K. (2012). Critical Questions for Big Data. *Information, Communication & Society*, *15*(5), 662–679. http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.678878
Browne, K. (2005). Snowball sampling: Using social networks to research non-heterosexual women. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *8*, 47–70.
Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. (2012). Researching News Discussion on Twitter. *Journalism Studies*, *13*(5–6), 801–814. http://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2012.664428
Bryson, B. (1996). "Anything But Heavy Metal": Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes. *American Sociological Review*, *61*(5), 884–899.
Burrell, J. (2009). The Field Site as a Network: A Strategy for Locating Ethnographic Research. *Field Methods*, *21*(2), 181–199. http://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X08329699
Burrows, R., & Savage, M. (2014). After the crisis? Big Data and the methodological challenges of empirical sociology. *Big Data & Society*, 1(1), 1–6. http://doi.org/10.1177/2053951714540280
Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J., Moody, J., Pfaff, S., & Virtk, I. (2002). *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
Caliandro, A. (2014). Ethnography in Digital Spaces: Ethnography of Virtual Worlds, Netnography, & Digital Ethnography. In R. Denny & P. Sunderland (Eds.), *Handbook of Anthropology in Business* (pp. 738–761). Left Coast Press.
Caliandro, A., & Gandini, A. (2017). *Qualitative research in digital environments: a research toolkit*. London: Routledge.
Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society, the information age: Economy, society and culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
Celma, O. (2010). *Music recommendation and discovery: the long tail, long fail, and long play in the digital music space*. Heidelberg, Dordrecht, London, New York: Springer.
Chan, T., & Goldthorpe, J. (2006). Social stratification of cultural consumption across three domains: Music, theatre, dance and cinema, and the visual arts. *Department of Sociology, University of Oxford*.
Christin, A. (2012). Gender and highbrow cultural participation in the United States. *Poetics*, *40*(5), 423–443. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2012.07.003
Coleman, E. G. (2010). Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *39*(1), 487–505. http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104945
Collins, R. (2004). *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Contini, D. & Scagni, A. (2013). Social-Origin Inequalities in Educational Careers in Italy: performance or Decision Effects? In M. Jackson (Ed.), *Determined to Succeed? Performance versus Choice in Educational Attainment* (pp. 149:184). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Coulangeon, P., & Lemel, Y. (2007). Is 'Distinction' Really Outdated? Questioning the Meaning of the Omnivorization of Musical Taste in Contemporary France. *Poetics*, *35*(2), 93-111.
Coulangeon, P., & Lemel, Y. (2009). The homology thesis: Distinction revisited. In K.

Robson and C. Sanders (Eds.), *Quantifying Theory: Pierre Bourdieu* (pp. 47–60). London: Springer.
Crossley, N. (2008). Pretty Connected: The Social Network of the Early UK Punk Movement. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *25*(6), 89–116. http://doi.org/10.1177/0263276408095546
D'Amato, F. (2014). Music Economies and Markets in Italy. In F. Fabbri, G. Plastino (Eds.), *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music* (pp. 72-82). New York: Routledge.
Dahlhaus, C. (2004). Trivial Music and Aesthetic Judgement. In C. J. Washburne & M. Derno (Eds.), *Bad music: the music we love to hate* (pp. 262–277). New York & London: Routledge.
Davidson, J., Liebald, B., & Liu, J. (2010). The YouTube video recommendation system. *Proc. ACM RecSys*, pp. 293-296.
Dell'Antonio, A. (2004). *Beyond structural listening? Postmodern modes of hearing*. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.
DeNora, T. (2000). *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
DiMaggio, P. (1987). Classification in art. *American Sociological Review*, *52*(4), 440–455.
DiMaggio, P. (1992). Cultural boundaries and structural change: the extension of the high culture model to theater, opera, and dance, 1900–1940. In M. Lamont & M. Fournier, M.(Eds.), *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality* (pp. 21-57). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
DiMaggio, P. (1997). Culture and Cognition. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 263-287.
DiMaggio, P., Nag, M., & Blei, D. (2013). Exploiting affinities between topic modeling and the sociological perspective on culture: Application to newspaper coverage of U.S. government arts funding. *Poetics*, *41*(6), 570–606. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.004
Douglas, M. & Isherwood, B.(1979). *The world of goods*. London: Allen Lane.
Eliasoph, N., & Lichterman, P. (2003). Culture in Interaction. *American Journal of Sociology*, *108*(4), 735–794. http://doi.org/10.1086/367920
Everitt, B., Landau, S., Leese, M., & Stahl, D. (2011). *Cluster Analysis*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
Fabbri, F. (1982). A theory of musical genres: Two applications. In P. Horn, D., Tagg (Ed.), *Popular music perspectives* (pp. 52–81). Exeter: International Association for the Study of Popular Music.
Fabbri, F. (2003). Taboo listening. In *Background listening and music composition* (pp. 1–15). IASPM Conf. Barcelona.
Fabbri, F. (2008). *Il suono in cui viviamo*. Milano: Il Saggiatore.
Fabbri, F., & Plastino, G. (2014). *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music*. New York: Routledge.
Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
Ford, H. (2014). Big Data and Small: Collaborations between ethnographers and data scientists. *Big Data & Society*, *1*(2), 1–3. http://doi.org/10.1177/2053951714544337
Friedman, S., & Kuipers, G. (2013). The Divisive Power of Humour: Comedy, Taste and Symbolic Boundaries. *Cultural Sociology*, *7*(2), 179–195. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975513477405
Friedman, S., Savage, M., Hanquinet, L., & Miles, A. (2015). Cultural sociology and new forms of distinction. *Poetics*, *53*, 1–8. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.10.002
Frith, S. (1996). *Performing rites: On the value of popular music*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Gans, H.J. (1966). Popular Culture in America: Social Problem in a Mass Society or Social

Asset in a Pluralist Society. In H. Becker (Ed.) *Social Problems: A Modern Approach*. New York: John Wiley.
Garfinkel, H. (2002). *Ethnomethodology's program: Working out Durkheim's aphorism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
Gasperoni, G., Marconi, L., & Santoro, M. (2004). *La musica e gli adolescenti: pratiche, gusti, educazione*. Torino: EDT.
Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
Gibson, M. (2014). "That's hip-hop to me!": Race, space, and temporal logics of authenticity in independent cultural production. *Poetics*, *46*, 38–55. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.09.002
Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Giglietto, F., Rossi, L., & Bennato, D. (2012). The Open Laboratory: Limits and Possibilities of Using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a Research Data Source. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, *30*(3–4), 145–159.
Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.
Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
Goodman, S., & Rowe, L. (2014). 'Maybe it is prejudice… but it is NOT racism': Negotiating racism in discussion forums about Gypsies. *Discourse & Society*, 25(1), 32-46.
Griswold, W. (1987). The fabrication of meaning: Literary interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92, 1077–1117.
Gronow, J. (1997). *The Sociology of Taste*. London, New York: Routledge.
Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. (1976). *Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*. London: Hutchinson.
Hallinan, B., & Striphas, T. (2014). Recommended for you: The Netflix Prize and the production of algorithmic culture. *New Media & Society*. http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814538646
Hammou, K. (2016). Mainstreaming French rap music. Commodification and artistic legitimation of othered cultural goods. *Poetics*, 59, 67–81. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.05.002
Hanquinet, L., Roose, H., & Savage, M. (2014). The eyes of the beholder: Aesthetic preferences and the remaking of cultural capital. *Sociology*, *48*, 111–132. http://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513477935
Hanrahan, N. (2013). If the People Like It, It Must Be Good: Criticism, Democracy and the Culture of Consensus. *Cultural sociology*, 7(1), 73-85.
Hargittai, E. (2010). Digital Na(t)ives? Variation in Internet Skills and Uses among Members of the "Net Generation." *Sociological Inquiry*, *80*(1), 92–113. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2009.00317.x
Harkness, G. (2012). True School: Situational Authenticity in Chicago's Hip-Hop Underground. *Cultural Sociology*, *6*(3), 283–298. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975511401276
Hennion, A. (2001). Music lovers. Taste as performance. *Theory Culture and Society*, 18(5): 1-22.
Hennion, A. (2007). Those Things That Hold Us Together: Taste and Sociology. *Cultural Sociology*, *1*(1), 97–114. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975507073923

