

COMPARING CULTURAL CLASSIFICATION

High and Popular Arts in European and U.S. Elite Newspapers, 1955-2005\*

Susanne Janssen, Marc Verboord und Giselinde Kuipers

*Abstract:* This article seeks to elucidate over time changes and cross-national variations in the status of art forms through a comprehensive content analysis of the coverage given to arts and culture in elite newspapers of four different countries – France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States – in the period 1955-2005. The authors explore how cultural hierarchy is affected by specific features of these societies and their respective journalistic and cultural production fields. The four countries show significant differences in journalistic attention to high and popular arts. Throughout the period of study, the American newspapers and to a slightly lesser extent, French elite newspapers generally devote more attention to popular art forms than their Dutch and German counterparts. In accounting for cross-national differences in the coverage given to popular culture, field level factors like the structure of the newspaper market and the position and size of local cultural industries seem more important than remote societal factors such as national cultural repertoires and the level of social mobility.

*I. Introduction*

Actors in the field of culture – producers, mediators as well as consumers – continually classify cultural products according to their alleged meaning, style, quality, effects or other properties. They group cultural artifacts under particular categories or genres on the basis of perceived similarities, thus attributing all kinds of characteristics to them. Such distinctions between works, artists and entire genres are not purely aesthetic decisions, but socially enabled and socially constructed events. The work of Bourdieu (1993), Crane (1992), Peterson (1997) and many others (e. g. Peterson and Anand 2004; Van Rees and Dorleijn 2001) on the production of culture has illuminated the manifold practices, institutions and actors that underlie and influence the classification of cultural products. It has also shown that cultural products may be classified differently in different times and places, in accordance with varying institutional and social circumstances (Corse 1997; Crane 1987; Dowd et al. 2002; Griswold 1987). Likewise, cultural classification systems – the ways in which cultural artifacts are “divided up in the heads and habits of consumers *and* by the institutions that bound the production

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and distribution of separate genres” (DiMaggio 1987: 441)<sup>1</sup> – show significant variations, which appear closely related to wider social and cultural conditions.

Perhaps the most salient change in the cultural classification systems of late twentieth century Western societies is the decline of traditional cultural hierarchies (i. e. “high” culture) and the diminished propensity of cultural producers and consumers to draw hierarchical distinctions altogether. Many authors have pointed to the erosion of the strong distinction between “high” and “popular” culture and the increased cultural legitimacy of “popular” and “middlebrow” art forms, which would no longer be considered inferior to traditional “high” arts by agents in the cultural field. Yet, such boundary erosion remains difficult to assess empirically in a systematical way, as the legitimacy of cultural genres and cultural authorities often stays implicit (Baumann 2006; Verboord 2010). Work on omnivorization suggests that culture consumers indeed increasingly avoid drawing boundaries between the high and the popular (cf. Peterson 2005; Ollivier et al. 2008), but it does not illuminate whether and how this is related to the practices of institutionally embedded agents in the “symbolic production of culture”. By focusing on one such institutional agency – arts journalism in elite newspapers – we seek to contribute to the understanding of how aesthetic selections by socially legitimated experts have changed over time. This focus not only allows us to systematically compare the social status of a wide range of cultural genres across time, but also to explore the degree of universality of such (shifting) classifications through a cross-national comparison. For that purpose, we study Western countries which in many respects are highly similar, yet vary on several dimensions (cf. Janssen et al. 2008) that are likely to affect the degree of cultural hierarchy and the extent to which popular culture have gained in legitimacy over time. Our research question reads:

*How has the attention to high and popular arts changed in the period from 1955 to 2005 in Dutch, French, German, and U.S. elite newspapers?*

Art journalists and reviewers working for elite newspapers are core agents in the development and dissemination of cultural classification systems and the legitimate categories they entail (Baumann 2007; Ferguson 1998; Shrum 1991; Van Rees 1983). Through their selective and evaluative activities they publicly confirm, modify or reject the ways in which cultural producers position their products on the market. This channels and shapes subsequent perception and valuation by other actors who are professionally engaged in the production and dissemination of culture, as well as higher educated cultural consumers who tend to read these papers (Rosengren 1987; Van Rees and Dorleijn 2001). The arts coverage in elite newspapers therefore signals to a certain extent which cultural artifacts are considered “legitimate culture” in different countries and periods, and what value is placed on them (Baumann 2007; Janssen 1999).

Our study does not pretend to capture “legitimacy” in its full manifestation: many studies concentrating on a single cultural form or practice have shown the complexity if not impossibility of that task.<sup>2</sup> The use of an *a priori* categorization of cultural forms

1 “Artistic classification systems” (ACS) in DiMaggio (1987).

2 Cf., for example, Bryson (2005), Clark (1979), Corse and Griffin (1997), Griswold et al. (2005), Weber (2000) on *literature and reading*; Allen and Lincoln (2004), Baumann (2007) on *film*; Peterson (1972), Lopes (2002) on *jazz*; Bourdieu (1990) on *photography*; Bryson

and deductive content analysis limits the nuances we are able to make in the present study. Yet, this approach does allow us to perform a cross-national trend analysis of cultural classification systems, so far lacking in cultural sociology (Janssen and Peterson 2005), precisely by mapping changes for the whole range of genres within one clearly delimited institutional context.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, through such an approach we are able to explore the impact of various societal-level and field-level factors on the process of cultural de-hierarchization and the aesthetic mobility of popular arts.

## II. Cultural classification systems in transition

According to DiMaggio (1991, 1992) changes in social structure and the rise of an open market for cultural goods led to an erosion of institutionalized cultural authority, set off spirals of cultural inflation, and created a more differentiated, less hierarchical, less universal, and more loosely-bounded cultural classification system in the United States in the late twentieth century. DiMaggio's analysis seems in many respects applicable to other Western countries. Along with the expansion and diversification of the cultural supply (see Gebesmair in this volume),<sup>4</sup> European societies have also witnessed the rise of more omnivorous cultural taste patterns (Cushman et al. 1996; López-Sintas and García-Álvarez 2002). This development appears intimately connected to the democratization of higher education, increased social mobility and heterogeneity, as well as the emancipation of previously powerless groups (workers, women, youngsters, ethnic, racial and sexual minorities) who managed to "import" their tastes into higher circles and challenged universalist classifications (Berkers 2009; Berkers et al. 2011; Bryson 2005; Van Eijck and Knulst 2005; Stein 2005; Wouters 2007). Furthermore, processes of individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Giddens 1991) have made people less prone to subscribe to traditional cultural hierarchies and collective taste patterns. Instead, they are increasingly required to choose individually and to show individual "authenticity" in the expression of taste, resulting in a fragmentation of taste cultures and life styles.

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(1996), Dowd et al. (2005), Lena and Peterson (2008), Regev (1994), Schmutz (2005), Schmutz et al. (2010) and Van Venrooij (2009) on *popular music*; Bielby et al. (2005) and Kuipers (2006) on *television*; Ferguson (1998), Johnston and Baumann (2007) on *gourmet food*; Janssen (2006) on *fashion*. For a general discussion of the sociology of legitimation, see Johnson et al. (2006).

3 Previous studies concentrate on a single cultural form or practice, while those covering more than one genre usually look at a single country (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1992; Levine 1988) or provide cross-national comparisons at a single point in time (Lamont 1992; Lamont and Thévenot 2000).

4 This expansion results in part from the rise of mass produced "media cultures" produced and disseminated by cultural multinationals and new communication technologies, but is also due to the strong expansion of public and private art support since the 1960s, which has boosted arts activity and the production of "fine" arts. For European countries, this also applies to domestic cultural industries – such as the film, television, and publishing industry – which expanded their production thanks to state support aimed at improving the competitive position of these industries and at leveling the growing dominance of cultural imports from abroad, in particular, the U.S.

