VARIETY IN CULTURAL CHOICE AND THE ACTIVATION OF SOCIAL TIES

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Abstract

This paper builds on the general connection between culture consumption and sociability which has been the focus of recent research in the sociology of culture. I propose that cultural variety, as given by the number of cultural activities that the person engages in, is tied not only to static properties of social networks (such as range), but also to the likelihood of having benefited from this connectivity (social capital). Taking the classic example of finding a job via a network contact as the main outcome, I show that persons who have a propensity to engage in a wide variety of cultural activities have a higher likelihood of having found out about their current job via a weak tie and that different types of weak tie activation are selectively correlated with distinct cultural taste profiles.

1 INTRODUCTION

Recent research in the sociology of culture has argued and provided empirical evidence for two general propositions. The first is that culture consumption variety should be connected to networks of larger size (DiMaggio 1987; Lizardo 2006); the second is that culture consumption variety should also be connected to the possession of social ties that span larger distances in social space. As Erickson (1996: 247) notes, network variety is a source of cultural variety: "[t]he more diverse the set of...contacts one has, the more variety of culture one will encounter and hence maintain or learn...Thus network variety is one important source of cultural variety." However, the reverse is also true: in order to maintain diverse networks, persons must command a wide variety of cultural tastes (Lizardo 2006). As DiMaggio observes, "[t]he reason for this finding, so at odds with conventional notions about the isomorphism of taste and class..., is that wide-ranging networks require broad repertoires of taste" (1987: 444). Lizardo (2006), building on DiMaggio's work, links this dynamic with Bourdieu's (1986) argument for the inter-convertibility of the different forms of capital, proposing that cultural capital can be readily converted into social capital when it is routinely mobilized in interaction. This is especially true in the face of the relative instability of personal relationships in contemporary social settings, which requires the constant renewal and formation of social ties (DiMaggio 1996; DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Griswold and Wright 2004; Wellman and Wortley 1990).

This strand of research however, has so far ignored the fact that differences in the size and density of individual networks—indexed by positional measures such as the various centrality indices (Freeman 1977; Borgatti 2005) or clustering (Burt 1992) are not the only factors postulated in theories of social capital. In addition, social capital theory points to the relative *resources* made available to individuals by virtue of a given stock of social ties. These theories also emphasize the differential opportunities available to individuals to access those relational resources in times of need (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988; Portes 1998; Lin 2001a). In other words, social ties are transformed from a potential store of resources into actual *social capital* when persons can accrue benefits from those ties (Lin 1999, 2000, 2001b, 2001a; Mouw 2003; Yakubovich 2005; Lin and Vaughn 1981; Lin and Ensel 1981; Lin and Dumin 1986). The beneficial impact of social ties becomes most obvious when persons have to deal with practical problems like finding a job, or obtaining instrumental or expressive benefits in the form of material and/or emotional support from trusted contacts (Granovetter 1973; Wellman and Wortley 1990).

In this paper, I bring these strands of cultural capital theory and social capital theory into dialogue with another. I do this by empirically examining the connection between *culture consumption variety* (DiMaggio 1987; Erickson 1996; Lizardo 2006) and the likelihood of having obtained a job via a social contact, the prototypical example of a beneficial effect of social

connectivity (Granovetter 1973, 1995). I build on the general link between the disposition to consume a wide variety of cultural goods and expanded opportunities for sociability which has been the focus of recent research in the sociology of culture (Bennett et al. 1999; Witte and Ryan 2004; Cardon and Granjon 2005; Lizardo 2006; Jeannotte 2003).

1.1 OUTLINE OF THE PAPER

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: in the next section, I develop some theoretical intuition connecting culture consumption variety and the likelihood of attaining positive outcomes as a result of being well-connected and derive some key empirical implications. In the next section, I analyze data from a probability sample of Americans collected in 2002 on the predictors of the prototypical form of network activation that has dominated the literature on social capital: having learned about a job opportunity via a social contact. The results provide empirical evidence supporting the proposition that individuals who consume a wider variety of cultural goods are more likely to have learned their current (or last) job via a network contact. Net of other individual predictors, as the cultural variety of the individuals' repertoire of tastes increases, there is a higher likelihood that persons activated a weak tie during their job search efforts. I close by outlining the general implications of these results, the limitations of the current effort and future avenues for further research on the topic opened up by this analysis.

