Art, Access, and the Internet: Continued Inequalities and a New Technological Utopia Anna Kay

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Anna Kay

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On my honor, I have not received unauthorized aid on this paper.

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ABSTRACT

This paper concerns the pervasive inequalities in arts attendance and the larger consequences of that stratification. Situated within the changing art climate in America alongside emerging theories of cultural openness, omnivorism, and technological utopia, I studied participation in the arts and technology in America from years 1982 to 2012. Using data from the National Endowment of the Arts funded Survey for Public Participation in the Arts, I ran frequency statistics, bivariate tests, and logistic regressions on attendance, demographic, and technology variables. First, I found persistent gaps in cultural attendance, both inside and outside the home, with white, well educated, and older individuals visiting art museums, operas, craft fairs, and using the Internet far more than other groups. Second, I found that the Internet functions as a gateway to cultural institutions instead of replacing them—looking at art online increases the propensity to look at art in a museum.

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INTRODUCTION

Art and culture in America have changed considerably in the past thirty years (Lopez-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005; Coates 2014). Tastes have become more omnivorous and less tethered to the former highbrow/lowbrow binary (Peterson and Kern 1996) and cultural institutions are moving in the same direction (Coates 2014). In August 2014, Minneapolis's Walker Art Museum hosted an "Internet Cat Video" festival; similarly, the High Line public park in New York is now a location for subversive and cutting edge contemporary art. Free exhibitions are increasingly common at every museum, and accessible sculpture gardens and public art are the new normal across the country. Further, museums and other cultural institutions have been relying on their interactive websites to give the public glimpses into the museum, promote upcoming events, and offer virtual tours and live streaming (Charitonos et al. 2012). These technological advancements are coupled with the changing contemporary art climate and create a sense of increased equality in who gets to access art. The general ideology surrounding art in America has aligned itself with the statement: If admission into a museum is free, then everyone goes.

The problem with that conception is the disregard for the larger structural framework inhibiting certain groups from participating in culture. Sociological investigations into art and culture in America continue to illuminate pervasive social inequalities in access to art and culture, despite any illusory openness (DiMaggio and Useem 1978; Hanquinet 2013). These findings have been particularly prevalent in America, where the governmental arts policy has delegated inclusion initiatives to individual donors and cultural institutions. But even French cultural policies to reduce

social disparities in access to art have hardly made a dent in the structural gradient in attendance rates and cultural capital (Coulangeon 2013). Further, the introduction of the Internet, while theoretically functioning to increase access universally, has been dictated by the same demographic inequalities as access to art outside the home. Despite best efforts on the part of government, cultural institutions, individual benefactors, or technological advancements access to art and culture remains a luxury with lasting social consequences.

At its core, culture maintains as much structural hold on society as the determinates race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Cultural conventions, and those defining highculture, create and maintain a framework of exclusion and distinction catering to the intellectual and economic elite (Bourdieu 1984). Therefore, "culture [remains] at the service of the status quo, of the monotonous reproduction of society and maintenance of system equilibrium" (Bourdieu ibid. 11). The cultural resources that are, by definition, easily accessible are generally dubbed low-class, "popular", or worthless. Thus, for art to be high-class it must be differentiated from the tastes of the masses. As such, art and culture become mechanisms through which powerful classes marginalize, exclude, and separate themselves from the economically and intellectually inferior, essentially creating closed class systems (Bourdieu 1984, O'Neill 2009). In the same way individuals are restricted access based on gender or race, those without cultural capital are blocked from segments of educational success, employment, and admission into certain social networks (Bourdieu 1984). The study of art and culture in America is full of data highlighting vast inequalities that ultimately come to the same conclusion—differential access to art and culture, both in person and on the Internet, in America is a prevalent form of social

control and class discrimination.

In this paper, I examine the existence of social inequalities in art and culture between 1982 and 2012 with an understanding that inequalities can be explained by differential attendance rates to cultural institutions along demographic lines. Further, I investigate exactly how technology is affecting, enhancing or eliminating certain inequalities. Taking into account the omnivorous quality of consumption and the morphing contemporary art climate, inequalities will be placed in the context of theories of distinction, openness and technological utopianism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cultural capital and cultural legitimacy

Bourdieu argues that humans are able to legitimate themselves based on their cultural consumption. Existing in "fields", individual actors accrue and exchange economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capital in order to exert dominance over others. A person with valued cultural capital is a person advantaged in the field of status competition. Individuals with highbrow taste are able to distinguish themselves from the masses with lowbrow taste by declaring their taste superior and exclusive. Thus, individual actors residing at the autonomous pole dictate the rules, standards, and value of culture in the field. While the defining class is historically the elite one, for Bourdieu high cultural capital was not absolutely united with high economic capital. The difference between the vulgar elite and intellectual middle class is variation in cultural consumption. Thus, we can understand class as being marked by particular tastes in cultural consumption.

However, sociologists have challenged Bourdieu, finding that high cultural capital and high economic capital often go hand in hand (DiMaggio and Mohr1985; Ollivier 2008; Bennett 2011). Individuals with high economic capital have higher access and involvement with the arts, accumulating the cultural capital necessary to excel in academia, social circles, and employment. Using cultural capital as a currency for power and legitimation, the ruling classes enter into a closed loop of class reproduction. Above all, struggles over cultural systems of classification are linked to struggles over social divisions, in the sense that tastes and cultural practices often function as means of enacting and justifying struggles over social boundaries (Alderson et al. 2007; Ollivier 2008, Kieran 2010).

