Production and Producers of Lifestyles: The Fields of Popular and Classical Music in the United States

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Abstract: Lifestyles are ultimately based upon classifications—whereby certain tastes, dispositions and activities are deemed appropriate for a given group. These classifications, in turn, are influenced by the range of goods and services that producers of various types offer. To show the relevance of such production, I examine two musical fields in the United States. Drawing upon neo-institutional theory, I document historically how the establishment of dominant organizational forms in each field (symphony orchestras; recording firms) and the evolving logics of these organizations (canonization; commodification) combined to shape the classification of music. After each field was established, the passing decades brought increasing differentiation within each—with the declining prominence of “core works” in the classical music field and the increasing diversity of products in the popular music field. As further evidence of this differentiation within each field, I offer quantitative analyses that illustrate how field-level factors spurred (a) the performance of both living and US composers in classical music (1842-1969) and (b) the hits of both non-US and “crossover” musicians in popular music (1940-1990).

Keywords: Musical Production; Aesthetic Classification; Neo-Institutional Theory; Institutional Logics

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scholarship on lifestyles reveals that such seemingly innocuous things as musical
tastes and leisure activities have palpable implications for the broader society. Classic
works in sociology and economics, for instance, show that lifestyle can figure
prominently in social stratification—particularly as the tastes and activities of
advantaged groups can serve both to mark and separate them from the less advantaged
(e.g. Veblen 1967; Weber 1946). Although not always concerned with the pernicious
aspects of stratification, decades of work on both community and marketing shows
that distinctive lifestyle patterns reveal the topography of a given social order—be it a
town or a market (see Blasisus/Mühlichen 2010; Holt 1997).

Recent lifestyle scholarship excels at interrogating this linkage between
stratification and topography—particularly that inspired by the seminal work of
Bourdieu (e.g.1984, 1993). According to Bourdieu, contemporary society is
differentiated into various domains of life—what he called “fields”—with each
containing its own logic of operation and its own stratification system whereby
different groups (e.g. classes) and factions jostle for resources and positioning. While
economic capital and social capital (e.g. networks of connections) serve as important
currencies in each field, so too does “cultural capital.” DiMaggio (1991: 135) defines
the latter as “proficiency in the consumption of and discourse about generally
prestigious—that is, institutionally screened and validated—cultural goods.” Thus,
taking their cue from Bourdieu, DiMaggio and others have equated cultural capital
with particular lifestyle elements—such as a familiarity with and preference for
classical music and other forms of high culture (e.g. the arts and literature). In fields
of education, for example, an engagement with high culture can not only mark the
advantaged but also serve as a means by which they can gain additional benefits for
themselves and their children (e.g. Aschaffenburg/Maas 1997; DiMaggio 1982a; Dumais 2002; Sullivan, this issue).

However, not all scholars are content with this formulation of cultural capital (including DiMaggio) because they note a new lifestyle pattern emerging, whereby some of the advantaged are not so much marked by their engagement with high culture but by their broad range of their tastes and preferences that can extend well beyond high culture. In this new formulation, “cultural omnivorism” (e.g. preference for a range of genres that span both classical and popular music) may be an important currency as well—one that benefits already advantaged groups or factions (e.g. Coulangeon/Lemel 2007; DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio/Muhktar 2004; van Eijck 2001; Peterson 2005).

Recent work on both cultural capital and cultural omnivorism has thus enlivened scholarship on lifestyles—especially as it emphasizes such things as musical tastes and leisure activities and shows their implications for the broader social order (see Bennett et al. 2009; Blasisus/Mühlichen 2010; van Eijck, this issue). Much of this research relies on surveys that query individuals about their tastes for and involvement with such things as orchestral music and opera (deemed by researchers to be “classical” music, or some variant like “highbrow”) and such genres as rock music and rhythm & blues (deemed to be “popular” music, “lowbrow,” etc.) (e.g. Nagel et al. this issue; Peterson/Rossman 2008). Yet, if these broad musical classifications (classical music vs. popular music) figure in both cultural capital and omnivorism—and, in turn, the topography of stratification—from whence do these classifications emerge?

DiMaggio (1982b, 1987, 1991, 2006) provides one potential answer regarding the origins of these musical classifications. He argues that if a familiarity with
classical music and other types of high culture is to serve as a widely-regarded currency, there must be an “organizational base” that both celebrates such high culture while also making it potentially available to many—a base that brings together producers and consumers. “Just as financial currency lacks value without a state and a banking system to guarantee it, so cultural capital cannot establish or retain its value in the absence of significant institutional effort” (DiMaggio 2009). After that organizational base took root in the United States of the early 1900s, he maintains, its attendant consumption patterns resulted in the cultural capital that matters for educational attainment, etc. However, he notes that the organizational base for high culture encountered a number of problems from the mid 1900s onward, hampering its ability to celebrate high culture and blurring the distinction between classical and popular music (see below). Concurrently, the organizational base devoted to popular music—one that also brings together producers and audiences—expanded considerably while also growing more varied in its offerings (see Dowd 2003, 2004). One implication is that the currency of cultural capital has grown less relevant among high status individuals while the currency of cultural omnivorism has grown more salient (see DiMaggio/Muhktar 2004; Peterson/Rossman 2008).

In problematizing the historical linkage between production and consumption, DiMaggio has been a key proponent of the “new institutionalism in organizational analysis”—an influential theory stimulating scholarship within and beyond sociology (DiMaggio/Powell 1983, 1991; Dobbin 1994; Johnson et al. 2006; Scott 1995). With a nod to Bourdieu, DiMaggio and other institutionalists emphasize what they label the “organizational field”—the range of relevant actors for a given endeavor (e.g. education, business). They do so to draw attention not just to the primary producers in a field (e.g. schools, manufacturers) but also to an array of individuals and
organizations that can impinge upon those producers—including the audience of “consumers.” Institutionalists are thus interested in how fields come to operate in concert despite the competing interests of all these actors. Hence, they heed how particular types of organizations and practices come to dominate a given field and how assumptions regarding the nature of the endeavor become commonplace. These are some of the “institutions” to which the theory refers—the taken-for-granted ways of organizing and the logics for operating within a given field. While such institutions can be stable for long periods of time, institutionalists often document the process by which ways of organizing and operating are first innovated, then eventually diffuse to the point of being simply “commonsense,” and finally fade in their relevance for the broader field. Thus, at the core of this approach is a longitudinal examination of the rise and fall of various institutions.