In the U.S. as well as in Western-European countries, the higher educated traded off part of their consumption of “highbrow” art forms for more popular ones, thus becoming more omnivorous (Coulangeon and Lemel 2007; DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; Gebesmair 2004; Peterson and Kern 1996; Rössel 2006; Van Rees et al. 1999; Van Eijck and Knulst 2005). The more inclusive tastes of the higher status groups have probably led elite newspapers in these countries to diversify their arts coverage accordingly. This diversification, in turn, has likely contributed to the wider diffusion and legitimation of such tastes.

We therefore anticipate increased prominence of popular cultural genres in elite newspapers’ arts coverage, although we also expect the evolution and extent of this development to vary across the four countries included in this study (Rössel 2006; Schulze 1992). First, social structural factors may affect the degree of legitimacy of popular cultural genres, notably a country’s stratification system and the degree of social mobility. Second, certain historical national repertoires make it more or less likely that people will (continue to) draw strong hierarchical boundaries between cultural genres. Third, variations in a country’s educational and media system can be a source of variations in the strength of hierarchical distinctions between “high” and “popular” arts. Finally, the degree of state support for high and popular arts and the size of a country’s cultural industries likely affect the prominence of popular cultural genres in elite newspapers’ arts coverage.

Below, we briefly review the above society-level and field-level factors that may have given rise to cross-national differences in the extent to which popular cultural genres have gained in legitimacy.

### 1. Social mobility

High levels of social mobility and intergroup interaction are likely to erode prestige differences between art forms (DiMaggio 1987; Lizardo 2006). The growth of the college-educated upper middle class and increasing social mobility have been identified as key factors in cultural de-hierarchization processes in the United States (DiMaggio 1991; Peterson and Kern 1996), as this resulted in an increase in cultural consumption and consecration by people not “raised” on high culture. Both developments are to a large extent caused by the emergence of a more open and inclusive educational system. In the U.S., the democratization of the system of higher education had already started before the first year in our study, but in the three European countries, the opening up of the educational system and the resultant rise of a college-educated, mobile middle class did not happen until the late 1960s.

Although a “ranking of countries according to degree of openness must be approached cautiously”, some characteristics stand out in the literature (Breen and Jonsson 2005: 232). Of the four countries in this study, Germany and France consistently emerge in the research literature as countries that represent the more rigid pole in such a ranking, while the Netherlands occupies an intermediate position (Breen and Luijkx 2004; Breen et al. 2009). The U.S. has the highest social mobility rate of the four countries in this study (Breen and Jonsson 2005).

## 2. National cultural repertoires

Whereas the association between social class and cultural status suggests a dynamic field in which both reputations and participatory patterns can rapidly change, other researchers emphasize the continuity of such patterns. Striking dissimilarities have been found in equally developed and quite similar societies (see Lamont 1992 on the United States and France). Cultural classification systems and taste patterns thus appear also shaped by long-standing cultural traditions or national “repertoires of evaluation” (Lamont and Thévenot 2000: 8-9): “Each nation makes more readily available to its members specific sets of tools through historical and institutional channels, which means that members of different national communities are not equally likely to draw on the same cultural tools to construct and assess the world that surrounds them.”

Both the French (Lamont 1992) and the German national repertoire (Wouters 2007) seem to be characterized by a strong hierarchy and strong cultural boundaries, respectively promoting aestheticism and intellectualism (France) and idealism and anti-utilitarianism (Germany) as ultimately important. Both the German and French national repertoires are thus likely to sustain “high” culture. In the Netherlands and the United States, by contrast, the historical dominance of the (upper) middle classes resulted in a national repertoire stressing pragmatism rather than intellectualism, aestheticism or idealism, which may contribute to a relatively low degree of cultural hierarchy in both countries. We expect the U.S. to have the lowest degree of cultural hierarchy considering the historically central place of populism – in addition to the theme of pragmatism – in the American national repertoire (Lamont 1992) as well as the U.S.’s diversity, lack of “social integration”, and many cultural and social centers which led to greater informality and a weaker cultural hierarchy at a much earlier phase (DiMaggio 1987; Mennell 2007).

## 3. Educational system

The educational system plays a key role in the diffusion of cultural classifications and the production of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984, 1996; DiMaggio 1987). The level of cultural hierarchy may be weaker or stronger depending on the degree of standardization of a country’s school system, its level of stratification, and its focus: technical or humanistic (DiMaggio 1987; Lamont 1992). The German educational system (characterized by a moderate degree of standardization, strong stratification, and a humanistic orientation) and the French educational system (strongly standardized, heavy focus on the arts and humanities and a moderate degree of stratification) seem most conducive to cultural hierarchy (Allmendinger 1989; Hannah et al. 1996). The Dutch system of secondary education – which is also highly standardized and stratified (Blom 2004; Hannan et al. 1996), yet more practically oriented, would take an intermediate position. The American educational system is far less standardized and stratified than that of the three European countries, while it also tends to downplay the arts and humanities in favor of more marketable, technical skills. As such it is least likely to sustain hierarchical cultural distinctions.

#### 4. Media system

In a market dominated media system such as the U.S. system, the degree of cultural hierarchy will likely be lower than in the state dominated media systems of most European countries, where commercial influences are mitigated by various forms of state support. Commercial, entertainment oriented radio and television stations have dominated the U.S. system from the beginning, eroding the position of high culture through both their programming and advertising. In contrast, in France, Germany and the Netherlands, public broadcasters had a monopoly until the mid- or late 1980s, providing a relatively large amount of cultural programming, thus sustaining high culture by making it available to a wider audience (Lamont 1992; Papathanassopoulos 2002).

In a similar vein, in a more market-dominated journalistic field (such as in the United States), elite papers coverage of popular culture is likely to be higher than in a journalistic field where the influence of commercial pressures is softened by a high level of state support (France, Germany and the Netherlands) (cf. Benson 2005; Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Besides such differential degrees of state and market influence, national differences in the journalistic field's internal organizational structure (Benson 2005) may affect the amount of coverage given to high and popular art forms. Compared to their American and German counterparts, both the French and the Dutch national press are much more centralized and concentrated and increasingly have to compete for the same readers and advertisers. In such a situation of direct and intense competition, newspapers are more likely to adjust their coverage to "popular" demand, especially when they depend on single copy sales rather than subscriptions as is the case in France (Benson 2005; Esser 1999). Hence, although French media overall get most state support (Kuhn 1995: 40) the French national elite press may be more prone to cover popular cultural genres than German or Dutch elite newspapers.

#### 5. The cultural field: state support for the arts and the prominence of cultural industries

A high level of (direct) state support for artists and cultural institutions may help to sustain strong cultural boundaries, as it increases the availability of high culture and provides artists and other actors in the field with more autonomy from market pressures. Conversely, a strong dependency of cultural producers and institutions on private funding and earned income (revenues through sales) is likely to erode hierarchical distinctions between art forms and genres.

The U.S. system of arts support is far more decentralized and market-oriented than the European models (Mulcahy 2000; NEA 2007), which may contribute to weaker cultural boundaries in the United States. The French system of arts support – with its long tradition of centralized intervention in the arts – undoubtedly strongly contributed to the production and diffusion of a unified definition of high culture. Although the Dutch cultural policy framework during the time-frame of this study became equally centralized as French cultural policy (ACE 1998), it tends to emphasize culture

less as an element of national identity or national prestige than the French model. Germany has a highly decentralized cultural policy system, in which cities and towns are the most important sponsors and carriers of culture and the arts. These local authorities mostly fund already existing institutions and organizations in the field of classical music, theater, cultural heritage, and the visual arts, thereby strengthening the traditional sectors of high culture (Katz-Gerro 2002).