The highbrow/low brow divide reigned within the sociology of culture until the introduction to the "cultural omnivore" (Peterson and Kern 1996; 2005). Unlike the highbrow/lowbrow dichotomy present in Bourdieu's work, the new omnivore exists in a cultural field where they are "[open] to appreciating everything" (Peterson and Kern 1996: 904). The new patterns in consumption further challenge Bourdieu's assertion that an individual's taste is wedded to their ranking in the social hierarchy. According to Peterson, individuals with high economic capital are increasingly indicating they enjoy various lowbrow genres characterized by the attachment to socially marginalized groups (gospel/rap music genres or folk/street art) instead of or along with highbrow activities (performances of plays, ballet, classical music, musicals, art galleries, museums, or the opera). The new omnivore/univore thesis turned the question away from *status* of consumption so present in Bourdieusian fields, and looked toward the "voraciousness" and diversity of cultural consumption (Katz-Gerro and Sullivan 2010). While

omnivorousness is indeed a trend marked by widening tastes in literature (Zavisca 2005), music (Van Eijck et al. 2008), dance (Chan and Goldthorpe 2005; Sanderson 2006), and fine art, research points back to social inequalities in cultural consumption despite the "new openness".

Cultural consumption in America

The modern art world in America has also embedded itself in the theoretical debate between covert elitism and hopeful openness. Historically, the United States has been remarkably exclusive and hierarchical in terms of the distribution of economic and cultural capital (DiMaggio 1982, 1995). Institutions were known to actually restrict access to art based on social class and, when opening exhibits to the public, art was presented in an intimidating and unapproachable way. Over the past few decades, the contemporary visual art world has been under pressure to move away from its strict hierarchies towards greater communication while treating the public or "masses" as active consumers rather than passive recipients (Marty 2007; Glow, Johanson and Kershaw 2014). Haapalainen (2006) notes that contemporary art is residing within "new institutionalism" where both institutions and consumers understand art in terms of ideas of openness, networking and process instead of class divisions. Contemporary art and art institutions are increasingly trending toward immaterial and situational content, turning the conservative art museum into a location for social exchange. Instead of relying on controlled physical spaces to transmit and communicate cultural capital, we are now turning toward technology as an access point.

The main approach to socially conscious cultural openness in America has been

reliant on the Internet and the "digital capital" that it provides (Stern 2010: 29). While elites have dominated the discourse on artistic worth for decades through certain gatekeepers like gallery owners, curators, and art historians (DiMaggio 1982; Arora and Vermeylen 2012), access to a computer today means access to a museum blog, an art critic website, or a gallery page. The launching of the Internet among other modern cultural intermediaries theoretically boosted the power to increase access to art across class lines (Nixon and du Gay 2002). While enthusiasts asserted that the Internet would diminish inequality by lessening the cost of information and allowing everyone equal access to accruing cultural capital, many sociologists have found disparities in access to the Internet based on race (Hoffman and Novak 1998), age, gender (Bimber 2000), and SES (Stern 2010). The same inequalities arise in terms of contact with art through media (Bradshaw et al. 2012). The Internet is, indeed, an open forum that art institutions are using, however, the Internet is employed first and foremost by educated individuals with high economic capital (DiMaggio and Hargittai 2001).

Another implication of the rise of Internet is the potential of a technological utopia or dystopia. Theorists have worried about the dystopian potential of the Internet since its birth, arguing that Internet connection and networks will replace actual connection and participation in communities and culture—furthering isolation and disconnection with the outside world. On the other end of the spectrum resides the utopian idea that the universal and wide reach of the Internet will result in "extended democracy, personal liberation, enhanced powers of organization and coordination, and renewal of community" (Howcroft and Fitzgerald 1998: 6). In 1991, Wellman found that, instead of taking the place of outside connection, the Internet has a tendency to increase a

desire for face-to-face contact within communities (Wellman et al. 1991, 1996). Internet use functioned to ease people into social situations by expanding networks and breaking down social barriers. Art and culture can be accessed on the Internet in a way similar to Wellman's social networks and community connections. Within the context of a technological dystopia or utopia, the increase of art on the Internet would either take the place of cultural institution attendance, or give individuals the resources to engage with art and culture outside the home, or have no effect at all.

American "cultural democratization" in context

The theoretical discussion surrounding cultural consumption and the evolution of the American art world parallels the policy's attempt to increase openness. Varying types of government policy can shape the culture it supports in different ways (Hillman-Chartland and McCaughey 1989). Thus, it seems logical that the policy surrounding culture in the United States has aligned itself with the highbrow/lowbrow and omnivore/univore dilemma within sociology. Historically the United States serves as a "facilitator state", promoting private support of the arts through tax policies (Hillman-Chartland and McCaughey 1989: 54). Until the 1960's, American art was almost completely funded through property and income taxes, patronage, and donation creating cultural institutions supported through the economic capital of the American elite (Moen 1997). Even today, America's primary art funding source, the 1965 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) remains peripheral, only funding individual projects while not giving substantial money to cultural institutions. The number NEA funded non-profits supporting styles outside the high-arts discipline fall far behind the budget and audience

support of more traditional genres (Kreidler 2013). Although the NEA's mission statement explicitly addresses efforts to decrease inequality in access to art, its actual policy remains uniquely linked to supporting diverse exhibitions rather than inclusive presentation or education.

As consumption patterns have changed, American art policy has aligned itself with cultural omnivorism, increasingly funding exotic exhibitions and up-and-coming artists instead of attending to basic cultural inequalities in access. While a large section of the NEA aims to conserve the classical hegemonic art of the past, smaller more contemporary policy at the state and local levels fund experimental, and popular art (Arian 1989, Besch and Minson 2001). The movement toward complete openness has been difficult due to powerful political desires, often fueled by autonomous-elite ideals, insuring that the NEA remains focused on increasing variety and conservation of art instead of access to it (Clotfelter 1991; Moen 1997; Shockley 2011).

The policy climate in America stands out when compared to the far-reaching European state, country and ministry funded art worlds. For example, France functions as an "architect state", whose various branches of government pay special attention to social determinants when allocating funding (Hillman-Chartland and McCaughey 1989: 54). French cultural policy, especially that of André Malraux in the 1970s, has long aimed to diminish the social disparities in access to art (Poirrier 2003). Primarily aimed at encouraging art supply to the masses, Malraux's essentially democratized highbrow culture (Coulangeon 2013). French policy contrasts that of America, setting up an interesting dialogue between two countries, one aimed at distributing cultural capital and one aimed at preserving it. Further, the American focus on *what* is in contemporary

museums challenges the French emphasis on *who* is attending cultural institutions.