This construction of organizational fields matters because they are important seedbeds for emergent and evolving lifestyle elements. Put another way, they are where various actors help build and make broadly known the classifications that we have come to associate with high culture (e.g. classical music) and popular culture (e.g. rock’n’roll, R&B). In this article, I draw on and extend DiMaggio’s arguments by focusing on pivotal periods in US fields of classical and popular music. First, I historically document the dominant organizational forms and evolving logics at play in each—the logic of “canonization” taking root and then waning somewhat in classical music and the logic of “commodification” taking root and evolving in popular music. This historical discussion draws on previously published work—including DiMaggio’s, as well as my own (section 3). Then, I offer illustrative analyses that quantitatively demonstrate the implications of field-level factors in terms of the types of musicians that enter both fields—examining the classical music field
from 1842 to 1969 and the popular field from 1940 to 1990. Simply put, I show how the emphasis on dead European composers in the classical field has partly given way to increased entry of both living and American composers, while the emphasis in the popular field on domestic musicians with broad appeal has decidedly given to increased entry of both non-US musicians and those with specialized (“crossover”) appeal (sections 4 and 5). Before turning to these two fields, I first provide a brief overview of neo-institutional theory (section 2).

2. NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY: FIELDS, FORMS AND LOGICS

To understand what neo-institutional theory has to say about fields of musical production, it is helpful to consider its broad contours. A fundamental aspect of the theory is its treatment of the environment—the “world” that is out there (Dobbin 1994; Johnson et al. 2006; Scott 1995). Institutionalists posit that actors confront an environment that is not self-evident but, instead, requires interpretation. In building such an interpretation, actors are defining reality rather than simply responding to it—such as when devising explanatory accounts about how their world works. However, actors can lose sight of the fact that they are the authors of this reality. For example, what appear to be transcendent and “natural” laws that govern different fields—such as the “free market” principle stressing the minimal role of government regulation in commercial fields—actually result from this ongoing reality construction; hence, various government policies and court decisions ironically helped the free market principle take hold in the US (Dowd/Dobbin 2001). Similarly, the constructionist bent of this theory problematizes the very classifications that underlie lifestyle elements—as when noting that “classical music” and “popular music” are not timeless ways of apprehending the full range of music that is produced and enjoyed but, instead,
emerged and evolved at specific points in time because of the efforts of key actors (DiMaggio 2009; Roy/Dowd 2010).

Another fundamental aspect of the new institutionalism is its attempt to link the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis—whereby the choices and actions of individuals (micro) are informed by the fields (meso) and broader society (macro) in which individuals are located. While most institutional works (including this one) do not simultaneously link these levels empirically (DiMaggio/Powell 1991; Dobbin 2008; Schneiberg/Clemens 2006), they often do so theoretically (see Friedland/Alford 1991). For instance, institutionalists do not view individuals simply as the hyper-rational creatures found in certain economic theories, whereby “human calculators” carefully weigh a wide range of options and information before deciding upon a course of action. Instead, drawing upon such micro-level scholarship as cognitive psychology and ethnomethodology, they also maintain that individuals are sometimes “boundedly” rational and at other times “arational” (DiMaggio 1997; DiMaggio/Powell 1991; Dobbin 1994). Bounded rationality occurs when individuals explicitly weigh a limited range of information, as when considering a few options that have worked well for them in the past or by purposefully imitating what has apparently worked well for others. Arationality occurs when individuals proceed with little, if any, deliberation. Regarding the latter, “[this] routine, everyday cognition relies heavily and uncritically upon…knowledge structures that represent objects or events and provide default assumptions about their characteristics, relationships and entailments under conditions of incomplete information (DiMaggio 1997: 269). Put another way, it is this arationality that helps various institutions to persist (e.g. the logic by which a given field operates)—as when individuals enact a logic with little to no forethought because that is simply how “things are.” Meanwhile, rationality helps
institutions rise and fall over time—as when “cultural entrepreneurs” purposefully seek to transform the tacit assumptions of particular fields by championing new logics of operation—and bounded rationality often matters during field-wide diffusion of institutions—as when actors choose from but a few institutional logics (DiMaggio 1982b; Dobbin & Dowd 2000; Johnson et al. 2006).

While micro level decision-making could become highly idiosyncratic—with individuals choosing increasingly disparate and divergent courses of action—the new institutionalism famously maintains that much uniformity and convergence actually occurs (e.g. Bielby/Bielby 1994; DiMaggio/Powell 1983). This happens because the meso and macro contexts orient individuals towards particular information and assumptions. That is, individuals are “doubly embedded” in a modern worldview (macro) and in organizational fields (meso) (Dowd/Dobbin 1997).

The modern worldview has been centuries in the making—and it has ramifications for individuals and organizations (Boli/Thomas 1997; Meyer 2010; Meyer et al. 1994). When compared to the distant past, the “individual” is now, among other things, an entity that holds well-defined rights (as increasingly, and uniformly, stipulated by constitutions of nation-states; e.g. Boli-Bennett/Meyer 1978; Elliot 2007); that needs cultivation (as reinforced by the widespread diffusion of compulsory education; e.g. Boli et al. 1985; Ramirez/Boli 1987); that possesses an inner-life (as touted by the rise and spread of such therapeutic disciplines as psychology; e.g. Frank et al. 1995); and that benefits from self-actualization (as recently endorsed by the expanding purview of personnel professionals; e.g. Dobbin 2009). Viewed from the vantage of history, the individual became an actor in the modern sense and, in turn, developed the potential (if not a requirement) for possessing “lifestyle.” This modern worldview is also associated with the
rationalization and scientization of society (Drori et al. 2003), which further expands the claims and responsibilities of individual actorhood. The main purveyors of this are organizations—which possess increasing sway over an expanding number of social domains (e.g. education, entertainment) (Boli/Thomas 1997; Meyer 2010; Johnson et al. 2006; Pederson/Dobbin 1997).