2 THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CULTURAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The core of the social capital argument is that persons can accrue benefits from social connectivity by having a wide *range* and *diversity* of contacts (Burt 1983, 1992; Lin and Dumin 1986). Contact diversity increases the chances that a person will have access to *non-redundant* sources of information, and thus that he or she will be privy to knowledge (such as opportunities for employment) not available to her less well connected peers (Granovetter 1973, 1995). Non-redundant sources of information are typically consists of contacts that are not likely to be connected to one another. Essentially, social capital emerges from the capacity of the person to serve as a bridge between distinct social (and by implication cultural) worlds (Burt 1992; Pachucki and Breiger 2010).

Contact diversity also increases the probability of having access to intermediaries that control or have access to desirable resources, such as influence, or who occupy high status positions (Lin 2001a, 2001b). When individuals benefit from being well-connected, it can be said that social capital is "converted" (Bourdieu 1986) into desirable resources (e.g. economic capital). In this way, individuals derive advantage from relatively temporally stable qualities of their social network (size, diversity, range, etc.) when they are able to call upon the resources embedded in that network as a result of situational contingencies (i.e. needing help finding a job).

A key analytical limitation of network theories of social capital is that they generally neglect to ask the question of the *sources* of connectivity, preferring to focus primarily of the *consequences* (outcomes) that come from differences in connectivity. Recent research at the intersection of the sociology of culture and network theory has begun to make progress in answering the question of the origins of social ties.

These analysts make two primary observations. First, insofar social relationships are mediated through focused episodes of social interaction (Collins 2004). Second, interaction rituals in post-traditional societies tend to revolve primarily around the discussion of symbolic and cultural goods (DiMaggio 1987, 2000; Fine 1977). Taken together, these observations lead to a clear theoretical implication: *the diversity and range of cultural tastes, competences and life-style practices, should be a key predictor of the size, range, and composition of personal networks* (Lizardo 2006). The mobilization of cultural aptitudes and knowledge in conversation should be implicated in the differential *capacity* of individual actors to generate new social ties (and thus sustain a large and diverse social network over time). This insight acquires more salience when considered in the context of recent empirical confirmation of the short lived and ephemeral nature of most network connections (Bidart and Degenne 2005; Bidart and Lavenu 2005; Burt 2000, 2002; Suitor et al. 1997; Suitor and Keeton 1997; Feld et al. 2007).

We should therefore expect that individuals who command a wide variety of tastes will also be more effective in sustaining high rates of social interaction in their—constantly shifting, sparse and loosely bounded—personal communities (Wellman and Wortley 1990). Consistent with this proposal, Lizardo (2006), using data from the 2002 General Social Survey (the same data source to be used below), finds that there is a positive relationship between the average size of the personal network (as measured by a one-shot item which asked the respondent the number of persons that the he or she comes into contact with at least once a year) and the number of cultural activities—associated with both the fine and the popular arts—that the respondent reports having engaged in at least once in the past year, even after accounting for simultaneity bias.

More recent research on the culture networks linkage has borne out the implications of Lizardo's (2006) original study (Vaisey and Miles 2012). For instance, Lewis et al (2011), and Friemel (2012) use stochastic actor-based models (designed for the analysis of dynamic network data) to show that rather than "acquiring" the cultural tastes of their friends (the standard contagion or influenced-based model), persons actually use their pre-existing cultural dispositions to *select* friends that already share their tastes. Using survey data from a Dutch sample of secondary students, Nagel, Ganzeboom and Kaljmin (2011) come to similar conclusions. They find that tastes for both popular (television, movies) and traditional high-status (e.g. classical music) pursuits serve as bases of relationship formation among

adolescents. Taken together this strand of research provides strong support for the hypothesis that, insofar as persons form and construct relationships via the mobilization of pre-existing cultural tastes, persons who command diverse tastes should also have a higher levels of (potential and realized) access to larger, more diverse social networks—rich in weak ties (Roberts et al 2009).

3 EMPIRICAL IMPLICATIONS

If the consumption of a variety of cultural goods is positively connected to the potential variety of contacts in an individual's personal network (DiMaggio 1987; Lizardo 2006), and if networks are a resource that can be accessed when the individual requires either support, information or the projection of influence (Lin 1999; Granovetter 1995), then we should expect that those individuals endowed with more varied repertoire of taste to be more likely to *successfully access* or *directly benefit* from those networks in a time of need. That is, cultural variety should not only lead to variety in social ties, it should also lead to the likelihood of having benefited from being well-connected in the solution of practical problems. In the empirical analysis that follows, I subject this empirical prediction to the test by using the classic example of using a social contact to find a job (Granovetter 1995) as the main empirical indicator of how persons can benefit from being well-connected.