The main differences between American and French approaches to art remains embedded in political ideals and policy. Unlike socially conscious policy employed in France, American reliance on technological developments has simply added the Internet to the long list of barriers to art access including basic transportation, leisure time, and economic means (Jun et al. 2008; Johnson et al. 2011). Despite the changing nature of what kinds of cultural capital are relevant, how cultural capital is transmitted, and whether or not cultural capital holds weight in contemporary America, access to the valuable currency is unequal.

Defining cultural inequalities

The shifting taste in America from elite/mass to univore/omnivore coupled with the growing influence of certain cultural intermediaries make cultural inequalities difficult to define. Inequalities in cultural consumption remain stuck in a theoretical back and forth between Bourdieu's distinction and Peterson's omnivorism. One side maintains status and cultural capital's influence on cultural participation, the other argues hierarchies being dismantled. The tendency is to understand the new "culturally cosmopolitan" tastes of the elite as a reflection of their tolerant, flexible, and inclusive nature while the popular classes are labeled as less tolerant or less open (Lahire 2008: 184). The "cultural omnivore" then still has classification power, defining what taste is superior despite increased voraciousness or consumption.

That being said, Ollivier (2008) stresses necessary attention to power relations that reinforce the academic debates on cultural access, consumption, and diversity in

contemporary research. Cultural omnivorism does not equate openness to cultural diversity but rather "[cultural omnivorism] builds upon... the older categories of high and mass culture in which it remains thoroughly embedded" (Ollivier 2008). Cultural omnivorism is not synonymous with dismantled cultural hierarchies, rather inequalities based on gender (Tally-Katz 2002; DiMaggio 2004; Ollivier 2008), SES (Chan and Goldtorpe 2007; Bellavance 2008; Kraaykamp et al. 2008; Van Ingen and van Eijck 2008), education level (Hansen, Burdick, Cammarano and Obellero 2009), and race (DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990; Blackwood and Purcell 2014) are still present.

Tally Katz-Gerro (2002) tracked the changing demographic of high-art consumers over time in Sweden, Israel, West Germany, and Italy only to find that preference was linked by class status as well as gender and ethnicity. Michele Ollivier (2008) found that over a period of 30 years in Quebec, the shifting classification from univore to omnivore hardly existed. Further, Coulangeon (2013) illuminated drastic and unchanging classed cultural disparities in cultural consumption. Coulangeon's investigation is the only one to directly investigate cultural consumption in the wake of changing policy, taking an empirical look at the changing theoretical canon of consumption. He found that not only are there social disparities within access to culture, but also "the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture remains consistent with the major principle of differentiation of cultural practices and attitudes" (Coulangeon 2013: 204). Thus, the basic definition of inequality in cultural consumption becomes access.

However, simply measuring increased access to visual art via media does not translate to increased equality in quality of consumption, judgment, or knowledge construction (Glassner 2000; Arora and Vermeylan 2012). Barriers to accessing art are

not only material, but also dependent on symbolic and cognitive factors that affect the understanding of art and the desire to gain access to the cultural capital. Even if individuals are using increased opportunities to access art, they may not be constructing meaning, drawing connections, or understanding the art in a cultural context. Meaning construction around art varies greatly based on SES, gender, and race (Bourdieu 1984, DiMaggio 1987; Newman et al. 2004; Harris 2006; Kearon 2012), adding another barrier to true equality in participation. Cultural capital then is something deeply situational.

If we can understand Bourdieu's finding that the ability to define (or to distinguish your taste as superior and separate from others) is the ability to control, then the study of consumption patterns becomes the study of social patterns. Even the introduction of the omnivore furthers the connection between changing cultural participation and social definitions. Despite the shifting policy and institutional setting, studying consumption patterns will reflect the climate in which it exists. The question becomes, are there still social disparities in cultural participation despite evolving theories and changing policies?

HYPOTHESES

The American cultural climate has changed over the past thirty years chiefly due to the growth of the Internet, and the rise of the cultural omnivore. The shifting theory around taste and consumption have made certain inequalities within this climate difficult to define. Instead of looking at voraciousness of consumption, investigating the evolution of basic participation trends over time will reveal pervading gaps in access to cultural capital.

The policy climate in the United States has remained relatively stable over the past thirty years other than a drastic budget cut to the NEA in 1989. Variation, then, is predominantly described by the changing nature of the contemporary art world in America, practices of new openness, and the introduction of the Internet as a point of access. While this study is loosely modeled after Coulangeon's (2013) study of inequalities in France, America does not have the same tangible shift in policy. Therefore, my research will address the following questions:

- 1. To what extend do social indicators (gender, race, age group, and education level) effect attendance rates to more exclusive cultural events (art museum, opera) and popular cultural events (craft-fair) over time (1992, 2002, 2012)?
- 2. In lieu of actual government policy supporting widening art access like that imposed in contemporary France, to what degree is the Internet influencing increased access to art (art museum, opera) based on those same demographics (gender, race, age group, and education level)?
- 3. Does the emergence of art on the Internet influence cultural institution attendance rates outside of the home in congruence with theories of either technological utopia or dystopia?

First, I hypothesize that attendance rates will go down over time and that attendance rates will be socially determined. Drawing from the discussion of the literature and current policy climate in America, I hypothesize that the Internet remains an access point saved for the already economically and culturally elite. Those with already high cultural capital will continue to accrue it despite the universal nature of the Internet. Subsequently, those

using the Internet will be more likely to actually attend the cultural institution in person— Internet art promoting museum art in congruence with Wellman's technological utopia.

DATA, METHODS, AND VARIABLE DEFINITIONS

The data from my study came from The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). The SPPA data is a compilation of survey responses taken over thirty years: 1982, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2008 and 2012. Funded by the National Endowment of the Arts, the SPPA was administered through the U.S. Census Bureau's National Crime Survey until 1997 and later as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The SPPA is America's leading survey in cultural practices. The sample size reports the answers of 79, 244 random, non-institutionalized American respondents, giving us individual-level data on preference, cultural attendance, and demographic patterns over time.