These micro and macro processes intersect in the ongoing construction of organizational fields (the meso). The potential for the emergence of a new field occurs when particular individuals discern an unmet need in their environment (i.e. reality construction regarding a particular “endeavor”) and establish a type of organization that addresses that need (i.e. an organizational form). For the potential to be realized, these individuals must convince constituencies, initially, in their immediate locale and, later, across locales that their organizational form is both needed and legitimate (Johnson et al. 2006). That is, they must secure the consent and support of individual decision-makers (the micro). They often do so by drawing on ideas found in the broader environment (the macro). As Glynn (2008: 358) summarizes, the modern worldview “…supplies possible and legitimated meanings and symbols…By grafting these institutional elements onto their identities [e.g. their endeavor], organizations attempt to garner legitimacy which enables resource flows favorable to their enterprise.” Once that legitimation is created both locally and then generally, the field is poised for expansion—as can occur with growing numbers of this organizational form and with related organizations (e.g. distributors) entering the field to engage this particular endeavor (DiMaggio/Powell 1983; Johnson et al. 2006). In the wake of this legitimation and growth, the organizational form and its endeavor become a “fact”—both for the producers themselves and the audiences that they address.
While the establishment of an organizational form brings stability and “facticity” to a given field, it does not resolve the question of how its various organizations should operate. In principle, organizations can operate in highly varied fashions; in actuality, this variety is often winnowed down over time. On the one hand, individual decision-makers at these organizations often draw on limited information (the micro). They glean lessons from successful practices within the field (e.g. those of other organizations), and they heed the arguments of powerful actors within the field about how to operate (e.g. large organizations, professional associations). On the other hand, these decision-makers also assume that, given broader assumptions of the modern worldview about efficiency and science (the macro), there is an optimal way to organize. Resulting from this interplay of the micro and macro, “institutional logics” diffuse within a field via imitation and politicking (if not coercion). These are the widely-shared and taken-for-granted ways by which actors make sense of their field and its endeavor—“the cognitive maps, the belief systems carried by participants…to guide and give meaning to their activities” (Scott et al. 2000: 20; Dobbin/Dowd 2000; Schneiberg/Clemens 2006). These logics have real consequences in shaping the practices of organizations and, as shown below for musical production, the classifications that they espouse.

Organizational fields are thus dynamic entities. The proliferation of an organizational form and the diffusion of logics help spur widespread agreement about a given domain of life (Johnson et al. 2006; Schneiberg/Clemens 2006). DiMaggio/Powell (1983: 148) capture this dynamism when noting that, “Once a field becomes established…there is an inexorable push toward homogenization [of organizational forms and logics].” Yet, the dynamism of fields does not simply flow in one direction. For instance, the homogeneity of practices can momentarily give way to
heterogeneity—as when actors within a given field consider a range of new logics before converging on one that is institutionalized. This can occur when cultural entrepreneurs reject the extant logic and introduce ones that serve their purposes and interests, or when an institutional logic looses its ability to work effectively amidst broader changes prompted by such things as shifting demand or new regulations (Dobbin/Dowd 2000; Dowd 2004; Schneiberg/Clemens 2006). It is because of this dynamism that DiMaggio/Powell (1983, 1991) speak not of the structure of organizational fields (a noun) but rather their structuration (a verb).

3. THE STRUCTURATION OF MUSICAL FIELDS IN THE UNITED STATES

DiMaggio (1982b, 1987, 1991) notes that classification plays a key role in the structuration of various fields devoted to music and the arts. Such fields gain coherence as actors share a common understanding of the type of cultural object (e.g. music) that they address. This occurs as actors differentiate one type of cultural object from others—and sometimes as they segregate these types while elevating one over the other. Indeed, the distinction between “classical music” and “popular music” is the epitome of this field-level classification.

Before examining how this distinction gained an organizational base in the United States, it is helpful to understand its broader context, especially that involving Europe. While “classical music” has long been a familiar category, performed music in Europe was once heavily tilted toward the present—not yet commonplace were notions of “classic” (e.g. the composers and compositions frequently encountered at performances) and “canon” (i.e. arguments regarding the merit of such classics). Beginning in the 1700s, and gaining momentum in the 1800s, there was a growing taste among certain elite audiences and critics (e.g. the cognoscenti) for “serious
music” that edified rather than entertained—such as the music of Beethoven. This had implications for audience comportment, with once rowdy behavior giving way to hushed reverence. Indeed, the logic of canonization had at its core the segregation of “classical” music from “popular music” commonplace in certain commercial settings—elevating what some deemed to be “serious” over mere “entertainment” (Roy/Dowd 2010; Santoro 2010; Weber 2001).

3.1 The Classical Music Field: Non-Profits and Canonization

The construction of the classical music field in the United States proceeded with an eye (and ear) towards Europe—which was facilitated by the trans-Atlantic travel of both aficionados and musicians, as well as printed music (DiMaggio 1982b; Gienow-Hecht 2003; Santoro 2010). In the U.S, certain writers publicly celebrated the works of Beethoven and other European composers as musically superior and transcendent (Chmaj 1985; DiMaggio 1982b; Levine 1988). The logic of canonization had thus spread to the New World, but it lacked an organizational form to implement it effectively. For instance, some aficionados established music societies to perform this esteemed music—such as the Handel & Haydn Society of the early 1800s—and some musicians formed collectives for its performance—such as the early incarnation of the New York Philharmonic in the mid 1800s (Dowd et al. 2002). However, both types of organizations had little impact on the US given their small and exclusive audiences (music societies) or their less than regular concert schedules (musician collectives) (DiMaggio 1982b, 2006). Meanwhile, the few for-profit organizations that sought to offer only serious music (e.g. Beethoven) quickly went out of business, as audiences were not drawn in large numbers to such serious fare (DiMaggio 1982b; Levine 1988; McConachie 1988). Consequently, the notion of “classical” music was still not widely
recognized in the US during much of the 1800s. In fact, the most common performance organizations of the day—for-profit establishments—stressed entertainment more than the respectful celebration of great works of the past. Levine (1988) compellingly demonstrates how these establishments offered programs that featured excerpts from Shakespeare, Beethoven, and opera (often translated to English) alongside popular tunes and gymnastic performances. The raucous audiences at such performances were more like those encountered today at sporting events than at hushed concert halls.