From the 1980s onward, all three European countries, and especially France, have also developed extensive policies and regulations to support and protect their national cultural industries in response to the threat of US cultural and commercial hegemony (Machet et al. 2002). The high level of state support for the French cultural industries has likely weakened the distinction between high and popular arts in France. This probably also holds for the Netherlands, where the very existence of a film industry is largely dependent on subsidies and government regulation, and where the government has supported popular music from the early 1970s onward. Initially, this was part of social welfare programs but since the late 1970s it became part of the arts subsidies provided by the Dutch Ministry of Culture. Such shift in the “administrative” classification of cultural forms (DiMaggio 1987) can affect not just their economic viability but may also alter their status relative to other art forms. In contrast with the French and Dutch state, the German government continues to spend its musical subsidies almost exclusively on orchestras and classical music, while allocating relatively little public money to popular music. Like the other two European countries, the German government, however, has provided ample support for its film industry (Jäckel 2003).<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, cultural industries have developed in such ways that some claim the cultural output has become of less quality and shows less diversity than in previous times (see discussion in Hesmondhalgh 2007). Particularly the growth of transnational conglomerates has evoked the criticism that cultural production is becoming more “commercial”. However, such criticism overlooks that – in addition to the relatively standardized cultural production modus – many popular culture genres have developed an institutional framework similar to the high arts. Genres like pop music and film have now their own prizes, festivals, academic scholarship, and – the focus of this article – journalistic criticism (Regev 1994; Baumann 2007). The increasing status of popular culture has thus contributed to the emergence of cultural hierarchies *within* art forms that were previously simply considered “popular”. Specific constellations of power distribution between cultural industries and other institutions in a certain field may then affect classifications. An example would be the long-standing tradition of art house cinema in France versus the dominance of blockbuster movies in the U.S.

Hence, the coverage of individual art forms is probably strongly moderated by their position in the national cultural field. If a country has a high level of domestic production in a particular art form, this may lead to more newspaper coverage of this art form, even for the less prestigious genres (Janssen et al. 2008). The United States has a leading role in all cultural industries, including film and popular music. France too has

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5 It should be noted that the U.S. film industry receives also considerable state support, for instance in the form of general protectionist policies, e. g. tax breaks, restrictions on immigration, etc., which are not specifically directed at cultural products, but directly affect culture and the arts.

a sizeable cultural industry, and especially a well-developed film industry. Germany and the Netherlands, on the other hand, have much smaller cultural industries. The above suggests that elite newspapers in the U.S. will (yet again) be the most receptive to popular cultural genres, but also that the French coverage of popular culture, in particular film, could well be more extensive than in the other European countries.

### III. Hypotheses

*Table 1* summarizes the position of each country on the society-level and field-level dimensions we expect to affect the degree of cultural hierarchy and the status of popular art forms. We have attempted to capture the relative positions of the four countries on all of these dimensions, drawing on the research literature.

The ideal-typical characterizations in *Table 1* indicate that the United States has a less hierarchical cultural classification system than all three European nations in our study, and, moreover, that the divide between high and popular culture has probably eroded at an earlier stage in the United States than in the other countries. However, we expect the degree of cultural hierarchy and the degree of coverage given to popular cultural genres to differ across the three European countries. Our survey of macro- and meso-level factors contributing to cultural hierarchies suggests that elite newspapers in Germany are least receptive to popular culture throughout our period of study. This runs counter to the stereotypical notions of France as the most “highbrow” of nations. Within sociology, the classic image of snobbish France has probably been reinforced by the tremendous influence of Bourdieu’s work on cultural distinction – non-French readers of *Distinction* sometimes fail to notice that Bourdieu was writing about France in the 1960s. Moreover, in comparative sociology, the U.S. is typically contrasted with France, as a representative of the high-culture, state-centered European model (cf. Lamont 1992; Lamont and Thévenot 2000). However, we expect Germany to be more “European” than France in its preference for “high” culture.

The resulting picture for the respective positions of France and the Netherlands is less straightforward. If we look at the historical national repertoires and wider social structural features of both countries, we may hypothesize that traditional cultural hierarchies have probably remained more solid in France than in the Netherlands. At the meso-level, however, considering specifics of the French and Dutch media system and the domestic cultural industries in both countries, French newspapers appear more likely to embrace popular cultural forms than their Dutch counterparts.

To summarize, we may formulate the following hypotheses:

- H1:* In the second half of the twentieth century, elite newspapers in all four countries devote an increasing part of their arts coverage to popular art forms, resulting in a declining share of traditional high arts in these papers;
- H2:* Throughout the period under study, U.S. elite newspapers pay the most attention to popular art forms and German elite newspapers the least; French and Dutch elite newspapers take an intermediate position;

Table 1: Rankings of France, Germany, the Netherlands and the U.S. on societal and field-level factors affecting the legitimacy of popular cultural genres

	France	Germany	Netherlands	United States
<b>Society Level</b>				
<b>Societal mobility</b>	1,5 Low/Intermediate	1,5 Low/Intermediate	3 High/Intermediate	4 High
<b>National Cultural Repertoires</b>	1,5 Aestheticism Intellectualism	1,5 Idealism; Anti-utilitarianism	3 Pragmatism	4 Pragmatism; Populism
<b>Meso-/Field Level</b>				
<b>Educational System</b>	1,5	1,5	3	4
Standardization/ Humanistic orientation	1 High/High	2 Intermediate/High	3 High/Low	4 Low/Low
Stratification	2,5 Intermediate	1,5 High	1,5 High	2,5 Intermediate
<b>Media Field</b>	2,5	1	2,5	4
State support for public media (television/press)	1 High	3 Intermediate	2 Intermediate/High	4 Low
Level of competition on national newspaper market	4 High	1,5 Low	3 Intermediate	1,5 Low
<b>Cultural Policy</b>	4	1	2,5	2,5
State Support for High Culture	2 High	2 High	2 High	4 Low
State Support for Popular Culture/Cultural Industries	4 High	2 Intermediate	3 High/Intermediate	1 Low
<b>Size Cultural Industries</b>	3 Big	2 Intermediate	1 Small	4 Very big

Note: 1 = country least receptive to popular arts according to this factor/dimension; 4 = country most receptive to popular arts according to this factor/dimension.

- H3:* U.S. elite newspapers increase their coverage of mass-mediated, popular culture at an earlier stage than their European counterparts;
- H4:* German elite newspapers increase their coverage of popular art forms at a later stage than elite papers in France and the Netherlands.

#### IV. Research design and operationalization

To give a systematic account of cross-national differences and longitudinal changes of journalistic attention to various art forms, we performed a comprehensive quantitative content analysis (Neuendorf 2002) of the coverage given to “high-brow” and “popular” art forms in French, German, Dutch and U.S. elite newspapers for four sample years: 1955, 1975, 1995 and 2005.<sup>6</sup>

We purposively focus on arts journalism in elite newspapers as one of the key institutions in the attribution of symbolic value to cultural products. Not only do these papers present selections and evaluations of cultural products which are in many ways constitutive of future expert assessments (Van Rees 1983), but they also directly communicate to, and as such influence, members of the higher status groups in society (Beckert and Rössel 2004; Ferree et al. 2002; Shrum 1991). The arts coverage in elite newspapers is thus a useful indicator of the legitimacy of cultural artifacts in different countries and times (Baumann 2007; Janssen 1999). Moreover, studying general newspapers – instead of, for example, specialized periodicals on the arts and culture or particular art forms – allows us to systematically compare the social status of a wide range of cultural genres over a fifty year period across and to assess the universality of trends across countries.

