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Social Status and Social Capital

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Inequality in Access to Social Capital: Assessing the Role of Cultural Practices

Abstract: Previous research in social science established the existence of mutual relationship between cultural tastes and social networks. What is less known, however, is how this connectivity translates into tangible social benefits (social capital). By applying the resource generator tool, the article explores the extent to which access to different social resources (social capital) is related to pursuing different cultural activities, independent of social standing and network features. Empirically, the possibilities of locally representative survey data (N = 1010) from Poland (2017) are exploited. The analysis brings two main findings: (i) participation in elite culture is positively associated with better access to instrumental resources (lending money, job assistance), (ii) while popular culture is more relevant to "information and (cultural) influences" social capital and to general access to resources. The contribution of the study is to show that cultural consumption may assist in the accumulation of important social resources and thus contribute to solidifying social inequalities.

Keywords: social capital, social networks, cultural practices, taste, social stratification

Introduction

The idea that who we know—family members, friends and acquaintances—influences how we get on in life, lies at the core of tradition of social capital research (Alecu et al. 2022; Lin 2001; Portes 1998). While a notoriously contested concept, both on theoretical ground and considering its operationalization in empirical inquiry (Halpern 2005; Membiela-Pollán and Pena-López 2017; Son 2020), social capital (i.e. social networks and resources accessible through them) is an increasingly popular explanation for a variety of actions ranging from entering the labor market (Verhaeghe et al. 2015), getting and changing a job (Granovetter 1995), gaining promotion (Burt 2004), starting an entrepreneurial venture (Słomczyński and Tomescu-Dubrow 2005), attaining better social statuses (job prestige and income) (Contreras et al. 2019; Lin and Ao 2008; Shen and Bian 2018). Its usefulness is also recognized in expressive actions associated with health, life satisfaction and general well-being (Growiec 2015; Huang et al. 2019). Understanding the availability of social capital to individuals is thus a relevant scientific problem (Van Tubergen and Volker 2015). This issue has been central in social stratification research that alludes to an individualistic view of social capital, focused on the returns that can be obtained through individuals' contacts (Bourdieu 1997; Lin 1999, 2001; Pena-López, Rungo, Sánchez-Santos 2021).

As such, this approach deviates from a more collective view that regards social capital as a generic form of pro-sociality (Putnam 1993, 2000). Social capital scholars have focused on the relevance of education and other status variables (income, social class) in order to understand inequality in social capital (Alecu et al. 2022; Domański 2017; Li, Savage, Warde 2008; Van Tubergen and Volker 2015), but the recent development in both social network analysis and the study of culture suggests that there are also cultural variables (tastes and practices) that are interrelated with social capital possession (DiMaggio 2011; Lizardo 2013; Meuleman 2021).

The aim of our study is thus to shed light on the role cultural consumption (cultural practices) plays in shaping and structuring (uneven) distribution of social capital. The underlying assumption is that there exists a direct relationship between cultural activities people pursuit and social resources made available to individuals by virtue of a given stock of social ties (Lizardo 2013; Meuleman 2021). This relationship may be conceived from Bourdieusian perspective as a capital conversion, that is, conversion of cultural into social capital (Bourdieu 1997).

Conceptually, the paper relates to a prominent strand of research in the sociology of culture and networks that directly addresses the mutual relationship between culture and connectivity (Puetz 2015). This research shows that, next to the traditional presumption that cultural tastes, interests and knowledge are the effect of exposure to social network contacts and the process of identity-seeking (Erickson 1996, 2021; Mark 1998), it is also possible that people mobilize their pre-existing cultural resources to establish and maintain social relationships (Lewis and Kaufman 2018; Lizardo 2006; Selfhout et al. 2009; Vaisey and Lizardo 2010). By discussing and demonstrating cultural tastes people recognize their identity, status, group membership and shared preferences (DiMaggio 1987, 2011). Cultural tastes function as interactional hooks, a skill or conversational resource and opportunity structures, thus contributing to forming and maintaining social ties (Puetz 2015).

Following these lines of reasoning, previous research has determined that cultural tastes (of different kind) are associated with various network features (network size, diversity, closure, strength of ties) (Erickson 1996; Kane 2004; Lizardo 2006, 2011). Nevertheless, still relatively little is known about the relationship between cultural tastes and social network resources—a key element postulated in theories of social capital (Cebula 2023; Lizardo 2013).

The main contribution of our study is to extend existing insights from cultural—network research to the realm of social capital to provide further leverage in understanding patterns of social capital accumulation. While we recognize important contributions in previous research—for instance that there exists a positive association between participation in highbrow culture and network quality (having contacts with people holding higher social statuses [Meuleman 2021])—there is arguably further potential to map connections between cultural consumption and social resources availability.

In the current work we unpack a black box of "social resources" term by incorporating the resource generator measurement instrument (Batorski, Bojanowski, Filipek 2015; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005; Varekamp et al. 2015) into culture—network analysis. Compared to existing research, most of which relies on general indicators such as the

position generator (Erickson 1996; Meuleman 2021) or on analysis of incidents (receiving particular support, e.g. when searching for a job [Cebula 2023; Lizardo 2013]), our study addresses various functions of the social network by multi-dimensionally scrutinizing (specific) resources that social ties provide access to. Specifically, the paper offers a model for how different kinds of social resources (e.g. expressive, associated with lifestyle and subjective well-being and instrumental associated with status attainment) connect with different cultural profiles, including these of unequal rank (such as popular and elite culture). Understanding these connections has important implications for social inequality research as it reveals potential mechanisms through which one kind of resources is transformed into another. Convertibility of different forms of capital is, as argued by Bourdieu (1984, 1997), the main strategy used to ensure social reproduction.

Empirically, we focus on the case of Poland and exploit the possibilities of survey data containing detailed information about cultural practices and access to social resources of a representative sample of one urban population aged 18–75 years (N = 1010). Below we further develop ideas concerning the links between cultural practices (especially those pertaining to highbrow and popular culture) and social resources in order to propose two hypotheses. We then describe the data and variables used in the study. Finally, we present our analysis, interpret the findings, and draw conclusions.