Holt, D. (1997a). Distinction in America? Recovering Bourdieu's theory of tastes from its critics. *Poetics*, *25*, 93–120.
Holt, D. (1997b). Poststructuralist lifestyle analysis: Conceptualizing the social patterning of consumption in postmodernity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *23*(4), 326–350. http://doi.org/10.1086/209487
Holt, D. (1998). Does cultural capital structure American consumption? *Journal of Consumer Research*, *25*(1), 1–25. http://doi.org/10.1086/209523
Holt, F. (2010). The economy of live music in the digital age. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *13*(2), 243–261. http://doi.org/10.1177/1367549409352277
Holt, F. (2011). Is music becoming more visual? Online video content in the music industry. *Visual Studies*, *26*(1), 50–61. http://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2011.548489
IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) (2016a). *Global Music Report 2016*, http://www.ifpi.org/downloads/GMR2016.pdf [Accessed: 28 January 2017].
IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) (2016b). *Music Consumer Insight Report 2016*, http://www.ifpi.org/downloads/Music-Consumer-Insight-Report-2016.pdf [Accessed: 28 January 2017].
James, G., Witten, D., Hastie, T., & Tibshirani, R. (2014). *An introduction to statistical learning*. New York: Springer.
Janssen, S., Verboord, M., & Kuipers, G. (2011). Comparing cultural classification. High and popular arts in European and U.S. elite newspapers, 1955-2005. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, *63*, 139-168.
Jarness, V. (2015). Modes of consumption: From " what " to " how " in cultural stratification research. *Poetics*, *53*, 65–79. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.08.002
Jarness, V., & Friedman, S. (2017). 'I'm not a snob, but…': Class boundaries and the downplaying of difference. *Poetics*, *61*, 14-25.
Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2007). Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing. *American Journal of Sociology*, *113*(1), 165–204. http://doi.org/10.1086/518923
Jurgenson, N. (2012). When Atoms Meet Bits: Social Media, the Mobile Web and Augmented Revolution. *Future Internet*, *4*(4), 83–91. http://doi.org/10.3390/fi4010083
Kant, I. (1987). *Critique of Judgement*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
Kassabian, A. (2013). *Ubiquitous Listening. Affect, Attention and Distributed Subjectivity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Katz-Gerro, T. (2002). Highbrow Cultural Consumption and Class Distinction in Italy, Israel, West Germany, Sweden, and the United States. *Social Forces*, *81*(1), 207–229. http://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2002.0050
King, A. (2000). Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A "practical"critique of the habitus. *Sociological Theory*, 8(3): 417–433.
Kirchner, C., & Mohr, J. W. (2010). Meanings and relations: An introduction to the study of language, discourse and networks. *Poetics*, *38*(6), 555–566. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2010.09.006
Kraaykamp, G., & van Eijck, K. (2010). The Intergenerational Reproduction of Cultural Capital: A Threefold Perspective. *Social Forces*, *89*(1), 209–231. http://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2010.0087
Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology, 3rd Ed.* London: Sage.
Lahire, B. (2004). *La culture des individus: Dissonance culturelles et distinction de soi*. Paris: La Découverte.
Lambiotte, R., & Ausloos, M. (2005). Uncovering collective listening habits and music

genres in bipartite networks. *Physical Review E72*, *72*(6), 66107.
Lamont, M. (1992). *Money, morals, and manners*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Lamont, M. (2012a). How Has Bourdieu Been Good to Think With? The Case of the United States. *Sociological Forum*, *27*(1), 228–237. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2011.01309.x
Lamont, M. (2012b). Toward a Comparative Sociology of Valuation and Evaluation. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *38*(1), 201–221. http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-120022
Lamont M., & Fournier M. (1992). *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Lamont, M., & Lareau, A. (1988). Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments. *Sociological Theory*, *6*(2), 153–168. http://doi.org/10.2307/202113
Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *28*(1965), 167–195. http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107
Larsen, G. (2017). 'It's a man's man's man's world': Music groupies and the othering of women in the world of rock. *Organization*, *24*(3), 397-417.
Lash, S. (2007). Power after Hegemony: Cultural Studies in Mutation? *Theory, Culture & Society*, *24*(3), 55–78. http://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075956
Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
Latour, B., Jensen, P., Venturini, T., Grauwin, S., & Boullier, D. (2012). "The whole is always smaller than its parts": a digital test of Gabriel Tardes' monads. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *63*(4), 590–615. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2012.01428.x
Le Roux, B. & Rouanet, H. (2010). *Multiple Correspondence Analysis*. London: Sage.
Leguina, A., Arancibia-Carvajal, S., & Widdop, P. (2015). Musical preferences and technologies: Contemporary material and symbolic distinctions criticized. *Journal of Consumer Culture*. http://doi.org/10.1177/1469540515586870
Levine, L.W. (1988). *Highbrow/lowbrow: the emergence of cultural hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Lizardo, O. (2011). Pierre Bourdieu as a Post-cultural Theorist. *Cultural Sociology*, *5*(1), 25–44. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975510389714
Lizardo, O. (2014). Taste and the Logic of Practice in Distinction. *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 335–364.
Lizardo, O. (2016). Why " cultural matters " matter : Culture talk as the mobilization of cultural capital in interaction. *Poetics*, 58, 1:17. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.09.002
Lizardo, O., & Skiles, S. (2008). Cultural consumption in the fine and popular arts realms. *Sociology Compass*, (574), 1–20.
Lizardo, O., & Skiles, S. (2014). After omnivorousness: Is Bourdieu still relevant?. See http://www3.nd.edu/~olizardo/papers/handbook-chapter-draft-v3.pdf [Accessed: 20 January 2017].
Lizardo, O., & Skiles, S. (2015). Musical taste and patterns of symbolic exclusion in the United States 1993–2012: Generational dynamics of differentiation and continuity. *Poetics*, *53*, 9–21. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.08.003
Lizardo, O., & Skiles, S. (2016). The End of Symbolic Exclusion? The Rise of "Categorical Tolerance" in the Musical Tastes of Americans: 1993-2012. *Sociological*

Science, *3*, 85–108. http://doi.org/10.15195/v3.a5
Lizé, W. (2016). Cultural consecration and legitimation–Modes, agents and processes. *Poetics*, *59*, 1–4. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.10.004
Lopes, P. (2006). Culture and Stigma: Popular Culture and the Case of Comic Books. *Sociological Forum*, *21*(3), 387–414. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11206-006-9022-6
Lyotard, J. (1979). *La condition postmoderne*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.
Maffesoli, M. (1996). *The Time of the Tribes*. London: Sage.
Magaudda, P. (2011). When materiality 'bites back': Digital music consumption practices in the age of dematerialization. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 11(1): 15–36.
Magaudda, P. (2014). Produzione, consumo e pratiche della musica "popular" in Italia. In M. Santoro (Ed.), *La cultura che conta* (pp. 175–198). Bologna: Il Mulino.
Marres, N. (2012). The redistribution of methods: on intervention in digital social research, broadly conceived. *The Sociological Review*, *60*(S1), 139–165. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02121.x
Marres, N. (2015). Why Map Issues?: On Controversy Analysis as a Digital Method. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, *40*(5), 1–32. http://doi.org/10.1177/0162243915574602
Marres, N., & Weltevrede, E. (2013). Scraping the Social? Issues in live social research. *Journal of Cultural Economy*. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17530350.2013.772070
Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Mason, J. (2006). Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research*, 6(1): 9-25.
McCoy, C. A., & Scarborough, R. C. (2014). Watching "bad" television: Ironic consumption, camp, and guilty pleasures. *Poetics*, *47*, 41–59. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.10.003
Meuleman, R., & Lubbers, M. (2014). The social distinction in having domestic versus foreign favorite music artists. *Poetics*, *45*, 55–71. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.06.003
Meuleman, R., & Savage, M. (2013). A Field Analysis of Cosmopolitan Taste: Lessons from the Netherlands. *Cultural Sociology*, *7*(2), 230–256. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975512473991
Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No Sense of Place. The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Micheli, M. (2015). What is New in the Digital Divide? Understanding Internet Use by Teenagers from Different Social Backgrounds. *Communication and Information Technologies Annual: Digital Distinctions and Inequalities Studies in Media and Communications*, *10*, 55–87.
Middleton, R. (1990). *Studying Popular Music*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
Miller, W.I. (1997). *The Anatomy of Disgust*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Mohr, J. W. (1998). Measuring Meaning Structures. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *24*(1), 345–370. http://doi.org/doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.345
Mohr, J. W., & Bogdanov, P. (2013). Introduction—Topic models: What they are and why they matter. *Poetics*, *41*(6), 545–569. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.10.001
Mohr, J. W., Wagner-pacifici, R., & Breiger, R. L. (2015). Toward a computational hermeneutics, (December), 1–8. http://doi.org/10.1177/2053951715613809
Montecchi, G. (2014). Teatri d'opera e musica da concerto. La sindrome della classica. In M. Santoro (Ed.), *La cultura che conta* (pp 107-173). Bologna: Il Mulino.

Morris, J. W. (2015). Curation by code : Infomediaries and the data mining of taste. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *18*(4–5), 446–463. http://doi.org/10.1177/1367549415577387
Murthy, D. (2008). Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research. *Sociology*, *42*(5), 837–855. http://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508094565
Newman, M. (2006). Modularity and community structure in networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, *103*(23), 8577–8582.
Noelle-Neumann E. (1974). The spiral of silence. A theory of public opinion. *Journal of Communication*, 24(2): 43-51.
Nowak, R. (2016). *Consuming music in the digital age: technologies, roles and everyday life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
OECD, 2016. *Education at a Glance 2016. OECD Indicators*. http://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en. See http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016_eag-2016-en [Accessed: 20 January 2016].
Packard, V. (1960) *The Status Seekers. An Exploration of Class Behaviour in America*. London: Longmans.
Perna, V. (2014). Killer Melodies: The *Musica Neomelodica* Debate. In F. Fabbri, G. Plastino (Eds.), *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music* (pp. 194-206). New York: Routledge.
Peterson, R. (1997). The rise and fall of highbrow snobbery as a status marker. *Poetics*, *25*, 75–92.
Peterson, R. a. (2005). Problems in comparative research: The example of omnivorousness. *Poetics*, *33*(5–6), 257–282. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2005.10.002
Peterson, R., & Kern, R. (1996). Changing highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore. *American Sociological Review*, *61*(5), 900–907.
Prato, P. (2010). *La musica italiana. Una storia sociale dall'Unità italiana*. Roma: Donzelli.
Prieur, A., Rosenlund, L., & Skjott-Larsen, J. (2008). Cultural capital today. *Poetics*, 36(1), 45–71. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2008.02.008
Prieur, A., & Savage, M. (2013). Emerging forms of cultural capital. *European Societies*, 15, 246–267.
Prior, N. (2005). A question of perception: Bourdieu, art and the postmodern. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *56*(1), 123–39. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00050.x
Prior, N. (2008). Putting a Glitch in the Field: Bourdieu, Actor Network Theory and Contemporary Music. *Cultural Sociology*, *2*(3), 301–319. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975508095614
Prior, N. (2014). The plural iPod: A study of technology in action. *Poetics*, *42*, 22–39. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.11.001
Reeves, A. (2014). Cultural engagement across the life course: Examining age–period–cohort effects. *Cultural Trends*, 23(4), 273–289. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1080/09548963.2014.961274
Reeves, A. (2015). "Music"s a Family Thing': Cultural Socialisation and Parental Transference. *Cultural Sociology*, 1749975515576941-. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975515576941
Rimmer, M. (2012). Beyond Omnivores and Univores: The Promise of a Concept of Musical Habitus. *Cultural Sociology*, *6*(3), 299–318. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975511401278

