Distinction on the Box: Cultural Capital and the Social Space of Broadcasting

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Abstract

The literature on cultural capital has had relatively little to say about television viewing, except insofar as television has served as a negative point of reference in relation to which other cultural practices register their distinctiveness. This article, by contrast, examines the respects in which practices of distinction are operative within the space of broadcast television. Looking first at the 'internal economy' of television as expressed in the relations between genre, programme and channel preferences, it then examines how these preferences are related to occupational class, gender, level of education and ethnicity. While showing that divisions within the space of broadcasting are most powerfully articulated in terms of age and gender, the article also shows that occupational class and level of education play important roles in stratifying television audiences along traditional 'high'/'low' lines. A closer analysis of the relations between these variables reveals more complex patterns of distinction, particularly in the place occupied by 'new drama' and 'new comedy' in the preferences of younger, well - educated viewers.

Keywords: Media field; Genre; Broadcast television; Social distinction; Audience; Cultural capital

Introduction

In a submission to the Charter Review, the BBC stresses the civic role of broadcasting:

> Broadcasting is a civic art. It is intrinsically public in ambition and effect. We may experience it individually, but it is never a purely private transaction. To turn on a TV or radio is to enter a communal space and to be constantly aware of and influenced by that fact. (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2004, p. 6)

Yet, if this is so, it is equally true that the public space that broadcasting constructs is one that is divided by and between different communities of taste and interest as viewers tune into some kinds of programmes but not others and draw on these in their everyday conversations in ways that vary in accordance with their social backgrounds and social networks. The questions I want to pursue here, therefore, focus on the role that cultural choice, or taste, plays in differentiating and dividing the television audience. This is not, to be sure, a matter of a rigorous division of television viewers into hermetically separate publics. Divisions within the television audience tend to be fluid and overlapping, and are often less sharply drawn than in other sections of the cultural field. This does not, though, diminish their significance theoretically from the point of view of their implications for our understanding of the role that cultural tastes play in the mechanisms through which social distinctions are organized.

In seeking to show why this is so, I focus, in what follows, on the survey data relating to television viewing practices from the *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion* (CCSE) project with two main aims in view. First, I trace the 'internal economy' of these practices by looking at what our data tells us about which likes and dislikes–for television genres, channels and programmes–tend to go together, and which ones tend to be separated. I also consider how such preferences connect with preferences in other sections of the cultural field–with preferences for visual art and reading, for example. I then consider how this internal economy of viewing preferences maps onto broader social divisions and differences by considering the relationships between likes, and dislikes, and occupational class, gender, level of education, age and–within the limits of our main sample–ethnicity. As a prelude to all these concerns, however, I need first to say a few words about the role that television has played in the earlier literature on cultural capital. Or, more accurately, about the role that television has not played, for it has, in the main, been conspicuous by its absence.

Part 1: 'Do You Watch Television?'

I ask this question here not because we asked it in our survey–to the contrary, we decided not to do so on the assumption that television watching is a more or less universal practice in contemporary Britain. This proved to be so, with only 1.3 per cent of our sample – a mere 21 respondents – reporting that they never watch television,[1] while 85 per cent watch 2 hours or more television on average per weekday evening. Our assumptions in this regard stand in marked contrast to those informing Bourdieu's questionnaire in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu asked only one question about television –'If you watch TV, which programmes do you mainly watch?'– and, just as tellingly, does not report his findings in relation to either this question or the related question he asked about favourite kinds of radio listening. Television rates only one reference in the index to Distinction, where he interprets working - class resistance to formalist experiments in television and attempts to bring high culture into the home via television as a proxy for working - class responses to formalist innovations in modern art (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 33). This neglect of broadcasting may have been warranted in 1960s' France when TV - set ownership was more limited, albeit still significant.[2] It does, however, mean that Bourdieu's study throws little light on the medium that has since become the organizing centre of cultural life for the vast majority of the population. I mean this not merely in the sense of the sheer amount of time that watching television accounts for in time - use surveys. Rather, the more important point concerns the role that television has played in transforming the relations between practices in the cultural field. This is partly recognized in Bourdieu's later work on journalism, and the more general literature on the media field that this has prompted, where the stress falls on the capacity of the media field to exert power over other areas of cultural production (the literary and artistic fields) by subjecting them to journalistic standards of truth, relevance, credibility etc. (Benson & Neveau, 2005; Bourdieu, 1998). The flip side of this concerns the role that television plays for its audiences in mediating their relations to other cultural activities, providing a point of reference in relation to which other practices–like reading, or listening to music–derive some aspects of their

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[1] The responses to different questions indicate some inconsistency in statements about not watching television. The figure given here is the highest one.