Theoretical Background

The analysis integrates key theoretical-methodological insights from two distinct research traditions: one concerning cultural consumption and inequality and second pertaining to network structure and social capital. We imply that if the consumption of various cultural forms is positively connected to different network features, as seen by Erickson (1996), Lizardo (2006), and Cebula (2020)—in the case of Poland, and if networks are conducive to the variety of resources, as conceived in social capital theories (Alecu et al. 2022; Lin 1999, 2001; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005), then we should expect that the individuals endowed with different repertoires of taste should be characterized by different portfolio of social resources.

Recent research in the sociology of culture has theorized and provided empirical evidence for two general propositions. The first is that cultural tastes are not only an effect of cultural flows through social networks and adopting norms and preferences from reference groups (Erickson 1996, 2021; Kane 2004; Mark 1998) but they also assist in forming and sustaining relationships with others (Lizardo 2006; Lewis and Kaufman 2018; Nagel, Ganzeboom, Kalmijn 2011). The second is that different network features (e.g. size, closure, strength and diversity of ties) correspond to various cultural tastes and their structure as evidenced by the homology between network and cultural diversity (Cebula 2020; Erickson 1996). In the tradition set out by DiMaggio (1987) and Douglas and Isherwood (1979), cultural goods and tastes represent a communication systems through which social boundaries as well as social bridges are built. Shared culture facilitates the construction and persistence of social networks through a range of mechanisms. First, visible symbols permit persons to recognize others with whom one shares a status, identity

and lifestyle thus steering the interaction process (DiMaggio 2011; Puetz 2015). Second, cultural tastes function as a skill or conversational resource whereby people finding something in common have greater chance to establish or maintain social relationships (Lizardo 2016; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, Cook 2001). Also, shared cultural participation (and not only talking about culture) shapes a context for forging network ties. Third, from an ecological perspective, networks form due to unequal opportunities to interact with in-group and out-group members (Blau 1977). By participation in interactional "foci," such as neighborhoods, schools, leisure organizations, workplaces—where joint activities take place, individuals are exposed to specific possible contacts and interactions that translate into durable relationships (Benediktsson 2012; Feld 1981; Mollenhorst, Völker, Flap 2008). More recent study (Lewis and Kaufman 2018) has also proven that cultural tastes may constitute a generalized capital that helps in building relations regardless of any similarity between individuals. For instance, people with some tastes can enjoy higher popularity because others find their tastes esteemed and compelling.

Informed by these general insights, scholars shifted their concern to specify what kinds of culture (cultural tastes) link with what kinds of network characteristics. A foundational in this regard is the theoretical work of DiMaggio (1987). He assumed that some cultural forms are more conducive to group solidarity and closure, while others serve for establishing common ground with almost everyone. The capability of cultural goods (tastes) to form social relations depends on whether familiarity with them requires mastery of a sophisticated cultural codes (Sokolova and Sokolov 2020). Relatively arcane forms (difficult to reciprocate), such as traditional highbrow culture serve to establish excluding ties of greater intensity, while popular culture (such as sport, tv, or music) provides "fodder for least-common-denominator-talk" (DiMaggio 1987: 443). These intuitions were confirmed by Lizardo (2006), who found that high culture taste pattern is associated with more strong ties, whereas engagement in popular culture is associated with larger weak-ties network. It is so because popular culture is shared widely socially and fosters the creation of weak "bridges" across social space. In contrast, highbrow culture, that is most strongly associated with social position, enable individuals to recognized similar others and build selective relations of greater strength.

Although this research tradition is valuable in itself, recent accounts have started to argue in favor of incorporating theoretical-methodological insights from social capital studies into network-culture analysis, according to idea that cultural tastes are tied not only to static properties of network but also to resources and benefits flowing from this connectivity (Lizardo 2013). Although social capital is notoriously contested concept (both theoretically and operationally) and we can distinguish between a collectivistic and individualistic understanding of social capital (Lin 2001; Putnam 1993, 2000; Son 2020), there is a common agreement that social capital is network-based phenomenon that has a potential to affect people's opportunities in life. Not discarding valuable insight flowing from communitarian approach presented by Putnam (1993, 2000), in our study, we take Lin's influential approach to social capital (Lin 1999, 2001, 2008) as our point of departure, viewing social capital as a predominantly individuals' access to valuable resources embedded in personal networks. This perspective is more pertinent to our main concern as it ties in with stratification research showing different opportunities, privileges

and personal outcomes accrued from social connections (Alecu et al. 2022; Pena-López, Rungo, Sánchez-Santos 2021).

Previous studies started to explore the links between social resources and cultural consumption. For example, Lizardo (2013) and Cebula (2023) have demonstrated that person who engage in a broader range of cultural activities (or show more omnivorous taste) have greater chances to find work through social ties (a prototypical form of social capital mobilization) than using other ("standard") methods or may count on assistance in job finding if needed. This may be accounted for by the fact that individuals who are versatile in their cultural consumption are capable of establishing common footing with many persons and gaining access to labour market information more effectively. Meuleman (2021) has provided evidence that the type of culture matters in access to social resources proxied by the status of social contacts. Consumption of highbrow culture increases the number of ties with people of higher professional status and education (an indicator of more valuable social resources) and that this relationship is stronger for highbrow than popular culture. At the same time, the popular taste increases general sociability (network size) but not translates into more diversified social resources nor resources of higher rank.

The drawback of these studies is their limitation in social capital measurement: either by narrowing it to mobilization of specific resources (as in the case of job-finding) or by using sweeping and abstract indicators such as the position generator (Lin and Dumin 1986) that contain little specific information about social resources and their miscellaneousness. To remedy this, we adopt a measurement strategy based on the resource generator (Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005) that better captures the different resources individual may access through their network. To our knowledge, no previous empirical study has adopted this tool to cultural consumption domain. Although we perform an inductive, bottom-up mapping of social capital on the one hand and cultural patterns on the other hand to explore complex relations between them, some initial expectations can be developed from the literature.