##### 1. Selection of countries and newspapers

The four countries in this study – France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States – in many respects are similar, but they offer the necessary variability to explore the impact of various societal-level and field-level factors on cultural classification. Due to restraints in resources, our newspaper sample could only include a limited number of daily newspapers per country. Newspapers show considerable differences in their coverage of cultural subjects as well as their impact on classification processes. We preferred to focus on newspapers that target the governing, intellectual, and cultural elite because these papers fulfill a key role in processes of cultural valorization. Another criterion was that the selected newspapers had appeared during the entire research period. For each European country, we chose the two with the largest paid circulation, on average, in the four sample years (cf. Appendix A): *Le Monde* en *Le Figaro* for France; the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)* for Ger-

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<sup>6</sup> For practical reasons, the sample year 2005 was constructed from the last half of 2004 and the first of 2005.

many; *NRC Handelsblad* (*NRC*) and *de Volkskrant* for the Netherlands; the *New York Times* (*NYT*) and the *Los Angeles Times* (*LAT*) for the United States.

## 2. Sampling procedures

For each newspaper, we charted the amount and nature of the coverage given to the arts in general and to particular art forms. Such longitudinal research designs require a population and a sampling frame that yield representative data in terms of both time and content. Coverage of the arts is generally concentrated around the weekends, and subject to seasonal influences. We therefore applied a multistage stratified sampling procedure in combination with the method of the constructed week: for each day of the week we selected a random edition from each quarter, resulting in four constructed weeks (Riffe et al. 1993).<sup>7</sup> We thus have 24 editions (28 including Sunday editions) per sample year for each newspaper title. The total sample for the content analysis contains 776 editions.

We did not restrict data collection to arts and culture sections or lifestyle supplements but covered the whole newspaper. Coders analyzed all types of articles, including news stories, reviews, background articles, interviews and columns on the specified art forms. In the case of articles containing more than one item (e. g. an article reviewing literary novels by various authors), coders filled out a separate registration form for each item. In total, our data file contains 18,088 items.

## 3. Operationalization

Studying the hierarchical dimension of cultural classification systems requires relational analysis, which compares the positions of art forms and genres to one another. In this study, we use the relative amount of elite newspaper coverage given to a particular art form or genre as an indicator of its legitimacy/status relative to other art forms or genres (Janssen 1999). In the analysis, we look at the proportion of total arts coverage devoted to each art form or genre. We measure the amount of attention paid to various art forms and genres in cm<sup>2</sup> (height \* width of each article).

We classified all arts articles in the sampled newspaper editions into one of the traditional “high” arts – Classical Music, Literature, Theater, Ballet/Modern Dance, Visual Arts, Architecture – or “popular” arts – Film, Pop Music, Jazz Music, Popular Fiction, Popular Dance, Musical/Variety, Television Fiction, Photography, Fashion, Design (see also Table 2). Our categorization of art forms as highbrow or popular is based on conventional notions of the high or popular status of these art forms (e. g. Alexander 2003; Zolberg 1990: 144). This allows us to explore how elite papers’ coverage of traditional high and popular art forms has changed over time.

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<sup>7</sup> According to sampling efficiency studies, two constructed weeks suffice for representing a year’s content adequately (Riffe et al. 1993). We used two extra constructed weeks to stay on the safe side.

Our analysis is primarily aimed at comparing differences between (rather than within) these art forms, although we will also consider the attention to various genres within the broader categories of film and popular music. To determine the share of arts coverage in total coverage, we coded the total size of the sampled newspaper editions as well.

*Table 2:* Classification of (traditional) high and popular arts

High	Popular
Literature	• Popular Fiction ( <i>e. g. thrillers</i> )
Classical Music	• Popular Music ( <i>including chansons, kleinkunst</i> ) • Jazz Music
Theatre (plays)	• Popular Theater ( <i>incl. musical, variety, cabaret, comedy, mime, circus</i> )
Visual Arts ( <i>e. g. painting, sculpture</i> )	• Photography ( <i>excluding journalistic photography</i> )
Ballet/Modern dance	• Popular Dance ( <i>e. g. folk dance</i> )
Architecture <sup>a</sup>	• Design <sup>a</sup> • Fashion <sup>a</sup> • Film • Television Fiction ( <i>including reality</i> )

*Note:* In total, our data file contains 18,088 arts items. For about 5 percent of these items, no specific art form was coded; 3 percent of the items involved a combination of high and popular culture. These were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>a</sup> As a demarcation rule to distinguish between ‘arts and culture’ and ‘lifestyle’ (or in the case of architecture regular ways of building construction), we coded only items for which (a) the designer was mentioned or implicated or (b) the item was discussed in a clear artistic context.

The newspapers were coded in original format – either in archives or via full-page scanned digital files – by 14 coders between 2004 and 2006. Four of these coders were primary investigators in the project, the other ten were hired. All hired coders had a Master’s degree either in the field of Arts and Culture Studies (8) or in German (3) or French language (3). Development of the coding schedule took about 3 months; training of the coders an additional 2 months. All coding was done on laptops containing a specially developed coding sheet which enabled direct storage into SPSS-format.<sup>8</sup> Coders classified each newspaper item into one of the main categories in *Table 2*, using information in the article as well as their personal knowledge or search results from the Internet and encyclopedias. Inter-coder reliability for coding art forms and genres proved good (Cohen’s kappa of 0.92).

We use One-Way Anova to compare mean amounts of attention across countries and years. Because size and content of newspaper editions vary greatly across week days, we analyze at an aggregated level: our research units are reconstructed weeks of newspapers, consisting of 6 or 7 week days. Due to the subsequently small and, for the

<sup>8</sup> The electronic coding sheet program was developed by RISBO, Rotterdam. We thank Peter Hermus for his assistance in preparing the data.

U.S., unequal number of research units, some variables do not meet assumptions of homogeneity of variance. Significant results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

## V. Results

### 1. General trends in arts coverage

*Table 3* shows, for each sample year and newspaper, the mean number of pages<sup>9</sup> per edition (first column), the proportion of pages devoted to arts coverage (second column), and the mean number of individual arts items per edition (third column).

The American newspapers have much more pages per edition than the European newspapers, which is not only due to larger week day editions but also to large Sunday editions which the European papers do not have (except for the German *FAZ* in 2005). In 1955, the European newspapers typically are between 12 and 17 pages in length, far less than the US averages of 95 and 105 pages. In the course of time, all newspapers increase in size: on average German and French newspapers are over 60 pages in length, Dutch newspapers between 33 and 46 pages, and the American ones between 140 and 160 pages.

The amount of space for the arts also increases, although not to the same extent in every newspaper. In 1955, proportions range from 2 percent (*LAT*) to somewhat above 6 percent (*FAZ*). By 2005, arts coverage in the *LAT* amounts to 4.2 percent of the entire newspaper, while in all other newspapers it is over 5.5 percent, and in the case of the Dutch newspapers and *Le Monde* over 9 percent. In absolute terms, the space devoted to arts coverage has increased in all newspapers, since they all carry more pages. This is reflected in the growth of the number of arts items per edition (except for *Le Figaro* and the American newspapers which published many small items in 1955). Note that the percentages of the *NYT* and *LAT* equal more space than the European newspapers since the paper is much larger as a whole. Already in 1955, the American newspapers, unlike most European newspapers, dedicate at least one page per day to art reviews, and have special Sunday sections on Arts and Culture as well as Books.

In the time-frame studied here, the size of newspapers increases in all four countries, but the space devoted to the arts grows as well. In 1995, however, the largest leap has been made. By then, all newspapers write about the arts on a daily basis; they all carry special weekly sections dedicated to Arts and Culture in general; and, in most cases, they have special sections on subjects such as Literature and Lifestyle. The difference between the European and the American newspapers remains large, mainly due to the latter's substantial Sunday editions, which expand considerably over time.