[2] Between 1960 and 1967, there was an increase from 13 to 52 per cent of French households owning television sets (Lahire, 2004, p. 628). The questionnaire on which *Distinction* is based was administered in two surveys, one conducted in 1963 and the second in 1967-68.

relative value and significance. Yet, in spite of this, television has been accorded relatively little attention in the literature on the relations between cultural capital and cultural consumption, where music and, to a lesser extent, the visual arts have typically received more attention.[3]

A notable exception, in the recent literature, is Bernard Lahire's discussion of the impact of television in flattening out the relationships between classes and culture so that class distinctions are now no longer so easily identifiable in terms of sharply differentiated tastes (Lahire, 2004, pp. 624–636). He suggests three reasons for this. First, he notes that the development of multi - set households and the increasing tendency for adolescents to choose their own television (and, it should be added, to spend time on line in the internet environment), rather than watching in a larger family setting, has opened up a zone of heterogeneous socialization within the household that makes the transmission of singular cultural values from one generation to the next more difficult. Our figures point to similar tendencies in Britain, with only 35 per cent of those in the 35–45 age group – the highest of any age group – indicating that they usually watch television with their children, or with partners and children, in contrast to the 56 per cent who usually watch television alone or with their partner. Second, the fact that television is watched mainly in the home–and is thus disconnected from the public display of status–and, in the case of broadcast television, is also experienced as free at the point of consumption, has reduced the sharpness of the divisions separating the cultural interests and tastes of different groups. Professionals and senior managers, who treat television much like the members of other classes as a way of relaxing and unwinding at home, thus, in the French data Lahire discusses, show a significant appreciation for televisions genres that are ranked low in conventional hierarchies of cultural esteem or legitimacy (Lahire, 2004, p. 137).[4] Similarly, the freeness of television at the point of access makes possible 'curiosity viewing', allowing experimentation with cultural activities–like orchestral concerts, for example–that might otherwise remain out of reach, financially or culturally, for poorer or less well - educated groups.

Georgina Born's comments point in a similar direction when she notes that broadcasting, with its mixed economy of hybrid institutions and ambiguous genres, cannot easily be squared with Bourdieu's conception of the cultural field as being structured by a polarized opposition between low and high cultures mapped onto an underlying division between cultural activities that depend on the logic of the market and those that are produced in opposition to it (Born, 2003). This is not, though, to suggest that television is a 'distinction - free zone'. To the contrary, the debates in media studies on quality television provide ample evidence of the respects in which television also operates as the site for the emergence of new practices of distinction, ones in which relations of age, class and gender – and their intersections – are all in play. It will be helpful, though, before looking at the light our data throw on these aspects of viewing practices, to look first at the internal economy of television viewing by considering how different choices–of televisions genres, programmes and channels – are related to each other.

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[3] It does not figure at all in the American literature on the omnivore/univore thesis, for example (see Peterson, 1992; Peterson & Kern, 1996). The major exception to this rule in the English language literature is the Australian study by Bennett, Emmison, and Frow (1999).

[4] The data Lahire discusses are derived from a 1997 French survey of the cultural practices of a representative French sample of those aged 15 and over.

Part 2: The Internal Economy of Television Viewing

I look first at the responses to our questions exploring the television genres which our respondents liked most and those which they liked least. Figure 1 shows the results of Pearson correlations of the 'most like' and 'least like' preferences, the continuous lines indicating positive correlations and the dashed lines negative ones. Four positively related clusters of genres are evident here. These comprise, first, reality television, soap operas and variety/chat shows; second, arts programmes, films and drama; third, news and current - affairs programmes, nature and history documentaries, and sport; and, fourth, quizzes and police shows. These represent, broadly speaking, a division between: popular television (reality, soaps and variety/chat shows); a 'middlebrow' group of police/detective and quiz shows; a set of 'factual' television genres represented by news, current affairs and documentaries, and sport; and a 'culture' grouping of arts programmes, films and drama. The pattern of negative correlations is equally telling, with, of all the genres, soap operas being distinguished from by far the widest range of other genres: news and current affairs, documentaries, sport, arts programmes and films. It is followed next in this by sport, which is negatively correlated with soaps, films, drama and the clutch of genres focused on the home (cookery, home decorations and gardening).

Figure 1: Connected genre preferences

The role of the distribution of dislikes in these correlations merits some discussion. The three genres that are liked least are sport (16 per cent), reality television (27 per cent) and soap operas (17 per cent). This reflects the strong role that gender plays in organizing television preferences: far more women (24 per cent) dislike sport than men (6 per cent), with men far

more likely to dislike soap operas (27 per cent) than women (9 per cent). Conversely, 25 per cent of women give their first preference to soap operas compared to 2 per cent of men, while, unsurprisingly, sport reverses this pattern. Yet there are other considerations at play here. The responses for reality television, for example, are at odds with viewing figures for these programmes which, while regularly recording large audiences, are reported here as the preferred viewing of only 1 per cent of the sample and, as we have seen, as the most disliked genre–and disliked pretty well equally by both men (28 per cent) and women (25 per cent). This is perhaps best explained in terms of the operation of a set of judgements, reflecting the continuing weight of traditional cultural hierarchies, according to which television viewing is judged pejoratively as a waste of time compared to other activities. This was clear from the evidence of our focus groups, for many of whose members the idea of just watching television rather than doing so for a specific purpose was generally anathema. And if television plays this role in relation to other cultural practices, reality television plays it within television. It is, in both our focus groups and our household interviews, regularly referred to as trash or rubbish–with soap operas coming a close second in this regard–even by those who watch it regularly.[5]

This throws some light on the differences between first and second preferences, where 3 per cent named reality television–perhaps reflecting a greater preparedness to sneak this in as a second choice rather than declare it 'up front'.[6] When second choices are added to the picture, the connections between genre preferences shown in Figure 1 undergo some changes. Reality television is no longer positively associated with variety and chat shows or opposed to news/current affairs; comedy/sitcoms come to be positively connected with soap operas and contrasted to arts programmes; sport is no longer positively associated with news and current - affairs programmes; watching films on television continues to be connected to arts programmes, is no longer sharply differentiated from watching sports and soap operas, but is from quizzes and game shows; news and current - affairs and arts programmes are positively connected; police and detective fiction are strongly counter - posed to soap operas, which are likewise distinguished from quizzes and game shows; drama no longer stands in contrast to news and current affairs.