Ritzer, G. (2013). Prosumption: Evolution, revolution, or eternal return of the same?. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 14(1): 3-24.
Roberts, L. (2012). Talkin bout my generation: popular music and the culture of heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *20*(3), 262–280. http://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.740497
Rogers, R. (2009). *The End of the Virtual*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Rogers, R. (2013). *Digital methods*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
Rogers, R. (2015). Digital Methods for Web Research. In R. A. Scott, S. M. Kosslyn (Eds.), *Emerging trends in the social and behavioral sciences: An interdisciplinary, searchable, and linkable resource* (pp: 1-22). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
Roose, H., van Eijck, K., & Lievens, J. (2012). Culture of distinction or culture of openness? Using a social space approach to analyze the social structuring of lifestyles. *Poetics*, *40*(6), 491–513. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2012.08.001
Santoro, M. (2002). What is a "cantautore?" Distinction and authorship in Italian (popular) music. *Poetics*, *30*, 111–132.
Santoro, M. (2010). Constructing an artistic field as a political project: Lessons from La Scala. *Poetics*, *38*(6), 534–554. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2010.10.001
Santoro, M. (2011). From Bourdieu to Cultural Sociology. *Cultural Sociology*, *5*(1), 3–23. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975510397861
Santoro, M. (2013). Putting Circuits into Fields, or How Italian *Canzone* Gained the Status of "Art" in the Music Market. *European Societies*, *15*(2), 229–245. http://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2013.767928
Santoro, M., & Solaroli, M. (2007). Authors and rappers: Italian hip hop and the shifting boundaries of canzone d'autore. *Popular Music*, *26*(3), 463–488. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143007001389
Sassatelli, R. (2007). *Consumer culture: History, theory and politics*. London: Sage.
Sassatelli, R., Semi, G., & Santoro, M. (2015). *Fronteggiare la crisi: come cambia lo stile di vita del ceto medio*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., … Miles, A. (2013). A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment. *Sociology*, *47*(2), 219–250. http://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513481128
Savage, M., & Gayo, M. (2011). Unravelling the omnivore: A field analysis of contemporary musical taste in the United Kingdom. *Poetics*, *39*(5), 337–357. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2011.07.001
Savage, M., & Silva, E. B. (2013). Field Analysis in in Cultural Sociology. *Cultural Sociology*, *7*(2), 111–126.
Scelsi, R. (2014). Tutta colpa di Antonio. Evoluzione del concetto di nazionalpopolare da Gramsci a Pippo Baudo. See http://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/il-concetto-di-nazionalpopolare-da-gramsci-a-pippo-baudo/ [Accessed: 25 January 2017].
Schmutz, V. (2009). Social and symbolic boundaries in newspaper coverage of music, 1955–2005: Gender and genre in the US, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. *Poetics*, *37*(4), 298–314. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2009.06.006
Schmutz, V. (2016). Commercialization and consecration: Media attention to popular music in the US and the Netherlands, 1975-2005. *Poetics*, *59*, 82–95. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.09.003
Shepherd, H. (2011). The Cultural Context of Cognition: What the Implicit Association Test Tells Us About How Culture Works. *Sociological Forum*, *26*(1), 121–143. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.
Splendore, S. (2017). *Giornalismo ibrido. Come cambia la cultura giornalistica italiana*.

Roma: Carocci.
Silva, E., Warde, A., & Wright, D. (2009). Using mixed methods for analysing culture: The cultural capital and social exclusion project. *Cultural Sociology, 3*(2), 299–316. http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975509105536
Silver D., Lee, M., & Childress, C.C. (2016). Genre Complexes in Popular Music. *PLoS ONE*, 11(5): e0155471. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0155471
Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London, Sage.
Simmel, G. (1957). Fashion. *The American Journal of Sociology, 62*(6), 541-558.
Sonnett, J. (2016). Ambivalence, indifference, distinction: A comparative netfield analysis of implicit musical boundaries. *Poetics, 54*, 38–53. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2015.09.002
Star, S.L. & Griesemer, J.R. (1989). Institutional ecology, "translations" and boundary objects: amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39. *Soc. Stud. Sci.*, 19(3):387–420.
Stark, D. (2009). *A sense of dissonance: Accounts of worth in economic life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Striphas, T. (2015). Algorithmic culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 18*(4–5), 395–412. http://doi.org/10.1177/1367549415577392
Sullivan, O., & Katz-Gerro, T. (2006). The Omnivore Thesis Revisited: Voracious Cultural Consumers. *European Sociological Review, 23*(2), 123–137. http://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcl024
Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2): 273–286.
Tepper, S. J., & Hargittai, E. (2009). Pathways to music exploration in a digital age. *Poetics, 37*(3), 227–249. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2009.03.003
Thornton P.H., Ocasio W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure, and Process*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press
Thelwall, M., Sud, P., & Vis, F. (2012). Commenting on YouTube Videos : From Guatemalan Rock to El Big Bang. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 63*(3), 616–629. http://doi.org/10.1002/asi
Thornton, S. (1995). *Club Cultures*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Tomatis, J. (2014). A Portrait of the Author as an Artist: Ideology, Authenticity and Stylization in the *Canzone d'Autore*. In F. Fabbri, G. Plastino (Eds.), *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music* (pp. 87-99). New York: Routledge.
Vaisey, S. (2009). Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action. *American Journal of Sociology, 114*(6), 1675–1715. http://doi.org/10.1086/597179
van den Haak, M. (2014). *Disputing about taste. Practices and perceptions of cultural hierarchy in the Netherlands*. Doctoral dissertation, Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Amsterdam.
van Dijck, J. (2009). Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content. *Media, Culture & Society, 31*(1), 41–58. http://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708098245
Van Meeteren, M., Poorthuis, A., & Dugundi, E. (2010). Mapping communities in large virtual social networks. *Proceedings of the IEEE Workshop on Business Applications of Social Network*, pp. 1–8.
van Venrooij, A. (2009). The aesthetic discourse space of popular music: 1985–86 and 2004–05. *Poetics, 37*(4), 315–332. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2009.06.005
van Venrooij, a., & Schmutz, V. (2010). The Evaluation of Popular Music in the United States, Germany and the Netherlands: A Comparison of the Use of High Art and Popular Aesthetic Criteria. *Cultural Sociology, 4*(3), 395–421.

http://doi.org/10.1177/1749975510385444
Vanderbilt, T. (2016). *"You May Also Like": Taste in an Age of Endless Choice*. New York: Knopf.
Varriale, S. (2014). Bourdieu and the sociology of cultural evaluation: Lessons from the italian popular music press. *Rassegna Italiana Di Sociologia*, *55*(1), 121–148. http://doi.org/10.1423/76934
Varriale, S. (2016a). Beyond Distinction: Theorising Cultural Evaluation as a Social Encounter. Cultural Sociology, 10(2): 160-177.
Varriale, S. (2016b). *Globalization, music and cultures of distinction: the rise of pop music criticism in Italy*. London: Springer.
Veblen, T. (1973). *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Venturini, T., Jacomy, M., & De Carvalho Pereira, D. (2014). Visual Network Analysis (working paper), http://www.tommasoventurini.it/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Venturini-Jacomy_Visual-Network-Analysis_WorkingPaper.pdf [Accessed: 20 January 2017]
Venturini, T., Munk, A., & Jacomy, M. (forthcoming). Actor-Network VS Network Analysis VS Digital Networks Are We Talking About the Same Networks?. In D. Ribes and J. Vertesi (Eds.), *DigitalSTS: A Handbook and Fieldguide*.
Verboord, M. (2011). Cultural products go online: Comparing the internet and print media on distributions of gender, genre and commercial success. *Communications*, *36*(4), 441–462. http://doi.org/10.1515/comm.2011.022
Vlegels, J., If, T. D., & Lievens, J. (2016). Poetics Music classi fi cation , genres , and taste patterns : A ground-up network analysis on the clustering of artist preferences. *Poetics*. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.08.004
Wagner, P. (1999). After Justification. Repertoires of Evaluation and the Sociology of Modernity. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *2*(3), 341–357.
Warde, A. (2008). Dimensions of a Social Theory of Taste, *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 1(3), 321–336. http://doi.org/10.1080/17530350802477069
Warde, A. (2014). After taste: Culture, consumption and theories of practice Introduction: Consumption and the role of theory. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *14*(3), 279–303. http://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514547828
Washburne, C. J. & Derno, M. (2004). *Bad music: the music we love to hate*. New York & London: Routledge.
Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). Social network analysis: methods and applications. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
Webb, P. (2007). *Exploring the Networked Worlds of Popular Music*. London & New York: Routledge.
Williams, R. (1985). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Williams, J.P. (2006). Authentic Identities : Straightedge Subculture, Music, and the Internet. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35*(2), 173-200.
Zhou, R., Khemmarat, S., & Gao, L. (2010). The impact of YouTube recommendation system on video. *IMC'10*, pp. 404–410.
Zillien, N., & Hargittai, E. (2009). Digital distinction: Status-specific types of internet usage. *Social Science Quarterly*, 90(2), 274-291.