The SPPA questionnaire has changed since its birth in 1982, dropping certain dated questions and adding new ones regarding media and technological advancements. Due to the yearly changes in data collection methodologies, question wording and sample population the cumulative data set presents a few limitations. For example, we must take into account how much a change reflects certain survey modifications or illuminates an actual inequality. However, the cumulative data set (1982-2012) makes cross-sectional analysis simple by mainly including variables that have remained constant over time, namely the demographic and art attendance responses. Further, the cumulative data set disregards the 1997 responses, as the 1997 survey was not distributed through the Census Bureau (unlike every other round of SPPA). In order to further ensure consistency

between years, I omitted the incongruent variables from my analysis, specifically salsa/Latin concert attendance rates and certain racial categories (see variable list).

The survey contains questions about respondent's participation in, and frequency of attending, art performances and events in the following categories: jazz music, classical music, opera, musicals, non-musical plays, ballet, other dance, art museums, visual art and craft fairs, and historical park/monument sites. All eleven participation variables relate to cultural events individuals seek outside the home. Additionally, the 2008 and 2012 surveys include questions regarding exposure to art via various media, including the radio, mobile phone, television or Internet, introducing a set of questions regarding participation inside the home. Although the 2012 survey is the most recent, some specific changes render it difficult to analyze. Unlike the 2008 data-set, the 2012 questions were asked to both the respondent, and the spouse separately. While these variations were smoothed over in the cumulative data set, the 2012 set varies in number of survey responses and accuracy too much to stand alone.

Comprehensively, the questionnaire gathers variable data regarding highbrow, lowbrow, and middle-brow cultural activities, allowing us to investigate not only changing attendance rates but differentiation in cultural event attendance between groups. My analysis will focus on a set of ten variables that remain constant over the past thirty years, as well as include more contemporary variables regarding media. Taking into account both the cultural omnivore and the changing cultural climate in America, my variables align themselves as indicators of cultural participation in other influential studies (DiMaggio 1985; Peterson and Kern 1996; Coulangeon 2011, 2013).

Variables in my analysis and how I grouped them:

Demographic variables

- 1. Race. While the 2008 data takes a much more comprehensive stance on race including mixed races etc., 1982 offers responses of "white" "black" and "other". For my purposes, I simplified the variables including only "white", "black", "Asian" and "other" despite more comprehensive contemporary categories including "black-white-American Indian" and "4 or 5 or more races". All these mixed race groups went into the other category. Race is used both as a categorical variable and as a series of dummies.
- 2. Ethnicity. Ethnicity was coded as either Hispanic (1) or non-Hispanic (0). This variable is only available in years 2002, 2008, and 2012.
- 3. Age. The SPPA asks age data based on 10 year increments (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+). Frequencies varied greatly in this organization, most of the respondents either 25-34 or 55-64. I condensed the age variables into three groups in order to even the ratios. The data was analyzed with age groups 18-34, 35-54, 55-75+.
- 4. Gender. Gender was a categorical variable coded 1 for male and 2 for female. I dummied these variables out into two separate female (0 no, 1 yes) and male (0 no, 1 yes) variables.
- 5. Education level. The education level of respondents is divided into four categories— high school diploma or less, some college, bachelors degree, or post grad degree. In lieu of an accurate household income variable, education level is used as a marker of class and status.
- 6. Year. I was able to parse out data based on each year in the cumulative data set, focusing specifically on 1982, 1992, 2002, 2008, and 2012.

Attendance variables

- 1. Art museum attendance. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) been to an art museum or art gallery during the past 12 months. Art museum participation represents a relatively accessible cultural activity with a medium attendance rate.
- 2. Opera attendance. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) been to a live opera performance during the past 12 months. Opera participation represents an inaccessible cultural activity with a low attendance rate.
- 3. Craft fair attendance. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) been to a craft fair or visual art festival during the past 12 months. Craft fair participation represents a highly attended and accessible cultural activity.

Technology variables

- 1. Internet use. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) used the Internet in the past 12 months.
- 2. Art museum online. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) viewed art on the Internet in the past 12 months.
- 3. Art information online. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) used the Internet for information regarding art museum events, gallery events, or cultural updates on the Internet in the past 12 months.
- 4. Art museum viewing online. Respondents indicated that they either had (1) or had not (0) used the Internet to view visual art, specific to a museum or gallery, on the Internet in the past 12 months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequencies in the SPPA data, as shown in Table 1, reflect the greater cultural trends in America and around the world (DiMaggio 1985; Coulangeon 2011). The most attended cultural events were art museums/galleries (with an average of 24.13% of the population indicating they participated in the past twelve months) and craft fairs/visual art festivals (with an average of 35.5%). The activities with the lowest rates of participation were opera (2.9% attended in the past twelve months) and ballet (4.02%) attended in the past twelve months). In terms of frequencies overtime, most of the attendance rates report significant decline. Opera, ballet, play, musical, classical music, jazz, and craft fair attendance rates dropped between 1992 and 2012. The only cultural event with any increased attendance was a visit to an art museum or gallery between 1992 and 2002 (26.36% indicating yes in 1992, 27.05% in 2002), followed by a large drop in 2012. Like DiMaggio and Mukhtar's (2004) findings, the downward trends in attendance reflect a movement away from cultural activities as leisure activities. Individuals are not only working more, but choosing to spend time watching television, sports, or engaging in athletic activities (Bradshaw et al. 2012). That being said, the drops in cultural participation over the past thirty years do not point to the declining importance of cultural capital, but rather to an increase in competition from different breeds of entertainment, as well as changing population composition and family structure (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004).

With frequency statistics highlighting general trends in attendance over time, I then introduced the social indicator variables (see Table 2) using bivariate analysis. I ran a chi square test for independence for each of my social indicator variables and the attendance rates across cultural events. My hypotheses and the literature led me to believe there would be a statistically significant relationship between most social signifiers and attendance rates. However, the only notable relationship was between education and art participation. Above women, whites, and older people, higher educated people were more likely to attend the opera (X2 (2, N=96,840) = 0.16, p <0.00, art museums/galleries (X2 (2, N=96,620) = 0.36, p <0.00) and, surprisingly, craft fairs (X2 (2, N=72,277) = 0.23, p <0.00), as well use the Internet (X2 (2, N=9,296) = 0.33, p <0.00).