The relations between these likes and dislikes throw some light on the different degrees of cultural legitimacy of different genres. Yet there are specific difficulties here, for television stands in a different relation to the institutions of legitimation – largely those linked to the education system – through which particular kinds of culture have different kinds of legitimacy conferred on them than do music, literature and even film. This is so, first, in the respect that watching television is routinely placed beneath other cultural activities as a practice of relatively little value, just as media studies curricula occupy a low place in the hierarchy of academic disciplines and universities (media studies is taught mainly in the new universities and not at all at 'Oxbridge'). Second, and as a consequence, ways of valorizing particular kinds of television via, for example, aestheticizing forms of criticism or analysis,

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[5] In his 2004 MacTaggert Lecture at the Edinburgh Film Festival, John Humphries, presenter of Radio 4's Today programme, chose reality television as the main example of what he characterized as 'carbohydrate television' which, at best, turns viewers into mindless zombies and, at worst, coarsens them by transforming other human beings into freaks to be gawked at, in contrast to the more nourishing diet of 'protein television' (Humphries, 2004, p. 21).

[6] A similar tendency is evident in answers to our questions asking which three television programmes were liked most. Only one respondent named this as their first choice, compared to seven as their second choice and 19 as their third.

tend themselves to have a relatively low place within the institutions and processes of legitimation more generally: they carry much less weight than literary or art criticism, for example.

In view of these considerations, two further tests were applied in determining which genres shared a high legitimacy, which a medium legitimacy and which a low one. First, account was also taken of the correlations between tastes for particular genres and tastes in other fields. This proved useful in confirming that news and current affairs programmes, arts programmes, nature/history documentaries and drama are meaningfully grouped together as a high - legitimacy cluster: liking documentaries and arts programmes, for example, is strongly associated with liking impressionist paintings (the genre associated with the most 'discriminating' tastes in the art field–see Silva, this volume), while liking news and art programmes correlates with a strong preference for reading biographies and modern literature, the most highly ranked of the literary genres we asked about.

Second, albeit at the price of some circularity, examining the relations between genre preferences and level of education – a convenient proxy for cultural capital – suggested a number of useful distinctions. Quizzes and game shows and police shows and detective fiction, while closely connected in first - choice preferences, recruit significantly different audiences in terms of level of education. A logistic regression analysis, discussed in more detail later, shows far stronger levels of interest in the former on the part of those with no or only lower secondary qualifications. The distinction between comedy and soap operas suggested by Figure 1 was also supported by the strong links between comedy and the 20–30 year-old members of the sample with – or acquiring – above-average levels of education. Looking at the relationship between level of education and preferences for sport and soap operas–the genres in relation to which gender divisions are most marked – also helped to distinguish the different degrees of legitimacy associated with these. The key factor here is that whereas men's and women's preferences for sport are relatively constant across all levels of education, that of women for soap operas decreases significantly with level of education– from 34 per cent of those with no educational qualifications to 16 per cent of those with university qualifications. This suggests that, in spite of the now considerable literature that has aimed to validate soap operas as a serious genre, the assumptions informing male-centred hierarchies of genres are still in operation, affecting the viewing practices of women as well as those of men.

These, then, are the bases for grouping the genres included in our survey into the different levels of legitimacy shown in Figure 2, and which I shall largely refer to from this point on to identify more general tendencies in viewer preferences. When the sample is divided into these categories, 36 per cent expressed their first preference for a genre in the high-legitimacy category – quite a high percentage, largely reflecting the large number of first preferences for news and current-affairs television which, at 17 per cent, was the most frequent first choice. Forty-three per cent cast their lot for a genre in the medium-legitimacy category, and 20 per cent for a genre in the low legitimacy category, with the remaining 1 per cent being excluded as not watching television.

Low legitimacy
Quizzes/game shows, soap operas, reality TV, variety/chat shows

Medium legitimacy
Comedy/sitcoms, sport, police/detective, films, cookery/home decorations/gardening

High legitimacy
News/current affairs, arts programmes, nature/history documentaries, drama

Figure 2: Legitimacy Rankings of Television Genres

What is the relationship between preferences organized in these terms and other choices within the space of broadcast television? In answering this, I look first at how genre preferences and rankings map onto television channel preferences (Table 1). The patterns for ITV1 and BBC1 here are close to being mirror images of one another, each recruiting significant preferences from across all three genre groups, but ascending with degree of legitimacy in the case of BBC1 and descending with it in the case of ITV1.[7] BBC2 stands out from the other channels in the much sharper gradient that separates those with high (10 per cent) from those with low (1 per cent) genre preferences who most prefer this station.

	Low-legitimacy genres	Medium-legitimacy genres	High-legitimacy genres	N
BBC1	29	39	49	633
BBC2	1	4	10	89
ITV1	58	37	24	560
Channel 4/S4C	7	9	9	136
Channel 5	3	6	4	67
Other	2	5	4	71

Table 1: TV Genre and Terrestrial Channel Preferences (Column %)

While we also explored cable and satellite station preferences, the picture here is much less clear, mainly because fewer choices (50 per cent of the sample either did not have or did not watch cable or satellite channels) were spread over a much larger range of options (over 200 channels). Nonetheless, when grouping these channels into related sets, some similarities are discernible: the strong tendency for those who like high genres on terrestrial television to prefer documentary channels on cable or satellite; the strong link between low-legitimacy genres and the more popular end of the satellite/cable channel spectrum; and the strong link between sport and medium-legitimacy genres (Table 2).[8]

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[7] It is relevant to note here that the BBC is, of course, a major institution of legitimation operating within the field of broadcasting. Much of the distinctive character of the debates about public service broadcasting in Britain derives from the BBC's dual role as the major agent of legitimation while also competing with other agents, particularly the commercial channels.