We should thus expect to find that:

H1: *Individuals who engage in a larger variety of activities are more likely to have found out about their current job from a* **network contact** *in comparison to having found out about their current job via a method that did not involve a personal contact.*

However, as Granovetter (1995) persuasively argued, a key indicator of being well-connected is not simply having used any type of social contact to find a job, but actually being able to mobilize *weak ties*. Weak ties are more beneficial than strong ties because they are more likely to provide the person with information about opportunities that go beyond those available in their local social environment.   Thus, a key differentiator between those who are well-connected and those who are not well-connected is not necessarily differences in the size of the "core" kin or the intimate contacts network, but differences in the size of the "peripheral" network composed of weak ties (Suitor et al 1997). Students of the culture/network linkage argue that the ability to command a wide variety of tastes should be correlated with the ability to sustain network relationships with persons across a wide variety of arenas outside of the intimate circle of kin and close friends (Erickson 1996; Lizardo 2006). We should thus expect that *among* those who found out their job via a network contact, cultural variety should be *preferentially* associated with having obtained this benefit through a weak tie rather than a strong tie.

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In the literature on job search via networks weak ties have been conceptualized in two different ways: 1) using a *direct* measure of tie strength by counting weak ties as those named as "acquaintances" rather than close friends or relatives (Granovetter 1995; Mouw 2003) and 2) using an *indirect* measurement strategy, in which a persons is counted as having used a weak tie if they obtained their job by being contacted by the employer directly (without using an employment service or having answered an ad in the paper) (Yakubovich 2005). The rationale for the latter (indirect measurement) strategy is that weak ties have been shown to serves as conduits of *both* "information and direct influence" (Yakubovich 2005: 415).

The most frequent example of direct influence is of course a direct connection between the potential employer and the individual. It follows therefore that any factor that increases the probability of having a network richer in weak ties will increase the chances of any one individual already having a potential employer as an acquaintance (Yakubovich 2005). The difference between these two different sources of network embeddedness is roughly consonant to the contrast between "outdegree" (social capital as a result of knowing lots of others) and "indegree" (social capital as a result of being known by lots of others) in network analysis. Both of these have been argued to be connected to the mobilization of weak ties over strong ties (Granovetter 1995; Yakubovich 2005).

If cultural variety and network variety are positively associated (Lizardo 2006; Erickson 1996), and if network variety is defined as having a network rich in contacts who are different from ego, and who are therefore more likely to be weak ties, then we should expect that cultural variety will increase the chances of individuals having potential employers as acquaintances, and of thus mobilizing those weak ties when necessary.

This reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: *Individuals who engage in a larger variety of activities are more likely to have found out about their current job from a **weak tie** in comparison to having found out about their current job via a method that did not involve a personal contact.*

4 Data and Variables

I use data from the culture and network modules of the 2002 General Social Survey (Davis, Smith and Marsden, 2002). The GSS is administered biannually by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized, English-Speaking American adults. The 2002 wave of the GSS contained a recurring module on participation in the arts (similar to ones fielded in 1993 and 1998), along with a new module related to social networks and social support. The network module contained a question asking the respondent to report the *method* that they used to obtain their last job. The availability of

this item, in conjunction with the self-report measures of cultural participation, makes these data suitable for testing the hypotheses outlined above.

4.1 MAIN PREDICTOR: CULTURAL VARIETY

I develop of an index of cultural variety using and additive seven-item scale of cultural participation (Lizardo 2006). Respondents were asked to report whether they had engaged in the following activities during the past year: 1) gone to see a movie in a theater 2) gone to a live performance of popular music like rock, country, or rap 3) gone to a live performance of a non-musical stage play 4) attended a live ballet or dance performance 5) gone to a classical music or opera performance and 6) visited an art museum or gallery and 7) read a novel, poem or play. The variables are coded one if the respondent engaged in that activity in the past year and zero otherwise. The cultura variety scale thus rangers from zero to seven and displays excellent levels of inter-item reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.93). This is what Warde et al. (2008) have referred to as "omnivorousness by volume." Previous research supports the criterion validity of this way of considering the culture consumption patterns characteristic of young, upwardly mobile elites (e.g. Sullivan and Katz-Gerro 2007; Warde et al. 2008).