DiMaggio (1982, 1992, 2006) argues that “classical music” took root in the US with the proliferation of non-profit performance organizations that sought to offer art rather than entertainment. The non-profit provided relief from the vagaries of audience demand because donations from various sources could compensate for low ticket-sales that typically resulted from featuring only “serious” works; such financial support initially came from individuals and, as the years passed, from philanthropic foundations (beginning in the 1920s), corporations (the 1950s), and government agencies (the 1960s). The Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was the first such non-profit, established in 1881. Its affluent founder, Henry Higginson, pursued a decades-long project that involved three key elements: (1) hiring musicians and managers that would only play great works, rather than a hodgepodge of excerpts; (2) building and educating an audience that could appreciate such music in reverential rather than rowdy fashion; and (3) raising funds to offset any losses at the box-office produced by this edifying, rather than entertaining, programming.

Higginson is thus an example of a cultural entrepreneur, as he strategically worked to create a new institution—in this case, an organizational form that could effectively and solely uphold the classics. Seeing a need for this endeavor, he was
able to gain support among local constituencies for this new type of organization (Johnson et al. 2006). His public claims regarding the cultural uplift associated with such esteemed music resonated with well-established notions of morality and democracy in the US, whereby such programming could edify all. However, Higginson’s actions at the BSO (e.g. expensive tickets, enforcement of a particular audience etiquette) arguably benefitted, not the general populace, but the old-moneyed elite—be they the cognoscenti drawn to such music or merely those seeking spaces of “their own” in Boston, separate from such groups as immigrants and the newly rich (DiMaggio 1982b, 2009). In that regard, Higginson’s practices were part of larger efforts in the northeast US, whereby affluent individuals in various cities formed distinctive groups seeking both closure from others and the cultivation of tastes based not on the whims of fashion but on connoisseurship (Beisel 1997; DiMaggio 2009; McConachie 1988).

The BSO eventually succeeded and provided an example of how an organization could remain financially viable while offering only the classics, thus furthering its legitimacy in Boston. Its organizational form gained wider legitimacy when affluent individuals in other US cities—who too valued classical music and / or sought closure for their “own kind” in particular settings—established non-profit symphony orchestras (DiMaggio 1982b, 1991, 2009). For instance, the New York Philharmonic moved from being a musician’s collective and eventually adopted the non-profit form (Dowd et al. 2002). Thus, rather than weighing all possible ways to meet the endeavor of classical music, these individuals proceeded in boundedly rational fashion by adopting what worked in Boston (Johnson et al. 2006). From the late 1800s onward, as non-profit orchestras spread across the United States, they
offered programming centered around European composers of the past—such as Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn (Dowd/Kelly 2012; Dowd et al. 2002; Kremp 2010).

As the non-profit orchestra became a dominant player—i.e. as it was institutionalized—the US field of classical music was poised for expansion. This potential was realized as other important actors entered the field in the early to mid 1900s (DiMaggio 1991). Emergent media industries—first in musical recording and then in radio broadcasting—initially emphasized classical music among their “products.” They did so to justify the worth of their respective devices—showing how these new technologies could educate and edify their audiences (Dowd 2003; Horowitz 1987; Katz 1998). Meanwhile, print based media continued to have notable examples of writers instructing readers on the merits and nuances of classical music (e.g. Doane 2010). Higher education in the US—which was once surprisingly silent on music in its curriculum—began to champion classical music, as well. This was evidenced in the establishment of such conservatories as Julliard (1905) and Eastman (1921)—as well as the creation of music programs at colleges and universities that began in the 1920s and spread quickly thereafter (Dowd et al. 2002; Ohlmstead 1999). Finally, opera companies adopted the non-profit form too, allowing them to move away from a mixture of “serious” and “entertainment” and, instead, offer the serious only (DiMaggio 1992). Given such field-level actions, DiMaggio (1987, 1991) maintains that classical music was widely recognized as “elevated” in the US—allowing it to serve as cultural capital, a currency that can be employed in a wide range of settings. This recognition was not in regards to which particular works and composers fit into the category of “classical music,” but rather, it was about the salience of that category in general (DiMaggio 2009).
The logic of canonization had a palpable impact in the field of classical music. Analyses of more than a century of performances reveal that major orchestras overwhelmingly featured the works of a few European composers (Dowd/Kelly 2012; Dowd et al. 2002). This pattern played out both geographically and temporally, with the performances of newly established orchestras across the nation likewise converging on these few composers (Kremp 2010). Hence, from the early 1800s to mid 1900s, Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn accounted for more than 13,000 performances (Mueller 1973).

Yet even as the logic of canonization took root in the US, it was already facing challenges—with widespread agreement about the elevation of the “classics” beginning to slip from the 1900s onward (DiMaggio 2009). While a few composers continued to dominate orchestral repertoires throughout the 1900s and into the 2000s, the extent of that dominance declined markedly (Dowd/Kelly 2012; Dowd et al. 2002). As orchestras increased the number of performances they offered—and they did so dramatically in the early 1900s—they frequently looked beyond a few classic composers, so as to vary their programming (Dowd et al. 2002). Hence, their increased productivity led to the debut of composers who were not previously performed in the US—with these “new” composers coming from the ranks of both the living and the dead (Dowd et al. 2002; Kremp 2010). This attention to the previously ignored composers (both living and dead) was somewhat contagious: a rising number of composers receiving their orchestral debut in the previous year opened the door for more such new composers in the subsequent year (Dowd et al. 2002).

Developments in other parts of the field likewise challenged the logic of canonization. Colleges and universities expanded their curricula by celebrating other types of music as worthy of consideration—such as folk musics, jazz, and the avant-
garde. As the annual number of accredited music programs rose in the US, there was an attendant increase in orchestral performances devoted to new composers (Dowd et al. 2002). This suggests that, rather than merely uphold the superiority of the classics, academic programs were also stimulating attention beyond them. Meanwhile, as the mid 1900s arrived, the recording and radio industries increasingly turned their attention to popular music, making classical music a “niche” product rather than one that they prominently elevated (Dowd 2003; Dowd et al. 2002). Finally, the audience for classical music changed considerably after the mid 1900s. Not only was it aging and shrinking in numbers, but the primary group that had once served as its main constituency—high status individuals—was growing more eclectic in terms of musical tastes and, hence, less likely to treat classical music as “superior” to other music (see DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio/Muhktar 2004; Peterson/Rossman 2008).