Because my dependent variables were dichotomous, I ran logistic regressions to determine the models. I ran a logistic regression contrasting art museum attendance against race, gender, education, age group, year, and Internet use using the SPPA cumulative data set.

Continued inequality in cultural participation

The regressions run on the cumulative SPPA data set chiefly told us what we already knew— well-educated, white, women are attending art museums and the opera.

Model 3.1 illustrates, most importantly, that education level has a significant effect on the

likelihood of having attended an art museum or gallery in the past twelve months, with individuals holding an advanced post-graduate degree on average exhibiting 959% (9.5 times more likely) greater likelihood of attending than individuals completing some high school or receiving a GED (OR = 10.59). This finding supports Bourdieu and other scholars' assertion that cultural capital remains tied to education. Art museums are historically places united with educational institutions— field trips, student outings, and class assignments often involve trips to art museums. Further, basic schooling, both public and private, tends to contain an element of art history and practice. Thus, better education individuals have a significantly greater propensity toward understanding art as important and actively accruing cultural capital.

Demographic variables were also investigated in the regression. Although less significant, an increase in age significantly decreases the likelihood of attending an art museum or gallery, with those 55-75+ 14% less likely to attend a museum than those ages 18-34 (OR=.86). In regard to race, black people are 44.7% less likely to attend than their white counter parts (OR=.55), Asians are 26.6% less likely (OR=.73). Lastly, being male also significantly decreases the likelihood of attending an art museum or gallery (OR=.79). These social indicators were controls in each of my regressions. While these variables point to sustained imbalance in cultural participation over the years, they are not the primary focus of this study.

In this study, the opera represented the most elite and inaccessible cultural event chiefly due to the existence of a language barrier, specific etiquette, and content. In Model 3.2 we see exaggerated imbalances when compared to those of art museum attendance. Similar to Model 3.1, education level has a significant effect on the likelihood

of having attended a live opera performance in the past twelve months, with individuals with an advanced post-graduate degree 1,284% more likely to attend than individuals completing some high school or receiving a GED (OR = 13.8). The population attending the opera is older than the art museum, and significantly whiter. The highbrow quality of the opera makes it attainable only to the elite echelon of America— once again saving cultural capital for a special few.

While opera embodied exclusive, the craft-fair embodied a popular, highly attended cultural event. The regressions illuminate the same imbalances we saw in the opera and art gallery (see Model 3.3). Education, once again, has a significant effect on the likelihood of having attended a craft fair or arts festival in the past twelve months, with individuals with an advanced post-graduate degree on average exhibiting 286% (2.8 times more likely) greater likelihood than individuals completing some high school or receiving a GED (OR = 3.86). The literature pointed to the craft-fair demographic to less educated and more diverse. However, both the univariate tests (see Table 4) and regressions reveal the craft-fair attendees as remarkably similar to those attending the opera or art museums. Once again, individuals attending craft fairs are well educated, white, female, and above middle age.

In addition to the persistence of demographic inequalities in cultural event attendance, overall attendance to these events is decreasing over time. In line with the frequency statistics, the regression models show that individuals were less likely to attend an art gallery or museum through the years, 34.4% less likely to attend in 2012 than 1982 (OR=.65). As with art museum attendance, individuals were less likely to attend the opera over time, 47.1% less likely to attend in 2012 than 1982 (OR=.52). Individuals

were less likely to attend a craft fair or visual arts festival over time, 60.1% less likely to attend in 2012 than 1982 (OR=.39). Again, decreasing attendance rates do not indicate arts participation as incongruent with cultural capital. What Bourdieu called the "meltdown scenario" or the "dramatic deflation in the value of the arts as cultural capital" (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004: 189) would require a more substantial drop in participation statistics. As attendance rates drop, and facets of art and culture become scarce, cultural capital could be increasing in importance—rarity creating a valuable cultural currency.

The Internet and access

To investigate the relationship between the Internet and art attendance, I ran regressions on 2008 responses to questions regarding media, Internet use, and art website attendance. My hypothesis led me to believe there would be sustained inequalities in Internet access along the same demographic lines describing access to art. There was a correlation between Internet use and education r(55) = -0.3, p < .01, so the two independent variables were placed in different regression models. All other independent variables were not significantly correlated. The 2008 regressions for art museum, opera, and craft fair were in line with the cumulative data set regarding education level, age group, race, and gender.

The population using the Internet, however, was younger (see Table 5): individuals ages 55-75+ are 90% less likely to use the Internet (OR= .09). This fits with overall understanding that younger people have embraced technology faster than individuals who grew up without Internet (Dhavan 2001). While the Internet represents

an opening to a larger age demographic, individuals using the Internet are still highly educated. Individuals with advanced post graduate degrees were 1,388% more likely to have used the Internet than individuals with only a high school degree (OR=14.88). These numbers point us to continued imbalances within the realm of Internet use. Economic means, education, and knowledge of how the computers work, influence access.

The misconception in the literature and pervasive cultural understanding is that the Internet provides universal access. My data shows that, despite theoretical ubiquitous increased Internet use in America, the individuals using the Internet for art purposes are the very same ones actually attending the art museums and other cultural events (see Table 6). Educational attainment drastically influences how people understand the Internet, extract information from the Internet, and make meaningful Internet interactions. In fact, when controlling for education level, race, gender, and age group, those who use the Internet are more likely to visit art museums/galleries, the opera, and craft fairs.