Appendix 1

Table 9 Music videos included in the seeding sample. Column "Chart" presents year of the chart and song position

Video Title	Author	Chart	URL
FEDEZ - MAGNIFICO FEAT FRANCESCA MICHIELIN	FedezChanneL	#22, 2014	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RELQXv8m_cc
Lorenzo Fragola - The Reason Why	LorenzoFragolaVEVO	#51, 2014	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bE0OQJkUOK8
Ligabue - Tu sei lei (videoclip)	Warner Music Italy	#99, 2014	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RZivRe2rnA
Marco Mengoni - L'essenziale	MarcoMengoniVEVO	#3, 2013	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unRjK82bDLw
Ligabue - "Il sale della terra" (video clip)	ligabue	#46, 2013	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUWtAUKYmAQ
A te - Lorenzo Jovanotti Cherubini - Ufficiale	Lorenzo Jovanotti Cherubini	#100, 2013	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSea1YPxK1c
Baciami Ancora	Lorenzo Jovanotti Cherubini	#2, 2010	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsCCnpcGEWI
Nina Zilli - L'Uomo Che Amava Le Donne (video ufficiale)	universalmusicitalia	#50, 2010	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR4bB_Dw4Qs
IRENE FORNACIARI CON I NOMADI - IL MONDO PIANGE - HD	MegaMusicTelevision	#98, 2010	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbUUSViv0tQ

Table 10 Most commented artists' main features

Artist	Decade of debut	N. of comments	N. words in comment	N. videos	Av. view count
883	1990	681	5728	119	840905
99 Posse	1990	188	1429	8	1163786
Achille Lauro	2010	465	3637	7	282984
Adriano Celentano	1960	555	4126	176	754404
Alessandra Amoroso	2010	1415	9110	208	927310
Alex Britti	1990	156	1703	19	613498
Alunni Del Sole	1970	181	1707	20	249108
Amedeo Minghi	1970	178	1434	18	378814
Andrea Parodi	1990	149	1662	8	299911
Anna Oxa	1970	173	1108	34	873031
Anna Tatangelo	2000	200	1673	64	574819

Annalisa Scarrone	2010	1195	9037	143	445108
Antonello Venditti	1970	729	5634	251	379386
Arisa	2010	898	7521	113	645787
Articolo 31	1990	281	2713	78	496987
Artisti Uniti per l'Abruzzo	2000	117	1023	32	721336
Baby K	2000	145	1131	14	594793
Banco del Mutuo Soccorso	1970	184	1244	4	450865
Biagio Antonacci	1990	807	5458	128	799113
Bianca Atzei	2010	149	1213	10	1632435
Briga	2010	386	4269	11	1294342
Bushwaka	2010	997	4625	17	238780
Caparezza	2000	330	2693	12	1686515
Cesare Cremonini	2000	291	2857	106	411535
Claudio Baglioni	1970	413	3036	80	818779
Clementino	2000	2464	15064	84	654282
Club Dogo	2000	250	2143	31	2742675
Davide Van de Sfroos	2000	171	1260	343	45466
Dear Jack	2010	939	7320	15	1373830
Deleterio	2010	157	1089	2	341714
Dik Dik	1960	210	1177	39	169332
Dj Matrix	2000	235	1508	75	566441
Dolcenera	2000	253	1847	76	248117
Domenico Modugno	1950	178	1102	12	686688
Edoardo Bennato	1970	148	1177	39	495944
Elisa	1990	1352	10002	295	442538
Emis Killa	2010	2624	15186	70	1695964
Emma Marrone	2010	1169	8035	111	995706
Ensi	2000	586	3674	9	1495903
Entics	2010	380	2299	43	747761
Eros Ramazzotti	1980	666	4819	161	2121631
Fabri Fibra	2000	2963	16136	75	1243995
Fabrizio De Andrè	1960	818	8933	145	676121
Fabrizio Moro	2000	229	2174	115	271990
Fedez	2010	4369	25365	93	2452256
Fiorella Mannoia	1970	444	3941	140	358442
Francesco De Gregori	1970	311	2801	77	471127
Francesco Guccini	1960	266	1957	112	90990
Francesco Renga	2000	204	1338	74	293043
Frankie Hi Nrg	1990	252	2827	10	662468
Gemelli Diversi	1990	165	1219	46	939805
Gemitaiz	2010	1411	12676	38	939559
Gianluca Grignani	1990	229	2010	35	196725
Gianna Nannini	1970	296	2268	114	372553
Gianni Morandi	1960	306	2636	63	432000

Gigi D'Alessio	1990	513	4194	104	809876
Gigi Finizio	1970	190	1104	90	725659
GionnyScandal	2010	337	2876	8	1167515
Giorgia	1990	937	6527	155	760898
Giorgio Faletti	1980	127	1166	11	189102
Giorgio Gaber	1960	81	1098	21	372768
Giusy Ferreri	2000	390	3358	59	406723
Gue Pequeno	2010	577	3129	52	939505
Il Pagante	2010	1498	7379	9	1825075
J-Ax	2000	1350	13074	91	731700
Jovanotti	1980	895	8349	280	574332
Laura Pausini	1990	1531	11339	356	987493
Ligabue	1990	1889	16877	1002	289732
Litfiba	1980	282	2737	157	216252
Loredana Bertè	1970	130	1015	51	178909
Lorenzo Fragola	2010	480	2955	40	129641
Lowlow	2010	1306	12533	28	811106
Luca Carboni	1980	634	3981	117	206922
Luca J	2010	124	1181	9	173886
Lucio Battisti	1970	1594	10317	117	711875
Lucio Dalla	1960	1202	9151	157	503333
Ludovico Einaudi	1980	248	1859	24	2770321
Luigi Tenco	1960	132	1290	60	130216
Malika Ayane	2000	145	1573	107	377261
Mango	1970	1376	11829	29	989809
Manuel Cardella	2010	115	1295	23	469406
Marco Carta	2000	274	2042	75	240043
Marco Masini	1990	315	2341	53	728736
Marco Mengoni	2010	1318	11725	399	322685
Maria Belen	2010	192	2200	2	566814
Marracash	2000	341	2930	15	2804206
Maruego	2010	441	3045	2	552492
Massimo Ranieri	1960	433	3029	64	571522
Matia Bazar	1970	118	1275	52	159772
Max Pezzali	2000	729	5156	189	560156
Mia Martini	1970	639	4893	94	568424
Michele Bravi	2010	482	6746	27	27630
Mika	2000	232	1351	8	1326345
Mina	1960	462	4014	118	595722
Modà	2000	1727	11293	224	1449983
Mondo Marcio	2000	294	1814	14	751556
Moreno	2010	570	4400	5	1763945
Mostro	2010	302	3131	15	442112
Negramaro	2000	595	5106	190	787099
Nek	1990	566	3687	137	657126

Nesli	2000	265	1737	62	1222419
New Trolls	1960	230	1556	45	152157
Nino D'Angelo	1970	352	2579	101	666763
Noemi	2010	632	4369	101	589983
Nomadi	1960	1777	11509	1075	49376
Noyz Narcos	2000	332	1945	12	1645315
Perturbazione	1990	161	1390	7	403532
Pfm	1970	191	1434	10	456008
Pierangelo Bertoli	1970	222	2108	45	288913
Pino Daniele	1970	950	9183	69	769892
Pooh	1960	609	5140	94	337887
Povia	2000	599	5368	160	113252
Raf	1980	303	2055	57	837274
Raige	2000	364	3012	17	743757
Renato Zero	1970	742	4805	85	580318
Riccardo Cocciante	1970	251	1831	58	541725
Riccardo Sinigallia	2000	259	1882	4	278458
Rino Gaetano	1970	559	4896	164	488742
Roberto Vecchioni	1970	166	1617	102	103287
Rocco Hunt	2010	835	4781	20	1471163
Sac1	2010	229	2600	9	155326
Salmo	2010	2583	15459	27	2466784
Samuele Bersani	1990	116	1209	45	338131
Ser Travis	2010	191	2108	5	219444
Serena Brancale	2010	96	1262	1	226871
Shade	2010	147	1010	13	221951
Shoek	2010	89	1269	16	23851
Simone Cristicchi	2000	98	1427	50	146322
Sonohra	2000	250	1737	131	296541
Tiziano Ferro	2000	869	6698	97	1278253
Two Fingerz	2000	716	3939	15	760598
Vacca	2000	1400	6156	8	1388767
Valerio Scanu	2010	156	1534	23	152188
Vasco Rossi	1970	820	6474	239	398907