3.2 The Popular Music Field: Corporations and Commodification

The popular music field in the US initially rested on the same organizational base that was found in its European counterpart—for-profit venues that offered live performances of music and publishers that provided printed versions of music (Roy/Dowd 2010). Throughout the 1700s and especially the 1800s, when not making their own music for enjoyment, audiences purchased music via the stage and sheet music. Various businesses arose to address this burgeoning demand for approachable and entertaining, rather than elevated and edifying, music (Butsch 2000; Kraft 1996; Ryan 1985; Sanjek 1988). The logic of commodification had thus crossed the Atlantic and found a ready home.

The end of the 1800s ushered in technological developments that would eventually alter the popular music field within and beyond the US—namely, the
various incarnations of the recording machine. The initial challenge facing its proponents was not that of commodification in general; at this point in US history, all sorts of businesses were successfully commodifying various domains of social life, including those of entertainment and leisure (Butsch 1988; Zelizer 2010). Instead, their initial challenge was to legitimate the machine itself—convincing both investors and consumers that the phonograph met an important and unmet need. The earliest phonograph companies envisioned their endeavor as involving the renting and selling of machines to businesses and government offices for purposes of dictation and transcription, reducing reliance on paper. Given the deficiencies associated with the early phonograph, such cultural entrepreneurs as Thomas Edison and Jesse Lippincott were unable to build an audience for this use (Dowd 2002). Subsequent companies, however, would come to envision their endeavor as music—combining the recording of musicians with the distribution of these recordings, initially, to public places for consumption via early forms of the coin-operated jukebox and, later, to domestic spaces via individually owned phonographs (Dowd 2002, 2005; Millard 1995).

In the early 1900s, cultural entrepreneurs who ran such companies as Columbia Phonograph and Victor Talking Machine had convinced consumers, retailers, and others that recorded music met an important need, supplementing “live” music encountered in public venues and private domains. One way they did so was by emphasizing both operatic and orchestral recordings, using the classification of “classical music” to justify the contributions of their new machines. They also did so by emphasizing “high quality” popular music emanating from performers with broad appeal; for all intents and purposes, this often meant music by urban, white

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1 Given its competing inventors, the early recording machine went by a number of names (Dowd 2002). For simplicity’s sake, I use the term “phonograph.”
performers for urban, white listeners (Dowd 2003; Phillips/Owens 2004; Roy 2004). Their emphases were well received by retailers and audiences alike. In fact, both Columbia and Victor were so successful that they were among the first wave of multinational corporations (Dowd 2003, 2005). In legitimating their new endeavor, these cultural entrepreneurs had also tapped into broader trends regarding the commercialization of leisure and domesticity while also contributing to emergent trends in the scientization of sound (see Butsch 1988; Siefert 1994; Sterne 2003).

Columbia and Victor had each demonstrated the viability of a new organizational form—for-profit enterprises that produced musical recordings. However, the diffusion of this form was complicated in at least two ways. On the one hand, Columbia and Victor were not keen on encountering competition. To that end, they pooled their patents and used the courts to prevent other firms from utilizing their recording technologies. However, given expiration of those patents, as well as some unsuccessful court cases, a flurry of commercial firms entered the recording business in the late 1910s and 1920s (Dowd 2003, 2005; Sanjek 1988). These new firms succeeded, in part, by addressing the music and the audiences overlooked by Columbia and Victor (e.g. those for blues). In fact, their success would eventually result in a splintering of the market for popular music into three distinct markets: the mainstream “pop” and “country” markets dominated by large recording corporations, and the rhythm & blues market dominated by smaller record firms (Dowd 2003, 2004, 2005; Peterson 1997; Phillips & Owens 2004; Roy 2004). On the other hand, recording firms of all types faced a severe challenge when commercial radio arose in the 1920s—particularly when it appeared that audiences would prefer music “for free” via the airwaves rather than “for sale” via phonograph recordings. In fact, commercial recording nearly met its demise during the Great Depression. However, the
phonograph giants—Columbia and Victor—were eventually saved when two radio networks eventually attained ownership of those firms (CBS and NBC, respectively). This would solidify the position of the recording firms, as radio would now disseminate the music of performers under contract to recording firms—with airplay meant to boost, not replace, the sale of recordings (Dowd 2003; 2005; Sanjek 1988). The field was now set to expand considerably.

As the 1940s opened, the largest recording firms pursued a logic of commodification based on several tenets. The first was an emphasis on music with widespread, rather than particular, appeal (Dowd 2003, 2004). As noted above, that often meant music by white musicians for white audiences. Other actors in the field upheld this assumption as well. For instance, the American Federation of Musicians—a sizable union of instrumentalists—was segregated since the early 1900s, with white union members, rather than black union members, securing lucrative jobs in various locales. That said, the AFM was not comfortable with new technologies that could eliminate “live” work (as when establishments used recordings for background music). Consequently, they pursued a ban on recordings from 1942 to 1944, with the hope of gaining monetary concessions from the recording firms (Dowd 2003; Dowd/Blyler 2002; Kraft 1996). Meanwhile, the giant radio networks that disseminated the products and performers of the recording firms likewise emphasized music with broad appeal (i.e. the music of “whites”) while either ignoring African American musicians or relegating them to late-night hours (Barlow 1999; Douglas 1999; Dowd 2003, 2004). The logic of the largest recording firms rested on another tenet: the best way to provide music with broad appeal was via a centralized system. This entailed a few individuals who oversaw a limited number of organizational units—such as “pop” and “country” divisions—and who sought to generate hit songs
with a proven collection of performers. The final tenet was that corporate dominance flowed from quashing small record firms that could draw audiences away—pursuing this tenet not through patent litigation but through the sheer volume of recordings that the largest firms could produce and distribute (Dowd 2004, 2005).