[8] The main documentary channels, as described by respondents, included Discovery, Discovery Health, Discovery Science, Discovery Wings, History, History UK, National Geographic, Natural History, Animal Planet, Civilisation. The main lifestyle and hobby channels included Men and Motors, UK Food, UK Bright Idea, Travel & Adventure, Sky Travel, Travel Channel, Discovery

	Low-legitimacy genres	Medium-legitimacy genres	High-legitimacy genres	N
Arts World, BBC4	0.3	0.4	1.4	12
Documentary channels	3	3	10	88
Lifestyle/hobbies	3	5	2	57
Popular channels	19	13	8	189
Movie channels	4	4	3	58
News channels	0.6	1	6	44
Sports channels	3	17	4	145

Table 2: TV Genre and Satellite/ Cable Channel Preferences (Column %)

There are, though, limits to how far an analysis couched in terms of genres can take us in exploring the patterns of viewers' preferences. This is partly because the television text is inherently trans-generic, encouraging viewers to move across genres as they move through an evening's or a week's viewing schedule. It is partly because generic labels are frequently understood and interpreted differently, especially in the context of questionnaires such as ours (see Savage in this volume). And it is partly because genre analysis inclines toward a broad - brush approach at the expense of the more finely grained distinctions that are possible when analysis focuses on preferences for particular programmes. We know, for example, from responses to a question exploring the sports our respondents liked to watch, whether at a sporting venue or on television, that some sports are strongly dissociated from one another in the pattern of likes and dislikes that resulted: speedway and stock-car racing versus golf, skiing versus ice hockey, darts versus tennis, and basketball versus golf, for example. We therefore asked a separate set of questions designed to explore intra-generic preferences by asking respondents to name their three favourite television programmes out of a set list. Excluding those programmes for which response rates were extremely low (*Perfect Match* and *Eurotrash*, for example), and those which correlated with too wide a range of other programmes (*Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*), five separate groupings of programmes emerged from Pearson correlations between first- and second- choice responses to these questions.

Coronation St, Eastenders, Home and Away and *Big Brother* were closely related as a soaps/reality television cluster, while *Midsomer Murders, A Touch of Frost, The Bill* and *Bad Girls* exemplified a popular drama grouping. *Panorama* and *University Challenge* also correlated with one another as traditional forms of 'serious television'. *West Wing, Spooks* and *6 Feet Under* were closely related as a 'new drama' cluster of programmes, while *Friends, Sex and the City, South Park* and *Absolutely Fabulous* constitute a 'new comedy' cluster. These new comedy/new drama sets form part of a part of a wider group of programmes whose properties have been widely invoked in debates about 'quality television' as evidence for new forms of qualitative division within the television text (see Bjarkman, 2004; Geraghty, 2003; Jacobs, 2001; Smith &Wilson, 2004). In one of the most probing

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Home and Leisure, QVC, Craft Channel, Bidup TV and Food Channel. The main popular channels were ITV2, Paramount, Sky 1, UK Gold, UK Gold2, Living TV, UK Horizons, Comedy Channel, E4 and Granada Plus. The movie channels were Sky Movie, Sky Cinema, TCM, Box Office, Front Row and Hallmark. Film Four and Disney channels are not included in this category. The main news channels were BBC News 24, Sky News, CNN and ITN News, and the main sports channels were SkySports, Eurosport, Extreme Sport and At the Races.

discussions in this literature, Jason Jacobs relates *West Wing* and *Sex and the City* to a wider set of programmes including, for example, *The Sopranos, Twin Peaks* and *The X - Files*, and argues that these share with Romantic aesthetics a predilection for the fragment as both complete in itself and yet also part of a larger whole. The fragmentary organization of these shows, Jacobs argues, echoing John Caldwell's discussion of the distinguishing properties of contemporary forms of 'televisuality' (Caldwell, 1995), is well suited to the development of a distinctive television aesthetic in view of the ways in which they foreground and play with the properties of television. This is in view of the degree to which the 'boundaries of each episode are clearly marked and yet also blurred by the recognition, internalized by the episode itself, of interruption by the contingencies of the commercial broadcast environment, as well as of the story arcs beyond and behind it' (Jacobs, 2001, p. 444).

I shall return shortly to consider the extent to which a preference for new drama and new comedy might be connected to new practices of distinction on the part of the younger viewers in our sample. It will be instructive to look first, though, at the relations between these programme preferences and low- , medium- and high- legitimacy genres on the one hand and channel preferences on the other. Tables 3 and 4 summarize our findings on these matters. The soaps/reality and popular drama audiences are the most evenly spread across the low-, medium- and high- genre categories. In the case of soaps and reality television, however, majority support is clearly for the low- and medium- legitimacy genres whereas, in the case of popular drama, majority support is for the medium- and high- legitimacy genres. By contrast, the preferences of the 'serious television' audience are conspicuously tilted towards the high end of the legitimacy spectrum (69 per cent) and against low genres (6 per cent), while the new drama audience is most sharply divided between the medium (52 per cent) and low genres (4 per cent). New comedy audience preferences are also mainly allocated to medium-legitimacy genres, but with stronger support here for low-legitimacy genres than is shown by either the 'serious television' or new drama audiences.