Table 11 Most recurrent artists in each module

Cluster 0	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 1**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Lorenzo Fragola	28	Pop/Rock	2010	Ligabue	84	Pop/Rock	1990
Gemitaiz	14	Rap	2010	Elisa	1	Pop/Rock	2000
Madh	13	Pop/Rock	2010	Meg	1	Pop/Rock, Electronic	2000
Shakira	8	Latin, Pop/Rock	1990	Vasco Rossi	1	Pop/Rock	1970
John Legend	3	R&B	2000	Laura Pausini	1	Pop/Rock, Latin	1990
Cluster 2	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 3**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**

Marco Mengoni	20	Pop/Rock	2010	Luca Carboni	13	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1980
Jovanotti	15	Pop/Rock	1980	Fedez	10	Rap	2010
Modà	10	Pop/Rock	2000	Clementino	9	Rap	2000
Eros Ramazzotti	8	Pop/Rock	1980	Fabri Fibra	8	Rap	2000
Tiziano Ferro	4	Pop/Rock	2000	Emis Killa	8	Rap	2010
Cluster 4	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 5**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Laura Pausini	13	Pop/Rock, Latin	1990	Ligabue	59	Pop/Rock	1990
Alessandra Amoroso	6	Pop/Rock	2010	Pooh	3	Pop/Rock	1960
Nek	5	Pop/Rock	1990	Renato Zero	2	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1970
Annalisa Scarrone	5	Pop/Rock	2010	Vasco Rossi	2	Pop/Rock	1970
Giorgia	5	Pop/Rock	1990	Pino Daniele	2	Pop/Rock, Blues	1970
Cluster 6	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 7**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Vasco Rossi	38	Pop/Rock	1970	Davide Van de Sfroos	38	Folk	2000
Biagio Antonacci	26	Pop/Rock	1990	Roberto Vecchioni	11	Canzone d'autore	1970
Gianna Nannini	13	Pop/Rock	1970	Francesco Renga	6	Pop/Rock	2000
Maurizio Solieri	3	Pop/Rock	1970	Nathalie	4	Pop/Rock	2010
Sergio Endrigo	3	Canzone d'autore	1960	Anna Tatangelo	3	Pop/Rock	2000
Cluster 8	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 9**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Antonello Venditti	13	Canzone d'autore	1970	Elisa	19	Pop/Rock	2000
Rino Gaetano	9	Canzone d'autore	1970	Negramaro	14	Pop/Rock	2000
Fabrizio De Andrè	6	Canzone d'autore	1960	Lucio Dalla	10	Canzone d'autore	1960
Fiorella Mannoia	6	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1970	Malika Ayane	8	Pop/Rock	2000
Mina	4	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1960	Marco Mengoni	4	Pop/Rock	2010
Cluster 10	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 11**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Max Pezzali	24	Pop/Rock	2000	Max Gazzè	15	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1990
883	16	Pop/Rock	1990	Ministri	14	Indie Rock	2000
Cesare Cremonini	12	Pop/Rock	2000	Velvet	7	Pop/Rock	2000
Articolo 31	11	Rap	1990	Daniele Silvestri	6	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1990
J-Ax	10	Pop/Rock, Rap	2000	Ludovico Einaudi	5	New Age, Classical	1980
Cluster 12	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**	**Cluster 13**	**% Total**	**Genre**	**Debut**
Nomadi	47	Pop/Rock	1960	Povia	4	Pop/Rock	2000
Danilo Sacco	5	Pop/Rock	1960	Nomadi	4	Pop/Rock	1960
Lucio Battisti	5	Pop/Rock, Canzone d'autore	1970	Litfiba	4	Rock, Pop/Rock	1980
Francesco Guccini	5	Canzone d'autore	1960	Sonohra	3	Pop/Rock	2000
Pooh	2	Pop/Rock	1960	Fabrizio Moro	3	Pop/Rock	2000

Figure 23 The alternative related-artists network, based on a second dataset of YouTube music videos collected using a seed sample constructed by searching the generic keyword "musica" (see Airoldi et al., 2016). The darker the colour of the artist, the more recent her debut. The largest the node, the highest its in-degree. The thicker the edge, the higher its weight. Layout: Fruchterman-Rheingold

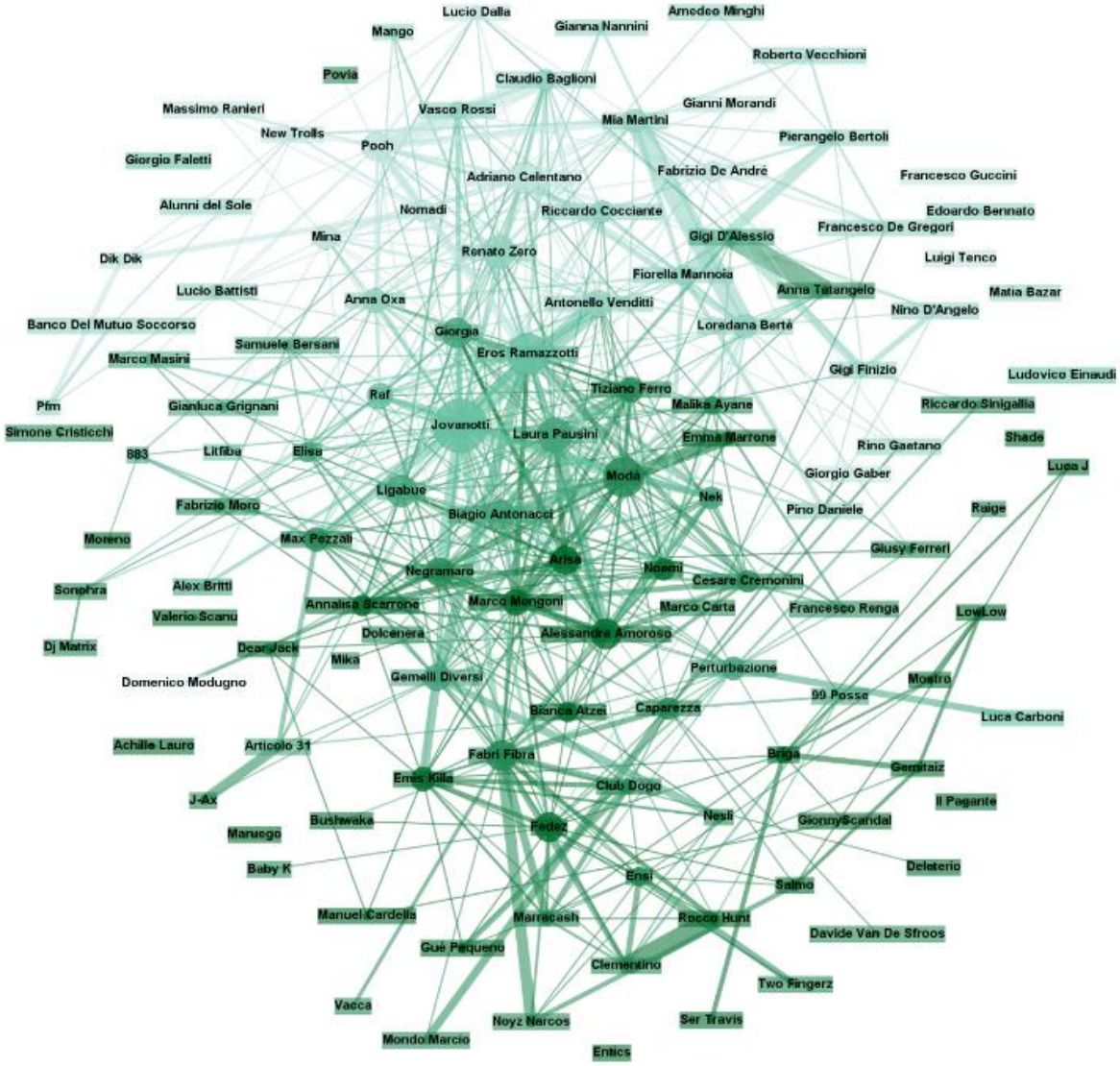


Table 12 Top (stemmed) words per cluster. K-means applied to aesthetic discourses

Cluster 1	**TF*IDF**	**Cluster 2**	**TF*IDF**	**Cluster 3**	**TF*IDF**
bell	2118.0702	merd	3539.2968	grand	4245.905
brav	2031.5744	spacc	2182.7803	bell	2104.394
stup	1963.196	grand	2115.4564	amo	1968.822
bellissim	1922.7539	piac	1987.6030	emozion	1728.811
piac	1746.2942	miglior	1914.4500	ascolt	1669.598
bravissim	1475.7773	ascolt	1801.1879	bellissim	1527.318
amo	1469.5329	schif	1727.4139	poes	1420.833
grand	1402.8083	critic	1383.6352	artist	1361.637
fantast	1253.2433	bell	1266.6068	unic	1317.043
emozion	1238.0516	cag	1252.1389	poet	1149.471
ascolt	1217.7339	bomb	1153.7332	stup	1131.041
ador	1109.8287	insult	1120.4044	meravigl	1127.659
compl	1090.6155	commercial	1094.9380	piac	1077.245
miglior	1049.8261	brav	1056.4910	miglior	993.6412
meravigl	1006.7115	coglion	1049.3413	buon	907.9312
prefer	911.53081	fig	1043.3194	fantast	885.3306
unic	830.71198	vend	969.5522	brav	773.3732
artist	661.22672	brutt	936.5720	prefer	755.0633
ben	650.02248	idol	905.1153	mit	739.5671
schif	590.14853	stim	769.6121	ben	734.5254