Changes in the field eventually undermined the tenet of relying on music with broad (and “white”) appeal while ignoring other types. The radio networks transferred their attention to television, leaving a dearth of programming on the airwaves. Small radio stations that targeted specific audiences—such as teenagers and African Americans—readily filled that gap, especially with the Federal Communications Commissions pushing for heightened numbers of small stations in operation (Barlow 1999; Douglas 1999; Dowd 2003, 2005). The AFM—partly fearing the implications of equal opportunity law and regulations—began the slow process of integrating white and black musicians in its local unions (Dowd/Blyler 2002; Kraft 1996). Such changes provided leverage for small record firms seeking to challenge their large counterparts. Indeed, their numbers and sales both flourished as they emphasized the very music the large firms overlooked—the R&B and rock’n’roll that appealed to specific audience segments rather than a wide swath of the population. Beguilingly, the largest record firms embraced the tenet of providing music with general and specialized appeal. To do so, they increasingly relied on the tenet of decentralized production. They now had numerous units that addressed an expanding range of genres—with many decision-makers overseeing this varied musical production. Rather than relying on the previous tenet of dominance via predatory competition, they now sought dominance by turning to small competitors for help in identifying new performers and new genres—sometimes monitoring their small counterparts, and sometimes by contracting with or acquiring with them (Dowd 2000, 2004, 2005). This
attention to specialized music and audiences grew more pronounced in the popular music field in the decades to follow. The rise of MTV in the 1980s further contributed to this specialization, given its early emphasis on “narrowcasting” to young audiences for rock music (Banks 1996; Dowd/Blyler 2002; Goodwin 1992).

The logic of commodification—with its multiple and evolving tenets—proved consequential for the field of popular music, as shown by studies addressing nearly half a century of hit records. When the largest firms pursued a general audience by way of predatory competition and centralized production, this severely limited the success of various types of musicians—particularly new musicians (given the emphasis on established musicians by the large firms), African Americans (given the emphasis on white musicians), and women (given long-term emphasis on male musicians within and beyond popular music). When these firms shifted the tenets of their logic to include specialized audiences, cooperation with competitors, and decentralized production—this greatly buoyed the success of these three types of musicians. Furthermore, the success that each type enjoyed was somewhat contagious: an increasing number of one type that had success in one time period stimulated additional success for that type in the subsequent time period. There were limits to this contagion, as a “tipping point” occurred for both new and female musicians; especially high numbers of successful musicians in one period actually dampened the success of each type in the subsequent period. However, that tipping point did not occur for African American performers—as rising success in one period stimulated increased success in the following (Dowd 2004; Dowd/Blyler 2002; Dowd et al. 2005).

Other developments in the popular music field likewise proved consequential. The recording ban of the AFM momentarily disrupted the dominance of the largest
recording firms, briefly ushering in a flurry of new musicians, as well as new recording firms. Later, ongoing integration of the AFM’s local unions led to heightened success for African American performers (Dowd 2004; Dowd/Blyler 2002). Meanwhile, the transition from the general focus of the powerhouse networks (e.g. CBS, NBC) to that of specialized focus of local radio stations was beneficial for new performing acts of all types, as well as for African American musicians (Dowd 2004; Dowd/Blyler 2002). Specialization could have its drawbacks: the growing prominence of MTV initially hampered the success of African American musicians, given its original focus on a very narrow notion of rock music (Dowd/Blyler 2002). Finally, this field-wide emphasis on both general and specialized tastes found a ready audience: recording industry sales generally rose from the mid 1950s through the 1980s, interrupted by an industry recession from 1978 to 1982 before rebounding markedly thereafter (Dowd 2004, 2005).

3.3 Moving Forward: Illustrative Analyses

Broad classifications of music are fundamentally intertwined with particular organizational fields. As seen above, the confluence of organizational forms and their respective logics, as well as the efforts and interests of other actors in the field, shapes how these classifications gain salience and evolve over time. In fact, the classification of both classical and popular music has grown more differentiated across the decades—as the “core works” have somewhat lost their sway in the former, and as specialization has gained considerable ground in the latter. To demonstrate further the salience of field-level factors, I offer illustrative analyses of two other types of differentiation within both fields: internationalization and invigoration.
Scholars of cultural fields (e.g., music, television) often emphasize the international aspects of these fields. While certain scholars focus on the hegemonic position of the United States—with its music and the like flowing across a host of national borders—some call attention to other flows involved in the transnational movement of cultural objects (Dowd/Janssen 2011; Gebesmair, this issue; Janssen et al., this issue). In the global field of classical music, for instance, composers from nations other than the United States have long been dominant—especially German and Austrian composers (see Bevers 2005; Gienow-Hecht 2003; Mueller 1951). This has not escaped the attention of Americans in the distant and recent past, as producers and patrons have sometimes called for greater attention to US-born composers (e.g. Chmaj 1985; Scholz 2001). Meanwhile, popular music from abroad has found its way into the US—as illustrated by (but by no means limited to) UK acts enjoying great success (Achterberg et al. 2011). Below, I show the extent to which field factors spur the entry of US composers and non-US pop musicians, respectively, into fields of classical and popular music.

Scholars likewise emphasize that cultural fields are dynamic entities, often invigorated by the influx of new creators and genres. While it is tempting to label the classical music field as moribund, with its orchestras serving merely as museums, the entry of living composers has long been a staple of this field. Indeed, they can eventually ascend to the ranks of the “classic” while also toppling some of the past masters from their lofty perches (see Dowd/Kelly 2011; Mueller 1951). Popular music has likewise been invigorated—especially as music and musicians enjoying success in one of its markets subsequently enjoy success in another market, changing audience expectations in the process. In fact, Ennis (1992) compellingly argues that American “popular” music was transformed as successful musicians in the R&B and country
markets “crossed over” into the mainstream market, helping to birth rock’n’roll (see also Dowd 2003). I show how the field-level factors described above shape such invigoration—investigating the entry of new composers into the classical field and crossover performers into the popular.