Following DiMaggio (1987) as well as recent empirical contributions (Lizardo 2006; Meuleman 2021; Nagel, Ganzeboom, Kalmijn 2011) it is argued that highbrow culture, as a more demanding (difficult to reciprocate) cultural code (a kind of restricted code) and established status signal, will serve to identify and seek entrance into higher social status groups, and thus to enhance the opportunities of accessing resourceful social networks. There is indeed strong empirical evidence that the preference for and competences with regard to highbrow culture are associated with higher social position, and primarily established in the parental family (Bennett et al. 2009; Domański et al. 2021; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck 2010). This—combined with the notion that people use cultural preferences to present themselves in social life and to evaluate others—allows holders of the highbrow culture (presumably members of higher status groups) to recognize each other and use this kind of taste as a means of including to and excluding from such groups and resources accumulated by them. This presumption does not exclude the scenario in which also individuals of lower status groups who command highbrow cultural code may benefit from higher status resources—as posited by DiMaggio's (1982) hypothesis on "cultural mobility."

Next to highbrow culture, popular culture represents a less particularized cultural capital with a generalized conversion value (DiMaggio 1987; Lizardo 2006; Meuleman

2021). Because of their lower association with social position, greater dissemination in the society and easiness to reciprocate, popular tastes are seen as more inclusive and universal code of communication infusing interactions and relations with almost everyone. Thus we can expect their relationship with the general access to social resources.

These hypotheses need to be supplemented by accounting for different kinds of social resources. Parallel to Lin's division into instrumental and expressive actions (Lin 2001: 57–59), we distinguish two general blocks of social assets: instrumental, associated with status attainment (such as money, job assistance, professional advice); and expressive associated with self-expression, personal identity and life-satisfaction (emotional support, access to companionship, confiding one's feelings, sharing pursuits are typical examples) (Pena-López and Sánchez-Santos 2017).

By combining resources with the (parallel) types of culture indicated above, we propose two empirical hypotheses pertaining to expected relationships between them.

H1: Individuals' highbrow tastes are positively related with access to instrumental resources, i.e. resources associated with status attainment.

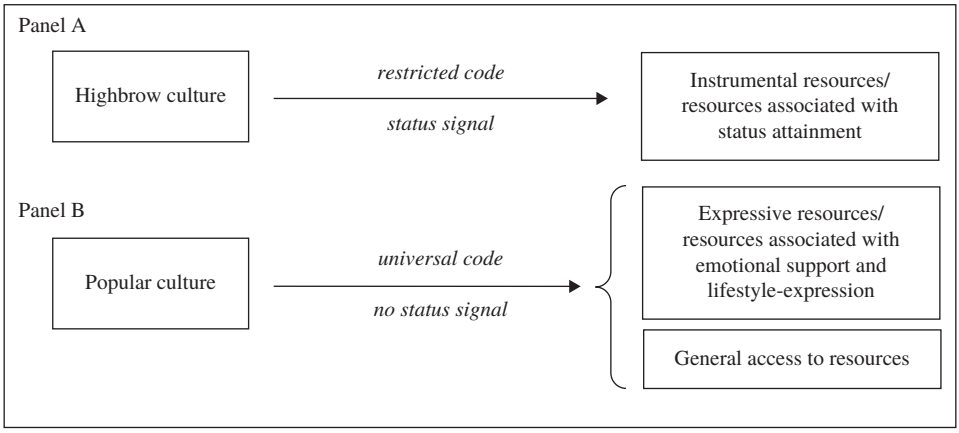
This relationship is reasoned if we assume that instrumental resources are predominantly accumulated in higher social positions (see Lin 2001; Pena-López and Sánchez-Santos 2017), access to which, according to our framework, is easier for people employing sophisticated (highbrow) cultural code.

H2: Individuals' popular tastes are positively related with access to expressive resources (e.g. resources associated with emotional support and lifestyle-expression) and with general access to resources.

Popular culture, as a more universal cultural currency and a form of entertainment is especially suitable to create relationships based on self-expression and exchanging feelings as well as to create many (casual) relationships with diversified alters.

Figure 1

Forms of culture and access to social resources (hypotheses)



We illustrate these two hypotheses in figure 1 in panels A and B, respectively. In the figure, the direction of the arrows reflect our model design, with social resources as dependent variables, but due to the cross-sectional nature of our data, these relationships should be understood as associations rather than causal effects.

Though fundamental to Bourdieu's model of social reproduction as a interconvertibility of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1997), connections between cultural tastes and social resources have seldom been discussed in contemporary cultural stratification research. The contribution of this study is therefore to reveal new paths through which different forms of inequalities (cultural and social) interact and converge.

Data and Methods

Empirically, we use survey data collected between November and December in 2017 within a research project "Social structure, networks, and consumption tastes and practices."[1] This dataset contains information on social capital accessibility and cultural participation of 1010 individuals being a representative sample of one city (Wrocław, Poland) population between the ages 18 and 75. The survey was conducted by means of computer-assisted-personal-interviews. To collect the data a stratified sample was drawn consisting of fourteen city areas. In each of these areas, streets were randomly selected (proportionally to their estimated size). Next, per street, a bunch of nine household addresses were drawn. At a given address, one person was selected by using a "next birthday method." The overall response rate was 34.8%. Comparing these data in terms of basic socio-demographic features (gender, age, education) with simultaneously conducted research (Kajdanek and Pluta 2017) has revealed much resemblance which confirms the validity of measurement.

Although the generalizability of the findings is limited to one municipal population, we believe that Wroclaw is a suitable case for studying more general social processes as it accumulates the features of the post-industrial economy (Książek and Suszczewicz 2017) as other cities and represents a highly-diversified cultural environment (with many lifestyle options) (Kajdanek et al. 2022).