A new technological utopia

In terms of the Internet replacing cultural engagement or the creation of cultural relationships, I found that the Internet use and art museum attendance are intricately connected, one actually reinforcing the other. Access to the Internet and art on the Internet increases art attendance as seen in Table 7. Broadly, those who used the Internet were 604% more likely to visit an art museum (OR=7.04), 275% more likely to visit the opera (OR= 3.75) and 319% more likely to attend a craft fair (OR=4.19). Model 7.5

illuminates that, while controlling for race, gender, education level, and age group, individuals that looked at art online were 370% more likely to have attended an art museum or gallery (OR= 4.70). Individuals who looked up art museum information online were 508% more likely to have attended an art museum or gallery (OR=6.08). Further, individuals who visited art museum websites were 690% more likely to visit an art museum (OR=7.90). This points us away from the hypothesis of technological dystopia, as well as the idea that the Internet will replace cultural communities, networks, and institutions outside the home. The Internet has grown into a network capable of holding and presenting more cultural information ever before confined inside the walls of a museum. Even with pervasive smart phones, laptops, websites, and virtual communities saturated with cultural artifacts, engaging in culture inside the home actually increases cultural appetite and culture building outside the home.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the populations using the Internet and visiting art museums are decidedly similar (see Table 5, Table 6, Table 8). The population using the Internet to access art match the demographic of the well educated, white, middle age population already prevalent in cultural participation. Even though the regressions control for demographic indicators, the analysis would be more comprehensive with perhaps a more popular cultural event like music downloads and concerts or movies and online streaming.

CONCLUSION

Contesting "new openness"

My data, like many previous studies, indicates wide inequalities in art access and, subsequently, the collection of cultural capital. Whether an omnivore or a univore, attending an opera or a craft fair, the individuals with educational and economic clout are attending cultural events outside the home and therefore are gathering the benefits of cultural involvement. Bourdieu's assertion that the divided education system supports a hierarchical closed loop of cultural capital distribution is upheld. The same people who understand art as essential reap the benefits of cultural saturation. This finding is significant in that it demonstrates continued imbalance despite the supposed inclusive cultural environment of contemporary America.

We cannot completely disregard the idealistic modern viewpoint of "new openness" in consumption and taste supported in Peterson's (1996) omnivore/univore findings. However, the existence of pervasive inequalities in my findings point to "openness" acting as another structural element in cultural consumption and not a radical shift in the American worldview or cultural sphere (Lopez-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005). The contemporary philosophical discourse surrounding art and aesthetic judgment parallels these findings. Previous ideas about the universality of judgment of taste described a utopia of art as one of "possible communication, a utopia of 'cultural communism,' or at any rate of the cultural community. The world is not irremediably split between the most civilized and the most uncultivated precisely because there exists this formal universality of judgments of taste." (Michaud 1999: 146). Thus, the judgment of taste signifies that individuals, regardless of demographic markers, share an aesthetic

experience and together participate in a democratic interaction with art and culture.

This "utopia of art" is essentially where Peterson's omnivore/univore thesis directs us. However, Michaud claims this utopia of art has now come to an end, and my data supports that assertion. The contemporary philosophy of aesthetic judgment notes the current public critical sphere as one characterized by a division between social groups and classes. The unequal attendance rates and access to culture present in America further signal the demise of the art utopia. Art has the potential to provide democratic communication but in reality, legitimate taste and judgment are dictated and enjoyed by the economic and intellectual elite. Essentially, judgment is not similar for every individual, but determined by social hierarchies. Instead of equal communication surrounding art and culture, "legitimate experience [is] reserved for an elite of refined *connoisseurs* leaving the lower classes to their uncivilized crudeness, excluded at the same time from political freedom and equality" (Lund 2014: 3).

Therefore, the modern state of art in America remains tethered to a divide between those with access to art and cultural capital and those without access. And, if we can understand society as being described by cultural markers, America remains stratified by education level and socioeconomic status. The described state of art in America can point to a hopelessly and permanently stratified cultural environment. However, the rise of the Internet presents the potential for the redistribution of cultural capital in America, ultimately acting as an avenue of social justice.

Cultural capital in a technological utopia

The dominant ideology surrounding the Internet in America seems to be that everyone with a computer has equal opportunity to the benefits and resources on the computer. However, instead of acting as a great equalizer, the Internet represents a portal through which social members can explore, garner, and trade cultural capital. Managing cultural capital, however, is not necessarily the only function of the Internet and different subgroups understand the Internet as an entity with a multitude of different purposes (Anderson et al. 1995). A substantial amount of education is required before somebody can access even a portion of the Internet's full potential. In many ways, because of this overwhelming and ultimately limiting nature of access and the Internet, it seems natural that individuals seek interactions and experiences outside the technological realm.

Instead of replacing the cultural institution, the Internet has the capacity to act as an entry point— essentially allowing individuals to get "one foot in the door". After visiting an institution's website, complete with directions, information on exhibitions, and schedules, certain barriers to access are dismantled. In many ways, the Internet tells the individual what to expect in the same way an elementary school field trip or an art history lesson would. Further, the Internet removes certain elements of viewer intimidation inherent in contemporary art by allowing the experience to come initially in the privacy of the home. Instead of learning about a contemporary artist in a formal setting, the classroom or elsewhere, individuals are able to acquire cultural capital in a technological way. Thus, cultural capital becomes a currency collected online. Individuals who have visited an art blog, or received information on an art museum

website have a source of capital that leads to the invitation to actually visit the cultural institution in person.

We see this barrier-breaking process used by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. Often praised for being at the forefront of highlighting artistic innovation and experimentation, MOMA represents one of the most elite cultural institutions in the country. Their website reflects their superior title, boasting an aesthetically pleasing and technologically advanced platform. At the core of MOMA's online presence resides a comprehensive introduction to the content, mission, and accessibility of the museum. In the bottom right hand corner of the home page, individuals are invited to "plan a visit" where they can then choose the language in which they would like to proceed. From there, website-goers are given a condensed version of the exhibitions on display, as well as certain etiquette reminders. The right hand corner of that page reminds people to not take photos where forbidden, to not bring sketchbooks over a certain size, how to check a purse or coat, museum prices, hours, and ADA accessibility. Other websites, like those of The Walker Art Center and LACMA, include information regarding bus routes, art history lessons, and links to various archived talks and courses

The elite and influential nature of the institution sets the bar for other museum websites even though MOMA's page was not the exact website visited by survey respondents. With that thorough standard in place, looking at art online becomes a delivery of cultural capital, an introduction to the important content, and an etiquette lesson in museum behavior. With a technologically outfitted toolbox, individuals are

primed to attend these cultural institutions. Once again, the museum website functions as a barrier breaker for individuals across demographics.