4.2 OUTCOME VARIABLES: JOB SEARCH METHOD

The key outcome of interest in this study is the way in which the respondent found out about their current job. To generate these variables I used a GSS item that asked the respondents to "*indicate how you first [from whom] found out about work at your present employer.*" Respondents who were not currently working were asked to answer this question for their last job. I recoded the original variable into a polytomous item containing seven categories. These categories, as well as the proportion of GSS respondents falling on each, are shown in Table 1.[2]

In order to test hypotheses 1, and 2, I collapsed the seven-category version of the variable into a three-category version. The response variable in the model presented below equals **one** for having used a job search method that *did not involve network contacts* (methods 4, 5, and 7 in table 1) equals **two** for those who used a *strong tie* (methods 1 and 2 in table 1) and equals **three** for those who relied on a weak tie (methods 3 and 6 in table 1).

5 RESULTS

5.1 EFFECTS OF CULTURAL VARIETY ON STRONG AND WEAK-TIE USE

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, I specify a Multinomial Logit (MNL) model predicting the log-odds of having used a weak or a strong tie as a network contact, with "other method" as the

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[2] Respondents coded as having answered "Don't Know" are not considered in the analysis.

comparison (reference) category. The model includes the cultural variety ordinal scale as the main predictor of interest. I adjust for a typical vector of socio-demographic factors, including education (dummy variables for highest degree earned) age, gender, race and marital status (married versus not married). Accordingly, the coefficient estimate for each of these variables should be interpreted as giving the effect of that predictor on the (log) odds of having used either a strong or a weak-tie *in comparison* to having used a method not involving a personal contact.

If hypothesis 1 is on the right track, we should find that high cultural variety has a positive effect, of comparable magnitude, on the log-odds of having learned about your current job *either* through a strong tie or a weak tie in comparison to not having used a method involving a network contact. If the more restricted hypothesis 2 is on the right track, we should find a similar pattern of results, except that the magnitude of the cultural variety effect should be discernibly stronger for weak ties than it is for strong ties. The results are shown in Table 2.

First, I find that cultural variety has no statistically discernible effects on the log-odds of having used a strong-tie in comparison to having used a method not involving personal contacts (t = 0.55). Second, I find that cultural variety has a strong ($exp(\beta)$ = 1.15), and statistically significant (t = 2.69) positive effect on the log-odds of having used a weak tie in comparison to having used a method not involving personal contacts. This pattern of results provides weak support for hypothesis 1 (cultural variety does increase the odds of having used a personal contact regardless of tie strength) but does provide support for a qualified version of hypothesis 2: high cultural variety individuals are more likely to *selectively* have mobilized the weak-tie component of their personal network when looking for a job. This is consistent with the claim that these persons are more likely to maintain a larger and more diverse profile of personal contacts. Note, in particular, that cultural variety is (other than marital status) *the only statistically significant predictor* of mobilizing a weak tie. This is consistent with the claim that individual heterogeneity in breadth of cultural taste is the primary axis of differentiation in generating individual differences in social connectivity.

To give an idea of the substantive significance of these results, Figure 1 presents the predicted probabilities of having learned about your current job via a weak tie in comparison to having used other methods. I compute these probabilities from the coefficient estimates of the second equation from the MNL model in Table 2 for hypothetical respondents that vary only in the number of cultural activities that they engage in while holding all other predictors constant at their mean values. As shown in the figure, the cultural variety effect on network activation is substantively significant. A respondent who only engages in one cultural activity only has little less than a 1 in 5 (18%) chance of having found out about their current job via a weak tie (below the sample mean of 23%). In contrast, a respondent who reports engaging in at least six

activities has close to a 1 in 3 chance (32%) of the same outcome, effectively doubling their chances.

5.2 HETEROGENEITY IN CULTURAL TASTE AND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF WEAK-TIE ACTIVATION

The results show that persons who engage in a wide variety of cultural activities are more likely to have mobilized two distinct mechanisms associated with the use of weak ties to find a job: information from an acquaintance or direct contact from their current employer. While both of these types of respondents can be said to consume on average a wider variety of cultural goods than respondents who used other relational and non-relational mechanisms to learn about their current job, it is possible that their patterns of cultural choice differ systematically. To explore this issue, I create a four-category version of the outcome variable that disaggregates the "weak tie" category into its two subcomponents: having learned about your job via an acquaintance and having been directly contacted by your current employer (job search methods three and six in Table 1, respectively). I then estimated separate multinomial regression models with this four-category nominal variable as the outcome but using the binary indicator for each type of culture consumption as a predictor (in lieu of the overall cultural variety scale) for a total of seven MNL regression models yielding fourteen predicted probabilities.[3] Each of the models adjusts for the same set of individual predictors shown in Table 2.