An adapted version of the resource generator (RG) instrument was used to measure individual access to social capital (Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005; Van der Gaag, Snijders, Flap 2008; Varekamp et al. 2015). This tool adopts a checklist approach to inquire about the specific (non-market) resources that respondents may access through their personal ties. Compared to other alternative measures, especially to the position generator (Lin and Dumin 1986), the resource generator has two strong advantages: it points to specific resources of interest directly and it measures access to resources from any part of the network including people without current occupational position (but who may deliver expressive resources). The drawback is that the construction of the tool, that is, the collection of the resources to be captured, is challenging and bound to specific population. In our case, a total of 14 resource items, covering different dimensions of life (from getting a job, through receiving emotional support to being informed about cultural

[1] This work was supported by the National Science Centre, Poland under grant number 2016/21/D/HS6/02424.

events) was used.[2] The respondents were asked whether there are people among their family members, friends and acquaintances who could do something for them (e.g. lend the respondent a considerable sum of money; help find a job if the respondent was looking for one). The answer categories were following: (i) "yes, someone from the family," (ii) "yes, someone from among the friends/acquaintances," (iii) "yes, someone both from the family and from among friends/acquaintances," (iv) "no, there are no such persons." An additional (implicit) option was: (v) "it is hard to say." To create ordinal variables, more fitted to multidimensional analysis, all variables were recoded in such a way that the options (iv) and (v) assigned a rank 1; options (i) and (ii)—rank 2; and option (iii)—rank 3 (following the greater accessibility of the assets). In the next step, the items were analyzed to uncover the hidden dimensions underlying the social capital. We opted for nonlinear principal components analysis (NLPCA) as it is especially suited to analyse nominal (qualitative) and ordinal data (Linting and Van der Kooij 2012). Three dimensional solution was approved as it delivered the most coherent (meaningful) and parsimonious explanation of the items available (table 1).[3]

The total variance accounted for the items (VAF) across these three components was 70.7%, which indicates a reasonable fit. The first component is of mixture nature as it combines items regarding both instrumental resources ("persons who are a source of information about new technologies") and expressive, lifestyle-related resources ("persons thanks to whom one can spend time outside the house in an active way"). Nonetheless, taking into account the prevalence of items referring to lifestyle inspirations (information, influences and access to company), this component was called "information and (cultural) influences" social capital. Items referring to practical help (providing accommodation in emergency), receiving emotional support and discussing important matters loaded on one component that we interpret as "psychological (emotional) support" social capital. Its common denominator is concentration on preserving or maintaining resources that is most typical for expressive actions (Lin 2001: 27). In contrast to it, the third component comprises resources of direct instrumental character, that is those based on professional knowledge or associated with status attainment (lending money, aid in finding a job) (Lin 1999; Pena-López and Sánchez-Santos 2017), hence it has been labeled "instrumental support" social capital. Component scores calculated for each person are used as dependent variables in further analysis. In addition, a single total social resource index was constructed by adding the ranks of all items, with scores ranging from 14 to 39 ($M = 28.5$; $SD = 5.22$). Since we have utilized a non orthogonal rotation method to extract components, all indicators of social capital correlate to each other. The strongest correlation ($r = 0.334$; $p < 0.001$) is between "psychological support" social capital and "information and influences" social capital and the weakest one—between "instrumental"

[2] Due to the specificity of the research project, the list of items is biased towards cultural resources, that is, resources associated with information about cultural events/options or companionship in cultural practices. Nevertheless, the set of items shows enough content variety to distinguish different forms of social capital (including those referring to instrumental and emotional support).

[3] One item ("people with whom on can discuss daily issues, such as family, children, work, household chores or exchange advices") was drop out as it did not correlate clearly with only one component. Additional analysis using standard factor analysis and hierarchical cluster analysis showed a similar grouping of variables thus confirming the robustness of the proposed solution.

Table 1

Dimensions of social capital—rotated component loadings (pattern matrix)

Items:	Dimension		
	Information and influences	**Psychological support**	**Instrumental support**
Persons who are a source of information about new technologies (smartphones, computers, etc.)	**1.022**	–0.007	–0.077
Persons thanks to whom one can spend time outside the house in an active way	**1.015**	0.060	–0.168
Persons who are a source of information how to spend time in an interesting way, what to see, where to go	**0.978**	0.101	–0.058
Persons thanks to whom one tries new things: e.g. new meals, hobbies, sport, etc.	**0.965**	0.122	–0.042
Persons who are a source of professional information, usable in job	**0.926**	–0.403	0.303
Persons who are a source of information about what is interesting in culture, as regards cinema, exhibitions, books, performances, etc.	**0.868**	0.249	0.069
Persons with inspiring „lifestyle"	**0.823**	0.022	0.367
Persons who would provide a place to stay if one has to leave his/her own house temporarily—e.g. in the event of breakdown, flooding, renovation, etc.	0.016	**0.956**	0.179
Persons who would provide psychological support if one experiences personal difficulties	0.005	**0.955**	0.195
Persons with whom one can discuss important matters	0.256	**0.899**	–0.283
Persons who can lend the respondent a considerable sum of money	–0.024	–0.186	**1.011**
Persons who would help settle a complicated official matter	0.009	0.442	**0.840**
People who would help find a job if the respondent were looking for one	0.251	0.250	**0.816**
Eigenvalue	*4.440*	*1.385*	*1.244*

Note: Principal component analysis for categorical data (CATPCA) with oblimin rotation (with Kaiser normalization).

Total variance explained: 70.7%

and "psychological support" ($r = 0.126$; $p < 0.001$). A moderate relationship was found for "information and influences" and "instrumental support" ($r = 0.254$; $p < 0.001$).[4]

When it comes to cultural consumption (our main independent variable), it has been operationalized via participation in 22 cultural and leisure time activities, covering both "popular" pastime (such as going to the cinema, playing computer games) and "highbrow culture" (e. g. going to the theatre, or a classical music, opera performance). For each activity, participant had to choose how often she or he participated in that activity (during the last five years), using five-point scale (from 1—"never" to 5—"at least once a week").