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<sup>9</sup> The space devoted to advertisements is not included in these figures.

Table 3: Total editorial space (in number of pages), proportion of editorial space devoted to arts coverage, and number of arts items per edition, 1955–2005 (N = 776)

	1955			1975			1995			2005		
	N pages	Arts prop	Arts items	N pages	Arts prop	Arts items	N pages	Arts prop	Arts items	N pages	Arts prop	Arts items
<b>France</b>												
Le Figaro	14,4	5,1 %	20,5	25,9	5,5 %	19,1	74,3	6,5 %	30,1	74,2	6,1 %	21,6
Le Monde	13,7	4,8 %	8,1	34,5	4,3 %	16,2	38,9	8,3 %	23,1	60,2	9,1 %	26,1
<b>(West) Germany</b>												
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	14,3	6,3 %	9,2	35,5	4,4 %	13,5	74,4	5,1 %	23,3	65,5	5,6 %	23,0
Süddeutsche Zeitung	17,1	2,7 %	7,4	42,6	3,7 %	14,2	75,9	5,2 %	26,1	69,4	6,4 %	22,1
<b>Netherlands</b>												
NRC Handelsblad	13,1	5,8 %	14,7	20,3	7,2 %	17,0	30,6	9,9 %	20,6	33,4	10,9 %	32,0
De Volkskrant	11,7	3,2 %	8,5	23,3	5,5 %	13,3	36,3	8,4 %	18,5	45,8	9,1 %	22,9
<b>United States</b>												
New York Times	95,1	2,7 %	55,4	121,2	2,3 %	28,1	136,6	5,3 %	33,1	139,9	6,4 %	39,1
Los Angeles Times	104,9	2,0 %	49,1	140,9	1,4 %	20,7	114,1	3,4 %	35,1	156,7	4,2 %	29,0

Note: All data in Table 3 concern average numbers per edition; the total number of editions is 776.

## 2. Coverage of popular culture

*Table 4* shows the relative amount of newspaper coverage given to popular arts (as listed in *Table 2*). Throughout the period 1955-2005, the American newspapers have the highest share of popular culture coverage, followed by the French newspapers. In 1955, the former already devote half of their arts coverage to the popular arts, which is about 10 percent more than French papers, 22 percent more than Dutch papers and 30 percent more than German papers. In each country, however, popular genres increase in prominence between 1955 and 2005, in line with our first hypothesis (H1). Although the Dutch and German papers show stronger growth, they are still far behind the American and the French papers. Overall, differences between countries in the space devoted to popular culture are significant ( $F = 31,6$ ;  $p = 0,000$ ), as are the differences across time ( $F = 15,4$ ;  $p = 0,000$ ). Country differences remain more or less the same over time (no significant interaction term).

*Table 4:* Percentage of space devoted to popular culture per constructed week (N = 124)

	1955	1975	1995	2005	G	N	U
France	39,5 %	35,6 %	48,2 %	50,0 %	***	~	*
Germany	20,6 %	26,2 %	30,0 %	40,5 %		*	***
Netherlands	28,4 %	35,1 %	38,0 %	44,0 %			***
United States	50,0 %	42,7 %	57,2 %	59,0 %			

Estimated marginal means in Anova of percentage of total arts coverage (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to popular arts, based on 4 constructed weeks (LAT: 3) per year per newspaper.

Last three columns show significance-levels of (overall) Games-Howell post-hoc test.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*  $p < 0.05$  ~  $p < 0.10$

A striking result is the share of popular culture equaling (in 1955) or even surpassing that of high culture in three out of four years in the American newspapers. Particularly the *LAT* pays more attention to the popular arts in the whole period; the *NYT* passes the 50 percent boundary in 1995. By 2005, the French papers devote as much space to popular as to high culture. Apparently, in the 1990s and 2000s, elite newspapers in these countries attribute equal value to popular and high culture. By contrast, the German and Dutch newspapers still clearly favor the high arts in 2005; the share of popular culture in these papers only just outranks the French and U.S. percentages of the 1950s.

These results confirm our expectation (H2) that the American newspapers are least hierarchical in their arts coverage through the period studied here. Our hypothesis (H2) that Germany is the most hierarchical of the European countries is also supported by these findings. The strong position of popular arts in French newspapers, and relatively strong hierarchy in Dutch newspapers, does not match our expectations: we assumed that France and the Netherlands would both have an intermediate position (H2). Also, we find only partial support for our hypotheses regarding the timing of the process of cultural de-hierarchization in the four countries (H3 and H4). This process seems not to have started at an earlier stage in the American papers (H3). Both the French and American newspapers expand their coverage of the popular arts largely between 1975 and 1995, while the Dutch newspapers show a gradual rise of popular

Table 5: Percentage of space devoted to high and popular arts per constructed week, 1955-2005 (N = 124)

	Mean overall percentage of space per year				Results One-Way Anova			Interpretation significant country trends
	1955	1975	1995	2005	Year	Country	Interaction	
<b>High</b>								
Literature	15,7	17,2	18,0	14,5	F= 1,71	F= 6,12**	F= 2,74**	US first most (with GE), later less than others
Theater	16,8	12,8	7,6	7,7	F= 21,1***	F= 3,6*	F= 4,0***	FR and GE more in '55, later almost equal
Classical Music	12,6	12,5	8,1	8,5	F= 8,9**	F= 9,6***	F= 1,58	FR less whole period
Visual Arts	10,9	12,1	13,0	11,1	F= 0,8	F= 12,2***	F= 0,5	US less, GE more, over time convergence
Ballet/Mod. Dance	2,3	3,3	2,4	2,1	F= 1,4	F= 1,8	F= 1,1	
Architecture	1,6	2,6	3,5	3,9	F= 4,7**	F= 7,9***	F= 1,2	FR less whole period, NE more in '55
<b>Popular</b>								
Film	16,5	13,8	14,5	18,4	F= 2,9*	F= 15,5***	F= 1,5	FR and US most whole period, except US low in '75, NE peak '75
Fashion	4,9	2,2	2,3	2,1	F= 4,3	F= 7,0***	F= 1,9~	FR and US more in '55, '95 and '05
Popular Theater	2,9	2,6	2,4	2,7	F= 0,2	F= 4,2**	F= 1,0	In '55 all equal, then FR and GE less, NE and US more
Popular Fiction	2,0	4,2	3,3	2,9	F= 3,9*	F= 3,8*	F= 1,3	US more until '95, in '05 FR peak, NE low
Pop Music	2,1	3,9	9,7	9,9	F= 35,1***	F= 14,5***	F= 3,4**	GE less whole period, NE and US most in '95 and '05, FR peak '95
Design	2,0	1,0	1,8	2,1	F= 1,7	F= 1,8	F= 1,5	

	Mean overall percentage of space per year			Results One-Way Anova			Interpretation significant country trends	
	1955	1975	1995	2005	Year	Country		Interaction
Television Fiction	1,5	4,1	4,1	4,7	F= 9,0***	F= 18,8***	F= 2,1*	US more until '75, NE less whole period
Photography	0,6	1,2	1,7	2,9	F= 8,1***	F= 2,1	F= 2,5*	NE peak '05, US low in '05
Popular Dance	0,5	0,2	0,3	0,3	F= 0,7	F= 0,4	F= 0,7	
Jazz Music	0,4	1,0	1,9	1,3	F= 5,1**	F= 2,4~	F= 1,1	GE least in whole period

Notes: US = United States; FR = France; GE = Germany; NE = Netherlands.

Estimated marginal means in Anova of percentage of newspaper coverage (in cm2) devoted to listed genres, based on 4 constructed weeks (LAT: 3) per year per newspaper. Results of significance testing concerns (overall) Games-Howell post-hoc test; \*\*\* p < 0.001 \*\* p < 0.01 \* p < 0.05 ~ p < 0.10.

culture coverage throughout the years. However, as expected (H4), the German papers show the greatest shift much later, after 1995.