	Low-legitimacy genres	Medium-legitimacy genres	High-legitimacy genres	N
Soaps/reality	44	35	21	364
Popular drama	17	43	39	491
'Serious TV'	6	26	69	124
New drama	4	52	40	89
New comedy	13	53	33	218

Table 3: Programme/ Genre Connections (Row %)

In Table 4, BBC1 is the preferred channel for all programme groups except for the soaps/reality television cluster, where ITV is the channel of choice, and is strongest – as is BBC 2 – for the 'serious television' and new drama groups. Those who prefer soaps and reality television allocate their channel preferences to ITV, whereas the popular drama group is split more or less evenly across BBC1 and ITV1. BBC1 recruits the support of more than half of those whose preferences are for 'serious television' and new drama. The new comedy audience is more or less evenly divided between BBC1 and ITV, with BBC2 and Channel 4 respectively scoring highest with 'serious television' and new drama audiences.

	BBC1	BBC2	ITV1	Channel 4/S4C	Channel 5	Other	N
Soaps/reality	39	0	49	5	5	2	364
Popular drama	41	7	39	4	6	3	491
'Serious TV'	51	15	15	15	1	4	124
New drama	52	8	20	16	3	1	89
New comedy	36	7	31	15	3	7	218

Table 4: Programme/Channel Connections (Row %)

There are, then, some clear tendencies emerging from this review of the internal economy of television viewing preferences. Programme, genre and channel choices map onto one another in ways suggesting strong associations between particular genres and groups of programmes which, in turn, map onto clearly differentiated sets of channel preferences. The questions I now go on to examine concern the ways in which these divisions within the internal economy of viewing practices connect to the social space of broadcast television.

Part 3: Who Likes What?

I shall organize my discussion by considering the roles of class, age, gender, ethnicity and level of education in relation to genre, programme and channel preferences. I report first the findings of a logistic regression analysis undertaken to assess the relative significance of these variables in relation to genre choice. Tables 5 and 6 summarize the odds ratios resulting from this analysis for gender and age, and for occupational class and education, respectively. These ratios predict the degree to which the social group concerned is likely to select the genre in question relative to a selected reference group (indicated at the foot of each table). Where these odds ratios are statistically significant, they have been placed in bold. Thus, Table 5 tells us that women are a little short of 4.5 times as likely as men to include quizzes and game shows among their preferred genre options (including both first and second choices), and that men are close to twice as likely to choose news and current affairs. Age is treated as a continuous variable, any figure over 1 indicating that the older age ranges in the sample are more likely to like the genre than the younger ones, and vice versa for figures under 1.

	Gender	Age
News/current affairs	0.561	1.038
Comedy/sitcoms	0.686	0.970
Police/detective	1.415	1.000
Quizzes/game shows	4.493	1.049
Nature/history documentaries	0.401	1.028
Sport	0.076	0.987
Arts programmes	0.204	0.980
Films	0.809	0.977
Variety/chat shows	2.313	0.997
Drama	3.101	1.012
Reality TV	2.681	0.949
Soap operas	10.917	0.981
Cookery/home/garden	3.033	0.995

Note: Reference categories: gender—male.

Table 5: Logistic Regression on Gender Choice (Gender and Age)

	News/current affairs	Nature/history documentaries	Arts programmes	Soap operas
Education				
GCSE/O-level	1.383	1.388	0.438	**0.607**
Further education	**1.734**	**2.064**	1.124	0.538
A-level/higher	**1.777**	1.388	0.876	0.519
Degree	**3.317**	**1.901**	2.082	0.393
Occupational class				
NSECAB1	0.403	0.396	10.465	0.543
NSECABA2	1.098	1.379	2.636	0.777
NSECABB2	1.165	1.138	17.280	**0.333**
NSECAB3	**0.621**	**2.061**	30.294	0.829
NSECAB4	0.667	1.007	3.927	1.556
NSECAB5	0.934	0.775	8.676	1.074
NSECAB6	**0.608**	1.304	16.146	0.890
NSECAB9	0.613	**1.804**	13.554	0.905
NSECAB10	**0.366**	1.165	0.000	1.383
NSECAB12	**0.563**	0.967	1.450	0.991
NSECAB13	0.898	0.767	28.247	1.118

Notes: Reference categories: education—no qualifications; occupational class—semi-routine employees. Occupational classes: (NSEC = The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification) NSECAB1—large employer/higher manager; NSECABA2—small employers/own account; NSECAB2—higher professionals; NSECAB3—lower professional, higher technician; NSECAB4—lower manager; NSECAB5—higher supervisory; NSECAB6—intermediary; NSECAB9—lower supervisory; NSECAB10—lower technician; NSECAB12—routine; NSECAB13—never worked.