The results of this analysis are summarized in Figure 2. In the figure, I plot the marginal effect (Long and Freese 2006: 126) corresponding to the odds of having obtained a job via the two methods in question in comparison to the base category. The marginal effect gives the average shift in the probability of observing a respondent fall into a given job search class, given that we "turn-on" that binary indicator of culture consumption from its null value of zero to one. The figure shows that respondents who found their job via the two different weak-tie mechanisms tend to have distinct culture consumption profiles. In particular, engagement with genres that are better classified as "popular culture"—they have less socio-demographically restricted audiences as given by the expected educational attainment of consumers—help us predict whether a person used an *acquaintance* to learn about their job, but do not help us in predicting whether they were *contacted directly* by their current employer. More elite cultural genres on the other hand, do a good job in predicting who obtained their current employment by being contacted directly but do not help us in identifying respondents who used

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[3] Note that this separate regression strategy is necessary because including all of the seven items into a regression model confounds high inter-item correlations (the tendency of persons who engage in one cultural activity to also engage in others) with the effect of that activity.

acquaintances to learn about their current job. The only exception is reading fiction which is not an elite activity, but which also does not have much of an impact in predicting who used an acquaintance to learn about their job.[4]

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

This analysis contributes to our understanding of the role of culture in processes of stratification by connecting culture consumption variety not only to the static *possession* of virtual resources in the form of larger and more varied networks of social relations, but by providing empirical evidence of a link between culture consumption variety and the likelihood of attaining desirable outcomes through the *activation* (either by the person or via an influential alter) of personal relationships. This is important because it is through the activation of resources embedded in social relations that social capital is theorized as going from a potential to a real resource (Lin 1999, 2001b). This research both contributes to recent theorizing on the link between culture and networks (e.g. Pachucki and Breiger 2010) as well as theory and research on the nature, sources and functioning of social capital in the contemporary context.

The results show that persons who engage in a wider variety of cultural activities are more likely to have successfully benefited from social connectivity when looking for a job. This network benefit appears to reflect precisely the type of network advantages that are associated with cultural variety: the activation of *weaker* arms-length relationships. These are precisely those relationships which in certain contexts—such as the loosely-knit networks of constantly shifting relationships associated typical of high-status Euro-American Westerners (Wellman and Wortley 1990)—that are most likely to produce advantages in the labor market (by for instance providing information about high-paying jobs or jobs that provide more of a fit between personal competences and qualifications and actual task activities).

In addition, while I find evidence that persons who engage in a wide variety of cultural activities do appear to have benefited from their network connectivity not all forms of cultural engagement have the same functional linkage to weak tie activation. Persons who engage in activities closer to the category of "popular culture" (e.g. mass disseminated via "culture-

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[4] Using multi-dimensional scaling techniques to separate the seven items into different groups (e.g. "popular" versus "highbrow") and then regressing factor scores obtained via this method on each of the two weak-tie job search strategies produce results that are substantively identical with those reported in the figure (available on request). The scaling route however, puts more a priori demands on the data (the "confirmatory" assumption that the genres partition into two broad classes) than I believe is necessary for present purposes.

industry systems") have a higher likelihood of having successfully learned about the current job via an acquaintance. Persons who engage in activities closer to the category of (traditional) "high status culture" (classical music, the arts) have a higher likelihood of having successfully learned about the current job via direct contact from the prospective employer. While both of these can be considered prototypical "weak-tie" activation episodes (Granovetter 1995; Yakubovich 2005), they differ in the underlying phenomenology and mechanism. Popular culture consumption appears to be associated with the mobilization of existing weak ties that help the person form and sustain directed *outward* ties (out-degree) to a large-variety of network contacts which can be accessed when the person requires novel information. The consumption of high-status cultural goods on the other hand, seems to be associated with being in a favorable position in more elite "social circles" (Kadushin 1966), whereby the person is the *recipient* of social ties emanating directly from influential intermediaries (in-degree).

Taken together, this pattern of results is consistent with research that points to the fact that the "conversion value" of popular culture is distinct from that which pertains to more delimited social pursuits (Lizardo 2006, 2011). The former helps in the formation and maintenance of less intimate types of connectivity, maximizing *variety* and *extensiveness* but sacrificing *depth*. These ties, in some sense, reach "farther" into social space, but do so with "thinner" strands (Erickson 1996). More socially delimited types of cultural engagement are more useful in connecting the person to more exclusive social circles, which have relatively more demanding entrance requirements. Here relationships require more encompassing forms of ritual identification and deeper levels of cultural matching to be successfully maintained (DiMaggio 1987). Persons who engage with both popular and high status culture—are able to enjoy *both* of these network advantages. In this manner, cultural variety affords the person with *resource complementarity* (Lizardo 2006). This complementarity is manifested in both lots of outgoing ties directed to the person *toward* diverse others and in lots of connections coming to the individual *from* others, most importantly those located in positions of influence or authority (Yakubovich 2005; Bian 1997; Podolny and Baron 1997).