For a clearer interpretation of differences in hierarchy, we break down popular and high culture into specific art forms. *Table 5* shows the overall means per art form for each sample year. Both high and popular art forms are ranked according to their average score in the 1955 editions of the four countries. We use one-way Anovas to test whether the differences across the four years and countries, or the interactions between the two, are significant.

The growing importance of popular culture can be attributed to three genres in particular. First, film coverage, already strongly present in 1955, grows another 2 percent up to 18 percent of all newspaper attention in 2005. Second, television fiction gains over 3 percent between 1955 and 2005. Third and most importantly, popular music develops from being a small genre in 1955 (2 percent) to the fourth overall genre in 2005 (10 percent). These results already imply that the rise of popular arts coverage (and decline in highbrow arts coverage) is not simply the result of switching within genres from the highbrow variant to the popular antipodes. True, classical music lost 4 percent points since the 1950s, but this amounts to only half of the increase of popular music. Moreover, the biggest loss was felt by the theater coverage (almost 9 percent), while the attention for popular theatre remained small. Instead, “new” genres like film and television fiction – that is, genres without highbrow predecessors, but thriving on (audiovisual) technology-based cultural industries – have become more legitimate. And, of course, popular music also shows strong resemblances to this pattern, given its locus in the cultural industries, its reliance on technology and its use of audiovisual aids to promote products.

Comparing the distributions per country, we find many significant differences (see *Table 5* for Anova results and Appendix B for mean values per country). For the popular arts, the U.S. has the broadest scope: American newspapers equal or exceed all countries in their coverage of the major popular genres film, popular music, television fiction and fashion. The European news papers sometimes “specialize” in certain genres. For instance, French newspapers pay considerably more attention to film and fashion, and also to popular fiction in 2005, than their German and Dutch counterparts. Dutch newspapers, on the other hand, almost match the American coverage of popular music in the last two decades,<sup>10</sup> and devote significantly more space to popular theater than French or German ones.

Also, the coverage of the highbrow arts differs between countries. Literature started out as being most important in the U.S., but in 2005, elite newspapers in all three European countries devoted more attention to literature than the *NYT* and *LAT*. While the European papers continue to discuss many fiction books, now in special book sections, literature shows a dramatic decline in both American newspapers which appear to have shifted their book review policy in favor of non-fiction (Rich 2007). The decline of theater occurred most persistently in the German and French papers. The

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<sup>10</sup> Previous studies on Dutch arts education (Bever 2005) and the “CKV1” arts education course (Haanstra et al. 2002) offered at Dutch secondary schools confirms the receptiveness of legitimating institutions in the Netherlands to popular music.

smaller attention to the visual arts in American papers and to classical music in French papers remains the same over time.

The results for the specific art forms also shed more light on the relative weak traditional high arts system we find in France. In 1955, film and fashion are very prominent in the French papers. Both are popular art forms with a strong basis in the French cultural system, because of their linkage with local cultural industries. The strong position of these two industries in the national field probably leads newspapers to write more about these art forms. In 1995, both film and fashion are still important, but, in addition, the French newspapers follow international trends in the valorization of pop music. The German newspapers lag behind in this respect, although the difference has become smaller by 2005.

### 3. Internal hierarchies in popular arts coverage

Our findings do not imply that all films, or all forms of pop music, have suddenly been consecrated as legitimate culture. New hierarchies have emerged within art forms that were previously simply considered “popular” (Bauman 2007; Kuipers 2006; Otte 2007). Some genres in particular have come to be regarded as more sophisticated or “highbrow”, whereas others continue to be snubbed and excluded (Bryson 1996).

Our data allow us to briefly explore differences in newspaper coverage within a popular genre. *Table 6* shows five selected subgenres within the domain of popular music: two broad subgenres already dating from the pre-rock ‘n’ roll boom of the late 1950s (light popular music, black music); and three more specific rock-related subgenres which came into existence in the late 1950s, the late 1960s and the late 1970s respectively (mainstream rock, heavy metal and alternative rock).

In 1955, light popular music was the pop music genre covered most in all countries. However, since popular music only comprised about 2 percent of all cultural coverage, this comes down to just 3 articles in German papers and a high point of 24 articles in U.S. papers. Black music was only represented in two U.S. articles, one of which – tellingly – discussed the increasing popularity of rhythm and blues with the focus on suggestive lyrics which were deemed problematic for playing on the radio (*New York Times*, August 21, 1955).

By 1975, of course, pop music as a genre was more developed though its newspaper coverage had grown only modestly – particularly in Europe (see *Table 5*). Light popular music remained the dominant genre in France (exclusively thanks to the domestic *chansons*), whereas mainstream rock clearly became one of the most important genres in the other three countries. Heavy metal, however, did not reach the same status as mainstream rock – despite at that time innovating band as *Deep Purple*, *Black Sabbath* and *Led Zeppelin* – and failed to do so the following thirty years. In contrast, alternative rock succeeded in gaining music press attention, culminating in having the highest coverage of all rock subgenres in 2005 in the US.

Black music stayed fairly marginal for a long time. The rise of rap music (hip hop), and to a lesser extent R&B, in the 1990s (cf. Tanner et al. 2009) led to a considerable growth in newspaper attention in the Netherlands, U.S. and France. And whilst in 1995 still opinion articles were found calling into question the legitimacy of the

Table 6: Distribution of selected subgenres within popular music (N = 114; in percent)

	1955	1975	1995	2005
<b>France</b>				
Light popular music	85,4	47,7	10,4	8,3
Black music	0	0	1,7	5,3
Mainstream rock	0	3,2	22,2	10,0
Heavy metal	0	0	0,4	0,4
Alternative rock	0	0	4,5	4,2
<b>Germany</b>				
Light popular music	40,6	19,4	20,1	4,7
Black music	0	12,5	1,4	2,1
Mainstream rock	0	18,0	15,4	25,1
Heavy metal	0	0	2,9	0
Alternative rock	0	0	3,4	15,1
<b>Netherlands</b>				
Light popular music	91,9	22,4	9,7	6,8
Black music	0	0	8,0	10,6
Mainstream rock	0	30,4	22,0	14,9
Heavy metal	0	2,3	0,2	2,2
Alternative rock	0	0	15,3	11,8
<b>US</b>				
Light popular music	49,5	16,2	1,9	2,7
Black music	10,8	8,4	6,8	15,5
Mainstream rock	0	38,3	12,6	9,9
Heavy metal	0	2,1	0,4	0,2
Alternative rock	0	0,6	9,7	21,4
<b>Total</b>				
Light popular music	67,6	26,9	10,8	5,7
Black music	3,4	5,3	4,4	8,1
Mainstream rock	0	21,7	18,3	15,1
Heavy metal	0	1,0	1,0	0,7
Alternative rock	0	0,1	8,2	12,9

Note: Overall category of Popular music, which is used to calculate the percentages, excludes Jazz music. As for the demarcation of subgenres: *Light popular music* includes 'light' genres of popular music already available in the 1950s (vocal, easy listening, crooners, chanson, and schlager). *Black music* includes 1950s style rhythm and blues, but also soul, funk, r&b, hip hop (disco is generally excluded and regarded as top 40 mainstream music; the same goes for pop-crossover acts as Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie). Mainstream rock includes original fifties rock 'n' roll, sixties and seventies (inspired) rock, m.o.r. rock. Heavy metal includes also hardrock. Alternative rock includes punk rock, indie rock and Britpop. Coding was done using pop encyclopedias and [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com).

genre ("Rap: Music? Not!", *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1995), in 2005 the majority of articles were reviews or news stories, underlining the genre's increasing cultural legitimization.