Appendix 2

Figure 24 Aiming to empirically assess the hypothesis of a non-random relation between musical content and evaluative repertoires (see Section 4.4), a bipartite "artist X evaluative principle" network has been constructed and analysed. Only dislikes have been considered here. The bigger the evaluative principle's label, the more frequent it appears in the critical-comment dataset. The thicker the edge, the more occurrent the association between nodes. Colours indicate 5 distinct clusters of nodes, detected by applying a community detection algorithm in Gephi (see Section 3.3.3). Modularity score is low (0.16). Since clusters aggregate heterogeneous artists in stylistic terms, as well as very different aesthetic criteria, the hypothesis is falsified. Though the present visualisation shows only the top 56 artists for reasons of clarity, the same random pattern has been detected also considering the entire dataset, both in the case of dislikes and defences. Layout: Dual Circle

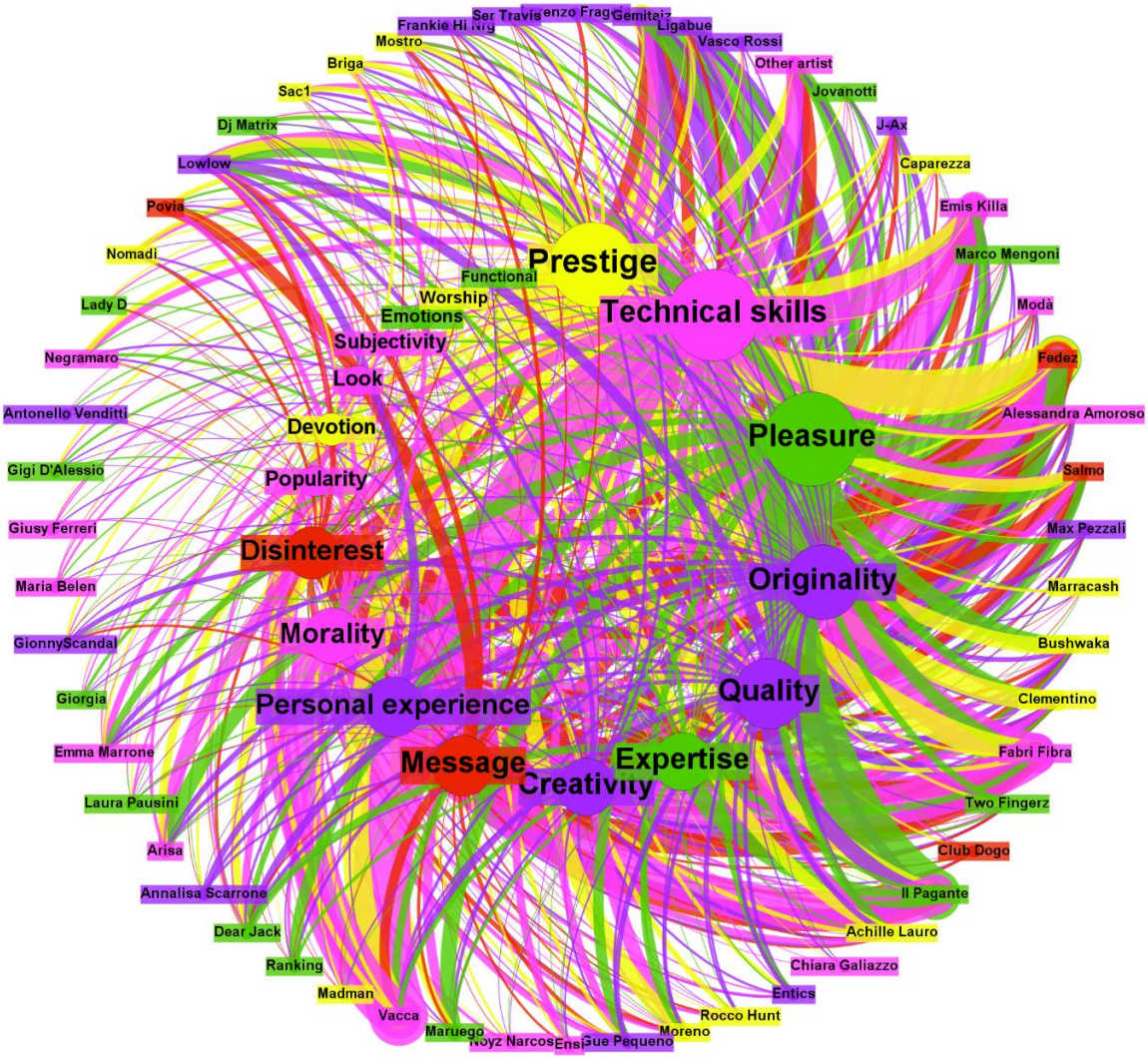
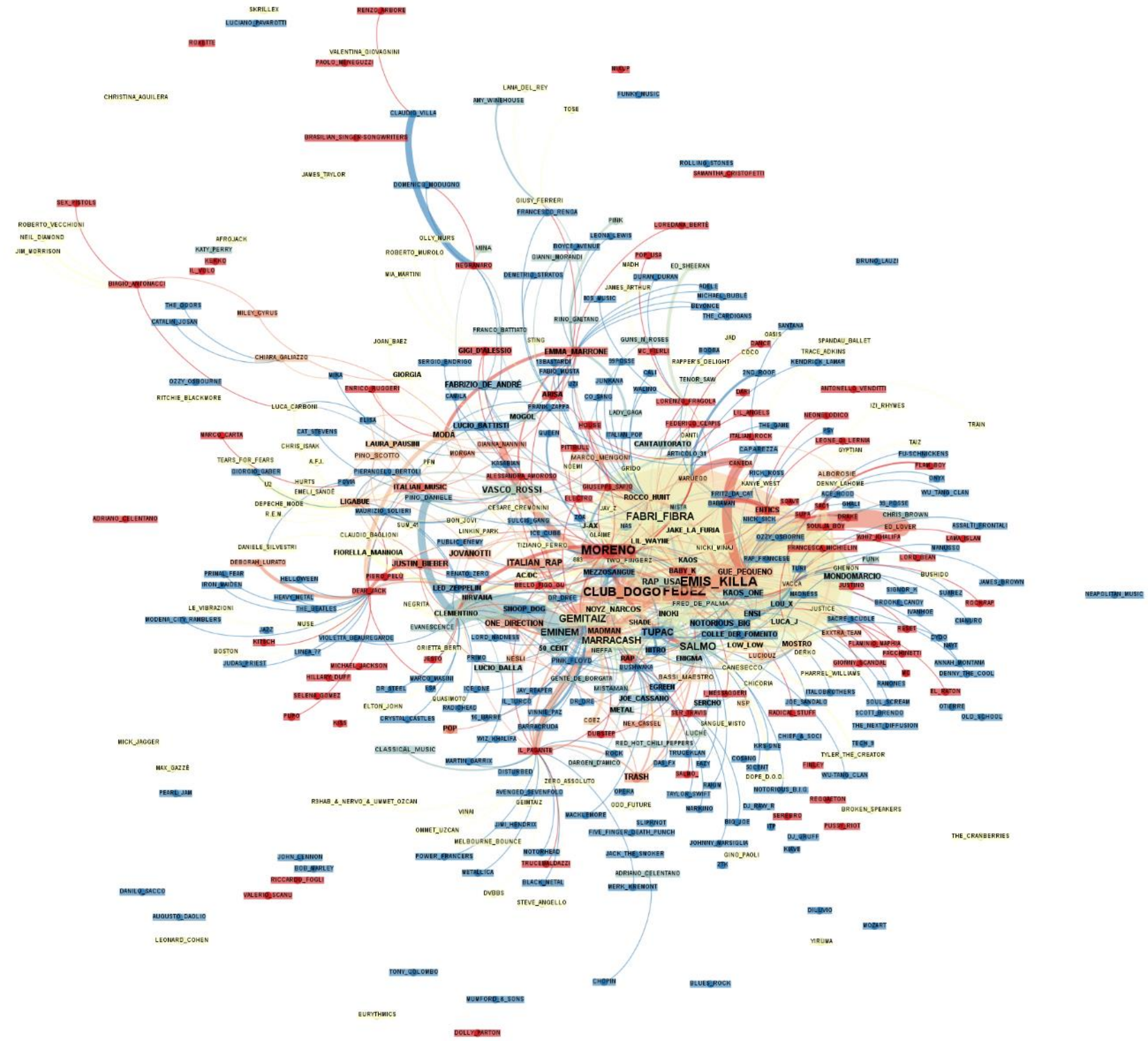


Figure 25 The overall network of artistic mentions (see Section 4.5.2). The bigger the label, the more frequently the artist has been mentioned. Nodes' colours indicate the average sentiment of each artist's mentions (light blue = positive, red = negative). Layout: Yifan Yu



Appendix 3

Contact message (summary)

My name is Massimo Airoldi and I am a Ph.D. student in Sociology at the University of Milan. I am currently conducting a research project which aims to give voice to digital music listeners' ground-up tastes. I am contacting you because you commented/uploaded one or more YouTube music videos. I believe that your opinions about artists, genres and new forms of music fruition are important and deserve to be shared.
The main purpose of this project is to interview users like you, who are willing to talk about their favourite music. Are you available to briefly discuss about the music you love via Google Hangouts, Skype or by phone? Please, let me know by replying to this message.
In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old. Interviews will be audio recorded prior informed consent. You will remain entirely anonymous and no personal information will be shared with other parties.
Thank you in advance for your availability,
Best,
Massimo

Interview guide (summary)

0) Verbal informed consent to audio recording and data treatment acceptance.