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Like all empirical efforts, both the data source and the analytic strategy followed here have its limitations. First it is important to be clear as to what the results shows and do not show. The results show that persons who engage in a large variety of cultural activities are more likely to have found out about their current job via a weak tie. In fact, cross-individual heterogeneity in breadth of cultural consumption is a better predictor of this outcome than such individual attributes as age, education of gender. Learning about job opportunities via an acquaitance is a classic indicator of accruing benefits from social capital, which following Granovetter (1973) is defined here as the capacity to have connections to other that bridge relatively wide distances

in social space. These results are consistent with a model in which cultural aptitudes feed into the capacity to form and renew social connections to dissimilar others---*even within levels of overall "volume" of connectivity*. That is, the expectation is that even when connected to the same *number* of persons, individuals who command a wide variety of cultural resources will be able to connect to a wider variety of alters (DiMaggio 1987; Erickson 1996; Lizardo 2006).

The results presented here are consistent with this underlying model of the process. However, these results should be considered an indirect test of the main hypothesis; they thus count as preliminary evidence for the existence of individual heterogeneity—premised on differences in cultural aptitudes—in the opportunity and capacity to activate social ties for informational benefits, rather than unambiguous evidence for the stronger claim that higher levels of cultural variety is the *cause* of the observed differences in the probability of having accessed a weak tie for information. Nor do these results imply that cultural variety is the only correlate of network activation. The evidence reported in this paper should in this way serve as a guide and foundation for future research on connection between cultural and social capital rather than the final word on the subject. More than likely there are multiple mechanisms at work, some of which enhance the connection between cultural variety and network activation, while others diminish it. In this respect, the 2002 GSS data (being the only available probability sample of Americans containing information on both cultural consumption and network outcomes), while suitable for the broad purposes of this study—establishing a plausible, theoretically motivated link between individual heterogeneity in cultural capital and the odds of having benefited from personal relationships—do ultimately leave something to be desired. A couple of these limitations deserve mention.

First, the cultural participation items are limited in number and are weighted towards the "highbrow" end of the spectrum. While the seven-item scale does display fairly strong levels of inter-item reliability and high levels of criterion and discriminant validity, a stronger test of the hypotheses would require a broader selection of culture consumption activities (e.g. sports, television programs, types of music) especially towards the so-called "popular" or "commercial" end of the spectrum. Note however, that even with the limited variation on the "traditional high status" versus "popular/commercial" culture available in this data, we can still observe differential heterogeneity premised on the consumption of high status versus popular culture in benefitting from different modes of activation of weak ties (Figure 2). This suggests that even within this limited set of items, we have enough variation in culture consumption to establish discriminant correlations with different facets of social capital activation.

Second, the GSS data are limited to a static cross-section of respondents but the argument for the role of cultural variety as a resource in the *maintenance* of social connections is inherently dynamic. This means that we are limited to retrospective reports on having used a personal tie

to found about the respondent's current job, coupled to contemporaneous measures of the propensity to consume a wide variety of cultural activities. This poses some difficult issues related to causal order and causal inference, some of which cannot be directly addressed with the data at hand. The data do allow us to rule out some plausible alternative explanations. For instance, it is possible that both the likelihood of having learned about your current job via a weak tie, and the propensity to engage in a wide variety of cultural activities are both a function of network size and thus the linkage between the two spurious. Model specifications that include such an adjustment for network size however, produce results substantively identical to those reported above. Thus, while the cross-sectional evidence is *consistent* with the argument as stated, an ideal data source, one useful for establishing stronger claims of causal order, would including over-time information on both cultural consumption activities, previous and concurrent patterns of social connectivity and episodes of activation of those relationships for purposes of information gathering, social support, intermediation, and other outcomes of interest to social capital researchers.