[4] Correlation coefficients between the general index of social capital and extracted components are as follows: 0.887 (for "information and influences" dimension), 0.598 (for "psychological support"), and 0.547 (for "instrumental support") ($p < 0.001$).

To examine underlying dimensions, exploratory technique — principal component analysis (PCA)—with varimax rotation was performed. It yielded 5 components solution that explained 59.2% of total variance.[5] The first factor was loaded most by such items as visiting the opera/philharmonic hall/attending a classical music performance; going to the theatre; visiting an art museum/gallery/exhibition/vernissage; going to the arts cinema etc., therefore it was dubbed "elite style" (see the Appendix A for full list of items and their assignments to the components). In contrast, the second factor, consisting of nine items (loadings > 0.450), covered in large part "popular" pastimes, such as using sport facilities (e.g. a swimming pool, gym, fitness club); visiting a café/restaurant/pub; going to a disco/club; playing computer games; hiking; attending sport events. This factor was later named "popular style." Both styles resemble, respectively, orientations to arts and entertainment, identified in other studies (Błaszczyk and Cebula 2016; Kajdanek et al. 2022; Meuleman 2021). We therefore consider them as a quite universal patterns of cultural consumption, capturing principal types of experience that people may seek (Van Eijck 2001). Performance of manual works (e.g. sewing, woodwork) and visiting an allotment garden/gardening—both resembling the functional style of the lower class (Bourdieu 1984)—created a separated cluster, named "practical style." The fourth factor combined reading books for pleasure and going to a park and was dubbed "reading" style. Of more commercialized and mass culture character was last factor, encompassing walking in shops and commercial centers for pleasure, going to mass events like fairs, festivals and going to a disco/club (similarly to popular style), hence this style was called further the "consumer" one. For every respondent, scores on all these factors were calculated and used as independent variables.

Our analysis risks confusing "cultural consumption effects" with individual- or contextual-level confounders that correlate both with consumption styles and social resources indicators. For instance, participation in "highbrow" or "popular" culture is associated with class or status position (Bennett et al. 2009; Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Domański et al. 2021) and social capital as well (Cebula 2023; Lizardo 2013). We can do quite a lot to mitigate demographic and socioeconomic confounders. All models include sociodemographic controls for gender, age, and household size. In addition, we report models adjusted for respondent's social standing. The latter was measured through a battery of seven questions, meant to capture cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). This covered: individual's educational attainment (with 9 levels, ranging from 1—"primary or no education" to 9—"PhD"); education of mother and father (measured using 4 levels, ranging from 1—"primary or no education" to 4—"higher education");[6] a general interest in the visual arts (assessed on a five-point scale from 1—"not at all interested" to 5—"very interested")—an indicator of embodied cultural capital; economic standard of living (an additive index based on possession of 11 durable goods/assets, such as dishwasher, a smartphone worth over PLN 700, a laptop/notebook/tablet, a coffeemaker, a car, a sport equipment, etc.);[7] financial condition of the household (evaluated on a five-point scale

[5] The data was adequate for the analysis, as confirmed by the index KMO = 0.917. The first factor explained 19.5% of variance (after rotation), the remaining: 16.5%, 8.3%, 7.5%, and 7.2%, respectively.

[6] In the absence of data on education, the value of the second parent's education was assigned (if available).

[7] The remaining items covered: DVD/Blu-ray player, automatic washing machine, allotment/holiday cabin, set for receiving digital or satellite television/cable television, private flat or house.

from 1—"we are living very poorly" to 5—"we are living very well"); and subjective social status (self-assessed on a 10-point scale where 1 meant "very poor" and 10—"very good"). We formed two latent dimensions from principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation that explained 62% of the total variance. The first factor (explaining 32.7% of the variance after rotation) was loaded mainly by culture related variables (parental education, respondent's education, and general interest in arts) and thus named "cultural capital." The second factor, constituted most by financial situation, economic standard of living and social status, explained 29.2% of the variance, and was referred as "economic capital."

Lastly, to ascertain that or cultural variables (i.e. practices) capture something more than the influence of network features, we have also included network size and diversity. Both lie at the core of the social capital argument that persons can accrue benefits from social connectivity by having a wide range and diversity of contacts (Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973; Lin 1999). Network size (the number of social contacts) was proxied by the number of people that the respondent keeps in touch with regularly (i.e. at least a couple times a year). This number was estimated in three separate questions: (i) on the number of social contacts with family members (from outside the household, counting persons above 12 years old); (ii) on the number of friends; and (iii) on the number of acquaintances (e.g. in workplace, neighborhood, from school, among people with whom one spends free time). The responses were added and the resulting index was transformed into 10-categories variable with five person interval.

Network diversity was assessed by asking people whether they have friends and acquaintances that are dissimilar to them in terms of socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics. The wording of the question was: "Among your friends and acquaintances, are there people: (a) who are older or younger than you by at least 15 years?; (b) who hold different political views than you?; (c) who have a different material status than you?; (d) who prefer different kinds of music, literature, and entertainment than you?; (e) who have a different lifestyle than you?; (f) who do not speak Polish?; (g) who are outside of your group of friends from the neighborhood or school?; (h) who have a different sexual orientation than you?". All affirmative answers (that is, "yes, 1–2 persons," "yes, a few persons," or "yes, many persons") were coded 1 and then counted to create one index of network variety, ranging from 0 to 8 ($M = 4.9$; $SD = 2.33$).

In order to estimate the effects of the independent variables on access to social capital (in total and broken down by its dimensions), a hierarchical regression analysis was performed. It consisted of two separate blocks of variables: the first one included sociodemographic characteristics and cultural consumption styles; the second considered the extra influence of network confounders (network size and diversity).