While the data I analyzed looked specifically at art museum and art online, we see similar barrier breaking in other forms of culture, specifically opera. A recent New York Times article highlights Carnegie Hall streaming its first opera online free for 90 days on a classical music website. Instead of taking the place of concert-hall performances, in the words of the artistic director of Carnegie Hall, "essentially, media promotes performances. Every artist is making their living in the concert hall" (Cooper 2014). Although Carnegie Hall's media presence is less about barrier-breaking, it points to the Internet functioning as a necessary access point for those without the time or resources to attend a live opera without replacing live attendance. However, the same ideals of a viable technological utopia still hold true. For the Internet to increase access over demographic hierarchies, the basic knowledge of how to use the web as a domain for cultural capital is imperative.

Policy implications

Increased equality in access to art and culture on the Internet requires an adjustment in how we interpret, employ, and distribute the Internet in America. In Wellman's (1999) study, each community member was handed technology along with a guide in how to use the device correctly. Therefore, their connectedness is, in part, the product of a comprehension of the Internet and its specific abilities. Through understanding how the Internet can facilitate elements of growth, education, and networking, the web becomes a tool in breaking down barriers— whether it they are

social barriers or cultural barriers. This barrier-breaking is at the forefront of an empirical technological utopia.

In addition to harnessing the potential of the Internet, we must pay attention to the different breeds of barriers to access that exist in America to rearrange hierarchies in cultural capital attainment. While my research investigates general attendance trends and technological access points, physical barriers to access (time, money, and transportation) as well as symbolic barriers to access (meaning creation and experience around art) remain unexamined. Further analysis would benefit from a SES variable, such as household income, instead of using education level as a proxy. As SPPA surveys continue to contain questions regarding Internet use and cultural participation online, a longitudinal examination of these variables would be beneficial as well.

Using the Internet to help dismantle closed class systems may seem like a futile venture compared to restructuring American government's art policy. However, in France, targeted government policy aiding cultural institutions in increasing access did next to nothing to diminish disparities in attendance rates (Coulangeon 2013). The French policy aimed at making art physically accessible negated the precursory elements inhibiting cultural engagement— mainly education and capital barriers to access. My data presents education level— and consequently SES— as the strongest indicator of differential cultural attendance, from art museum to craft fair to Internet use. This tells us that despite physical openness in the cultural institution, there are still symbolic barriers to attending and benefitting from art and culture. Therefore, increasing arts education from elementary school, and ultimately making basic education available across social determinates, increases an individual's ability to obtain cultural capital.

The beginning of any authentic openness in cultural institutions resides in arts education and the barrier-breaking potential of the educated Internet user. Without forgetting about physical barriers to access (time, money, and transportation) as well as symbolic barriers to access (meaning creation and experience around art), it is important to pay attention to the functions of cultural institutions' websites in the distribution cultural capital. Increasing Internet education in schools, making computers and Internet more widely available complete with guidelines in how to use the Internet properly, will exhibit just how vast the beneficial stretch of the Internet can be. I found that people who used the Internet to look at art were more likely to participate in art and culture outside the home, essentially confirming my own version of a technological utopia. Based on the literature and my data, employing technology and its expansive potential is one of the only successful pathways to increasing both the accessibility and attendance rates of various cultural institutions. These are efforts needed if we truly want to challenge cultural hierarchies and democratize the consumption of the American art world.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Cultural practice frequencies in 1992, 2002, and 2012.

Cultural practice frequencies in 1992, 2002,		2002	2012
	1992	2002	2012
/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /			
Art museum/Gallery	2626	25.05	22.05
At least one visit during the past 12 months	26.36	27.05	22.95
None	73.64	72.95	77.05
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Theater			
At least one visit during the past 12 months	13.49	12.50	9.50
None	86.51	87.50	90.50
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
1000	100.00	100.00	100.00
Classical concert			
At least one visit during the past 12 months	12.63	11.78	9.98
None	87.37	88.22	90.02
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jazz Concert			
At least one visit during the past 12 months	10.26	10.42	8.63
None	89.74	89.58	91.37
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ballet	4.71	2.76	2.14
At least one visit during the past 12 months	4.71	3.76	3.14
None	95.29	96.24	96.86
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Opera			
At least one visit during the past 12 months	3.39	2.99	2.33
None	96.61	97.01	97.67
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Craft Fair			
At least one visit during the past 12 months	40.90	34.77	25.02
None	59.10	65.23	74.98
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
	3.00		

Table 2 Distribution of the five socio-demographic variables in 1992, 2002 and 2012.

	1992	2002	2012
Gender			
Female	56.08	55.05	53.28
Male	43.92	44.95	46.72
T. 4.1	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Age			
18 to 34	32.58	27.62	24.95
35 to 54	36.64	40.61	35.77
<i>55 to 75+</i>	30.77	31.77	39.28
Total	100.0	100.0	100.00
Race			
White (non-Hispanic)	86.85	85.89	83.91
Black (non-Hispanic)	10.00	9.07	8.76
Asian (non-Hispanic)	2.66	3.89	4.31
Other	0.49	1.15	3.01
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic	91.87	91.42	89.15
Hispanic	8.13	8.58	10.85
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Γ.1			
Education High school or Less	55.45	46.40	40.53
Some College	20.89	27.65	28.96
Bachelors	13.79	17.12	19.28
Advanced Graduate Degree	9.87	8.83	11.23
•			
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 3
Logistic regression models of cultural attendance rates between 1982 and 2012.