Dynamic panel data are now more common in the social sciences (Vaisey and Miles 2012), but very few survey projects collect relational information on social contacts. Even fewer collect data on cultural tastes and activities and almost none combine both types of information. While such a data source is at present unavailable, this research suggests that analysts interested in the beneficial effects of social capital need to make the inclusion of cultural capital related variables into their data-gathering projects a priority. In the very same way, cultural capital and arts participations surveys would benefit immensely from collecting more systematic information on social ties, social connectivity and the active use of social relationships more broadly. Even more relevant for traditional concerns of cultural capital researchers, survey instruments would benefit from inquiring as to the role of culture as a resource in conversation, in addition to standard questions related to engagement frequency and taste.

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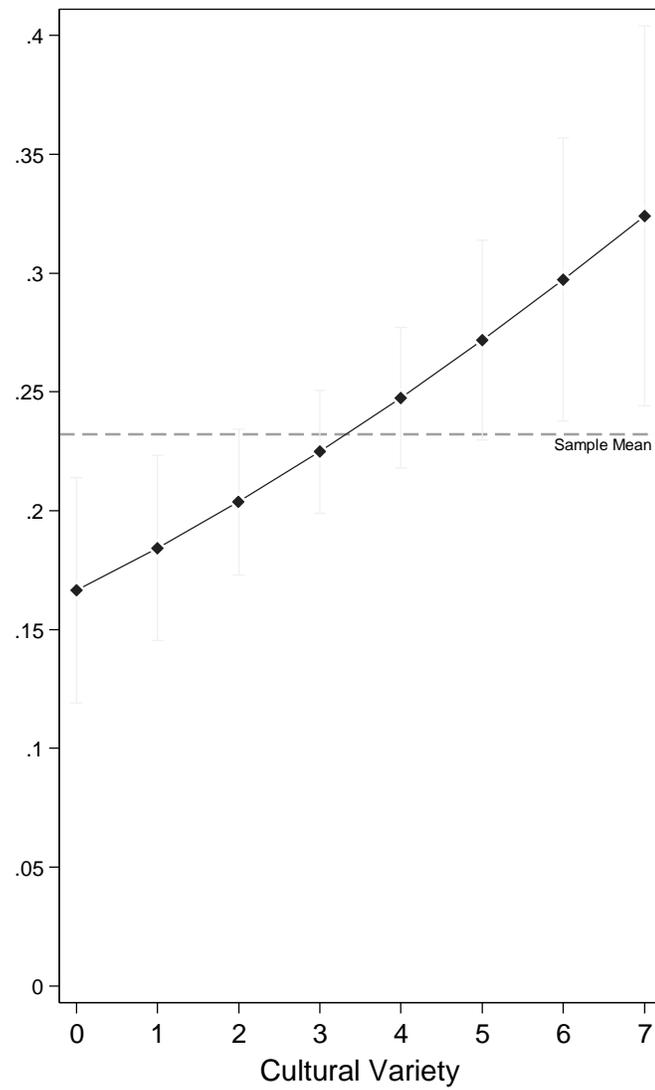
Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of having found a job via a weak tie in comparison to having used another method, by observed values of the cultural variety scale. Predicted probabilities are estimated from the coefficient estimates shown in model 2 of Table 2, with all variables held constant at their sample mean value.
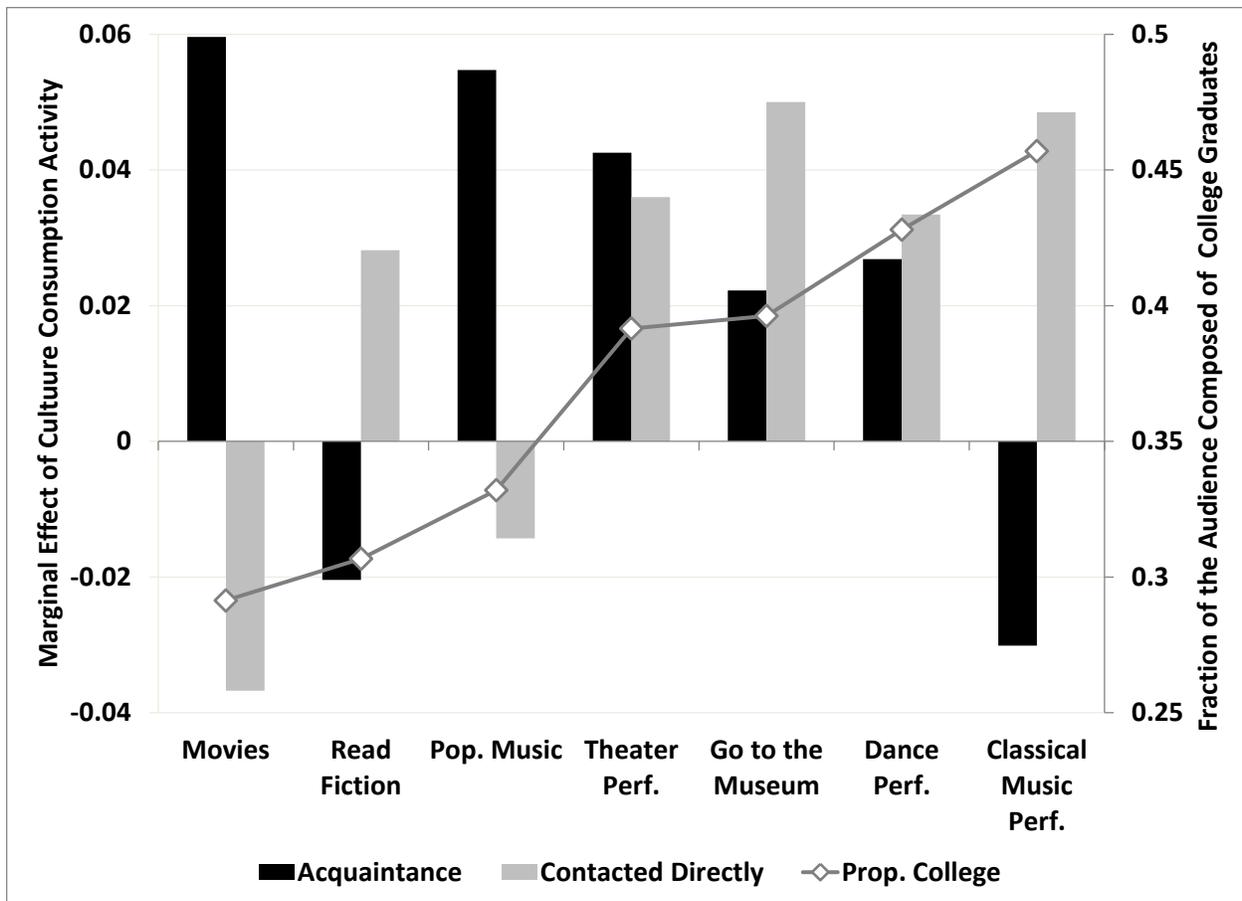
Figure 2. Marginal effects (left-hand y-axis) of having engaged in different culture consumption activities on the probability of having learned about your current job (for employed respondents) or about your last job (for respondent's out of the labor force) from either an acquaintance (black bars) or by having been directly contacted by the employer (gray bars). The marginal effect is the overall (positive or negative) shift in the probability of the outcome when the relevant variable shifts from its null value of zero to having a value of one (Freese and Long 2006: 126). Gray connected line shows the proportion of college educated person who engaged in that activity at least once in the past year (right-hand axis).