Results

Table 2 reports the standardized regression coefficients (β) that inform us on the strength and direction of "influence" of the predictors included in the models. For access to "information and influences," the results show that sociodemographic variables and cultural practices explain 12.6% of the total variance (model 1a) and this number rises significantly

to 16.7% when network covariates are added (model 2a). We can find that women enjoy a little better access to the resources under study than men as well as people living in non one-person households. With respect to the latter, there are especially two-persons and three-persons households that have better access to "information and influences." Among the stratification variables, cultural capital proved to be the significant predictor meaning that people who accumulate more cultural capital score higher on social capital scale. This underlines the theory of inter-convertibility of different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1997).

Table 2

Hierarchical regression models of three dimensions of social capital[a]

Variables (predictors):	Information and influences		Psychological support		Instrumental support	
	1a	2a	1b	2b	1c	2c
(Constant)	**—***	**—***	—	**—***	**—**	**—***
Gender (female)	**0.100****	**0.086****	**0.147*****	**0.125*****	**0.075***	**0.070***
18–25 years	0.007	0.002	**−0.116***	**−0.128****	**0.141****	**0.163****
26–35 years	0.055	0.027	−0.062	**−0.106***	**0.155****	**0.148****
36–45 years	0.049	0.038	−0.094	**−0.109***	**0.131****	**0.109***
46–55 years	**0.090***	0.072	−0.037	−0.064	**0.178*****	**0.169*****
56–65 years	0.035	0.020	−0.042	−0.065	−0.012	−0.022
65 years (ref.)						
1 person in household (ref.)						
2 persons in household	**0.258*****	**0.243*****	0.090	0.070	0.040	0.024
3 persons in household	**0.266*****	**0.227*****	**0.117***	0.058	0.048	0.030
4 persons in household	**0.208*****	**0.176*****	**0.093***	0.047	**−0.088***	**−0.099***
5 or more persons in household	**0.152*****	**0.124*****	**0.107****	0.065	−0.014	−0.016
Cultural capital	**0.158*****	**0.161*****	**0.131****	**0.136*****	**0.094****	**0.099****
Economic capital	0.017	0.036	−0.015	0.015	**0.198*****	**0.208*****
Elite style	0.026	0.033	**−0.117****	**−0.100****	**0.162*****	**0.105****
Popular style	**0.168*****	**0.137*****	0.050	0.006	**0.127*****	**0.079***
Practical style	−0.028	0.022	**−0.243*****	**−0.165*****	−0.030	−0.050
Reading style	0.007	−0.038	**0.070***	−0.003	−0.004	0.021
Consumer style	−0.021	0.019	**−0.099****	−0.036	0.042	0.023
Number of social contacts		**0.204*****		**0.321*****		−0.054
Network diversity		**0.099****		**0.138*****		**0.154*****
Adjusted R^2	0.126	0.167	0.123	0.223	0.247	0.264
F change (comparing to previous model)		ΔF(2,928) =24.301; p < 0.001		ΔF(2,929) = 61.096; p < 0.001		ΔF(2,927) = 11.894; p < 0.001

[a]Standardized beta coefficients.

Statistically significant values are marked in bold.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The most important finding is that among different cultural styles, pursuing popular style is positively associated with social capital indicator ($\beta = 0.168$; $p < 0.001$ in model 1a). This result persists even after controlling for network features ($\beta = 0.137$; $p < 0.001$) thus dismissing the suspicion that the effect of cultural practices is due to confounders related to network size or diversity. The latter provide an additional explanation of the total variance as evidenced by the positive coefficient for both variables. People who have more extensive and diversified social networks usually benefit more from social connectivity in terms of (cultural) information and influences. Overall, the findings support our hypothesis 2 that posits the positive relationship between participation in popular culture and access to expressive (lifestyle-related) social capital.

Turning to the second dimension of social capital ("psychological support"), the results of Table 2 show, similarly to the previous analysis, advantageous status of women. Compared to previous models, age turned out to be significant factor contrary to household size. After controlling for network variables, age groups between 18–45 suffered from deficits in "psychological support" in comparison with the oldest reference groups.

Just as with access to "information and influences," cultural capital is positively related to social capital. Those possessing more cultural resources are privileged in access to social contacts that may deliver emergency help and with whom important matters can be discussed. When it comes to cultural practices, contrary to our expectations, popular style does not show any significant relation with this dimension of social capital, whereas elite style and practical style show a negative relationship. Those who participate in "highbrow" culture more intensively or those who prefer practical activities usually score lower on "psychological support" scale ($\beta = -0.100$; $p < 0.01$ and $\beta = -0.165$; $p < 0.001$ in model 2b, respectively).

It is worth noting that among all predictors, the number of social contacts has a strong explicative capacity ($\beta = 0.321$; $p < 0.001$). It suggests that access to psychological support is to large extent a matter of the number of people with whom one keeps in touch and less a matter of cultural variables. The overall increase in explained variance between model 1b and 2b (from 12.3% to 22.3%) suggest that network features (including also network diversity) have standalone predictive power over and above sociodemographic and cultural variables, as suggested by network theory (Burt 1992; Lin 2001; Marsden 1987).

As regards the third dimension of social capital—"instrumental support"—estimates in Table 2 inform us that the access to this kind of resources is significantly associated with being female; falling under the age range between 18 and 55; and occupying higher position in stratification order. I should be noted that in contrast with previous models, "instrumental support" is more strictly linked to economic capital rather than cultural capital, that resonates well with the expectation that instrumental resources are especially relevant in status attainment process (Lin 2001)—both as an antecedent and a result of higher status. Among five cultural styles, there are two—elite style ($\beta = 0.162$; $p < 0.001$ in model 1c) and, to lesser degree, popular style ($\beta = 0.127$; $p < 0.001$; model 1c)—that connect positively with access to resources. According to the hypothesis 1 (H1) participation in highbrow culture is positively associated with availability of instrumental resources that aid in gaining privileged social positions. Although this relationship is a little reduced when adding network variables (model 2c), it is still significant which means that it cannot be accounted

for network factors. The latter deliver an additional portion of the explained variance as indicated by significant coefficient for network diversity and statistics of model fit (F-test; $p < 0.001$).