<u>Musical habitus, technologies and everyday life</u>

1) How important is music in your life (at present)? [music engagement]
2) Do you normally discuss about music with your relatives/friends/acquaintances? If so, how? [music engagement, communication]
3) How and when did you start listening to music? [primary and secondary musical socialization]
4) In what situations of your daily life do you habitually listen to music? [everyday practices]
5) How do you normally listen to music in the situations you mentioned? [music technologies]
6) Do you think there is an appropriate type of music for different situations? Tell me how you choose the music you listen to in a given moment. [musical choice and situations]
7) Have you ever uploaded/commented music videos on YouTube? [commenter/uploader]
8) How do you discover new music? [cultural intermediaries and algorithms]

<u>Objectified and embodied musical tastes</u>

9) What do you think about contemporary Italian pop music?
10) Can you indicate three contemporary Italian pop artists that you like and three that you dislike?
11) What do you think about Italian popular music of the past?
12) Can you indicate three "vintage" Italian artists that you like and three that you dislike?
13) More specifically, what do you think about Italian *cantautori*?
14) Can you indicate three *cantautori* that you like and three that you dislike?
15) What do you think about Italian rap music?
16) Can you indicate three Italian rappers that you like and three that you dislike?
17) What do you think about rock music?
18) What do you think about dance/electronic music?

19) What do you think about jazz music?
20) What do you think about classical music?
21) Can you rank the aforementioned music genres from the one that you like most to the one that you like least?
22) In general, do you prefer Italian or international music?
23) How has your musical taste changed during your lifetime?

Hierarchies and distinctions

24) Do you think that your tastes resemble an average Italian's ones?
25) What is your opinion about listeners who love the music you dislike?
26) In your opinion, is it possible to distinguish between "good" and "bad" music? If so, what criteria would you use? [perception of hierarchy of cultural legitimacy]
27) Tell me an example of musical content that you would never share on your social media profiles, if any [perception of hierarchy of cultural legitimacy]
28) Is there any music artist that you love but that, at the same time, you would feel ashamed to listen to in public?
29) In the past, a distinction between high art music and popular music ("for the masses") was particularly common. In your opinion, such a distinction is applicable also today?
30) If so, do you think that such a distinction is perceived and shared by Italian listeners?

Socio-demographics

31) Where do you live? [area of residence]
32) How old are you? [age cohort]
33) Educational title [cultural capital]
34) Occupation [economic capital]
35) Parents' educational title [family-based cultural capital]
36) Parents' occupation [family-based economic capital]

Appendix 4

Table 13 Variables about the use of YouTube for music reception. Relative frequencies across socio-demographic vars

		Listening to music		Commenting music		Related videos discovery	
Indep var	Value	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Cohort	1945-1959	68.7%	31.3%	87.4%	12.6%	80.2%	19.8%
	1960-1969	50.7%	49.3%	82.5%	17.5%	70.8%	29.2%
	1970-1979	37.6%	62.4%	76.1%	23.9%	70.6%	29.4%
	1980-1989	28.8%	71.2%	82.9%	17.1%	54.1%	45.9%
	1990-1998	17.9%	82.1%	73.2%	26.8%	37.4%	62.6%
Gender	Female	39.0%	61.0%	80.9%	19.1%	64.4%	35.6%
	Male	49.2%	50.8%	80.9%	19.1%	67.0%	33.0%
Occupation	En/Ex/Pr	49.3%	50.7%	80.6%	19.4%	68.7%	31.3%
	Teacher	38.0%	62.0%	82.0%	18.0%	68.0%	32.0%
	Clerk	43.0%	57.0%	83.2%	16.8%	67.9%	32.1%
	Other worker	49.4%	50.6%	79.5%	20.5%	71.1%	28.9%
	Student	17.6%	82.4%	72.5%	27.5%	33.3%	66.7%
	Retired	69.4%	30.6%	90.6%	9.4%	78.8%	21.2%
	Housewife	31.8%	68.2%	63.6%	36.4%	77.3%	22.7%
	Unemployed	39.1%	60.9%	75.4%	24.6%	62.3%	37.7%
Education	University	39.4%	60.6%	81.5%	18.5%	62.8%	37.2%
	USS or lower	47.4%	52.6%	80.2%	19.8%	68.6%	31.4%

Table 14 Top 40 active variables per axis, MCA. Ctr > 1.07 in grey

ACTIVEVARS	Dim.1	ACTIVEVARS	Dim.2	ACTIVEVARS	Dim.3
V2_complexity_Dont agree	0.97	V2_infamy_Dont know	1.49	V1_emotions_Dont agree	1.40
V2_infamy_Dont agree	0.70	V2_prestige_Dont know	1.51	V1_boring_Agree	1.28
V2_infamy_Agree	-0.66	V2_simplicity_Dont know	1.40	V1_prestige_Dont agree	1.09
V2_subcultural_Dont agree	0.76	V2_subcultural_Dont know	0.89	V1_refined_Dont agree	1.41
V2_simplicity_Agree	0.60	V2_complexity_Dont know	1.66	cantautorato_Dislike	1.29
disinterest_Agree	-0.67	sub_domestic_Dont know	0.89	V1_emotions_Agree	-0.35
V2_prestige_Agree	0.99	easy_listening_Dont know	0.95	cosmopolitan_Agree	0.62
symbolic_D_Agree	-0.82	V1_distinctive_Dont know	1.20	V1_distinctive_Dont agree	0.47
subjectivity_Dont agree	-0.64	practical_D_Dont know	1.49	V1_prestige_Agree	-0.33
originality_Dont agree	0.62	serious_listening_Dont know	1.56	V1_distinctive_Agree	-0.39
V1_boring_Agree	0.77	pleasure_Dont know	1.43	V2_simplicity_Agree	-0.42
V2_complexity_Agree	-0.40	expertise_Dont know	1.47	V1_refined_Agree	-0.29
V2_simplicity_Dont agree	-0.48	V2_subcultural_Agree	-0.54	V1_emotions_Dont know	1.04
practical_D_Agree	-0.58	V1_refined_Dont know	0.99	V2_simplicity_Dont agree	0.38
sub_domestic_Agree	0.55	V1_emotions_Dont know	1.07	V1_refined_Dont know	0.93

pop_Dislike	-0.62	sub_domestic_Dont agree	-0.41	V1_boring_Dont agree	-0.27
V1_emotions_Dont agree	0.73	sub_domestic_Agree	-0.39	V2_infamy_Agree	0.36
V1_refined_Dont agree	0.80	V2_subcultural_Dont agree	-0.42	V2_infamy_Dont agree	-0.32
latin_Like	0.45	V2_infamy_Dont agree	-0.32	cantautorato_Like	-0.23
disinterest_Dont agree	0.33	V2_infamy_Agree	-0.31	symbolic_D_Agree	0.46
V1_prestige_Dont agree	0.56	easy_listening_Agree	-0.31	serious_listening_Dont agree	0.36
concerts_>4	-0.53	expertise_Agree	-0.31	emotions_Dont agree	0.41
pop_Like	0.32	V2_prestige_Dont agree	-0.22	pop_Dislike	0.40
latin_Dislike	-0.35	rap_Like	-0.31	V2_complexity_Dont agree	-0.35
V1_distinctive_Dont agree	0.40	V2_simplicity_Agree	-0.28	rock_Dislike	0.58
serious_listening_Dont agree	0.43	cosmopolitan_Agree	-0.35	sub_domestic_Agree	-0.32
rap_Like	0.40	symbolic_D_Agree	-0.36	cantautorato_Indifferent	0.62
classical_Dislike	0.64	rap_Dislike	0.21	jazz_Dislike	0.33
V1_distinctive_Agree	-0.32	V1_distinctive_Agree	-0.21	sub_domestic_Dont agree	0.25
subjectivity_Agree	0.27	serious_listening_Agree	-0.17	cosmopolitan_Dont agree	-0.17
expertise_Agree	-0.37	V2_simplicity_Dont agree	-0.21	jazz_Like	-0.19
rap_Dislike	-0.29	rock_Dislike	0.41	classical_Dislike	0.38
originality_Agree	-0.25	V2_complexity_Agree	-0.15	V2_subcultural_Dont agree	-0.26
practical_D_Dont agree	0.25	practical_D_Agree	-0.22	originality_Dont agree	0.24
V1_refined_Dont know	0.77	V2_prestige_Agree	-0.31	serious_listening_Agree	-0.15
functional_Dont agree	-0.35	V2_complexity_Dont agree	-0.22	practical_D_Agree	0.21
emotions_Dont agree	-0.40	electro_Dont know	0.43	latin_Like	-0.19
concerts_Never	0.36	disinterest_Agree	-0.16	per_experience_Agree	-0.17
V2_subcultural_Agree	-0.31	cosmopolitan_Dont agree	0.10	pop_Like	-0.14
music_>10	-0.45	easy_listening_Dont agree	-0.13	V2_subcultural_Agree	0.18

Table 15 Top supplementary variables per axis, MCA. Those listed here have |*v.test*| > *1.9*