Logistic regression mod		useum	Opera		Craft Fair	
	Model 1 N= 65,738		Model 2 N=65,977		Model 3 N=65,672	
	OR	z	OR	z	OR	Z
Gender						
Female						
Male	0.79	-11.77**	0.72	-6.71**	0.56	-31.44**
Age						
18 to 34						
35 to 54	0.97	-1.32	0.98	-0.32	1.21	8.59**
55 to 75+	0.86	-5.85**	1.42	5.44**	0.94	-2.79**
Race						
White (non-Hispanic)						
Black (non-Hispanic)	0.55	-14.24**	0.51	-5.48**	0.39	-25.52**
Asian (non-Hispanic)	0.73	-6.10**	0.79	-1.83	0.39	-17.13**
Other	0.95	-0.62	1.02	0.12	1.02	0.38
Ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic						
Hispanic	0.79	-6.01**	0.91	-0.89	0.58	-15.49**
Education						
High school or Less						
Some College	2.98	42.24**	3.07	13.34**	2.14	34.07**
Bachelors	6.33	67.56**	7.09	24.41**	3.17	46.17**
Advanced Graduate Degree	10.59	74.04**	13.84	33.01**	3.86	44.97**
Year						
1992						
2002	0.94	-2.23*	0.80	-3.20**	0.69	-14.34**
2008	0.74	-10.55**	0.57	-7.94**	0.45	-30.64**
2012	0.65	-14.24**	0.53	-8.85**	0.39	-34.18**
Cons_	0.19	-52.53**	0.01	-48.92**	0.61	-18.12

Note. *= $p \le 0.05$, **= $p \le 0.01$. There was no significant change when the "year" variable was removed from the model.

Table 4
Average year and education level of cultural participants between 1982 and 2012.

	1982	1992	2002	2008	2012
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Art Museum					
Age	39.86	42.50	45.21	46.13	48.89
Education level	4.19	4.36	4.42	4.56	4.65
Opera					
Age	44.98	46.56	47.68	50.65	52.17
Education level	4.36	4.63	4.77	4.90	5.01
Craft fair					
Age	40.70	43.35	45.43	48.12	49.42
Education level	3.82	3.99	4.16	4.27	4.35
Internet use					
Age				43.13	44.24
Education level				3.13	3.14

Note. Age is reported in year; Education level is reported on a scale from 1-6 (1= Less than 9th grade, 2= Some high school, 3= High school grad (GED), 4= Some college, 5= College graduate, 6= Advanced college degree)

Table 5 Logistic regression models of Internet use in 2008.

Logistic regression models of	Inter	net Use	Internet Use		
		del 1	Model 2		
		N = 5563		5554	
	OR	Z	OR	Z	
Gender					
Female					
Male	0.99	-0.02	1.03	0.58	
Age					
18 to 34					
35 to 54	0.45	-8.10**	0.50	-7.15**	
55 to 75+	0.09	-23.35**	0.11	-23.17**	
Race					
White (non-Hispanic)					
Black (non-Hispanic)	0.42	-8.24**	0.43	-8.43**	
Asian (non-Hispanic)	0.45	-3.85**	0.67	-2.10*	
Other	0.96	-0.19	0.81	-1.02	
Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic					
Hispanic	0.28	-11.05**	0.23	-13.26**	
Education					
High school or Less					
Some College	4.22	17.55**			
Bachelors	8.51	18.35**			
Advanced Graduate Degree	14.88	14.86**			
Art museum			7.00	17.85**	
Cons_	4.29	14.93**	6.50	20.20**	

Note. *= $p \le 0.05$, **= $p \le 0.01$. The first variable in each group was held constant in the model.

Table 6 Logistic regression models of art on the Internet in 2008.

	Art online Model 1 N= 3748		Info online Model 2 N= 3744		Museum online Model 3 N= 5520	
	OR	Z	OR	Z	OR	Z
Gender						
Female						
Male	1.01	0.18	1.00	0.06	0.90	-1.36
Age						
18 to 34						
35 to 54	0.65	-4.63**	0.70	-4.22**	1.03	0.34
55 to 75+	0.46	-6.66**	0.44	-8.13**	1.32	2.81*
Race						
White (non-Hispanic)						
Black (non-Hispanic)	0.61	-2.93*	0.70	-2.57*	0.73	-2.21*
Asian (non-Hispanic)	0.47	-2.99*	0.59	-2.50*	0.63	-2.01*
Other	1.06	0.25	0.89	-0.49	1.02	0.08
Ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic						
Hispanic	0.75	-1.06	0.95	-0.38	0.93	-0.49
Education						
High school or Less						
Some College	2.01	6.19**	2.24	8.51**	2.12	7.53**
Bachelors	3.14	9.73**	4.28	14.33**	3.86	13.02**
Advanced Graduate Degree	4.54	10.95**	5.36	13.50**	4.85	12.74**
Cons_	0.20	-14.33**	0.35	-11.11**	0.09	-21.50**

Note. *= $p \le 0.05$, **= $p \le 0.01$. The first variable in each group was held constant in the model.

Table 7 Logistic regression models of art museum attendance and Internet use in 2008.

	Art Museum Model 1 N=18,248	Art Museum Model 2 N= 5554	Art Museum Model 3 N=3748	Art Museum Model 4 N=3744	Art Museum Model 5 N=5520
	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z
Gender					
Female					
Male	-5.32**	-2.75**	-2.29*	-2.30*	-2.17*
Age					
18 to 34					
35 to 54	-1.86	1.00	2.06*	2.01*	-0.97
55 to 75+	-4.83**	2.36**	4.13**	5.18**	-6.09**
Race					
White					
Black	-8.47**	-5.13**	-4.58**	-4.37**	-6.47**
Asian	-4.44**	-0.68	0.21	-0.20	-0.91
Other	0.92	-0.77	-0.09	0.25	-0.91
Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic					
Hispanic	-3.27**	-2.32**	-1.39	-1.47	-4.93**
Education					
High school or Less					
Some College	22.32**				
Bachelors	36.14**				
Advanced Graduate Degree	39.20**				
Internet use		17.90**			
Art online			18.16**		
Information online				22.95**	
Museum online					25.38**
Cons_	-35.64**	-20.53**	-14.08**	-17.04**	-15.13**

Note. *= $p \le 0.05$, **= $p \le 0.01$. The first variable in each group was held constant in the model.