Finally, we have estimated the models explaining the general access to social resources (Table 3).

Table 3

Hierarchical regression models of overall social capital measure[a]

Variables (predictors):	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	**—***	**—***
Gender (female)	**0.151*** **	**0.133*** **
18–25 years	0.020	0.019
26–35 years	0.077	0.040
36–45 years	0.053	0.032
46–55 years	**0.112***	**0.088***
56–65 years	0.010	–0.012
65 years (ref.)		
1 person in household (ref.)		
2 persons in household	**0.223*** **	**0.201*** **
3 persons in household	**0.237*** **	**0.186*** **
4 persons in household	**0.143****	**0.101***
5 or more persons in household	**0.136*** **	**0.105****
Cultural capital	**0.182*** **	**0.190*** **
Economic capital	0.060	**0.085***
Elite style	0.023	0.013
Popular style	**0.159*** **	0.109**
Practical style	**–0.110****	–0.056
Reading style	0.035	–0.010
Consumer style	–0.036	0.005
Number of social contacts		**0.227*** **
Network diversity		**0.167*** **
Adjusted R^2	0.180	0.248
F change (comparing to previous model)		$\Delta F(2,929) = 42.757$; $p < 0.001$

[a]Standardized beta coefficients.

Statistically significant values are marked in bold.

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$

The findings mirror to much extent the pattern of the results for "information and influences" social capital. Access to social capital is positively associated with being female; not living in a single household; belonging to age group 46–55; and having a higher level of cultural capital. Moreover, regardless of any other variables, cultural activities (concretely, practicing popular style), enhance the chances of extracting social resources from social network ($\beta = 0.109$; $p < 0.01$; model 2 of table 3). In line with

the hypothesis 2, popular culture that is assigned the general conversion value, is in fact positively associated with social capital taken in total. Additional explanatory power deliver network size ($\beta = 0.227$; $p < 0.001$) and network diversity ($\beta = 0.167$; $p < 0.001$), corroborating the idea that access to resources is strictly linked with network architecture (Burt 1992; Lin 2001, 2008).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper is a continuation and extension of a research program designed to examine the mutual relationships between cultural consumption and sociability (DiMaggio 1987, 2011; Erickson 1996, 2021; Lewis and Kaufman 2018; Lizardo 2006, 2013; Puetz 2015). Unlike previous studies that aimed at mapping complex links between cultural tastes and social network features (size, diversity, strength of ties [Kane 2004; Lizardo 2006, 2011]) and speculating how this can translate into general social capital (Meuleman 2021), our study proposes a more detailed approach that makes use of the resource generator instrument (Batorski, Bojanowski, Filipek 2015; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005; Varekamp et al. 2015) to capture specific social resources and their relationships with various cultural consumption styles (cultural practices), net of other explanatory variables such as social standing, sociodemographic and network traits. We developed a theoretical framework that combine social capital theory (in its individualistic and stratificational variant) (Lin 1999, 2001) with social resources (expressive and instrumental) and types of cultural consumption/cultural communication codes (highbrow vs popular) (DiMaggio 1987; Sokolova and Sokolov 2020; Nagel, Ganzeboom, Kalmijn 2011). Assuming that cultural tastes function as interactional hooks, a skill or conversational resource and opportunity structures that facilitate establishing and sustaining social ties, it is hypothesized that people who hold taste for highbrow culture have greater chance to accessing instrumental social resources as highbrow culture represents a sophisticated and rare cultural code used to identify and guard entrance into higher social status groups—groups privileged in terms of status attainment tools (information, influences, reputation). Next to highbrow culture, taste for popular culture should be connected with expressive resources (associated with lifestyle expression and confiding feelings) and general access to social capital, as it represents more generalized cultural code suitable for many interactions and constitutes a portable container of emotions and recreation.

Our results largely confirm these assumptions. As expected, people who participate in traditional highbrow culture (those who pursue "elite style" in our typology) have better access to instrumental, status related social resources ("instrumental support" social capital), independent of other factors. In other words, consumption of elite culture yields an additional accumulation of resources of strategic importance in social advance (such as money, work, or official matters) as espoused in the social capital theory (Lin 2001; Son and Lin 2012) (see H1). As regards popular culture, those adhering to "popular style" enjoy a better access to general social capital and especially to social capital associated with "information and (cultural) influences," in line with hypothesis 2 (H2). However, contrary to expectations, "popular style" is unrelated to "psychological support" social capital. We

speculate that this result may be due to the tendency to "discuss important matters" or seek emergency shelter mainly among strong, close social contacts (especially family), whit whom one is connected regardless of any similarity in or sharing popular pastimes. Future studies should address more closely which type of social relations is conducive to what kind of social resources. Against this background, popular culture appears as primarily a resource of universal conversion value that allows for many interactions (hence its correlation to general social capital), among which the most important are those associated with lifestyle expression and creation (trying new practices, learning about new opportunities to spend free time, getting new inspirations). As result, our hypothesis 2 is confirmed partially.

A number of other, more specific conclusions may be drawn from the results. First, popular style is positively related to "instrumental support" although this relationship is weaker than with elite style. It suggests that a part of social capital in its instrumental dimension may be due to the flow of the popular through social network, in line with the argument that popular culture, suited to have small talk with all people, would lead to many (weak) ties, which are more likely to access new, status-prompting resources (Granovetter 1973; Lizardo 2006, 2013). Second, there is a trade-off relation between "psychological" and "instrumental" support as regards elite culture. Those who pursue elite style benefit from instrumental resources but suffer from deficits in expressive resources associated with exchanging feelings, similarly to those cultivating practical style. One possible interpretation is that these kinds of pastime deliver comfort or stress relief so that there is no need to seek support from social networks. On the other hand, formal character of the elite culture and material tangibility of (mainly male) practical style may restrain from expressing feeling openly to others. However, these hypotheses require further testing.