SUPVARS	Dim.1	SUPVARS	Dim.2	SUPVARS	Dim.3
F	0.184	1945-1959	0.359	Student	0.405
books_<200	0.146	Retired	0.419	1990-1998	0.345
Low_edu	0.13	mother_uss_No	0.092	mother_uss_Yes	0.118
mother_uss_No	0.058	father_uss_No	0.078	books_<200	0.071
Clerk	0.082	books_>200	0.083	books_>200	-0.073
Unemployed	0.222	Low_edu	0.089	Teacher	-0.25
father_uss_No	0.05	Teacher	0.223	mother_uss_No	-0.073
father_uss_Yes	-0.073	1980-1989	-0.164	1945-1959	-0.219
Student	-0.196	High_edu	-0.074		
mother_uss_Yes	-0.093	books_<200	-0.081		
Entrepreneur/Executive/Professions	-0.216	Student	-0.26		
High_edu	-0.108	father_uss_Yes	-0.114		
books_>200	-0.15	1990-1998	-0.295		
M	-0.294	mother_uss_Yes	-0.147		

Table 16 Number of respondents and homogeneity rates per socio-demographic profile. Excluding cases with missing values in the variables considered, the sample consists of 967 respondents. Homogeneity rate is the percentage of respondents mentioning artists which occur in more than 3% of responses

Profile code	Educational level	Age	Gender	N.	Homogeneity rate_good music	Homogeneity rate_bad music
HOF	University degree/attendance	> 36	F	184	51.63	30.98
HOM	University degree/attendance	> 36	M	132	46.97	37.12
HYF	University degree/attendance	< 37	F	151	25.17	45.70
HYM	University degree/attendance	< 37	M	62	53.23	48.39
LOF	Upper-secondary diploma or lower	> 36	F	197	31.98	20.30
LOM	Upper-secondary diploma or lower	> 36	M	161	36.02	27.33
LYF	Upper-secondary diploma or lower	< 37	F	54	35.19	55.56
LYM	Upper-secondary diploma or lower	< 37	M	26	30.77	30.77
Total/Av	/	/	/	967	38.87	37.02

Table 17 Matrix "Artist X Socio-demographic profile". Relative frequencies of favourite artists

Artist	HOF	HOM	HYF	HYM	LOF	LOM	LYF	LYM	Av. rows
DE_ANDRE	52.2	28.0	27.8	32.3	16.8	28.0	20.4	30.8	29.5
LUCIO_BATTISTI	19.0	15.9	21.9	8.1			20.4	7.7	15.5
J-AX							14.8		14.8
RIHANNA							13.0		13.0
TIZIANO_FERRO	9.2		11.3		14.7	3.7	20.4		11.9
MINA	14.7	9.1	13.9	6.5	16.8	7.5	13.0		11.6
COLDPLAY			13.2	8.1			13.0		11.4
LINKIN_PARK							11.1	11.5	11.3
ALESSANDRA_AMOROSO							11.1		11.1
CAPAREZZA				6.5				15.4	10.9
QUEEN	9.8	10.6	10.6	12.9	9.1			11.5	10.8
ELIO_E_LE_STORIE_TESE				9.7				11.5	10.6
MARCO_MENGONI	6.0		6.6	8.1	13.2		18.5		10.5
PINK_FLOYD	6.0	10.6			6.1	17.4		11.5	10.3
CESARE_CREMONINI			9.9						9.9
LUCIO_DALLA	8.7	10.6	9.9		6.6	13.0	13.0	7.7	9.9
VASCO_ROSSI	12.0	7.6			10.7	9.3			9.9
LIGABUE	9.2	8.3	13.2	9.7	12.2	8.7		7.7	9.9
JOVANOTTI	13.0		8.6	6.5	12.2			7.7	9.6
GIUSEPPE_VERDI				11.3				7.7	9.5
KATY_PERRY							9.3		9.3
LAURA_PAUSINI	6.5				9.6		11.1		9.1
U2	8.2	9.8							9.0
THE_BEATLES	6.5				7.6	11.8			8.6
BRUCE_SPRINGSTEEN	9.8	7.6			5.6	8.7		11.5	8.6

ADELE					8.6				8.6
DE_GREGORI	10.9	12.1	4.0		12.2	5.0	7.4	7.7	8.5
ELISA	9.2		11.9	4.8	7.1	5.6	11.1	7.7	8.2
POOH				4.8				11.5	8.2
METALLICA				8.1					8.1
RADIOHEAD				8.1					8.1
FRANCESCO_GUCCINI	10.3	5.3	6.6	4.8	4.1	10.6	13.0		7.8
EMMA_MARRONE							7.4		7.4
ZUCCHERO		6.1			6.1	9.3			7.2
MOZART	8.2				6.1				7.1
MADONNA					7.1				7.1
PFM		8.3				5.0			6.7
FRANCO_BATTIATO		8.3		4.8		5.0	7.4	7.7	6.6
MAX_PEZZALI			7.3	4.8				7.7	6.6
STING					6.6				6.6
GIORGIO_GABER				4.8				7.7	6.3
EROS_RAMAZZOTTI					6.1				6.1
PAOLO_CONTE		6.1							6.1
MAX_GAZZE	3.8			6.5				7.7	6.0
ADRIANO_CELENTANO					8.6	5.0	3.7		5.8
CLAUDIO_BAGLIONI	5.4		4.6		7.6	5.0			5.7
MIA_MARTINI							5.6		5.6
AREA		4.5		6.5					5.5
VIVALDI		5.3							5.3
NEGRAMARO			6.6			3.7			5.2
"No one"						4.3	5.6		5.0
GIANNI_MORANDI					6.1		3.7		4.9
GIOACCHINO_ROSSINI				4.8					4.8
IOSONOUNCANE				4.8					4.8
LUIGI_TENCO				4.8					4.8
PINO_DANIELE		3.8			4.1		5.6		4.5
FIORELLA_MANNOIA	4.3								4.3
GIANNA_NANNINI	4.3								4.3
CCCP		3.8		4.8					4.3
VINICIO_CAPOSSELA	3.8								3.8
BRANDUARDI		3.8							3.8
NOMADI							3.7		3.7
RINO_GAETANO							3.7		3.7
Av. columns	10.5	8.8	11.1	7.9	8.9	8.8	10.7	10.5	8.2

Table 18 Matrix “Artist X Socio-demographic profile”. Relative frequencies of least favourite artists

Artist	HOF	HOM	HYF	HYM	LOF	LOM	LYF	LYM	Av. rows
GIGI_D_ALESSIO	24.5	16.7	27.8	14.5	21.3	16.8	14.8	23.1	19.9
FEDEZ	13.6	8.3	12.6	11.3	6.6	12.4	16.7	38.5	15.0
"No one"		9.1			12.2	18.0			13.1
CLAUDIO_VILLA	14.1	15.2			11.7	10.6			12.9
LIGABUE							11.1		11.1
J-AX			4.6					15.4	10.0
JUSTIN_BIEBER	3.3	3.0	11.3	4.8			25.9	11.5	10.0
LAURA_PAUSINI	9.2	9.8	7.3	8.1	8.1	5.0	14.8	7.7	8.8
VASCO_ROSSI		6.8	11.3	6.5	5.6	3.1	14.8	11.5	8.5
EMMA_MARRONE	4.9		7.3	8.1	5.1		13.0	11.5	8.3
MARYLIN_MANSON				8.1					8.1
METALLICA				8.1					8.1
RICKY_MARTIN				8.1					8.1
MICHAEL_JACKSON								7.7	7.7
ARIANA_GRANDE							7.4		7.4
MODA			4.6	6.5			7.4	7.7	6.5
"Don't know"			7.3		6.1	6.2			6.5
ADRIANO_CELENTANO				6.5					6.5
COLDPLAY				4.8				7.7	6.3
ONE_DIRECTION			4.6				7.4		6.0
POOH	4.3	5.3	9.3	4.8	4.6	4.3	7.4	7.7	6.0
MARCO_MENGONI		5.3				3.1	9.3		5.9
AL_BANO	7.6	5.3	5.3			5.0			5.8
PITBULL							5.6		5.6
ALESSANDRA_AMOROSO	4.3		6.6						5.5
IVA_ZANICCHI				3.2				7.7	5.5
NINO_D_ANGELO		3.8	5.3	4.8	3.0			7.7	4.9
LUCIO_BATTISTI				3.2			3.7	7.7	4.9
"Everyone"				4.8					4.8
JONAS_BROTHERS				4.8					4.8
RIHANNA			4.6						4.6
CLAUDIO_BAGLIONI				3.2			5.6		4.4
EROS_RAMAZZOTTI	3.3				6.1	3.7			4.4
ENRIQUE_IGLESIAS				4.8			3.7		4.3
ORIETTA_BERTI				3.2		5.0			4.1
CUGINI_DI_CAMPAGNA			3.3	4.8					4.1
CARMEN_CONSOLI					4.1				4.1
MADONNA	3.8			4.8	4.1	3.1			4.0
BIAGIO_ANTONACCI		3.8							3.8
IL_VOLO		3.8							3.8
RENATO_ZERO							3.7		3.7
TAYLOR_SWIFT							3.7		3.7

EMINEM	3.3	3.8	4.0		3.0				3.5
LOREDANA_BERTE			3.3				3.7		3.5
LADY_GAGA			4.0		3.0	3.1			3.4
DAVID_GUETTA				3.2					3.2
TOTO_CUTUGNO				3.2					3.2
MARIO_MEROLA						3.1			3.1
TIZIANO_FERRO						3.1			3.1
JOVANOTTI					3.0				3.0
MORENO					3.0				3.0
ZUCCHERO					3.0				3.0
BEYONCE		3.0							3.0
PRINCE		3.0							3.0
QUEEN		3.0							3.0
ROCK		3.0							3.0
Av. columns	8.0	6.2	7.6	5.9	6.3	6.6	9.5	12.4	6.0