Table 6: Logistic Regression on Genre Choice (Education and Occupational Class)

Perhaps the most important issues to draw out of Tables 5 and 6 concern the strong contrast between the predictive value of gender and age relative to that of level of education and occupational class. Both gender and age thus register significant differences in relation to virtually the full range of television genres. In the case of gender, the range of differences is also very wide, ranging, as we have already seen, between the polar extremes of women's exceedingly high (10.917) preference for soap operas and low (0.076) preference for sport relative to men. That the range of variation for age is quite muted here is a function of it having been operationalized as a continuous variable. As we shall see shortly, when we come to compare specific age groups with one another, the effects of age in dividing viewing practices are often very sharp indeed. In Table 6, by contrast, level of education and occupational class have a significant predictive value only in relation to the four genres identified.[9] These are, tellingly enough, restricted to the high- or low- legitimacy genres, suggesting that these variables are of minor consequence in relation to genre choices in the middle of the television field.[10]

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[9] Except for the figure of 1.925 logged for those with lower secondary education in relation to quizzes and game shows, and for the further exception noted under endnote 11 below.

[10] Except for police shows and detective fiction, where the university educated and those with lower secondary qualifications registered low rates (0.396 and 0.538 respectively) relative to the reference group of those with no qualifications.

The consequences of a university education, though, are pronounced in relation to the likelihood of watching news and current - affairs and documentary programmes. In the case of soap operas, a decline in interest in this genre is evident with each ascending level of education. It is also significant that higher professionals – as the class most reliant on educational attainment for its position – are far less interested in soap operas than all of the other occupational classes. Lower professionals and lower supervisory workers are the most avid documentary fans, while routine workers, lower technicians, workers in intermediary occupations and lower professionals and higher technicians are the least interested in news and current-affairs programmes. Not too much should be made of the figures relating to arts programmes, since the numbers here (11) are very small.

As with class and gender, the predictive value of ethnicity is relatively low and restricted to three genres. Both the non-British white (2.499) and the non-white groups (2.108) showed high values for news and current-affairs programmes and, in the case of the first group, low ones for sports TV (0.338) when considered in relation to the reference category of white English. Both groups also showed low values (0.251 and 0.327 respectively) for soap operas, reflecting their role as part of a specifically 'national popular' section of the television field. Interestingly too, the values for soap operas are high in densely populated regions (varying in range from 1.657 to 1.789 in relation to the reference group of the lowest-density quintile), indicating a highly urban audience.

To probe these tendencies more closely, I now examine their relations to the internal economy of television viewing practices considered in the previous section. I look first at the different ways in which gender, age, education, occupational class and ethnicity relate to choice of genres considered in terms of their different degrees of legitimacy. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Table 7 is the low degree of difference that exists between preferences for medium-legitimacy genres when these are correlated with level of education, class and ethnicity. The differences that are registered in relation to gender (55 per cent men, 32 per cent women) are also largely a function of the inclusion of sport in the medium - legitimacy genres and soaps in the low-legitimacy genres. It is, however, the marked and consistent reduction in preferences for the medium-legitimacy genres with age from a high of 71 per cent for the 18–25 year olds to a low of 27 per cent for those aged 75 or over, and the corresponding increase in preferences for high-legitimacy genres from a low of 10 per cent for the 18–25 year olds to a high of 49 per cent for the 55–64 year olds, that is most striking, indicating the pivotal role that age plays in stratifying the television audience. The roles of both level of education and occupational class are, in this regard, much less sharply delineated. Thirty-one per cent of those with no educational qualifications share an interest in the high-legitimacy genres, while 12 per cent of the university educated prefer low-legitimacy genres. The degree of variation in preferences for high-legitimacy genres is quite evenly spread and is quiet compressed in its range (excluding those who have never worked), from 26 per cent of those in routine occupations to 45 per cent of higher-level professionals. It is notable, however, that both of the employing classes (3 and 5 per cent) and the higher professionals (7 per cent) show low rates of involvement in the low-legitimacy genres that are most preferred by routine and semi-routine workers (27 per cent each).

	Low legitimacy	Medium legitimacy	High legitimacy	N
Gender				
Men	5	55	39	713
Women	32	32	32	851
Age				
18–24	19	71	10	144
25–34	21	49	28	297
35–44	19	48	32	318
45–54	19	37	40	266
55–64	16	34	49	240
65–74	27	32	41	168
75 +	19	27	40	130
Education				
No qualifications	28	40	31	419
GCSE/O-level	24	39	34	372
A-level/higher	18	55	27	210
Further education	14	42	43	169
University	12	42	45	366

Table 7: Genre Choice (Row %)

The most notable differences relating to ethnicity are the relatively high rate of preference for high-legitimacy genres on the part of those who classed themselves as white but not English or British and the relatively low rates of preference for low-legitimacy genres on the part of both this group and the 'non-whites' in the sample. These patterns are partly explicable in terms of the educational and class characteristics of these two groups. They have the highest levels of university education – 34 per cent for the 'non-whites' and 31 per cent for non-British whites compared to 22 per cent for the white English and white British – and the lowest ratios of those with no educational qualifications. Their positions in the occupational class structure are, however, different: 39 per cent of the white group – many of whom come from Europe, North America or Australia – are congregated in the professional and managerial classes, compared to 25 per cent of the 'non-whites'.

Turning now to programme choice, the more generally noteworthy aspects of Table 8 concern the respects in which preferences for the soaps/reality and popular drama programme clusters decline more or less consistently with both increasing levels of education and ascending class position. Preferences for 'serious television', new drama and new comedy all increase fairly consistently with level of education with, in the case of the first two, university education having a pronounced impact. In terms of occupational class, quite sharp divisions are registered between those in routine, semi-routine and lower technician positions, who show little liking for either 'serious television' or new drama, and the two professional classes whose members register quite high levels of interest in these – although not so much, in the case of 'serious television' as that evinced by small employers.