4. DATA, MEASURES & EXPECTATIONS

My analyses rest on two key sources. In the classical music field, I rely on the data compiled by Mueller (1973; see Dowd et al. 2002: 49). Mueller lists the performances of twenty-seven major symphony orchestras in the US from 1842 to 1969—resulting in 88,191 performances with an identifiable composer, orchestra, and year. While this source does not address the burgeoning number of small orchestras found in the US from the mid 1900s onward, it does provide unparalleled coverage of orchestras that have historically defined the repertoire for large and small orchestras alike (see Dowd/Kelly 2012). Not surprisingly, it has been used by several scholars (e.g. Kremp 2010). In the field of popular music, I rely on Billboard’s weekly charts of hit songs occurring in the US’s largest “pop” market from 1940 to 1990—which I call the “mainstream,” and which is distinct from the R&B and country markets (see Dowd 2004: 1488-9). Such Billboard hits are those receiving high sales and radio airplay, among other things, within a given week. I monitored 25,560 hit songs—including the performer and record company of those songs. While some criticize researchers for focusing on hit records rather than, say, all records produced, the latter information is not available for the US across long stretches of time; thus, a number of researchers have used Billboard charts to gauge long-term developments in US popular music (Dowd 2007).

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2 Dowd et al. (2002) examine only the distinct number of pieces performed by a given orchestra during a particular season—thus not attending to multiple performances of the same piece during, say, a given week. Here, I include those multiple performances.
To track entry of particular types of musicians into both fields, I supplement the above sources. Regarding US and living composers in the classical music field, Mueller (1973) fortunately offers a substantial amount of information on both—often giving composer nationality and lifespan. However, I also need various sources (e.g. *Groves Encyclopedia of Music*) to gather complete information on the 1,937 composers addressed here. From 1842 to 1969, 650 US composers entered the classical music field (i.e. obtaining their first performance by a major orchestra in the US)—with few doing so in the 1800s, and a noticeable rise in entries from WWI onward. Likewise, 1445 living composers entered the field—with low but steady numbers in the early and mid 1800s, rising thereafter. Regarding the popular music field, *Billboard* charts provide no information on nationality. Whitburn (1991, 1994) offers a crucial resource in that regard—as do various encyclopedic and online sources. However, *Billboard* charts are ideal for gauging crossover success. For each of the 4,928 performers enjoying success on the mainstream charts, I also track whether any of their songs *first* appeared on the R&B charts (est. 1942) or Country charts (est. 1944) before crossing over to the mainstream charts. From 1940 to 1990, the entry of both non-US (N=1019) and crossover performers (N=1002) into the popular music field is low initially and grows considerably in later years.

While institutionalists are often hard-pressed to measure directly institutional logics (Schneiberg/Clemens 2006), I have measures that do so in both fields. Some analyzing repertoires of performing arts organizations (including DiMaggio) make use of the Herfindahl index to gauge the extent to which a few creators (composers) dominate—which is an ideal way for tracking the logic of canonization over time (Dowd/Kelly 2012; Dowd et al. 2002). This index takes the share of each actor (e.g. composer) in a given time period, then calculates the square of each of those shares,
and finally takes the sum of the squared shares. The result is an index that ranges from “0” when repertoires are evenly spread among all creators to “1000” when repertoires are dominated by a single creator. The dominance of few composers is declining among the repertoires of major US orchestras, with an index in the 200s in the 1840s giving way to one that hovers consistently under 50 throughout the 1900s, reaching 27 in 1960. This shows the waning logic of canonization. Meanwhile, the annual number performances per established orchestras has gone from a ratio of 14 in the early 1800s to consistently exceeding 50 throughout the 1900s, often reaching a value of 70. This indicates the dramatic expansion of orchestral productivity. Given previous scholarship discussed above, I expect that the waning logic and the rising productivity will boost the entry of both US and living composers—extending repertoires beyond a few classic composers.

The Herfindahl index is also ideal for assessing one tenet of the logic of commodification—that of dominance by large corporations—because it allows an inspection of the extent to which the share of hits is spread across all recording firms in a given quarter, with the Herfindahl rising in periods when the largest are especially dominant (Dowd 2004). The dominance of the largest firms was highest in the 1940s and early 1950s (sometimes reaching an index of 331), dropped sharply from the mid 1950s (with a low of 24) and then rebounded from the 1970s onward, hovering around 200 in 1990. I also measure another tenet of commodification: that of (de)centralized production, as indicated by the ratio of units (i.e. the number of distinct record labels) to record firms. In the 1940s and early 1950s, the largest firms relied on few units—centralization, as indicated by such low ratios as 1.07; however, they increasingly lost consumer interest and, in return, suffered declining market shares. By 1955, each of the large firms turned to decentralized production—relying on it to a greater degree
from the mid 1950s to 1990, as shown by ratios that routinely exceeded 3.0 in the later years. By then, for instance, Time Warner presided over some 75 labels to address a wide range of genres (Dowd 2004).\(^3\) Based on my previous research, I expect that the dominance of a few firms will limit the entry of non-US and crossover performers, given their conservative approach and that the rising decentralization of record firms will foster the entry of non-US and crossover musicians, given its emphasis on new music and new audiences.\(^4\)

As done in a previous study of the classical music field (Dowd et al. 2002), I assess here the changing curricula of US colleges and universities by counting the annual number of music programs receiving first-time accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music—showing heightened attention to musical matters in higher education; such accreditations began in 1928, reaching a total of more than 300 by 1969. I also focus on the extent to which recording firms heeded US composers, using a five-year average that tracks some 7000 of such recordings identified by Carol Oja. Their number were slight in the first two decades of the 1900s, nearly disappeared during the Great Depression, recovered thereafter, and greatly increased from the 1950s onward. Finally, I gauge the dominance of traditional network radio (i.e. that which stressed both classical music and “pop” music of wide appeal) by the percentage of all radio stations associated with CBS, NBC, and later Mutual and ABC. The percentage rose quickly from the 1926 onwards, reaching the vast majority of stations by the end of WWII, then dropped sharply thereafter. Each of these factors should spur the entry of both non-US and living composers: college curricula are

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\(^3\) The tenet addressing general vs. specialized appeal is captured by the dependent variables that I use here and in previous studies (e.g. Dowd/Blyler 2002).