Table 1. Proportion of respondents in each job search category, 2002 General Social Survey, analysis restricted to currently employed respondents (full-time or part-time), N = 1038).

	Job Search Method	Percentage
1	From a relative	10.31%
2	From a close friend	19.94%
3	From an acquaintance	13.39%
4	From a placement service (school, public or private)	12.91%
5	From an advertisement or a sign	16.67%
6	Directly contacted by employer	9.83%
7	Called the employer or asked myself in person	16.96%

Table 2. Coefficient estimates from a Multinomial Logistic Regression model of the log-odds of the probability of having found out about current job via a network contact (strong tie or a weak tie), in comparison to having used some other method, 2002, General Social Survey.

Categorical Contrast:	Strong Tie vs. Other Method	Weak Tie vs. Other Method
Cultural Variety	0.0252	0.136**
	(0.55)	(2.69)
Age	-0.0452	0.0453
	(-1.78)	(1.54)
Age Squared	0.0343	-0.0436
	(1.34)	(-1.52)
Women	-0.335*	-0.120
	(-2.20)	(-0.74)
Black/Afr. Amer.	0.150	0.0415
	(0.67)	(0.15)
Hispanic	0.0949	0.413
	(0.20)	(0.85)
Married	0.395*	0.468**
	(2.51)	(2.70)
Less than High School (Ref.)	--	--
High School	-0.142	-0.240
	(-0.59)	(-0.85)
Some College	-0.477	-0.553
	(-1.36)	(-1.35)
College	-0.964**	-0.349
	(-3.11)	(-1.01)
Graduate/Prof.	-1.272**	-0.249
	(-3.13)	(-0.65)
Constant	1.041	-2.097**
	(1.77)	(-2.93)
N	1038	
Log-likelihood	-1059.2	
χ^2	70.53	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (t-statistics in parentheses)