It would take a full-length article to fully analyze the internal hierarchies within popular music as explored here. It is nevertheless clear that certain subgenres are covered more elaborately than others and that the erosion of cultural hierarchies does not imply the end of cultural hierarchies. Particularly those subgenres corresponding to the tastes of the dominant social classes – including readers of the elite newspapers we examined – receive the largest coverage: music by vocalists and *chansonniers* in the years before the rise of youth culture, mainstream rock in the aftermath of the 1960s, and more cutting-edge rock music or even rap music – increasingly fashionable among

youth in higher social classes – in the more recent years. Newspapers likely follow other institutional actors, such as the more specialized music press of rock magazines, in their selection policies (cf. Regev 1994). The rise of alternative rock – bigger than mainstream rock in specialist magazines as *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* (U.S.), *Oor* (Netherlands) and *Les Inrockuptibles* (France), but smaller in sales and music charts – is particularly suggestive in this respect.

At the other end of the spectrum reside subgenres like heavy metal which not only target a specific sub-cultural group of listeners, but also draw upon a musical, textual and imagery vocabulary (e. g. the emphasis on violence and satanic themes in heavy metal) that seems incompatible with the conventions of the legitimizing cultural institutions. Still, originally controversial and illegitimate subgenres like rap music may become more accepted as critics find merit in musical performances (e. g. Eminem, though subject of controversy for his lyrics, won Grammy awards and was among the artists most favored by critics in the early 2000s; cf. [www.rocklist.co.uk](http://www.rocklist.co.uk)). Subgenres may also adopt elements from other, more legitimate subgenres, to become more acceptable. For instance, in the 1990s heavy metal bands *Metallica* and *Soundgarden* developed both sound and themes more towards alternative rock which increased their status within the field.

## VI. Conclusion

In this article we content-analyzed the coverage given to “high-brow” and “popular” arts in elite newspapers to assess longitudinal trends and cross-national variations in the classification of cultural genres. Our findings show a clear shift in these papers’ arts and culture coverage from traditional high art forms such as theater, classical music, and literature to popular ones like film, pop music, and television fiction in all four countries. Among the high arts, especially theater and classical music are far less prominent in 2005 than in 1955. In the popular domain, popular music experienced the strongest growth in attention, and, to a lesser extent, television fiction. These findings point to decreasing cultural hierarchies and a growing legitimacy of popular art forms and genres.

In our view, this development reflects a wider societal shift towards a more open and less hierarchical cultural classification system. Following the work of DiMaggio (1987, 1991) and Peterson (2005) on the United States, we interpret this shift as the result of broader structural developments, which have occurred not only in the US, but also in Europe, though with different timing and different intensity: increasing social mobility, growing social and ethnic heterogeneity, the expansion of the educational system, and the growth of an educated upper middle class. This has led to the emergence of “new” middle classes whose cultural tastes are broad and omnivorous rather than exclusively focused on highbrow culture. Concomitantly, the central consecrating agents in the cultural field, the elite newspapers catering to the educated middle classes, have become less hierarchical and more broadly oriented.

We find significant differences between the four countries in our study. Throughout the period of study, the U.S. newspapers, and, to a slightly lesser extent, the French newspapers generally devote more attention to popular art forms than the

Dutch and German newspapers. German newspapers emerge from our analysis as most focused on high culture during all sample years. The Dutch newspapers typically have a position between their German and French counterparts.

The timing of this process varies between countries, as well. The French and American newspapers expand their coverage of the popular arts largely between 1975 and 1995, and the Dutch newspapers show a gradual rise of popular culture coverage throughout the years. However, the German papers show the greatest shift much later, after 1995. The difference between the four countries remains constant over the years; in 2005, differences between countries are almost the same as in 1955. Hence, although similar processes of de-hierarchization seem to have occurred in all four countries, there is no convergence between these countries in the coverage of arts and culture.

In the U.S. and German case, our findings accord with what we expected in view of both broader societal characteristics of these countries and features of their cultural and media field. Field characteristics and societal characteristics point in the same direction, appearing conducive to strong hierarchy in Germany, while favoring a more open and egalitarian classification system in the U.S. The Netherlands and France represent less straightforward cases. Even though societal conditions as well as the educational system in the Netherlands (Bever 2005; Van Eijck and Knulst 2005; Verboord and Van Rees 2009), particularly from the 1970s onwards, appear more beneficial to cultural de-classification than in France, Dutch elite newspapers stayed more devoted to traditional highbrow cultural genres than their French counterparts. Moreover, both wider social conditions and the educational system in France and Germany seem equally conducive to cultural hierarchy, but we find French elite newspapers to be far more receptive to popular arts than the German papers. This suggests that the “popularization” of arts journalism may be primarily associated with field-level rather than society-level factors. First, the French newspapers’ high degree of receptiveness to popular culture may be connected to the more competitive environment in which these newspapers have to function (cf. Benson 2005). The Dutch and German media landscapes are less competitive, especially in the earlier years of this study, which may have allowed Dutch and German arts journalist to remain relatively free of the commercial pressures that generally lead to more attention to popular culture.

Second, French newspapers’ focus on popular culture should probably be interpreted in relation to the importance of the film and fashion industry in this country – art forms we regard as popular culture in this study. There are various mechanisms that would cause a strong local industry to lead to more newspaper coverage of this industry’s products. First, newspapers tend to have a strong local bias (Shoemaker and Cohen 2006), which is even more pronounced in the field of culture (Wilke 1998). Moreover, the existence of a local industry means that arts journalists, artists, and their consumers may move in the same circles. In other words: the cultural and media fields are more interconnected, personally, and possibly also financially (i. e. through advertising, co-ownership). Finally, a strong central position in a certain discipline tends to lead to a stronger sense of importance of this industry, as well as feelings of national pride, so typically every cultural genre in which a country “does well” tends to get more media attention (Janssen 2006, 2009; Janssen et al. 2008).

Evidently, our findings raise a number of questions for further analysis and research. First, although elite newspaper coverage of a genre constitutes a valid and useful indicator of cultural legitimacy, the type of quantitative content analysis used in this study cannot grasp the nature of the coverage. A more detailed quantitative or qualitative content analysis, focusing e. g. on the use of journalistic styles or critical approaches in the coverage of different cultural forms may uncover further national or longitudinal differences. Various authors have found an “intellectualization” of the coverage given to popular art forms in the course of time, at least in the U.S. (Baumann 2007). Different countries likely have different styles of cultural reporting, which may be more or less “popular” or “intellectual”, reflecting particular national “repertoires of evaluation”. For instance, the prominence of film in French newspapers may be associated with a more “high-brow” approach by journalists, even towards more popular genres such as comedy or police movies. In this way, national “repertoires of evaluation” may still have an effect on arts coverage, even in less hierarchical systems (cf. Van Venrooij and Schmutz 2010).

Secondly, it would be useful to supplement our findings about one central consecrating actor, elite newspapers, with data from other legitimating institutions, such as subsidies, prizes, or international recognition. Such triangulation would allow us to further qualify the status of popular art forms and processes of cultural de-hierarchization in western societies. Moreover, it would enable us to explore the general theoretical issue of the relative importance of institutions and the dynamics of the field versus variables at the societal and cultural level. Do macro-structural transformations such as increasing mobility affect various consecrating agents in similar ways? Or is a consumer-oriented form like arts journalism unusually field-dependent as compared with other cultural institutions? Do field dynamics trump national “repertoires of evaluation” in other institutions too, as they seem to do in arts journalism? To what extent do we need specifically “cultural” variables, such as national cultural repertoires, to understand the working of nationally based institutions?