Third, our models confirm the general idea that access to social capital is intertwined with broader social inequalities. In particular, people endowed with higher levels of formal cultural capital (in the case of "information and influences" and "psychological support" social capital) and higher level of economic capital (as regard "instrumental support") are more likely to enjoy improved access to social resources. This result is compatible with the argument about inter-convertibility of different forms of capital that through processes of capital accumulation leads to strengthening social inequalities (Alecu et al. 2022; Bourdieu 1997; Otero, Volker, Rozer 2021; Li, Savage, Warde 2008). The finding for "psychological support" is a little surprising, given that access to "expressive resources" is common and should not depend on person's social status (Van der Gaag, Snijders, Flap 2008). Apparently, higher level of cultural capital entails greater awareness of emotional profits flowing from discussing important matters with others. The data also corroborate central statements of social capital theory that network features (here network size, and diversity) are important antecedents of accessing social resources as evidenced by positive association between them and different measures of social capital (Burt 1992; Lin 2001; Lin and Ao 2008). The larger the number of social contacts and the more diversified, the better access to social resources. The same holds for larger households. Two- and three-person households outperform single-person households in the availability of "information and influence" social capital, perhaps because availability of close people (e.g. partner, family member) creates an opportunity for interaction and exchange of information.

Counter-intuitively, social resources (especially "psychological" ones) are more easily accessible to women than to men. The interpretation may be that women culturally show a greater tendency to build close relationships based on confiding one's feelings in opposite to men socialized to status rivalry.

The study is not without limitations. Most obviously perhaps, the observational and cross-sectional design of our investigation does not allow us to assess the complex issue of causality. In other words, we are unable to conclude that cultural practices are the cause of social capital. This relationship may also work the other way around, although we think it is less plausible to argue that accessing instrumental resources translates directly into engagement in activities such as theater or opera going. Some previous studies showed that the model of selection process (privileging cultural dispositions as a causal variable) is stronger than model of social influence (or contagion) (Lizardo 2006; Meuleman 2021). Nevertheless, sticking to the data, we have no basis to draw conclusions about causal relationships. The limitation of the population to inhabitants of one large city also necessitates caution in generalizing results to other collectivities. However, we believe that to the extent that we touch upon general social processes and mechanisms and find much convergence in results from many social studies (e.g. as regards association between access to resources and social stratification or network characteristics [Lin and Ao 2008]), our findings are relevant also in other context and samples.

Our inventory of social capital items, while diversified to the extent that allows for distinguishing meaningful, interpretable dimensions, is far from comprehensiveness postulated by inventors of resource generator tool (Van der Gaag and Snijders 2005). Future research should include and scale a richer set of indicators, resulting from systematical, theoretical considerations about which resources represent the "general" social capital in (post-)industrial societies.

While beyond the scope of this study, we would welcome a more diversified and refined measurement of cultural consumption, in particular, by including other types of cultural indicators and domains (e.g. knowledge, preferences). Additionally, although the study tested the relationship between cultural activities and availability of many social resources while drawing on different mechanisms, we have not focused on the actual testing of these explanatory principles. We advocate future research that tests whether people have higher level of social capital because they discuss cultural matters or because make social connections during artistic and cultural events (see Meuleman, Jæger 2023). Another promising path of future research refers to revealing what kinds of social ties are most conducive to what kinds of social resources according to the general idea of "specialization" of ties in help delivering (Wellman and Wortley 1990).

Finally, although our regression models were design to embrace as many confounders as possible (regarding what was available in dataset), we cannot rule out that some other individual- and context-level characteristics that were omitted may also matter. One candidate could be cognitive ability (Domański 2017; Van Tubergen and Volker 2015). Smarter individuals may both have better access to social resources and participate more frequently in many cultural activities. While this is a possibility, we note that we already took into account respondents' own educational level and general interest in visual arts—traits probably correlated with cognitive capacity. It takes away part of our concerns here.

Future research may design more refined and elaborated models that control a larger number of potential confounders.

Despite these limitations, our analysis is one of the first to empirically demonstrate that access to specific social resources is systematically associated with different cultural profiles and as such it contributes to broader debates on cultural tastes, social capital and stratification.

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Appendix A

Table A1

Cultural practices: percentage who participated in selected activities

Items	Percent*
1. Going to the park, for a walk	91.0
2. Reading books for pleasure	90.4
3. Going to the restaurant, café or pub	83.8
4. Attending popular events such as festivals, trade fairs, feasts	82.8
5. Sightseeing monuments, visiting castles	79.5
6. Going to the cinema (multiplex)	76.1
7. Visiting an art museum, gallery, exhibition or attending a vernissage	72.3
8. Walking in shops and commercial centers for pleasure	71.7
9. Hiking	71.5
10. Going to the arts cinema	67.2
11. Going to the theatre	64.3
12. Using sport facilities such as a swimming pool, gym, fitness club	62.4
13. Going to the library or multimedia library	61.3
14. Doing handiwork, such as sewing, woodwork etc.	56.3
15. Attending a live popular music performance	56.2
16. Going to the opera, philharmonic hall or attending a classical music performance	54.3
17. Attending a sport event	52.0
18. Undergoing beauty treatments	43.2
19. Going to a disco, club	43.0
20. Gardening, visiting an allotment garden	42.8
21. Playing computer games	40.5
22. Engaging in non-professional artistic activities, such as painting, photographing, acting	36.9

*Summed responses: „once a year or less often," "a few times a year," "1–3 times a month," "once a week or more often."

Items on "elite style" component (loadings > 0.48): 16, 11, 7, 10, 22, 5, 15, 13

Items on "popular style" component (loadings > 0.45): 12, 3, 19, 21, 9, 17, 15, 6, 18

Items on "practical style" component (loadings > 0.70): 14, 20

Items on "reading style" component (loadings > 0.40): 2, 1, 13

Items on "consumer style" component (loadings > 0.40): 8, 4, 19