	Soaps/reality	Popular drama	'Serious TV'	New drama	New comedy	N
Gender						
Men	14	30	11	6	12	713
Women	31	33	5	5	16	851
Age						
18–24	21	16	4	5	31	144
25–34	27	18	3	7	25	297
35–44	24	29	5	8	14	318
45–54	24	33	8	6	12	266
55–64	25	41	11	4	8	240
65–74	16	50	11	5	2	168
75 +	18	42	19	0	1	130
Education						
No qualifications	26	43	5	3	5	419
GCSE/O-level	28	31	4	4	13	372
A-level/higher	22	25	8	7	21	210
Further education	22	32	8	5	12	169
University	16	21	15	11	21	366
Occupational class						
Large employer/managers	19	20	7	3	10	30
High professional	8	21	14	13	18	95
Lower professional/high technician	18	30	12	12	17	236
Lower managerial	16	29	11	8	14	81
High supervisor	13	42	8	6	20	71
Intermediate	27	29	6	6	17	187
Small employer	3	46	24	5	16	37
Own account	24	29	7	9	10	74
Lower supervisor	23	31	11	5	6	124
Lower technician	23	36	2	5	10	62
Semi-routine	30	34	6	2	14	323
Routine	29	37	5	2	12	202
Never worked	44	10	3	0	8	40
Ethnicity						
White English	22	33	7	6	13	1117
White other British	27	31	9	6	12	291
White other	6	22	15	4	33	46
Other	30	15	11	2	20	109

Table 8: Programme Choice

Again, though, the effects of age are consistently the most marked, particularly for popular drama, where interest increases from a low of 16 per cent for the 18–24 age group to 50 per cent for the 65–74 year olds, and for 'serious television', where there is a six - fold rate of increase from 3 per cent of 25–34 year olds to 19 per cent of those aged 75 or over. An interest in new comedy is subject to a constant and steep decline through the age ranges. Probing these differences a little further throws useful light on the ways in which particular areas of television are caught up in more complex forms of social differentiation arising from their relation to the intersections of age, class and gender. For example, comparing the preferences for 'serious television' and new drama of the two highest occupational classes (large employers, senior managers and higher professionals) with those of the lower-level professionals and managers and higher level supervisory and technical workers reveals significant differences in age composition. For those large employers, higher managers and

professionals who indicated a first preference for a new drama programme, the rate of support declines from a high of 21 per cent for the 24–35 year olds through every age group, except for the 55–64 year olds, to 0 per cent for those aged 75 and over.[11] For the lower level professionals and managers and higher-level supervisory and technical workers, support peaks at 18 per cent of the 35–44 year olds, declining thereafter to a low of 4 per cent for the 55–64 year olds. The equivalent figures for 'serious television' show support increasing more or less steadily with age for both classes, rising from around 5 per cent for the 25–34 age group, peaking with the 45–54 age group at 15 per cent for the large employers, higher-level managers and professionals, and in the two highest age ranges at 19 per cent (65–74) and 34 per cent (75þ) for the lower-level professionals, managers etc.

Here, then, is clear corroboration of the link between new drama and age-based practices of distinction related to younger managers and professionals. The fact that, within these two classes, men's and women's preferences for new drama are more or less evenly drawn, whereas, in the case of new comedy, women are more likely to be devotees than men, indicates that there are complex relations between class and gender to be investigated too. The strong presence of American imports in these two programme clusters also lends support to the view that the cutting edge of American media culture has displaced the role of traditional European forms of cultural capital in the social trajectories of younger management and professional elites (Savage, Bagnal, & Longhurst, 2005). This, plus the fact that, in line with international tendencies (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004), the younger sections of our sample were considerably less likely than older ones to take part in traditional forms of high culture activity outside the home may mean that, notwithstanding its general role in flattening social distinctions, television might now be playing a particularly important role in the ways in which younger groups position themselves in relation to one another within the cultural field.

So far as channel preferences are concerned (Table 9), BBC1 and ITV1 are the two most preferred channels for all levels of education, all occupational classes and all age groups, for both men and women, and for all the ethnicity categories. BBC1, like BBC 2 and Channel 4, is more likely to be preferred as one ascends the ladder of educational accomplishment, whereas the opposite is true for ITV1 and Channel 5. The class profiles of these channel preferences show the same tendency, although the zero participation of large employers and higher-level managers in Channel 4 is worthy of note. Age, however, is relatively muted in its impact so far as channel choice is concerned. It does not have a major influence on preferences for ITV1, which fluctuate by only 12 per cent through the age ranges. Preferences for BBC1 roughly double between the two extremes of the age range, and those for BBC2 increase three - fold between the 18–24 year olds and the 55–64 year olds, and tail off a little after that. The exception to these tendencies is Channel 4, where preferences are highest in the 18–44 age ranges and fall off sharply after that.

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[11] I have discounted the responses for the 18-24 age group as being too small for both new drama and 'serious television' to be of any statistical value.