## Appendix A

Table A1: Selected newspapers per country and their circulation in 1955 and 1995<sup>a</sup>

	Founding Year	1955	1995
Le Monde <sup>a</sup>	1944	166 000	379 089
Le Figaro <sup>a</sup>	1854	384 000	391 533
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung <sup>b</sup>	1949	145 475	391 220
Süddeutsche Zeitung <sup>c</sup>	1945	188 081	396 746
N.R.C./NRC Handelsblad <sup>d</sup>	1844	109 471	267 000
De Volkskrant <sup>d</sup>	1919	149 501	359 000
New York Times <sup>e</sup>	1851	555 726	1 122 277
Los Angeles Times <sup>f</sup>	1881	462 257	1 029 000

<sup>a</sup> Sources: J. M. Charon. 1996. *La Presse Quotidienne*. Paris, France; P. Murschetz. 1998. State Support for the Press in Europe: A Critical Appraisal. *European Journal of Communication* 13 (3): 291-313. Circulation figures pertain to 1960 instead of 1955.

<sup>b</sup> Source: FAZ Media Service.

<sup>c</sup> Source: IVW-Circulation Figures Süddeutsche Zeitung (first quarter).

<sup>d</sup> Sources: F. van Vree. 1996. *De metamorfose van een dagblad: Een journalistieke geschiedenis van de Volkskrant*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff; F. Huysmans, J. de Haan, A. van den Broek. 2004. *Achter de schermen: Een kwart eeuw lezen, luisteren, kijken en internetten*. The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office (p. 41). The NRC Handelsblad is the result of a merger of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* (NRC) and the *Algemeen Handelsblad* in 1970. For the period prior to that, the NRC was coded.

<sup>e</sup> Sources: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (1956); *Audit Report New York Times* (1996).

<sup>f</sup> Sources: *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (1956); *Quid* (1996).

## Appendix B

Table B1: Percentage of space devoted to high and popular arts in 1955 (N = 124)<sup>1</sup>

	Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US		Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US
<b>High</b>						<b>Popular</b>					
Theater	16,8	23,1	21,7	14,9	7,5	Film	16,5	20,8	10,4	12,6	22,4
Literature	15,7	11,1	18,4	15,0	18,2	Fashion	4,9	9,5	0,0	3,8	6,4
Classical Music	12,6	7,0	16,1	13,7	13,6	Pop Music	2,1	2,5	1,6	3,0	1,3
Visual Arts	10,9	8,5	15,9	13,6	5,4	Popular Theater	2,9	3,0	2,9	2,2	3,6
Dance	2,3	3,2	2,5	1,8	1,8	Popular Fiction	2,0	0,5	1,0	2,0	4,7
Architecture	1,6	0,1	1,1	4,1	1,1	Popular Dance	0,5	0,4	0,9	0,3	0,4
						Photography	0,6	0,2	1,3	0,4	0,4
						Design	2,0	0,6	1,7	2,5	3,2
						TV Fiction	1,5	0,1	0,5	0,2	5,0
						Jazz Music	0,4	0,7	0,4	0,0	0,6

Note: FR = France; GE = Germany; NE = Netherlands; US = United States.

<sup>1</sup> Average percentage of total arts coverage (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to each art form, based on 4 constructed weeks per year per paper.

<sup>2</sup> Average of the four country means.

Table B2: Percentage of space devoted to high and popular arts in 1975 (N = 124)<sup>1</sup>

	Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US		Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US
<b>High</b>						<b>Popular</b>					
Theater	12,9	15,9	11,3	11,0	13,4	Film	13,8	19,7	6,3	16,2	10,4
Literature	17,2	19,8	23,1	12,3	13,6	Fashion	2,2	2,7	3,0	1,5	1,6
Classical Music	12,5	7,6	14,1	17,4	11,0	Pop Music	3,9	2,1	1,7	2,9	8,8
Visual Arts	12,1	10,3	17,0	12,5	8,7	Popular Theater	2,6	1,3	1,5	4,6	3,2
Dance	3,3	2,7	2,9	1,7	5,8	Popular Fiction	4,2	3,8	3,8	3,4	5,6
Architecture	2,6	1,5	3,4	3,6	1,8	Popular Dance	0,2	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,7
						Photography	1,2	1,0	1,2	1,0	1,7
						Design	1,0	0,5	2,0	0,8	0,6
						TV Fiction	4,1	3,2	5,7	2,5	5,0
						Jazz Music	1,0	0,1	0,6	1,9	1,6

Note: FR = France; GE = Germany; NE = Netherlands; US = United States.

<sup>1</sup> Average percentage of total arts coverage (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to each art form, based on 4 constructed weeks per year per paper.

<sup>2</sup> Average of the four country means.

Table B3: Percentage of space devoted to high and popular arts in 1995 (N = 124)<sup>1</sup>

	Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US		Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US
<b>High</b>						<b>Popular</b>					
Theater	7,6	5,4	9,4	8,3	7,1	Film	14,5	18,4	10,5	9,3	19,9
Literature	18,0	21,5	20,1	19,1	11,5	Fashion	2,3	4,5	0,6	1,2	3,0
Classical Music	8,1	6,4	10,1	8,2	7,6	Pop Music	9,7	9,5	3,6	12,4	13,4
Visual Arts	13,0	9,6	19,3	14,8	8,5	Popular Theater	2,4	1,6	1,2	4,7	2,2
Dance	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,0	2,0	Popular Fiction	3,3	3,0	2,9	2,7	4,5
Architecture	3,5	1,1	5,4	5,3	2,0	Popular Dance	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,6	0,4
						Photography	1,7	1,8	2,4	1,3	1,5
						Design	1,8	2,2	0,7	2,2	2,0
						TV Fiction	4,1	4,3	5,0	0,9	6,0
						Jazz Music	1,9	2,3	1,1	2,1	2,1

Note: FR = France; GE = Germany; NE = Netherlands; US = United States.

<sup>1</sup> Average percentage of total arts coverage (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to each art form, based on 4 constructed weeks per year per paper.

<sup>2</sup> Average of the four country means.

Table B4: Percentage of space devoted to high and popular arts in 2005 (N = 124)<sup>1</sup>

	Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US		Mean <sup>2</sup>	FR	GE	NE	US
<b>High</b>						<b>Popular</b>					
Theater	7,7	8,4	7,1	6,6	8,8	Film	18,4	22,9	15,5	12,8	22,5
Literature	14,6	15,9	17,8	17,7	6,4	Fashion	2,1	3,9	1,3	1,5	1,9
Classical Music	8,5	7,4	10,9	8,2	7,5	Pop Music	9,9	6,6	6,7	13,8	12,7
Visual Arts	11,1	10,6	13,7	11,8	8,4	Popular Theater	2,7	1,6	1,5	3,9	3,8
Dance	2,1	1,7	1,1	2,3	3,1	Popular Fiction	2,9	4,1	3,1	1,6	2,8
Architecture	3,9	2,8	4,6	4,0	4,4	Popular Dance	0,3	0,5	0,1	0,1	0,5
						Photography	2,9	2,3	3,1	5,5	0,7
						Design	2,1	1,9	0,8	1,7	3,9
						TV Fiction	4,7	3,6	7,2	0,7	7,1
						Jazz Music	1,3	1,6	0,4	2,0	1,3

Note: FR = France; GE = Germany; NE = Netherlands; US = United States.

<sup>1</sup> Average percentage of total arts coverage (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to each art form, based on 4 constructed weeks per year per paper.

<sup>2</sup> Average of the four country means.

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*Correspondence:* Prof. Dr. Susanne Janssen, Erasmus University Rotterdam. Departments of Media and Communication and Arts and Culture Studies. Burgemeester Oudlaan 50, P.O. Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam. Netherlands.

*E-Mail:* s.janssen@eshcc.eur.nl