	BBC1	BBC2	ITV1	Channel 4/S4C	Channel 5	N
Gender						
Men	43	7	29	10	5	713
Women	38	4	42	8	4	851
Age						
18–24	29	3	39	19	7	144
25–34	38	4	37	13	2	297
35–44	36	4	41	10	3	318
45–54	43	7	33	4	5	266
55–64	47	9	29	6	5	240
65–74	42	7	36	5	6	168
75 +	50	5	35	1	6	130
Education						
No qualifications	34	4	47	3	7	419
GCSE/O-level	38	3	43	7	4	372
A-level/higher	40	8	31	13	2	210
Further education	41	5	32	11	5	169
University	51	9	20	14	1	366
Occupational class						
Large employer/managers	60	10	17	0	3	30
High professional	58	10	12	11	0	95
Lower professional/high technician	52	8	22	12	3	236
Lower managerial	38	9	31	16	4	81
High supervisor	44	4	39	6	1	71
Intermediate	44	4	39	10	2	187
Small employer	54	11	24	5	3	37
Own account	48	9	33	3	1	74
Lower super	34	5	38	10	7	124
Lower technician	36	11	36	3	5	62
Semi-routine	32	2	46	8	7	323
Routine	28	4	52	7	6	202
Never worked	28	5	28	10	15	40
Ethnicity						
White English	42	6	37	8	3	1,117
White other British	39	4	36	10	4	291
White other	24	9	26	15	9	46
Other	37	3	27	5	14	109

Table 9: Channel Choice

Conclusions

It will be useful, in concluding, to reiterate an earlier caution regarding the limitations of the statistics reported to this point. As expressions of taste elicited in response to a prescribed schedule of options, they are not necessarily a reliable guide to viewing habits. Reporting choices in the quasi - confessional context of a questionnaire like ours is a different matter from actually making them. One telling sign of a disjunction between the two is the fact that only 20 per cent of the sample indicated one of the low legitimacy genres as their first

preference, compared to 53 per cent indicating one of these as their least - liked genre.[12] Yet these genres–quizzes and game shows, soap operas, reality television, and variety and chat shows–are usually among the high rating shows in weekly schedules. This suggests that the preferences expressed by our respondents may tell us more about how they wish to place themselves within the space of broadcasting–aligning their viewing with genres or programmes which have a greater 'respectability' factor in the broader culture, and distinguishing them from those which are routinely condemned as frivolous or prurient–than about the relative distribution of their viewing time.

That said, our data do show, first, that the space of broadcast television is characterized by a clearly articulated internal economy in which genre, programme and channel choices are closely interconnected, and second, that the ways in which viewers relate to this space are affected by diverse aspects of their social position. Figure 3, the graphic representation of a multiple correspondence analysis of the relations between genre preference and a range of social position indicators, provides a useful means of summarizing these findings by visualizing the interactions between them within a socio - cultural space whose left–right axis mainly plots education and occupational class and, to a lesser degree, gender and whose vertical axis plots age, ascending from the youngest group in the top left quadrant to the oldest in the bottom right.[13] Resting on inductive procedures, this visual depiction of the field of broadcast television confirms the division of genres into low, high and medium legitimacies explored earlier in this article. All of the low-legitimacy genres (soap operas, quizzes and game shows, reality television, and variety and chat shows) occur in the right-hand quadrants, in association with lower levels of education and the lower occupational classes, albeit that they are located quite differently in relation to age (as between reality television at the most youthful end of the age spectrum and the strong association of quizzes and game shows with the oldest age groups). The high-legitimacy genres, by contrast, are all found in the bottom-left quadrant, defined principally in terms of high level of education and the higher occupational class positions. It is important, though, that except for arts programmes, occupying the extreme left edge of the space, the other high - legitimacy genres (drama, news and current affairs, and documentaries) are located towards the right - hand edge of this quadrant, thus confirming the tendency for 'distinctions on the box' not to be sharply drawn. The medium-legitimacy genres (comedy/sitcoms, sport, police/detective, films, cookery/ home decorations/gardening) are, finally, all located towards the middle of the field, their positions there varying mainly in accordance with their relations to age or gender.

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[12] The distribution of these dislikes is interesting, too. Although varying markedly with age (rising constantly from 36 per cent of 18-25 year olds to 65 per cent of 65–74 year olds), they are spread more evenly across different levels of education (from 49 per cent of those with no qualifications to 62 per cent of those who had gone to university) and class (from 47 per cent of workers in routine occupations to 70 per cent of large employers and higher professionals and managers).

[13] The forms of multiple correspondence analysis developed by the project team are discussed in the article by Gayo-Cal, Savage and Warde in this volume. It should be noted, though, that the version reported here represents an earlier stage of work than that reported in that article, and relates to the distribution of tastes only within the media field rather than in the cultural field as a whole.

Figure 3: The Social Space of Broadcast Television

The role of ethnicity in this space also merits comment. It is clear from the data reported earlier that the white members of the sample who do not identify themselves as British have genre, programme and channel choices that are towards the higher end of the legitimacy spectrum compared to the white English and the white British. This is reflected here in the location of the 'white other' group towards the centre of the bottom-left quadrant, with the 'white English' pretty well at the dead centre of the field as a whole and the 'white Celtic' in the right - hand half of the field. By contrast, the 'non-white' members of the sample (shown here as 'other origin') exhibit patterns of response that tend towards high-legitimacy options in some respects and towards lower ones in others. This is clearly a reflection of the quite different groups and populations that this problematic category of 'non-white' misleadingly groups together. It is for this reason that we added to our main sample an ethnic boost sample, so as to be able to examine the different tastes of the three main minority ethnic groups in Britain – the Indian, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean communities. While a detailed consideration of this cannot be undertaken here, our analysis of these data (Bennett et al., 2006) shows that each of these groups differs from the others in interesting and important ways just as much as each differs from the main sample.

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