\(^4\) I also consider that the combination of corporate dominance and high decentralization can help entry of both types, with decentralization offsetting the negative effect of corporate dominance (Dowd 2004, 2007). In analysis not reported here, I find no evidence of this for the two dependent variables.
moving away from a few classics, stimulating interest in other composers; recordings of American composers (both native and émigré) should likewise stimulate field-wide interest in US-born, and possibly living, composers; and traditional network radio occurred at a time in which both living (e.g. Mahler) and US composers (e.g. Gershwin, Copland) were stirring field-wide interest (Dowd/Kelly 2012; Dowd et al. 2002; Horowitz 1987).

As done previously for the popular music field (Dowd 2004; Dowd/Blyler 2002; Dowd et al. 2005), I access the impact of the American Federation of Musicians in two ways: a dummy variable capturing the years in which its recording ban was in effect (1942-44), and a continuous variable gauging the percentage of racially segregated local unions that integrated in the previous year; the vast majority of this integration occurred between 1965 and 1971. As in the classical music field, I monitor the impact of traditional network radio. However, given the time span under consideration, I use another measure for the popular music field: the quarterly percentage of radio advertising dollars earned by radio networks—which was at its peak in the 1940s, and dropped considerably thereafter. I tap the impact of the recording industry recession by way of a dummy variable for the years in which it occurred (1979-82). I gauge the impact of MTV by noting the quarterly number of all hits that had an accompanying music video—which rose quickly in the 1980s and reached 80% by 1990. I expect that developments in the AFM will foster the entry of both non-US and crossover performers: the ban could have opened the door for new types of music to receive attention (Dowd 2004) and racial integration indicates a field-wide openness to new music of various types (Dowd/Blyler 2002). I expect that the reign of traditional radio will dampen the entry of non-US and crossover performers, given its conservative emphasis on those with supposedly “wide appeal”
The industry recession will likely limit the entry of non-US and crossover performers, as recording personnel grew conservative in the face of such difficulties (Dowd/Blyler 2002). MTV’s impact should benefit the entry of non-US musicians, particularly as it did with British acts; but it should be a barrier for crossover acts given its “narrowcasting” during the 1980s (Banks 1996; Dowd/Blyler 2002).

For all of the analyses, I consider whether contagion is at play and whether there are “tipping points.” For each type of musician considered, I see how many of that type entered in the previous time period. If contagion occurs, a growing number in one time period should prompt a growing number in the subsequent period. However, if there is a “tipping point,” then exceptionally high numbers in one period will dampen those in the next period. This consideration draws upon ecological scholarship showing that a growing number of actors in a field indicates increasing legitimation for that type among various constituencies (e.g. audiences). However, especially high numbers can mark the shift from legitimation processes to those of competition—whereby many actors are now fighting for limited resources. If this tipping point occurs, then only so many types of actors can sustain the attention of audiences and others. I use a polynomial, \( X - X^2 \) to gauge the curvilinear impact of this contagion, where a significant coefficient for the squared term denotes a tipping point—reporting this polynomial when significance occurs (see Dowd 2004; Johnson et al. 2006).

5. RESULTS
Table 1 and 2 provide the regression analyses addressing the entry of musicians of various types into the classical and popular music fields. Because the dependent
variables are “counts” (e.g. the number of US composers entering the field in year \( t \)), I use negative binomial regression, as it is tailored to deal with this (Barron 1992; Long 1997). In each regression model, I lag all the predictor variables (time \( t-1 \); e.g. 1850) so that they precede the dependent variables temporally (time \( t \); e.g. 1851). Their respective impact is given by the following formula: \((100*exp(\text{regression coefficient}) – 1)\), showing how a one-unit change in a given predictor relates to the dependent variable. In each set of analysis, I first offer a model containing predictors associated with the field’s dominant organizational form (orchestras, recording firms) and then a model containing predictors associated with other actors in the field. I then combine the significant predictors from both and see how the significant fare in the presence of possible contagion.

The analysis of orchestral repertoires spans from 1843 to 1969—beginning in that year so as to make use of lagged predictor variables from 1842. Models (a) through (d) examine the entry of US-born composers into the repertoires of major orchestras and, thus, the classical music field.5 Three of the models show the significant impact of canonization: the more pronounced that logic in one year (i.e. the more a few composers dominate orchestral repertoires), the lower the number of entries for US composers the next year. Given that the logic is declining across time (Dowd et al. 2002), this bodes well for such composers. As orchestras perform more works in a given year, their increased productivity opens the door for US-born composers. As models (b) through (d) show, media actors have a significant impact.6

A rising number of recordings devoted to American composers stimulates the entry

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5 The estimation of model (a) had difficulties in terms of iteration. That is not the case for any of the other models in Tables 1 and 2.
6 Negative binomial regression handles the overdispersion problem that can occur in Poisson regression. Given the insignificance of the overdispersion parameter in models (c) and (d), as well as in models (n) through (p), I could rely on Poisson regression (Barron 1992). However, I continue to report the negative binomial regression results in those models—particularly as they are substantively identical to those yielded by Poisson regression.
of US composers into orchestral repertoires; the heyday of traditional network radio—which championed classical music among other things—is beneficial for US composers. Models (b) and (c) also show that the expansion of music curricula in higher education apparently stimulates interest in US composers, as shown by the annual number of new collegiate program; its significant impact only disappears in the presence of contagion. However, as model (d) shows, the entry of US born composers is not contagious, as their proliferation in one year does not spur more entries in the following year—regardless of any “tipping point” (which additional analysis does not find). These 650 composers would ultimately account for 5980 performances, nearly 7% of the total during this time period. Hence, their entry into the repertoires further differentiated the field but did not pose an overwhelming challenge to the classics—with the same being true in the early 21st century (Dowd/Kelly 2012).

Models (e) through (h) deal with the entry of living composers into orchestral repertoires. Both the logic of canonization and orchestral productivity continue to show significant effects. A pronounced emphasis on classics reduces subsequent entry of living composers; hence, as this logic of canonization wanes, the entry of the living becomes more commonplace. Increased productivity among orchestras prompts the increased entry by still-breathing composers. One media factor provides a significant impetus: the heyday of traditional network radio facilitates the entry of living composers; however, the decline of traditional radio eventually removes that impetus. Meanwhile, as model (h) reveals, the entry of living composers is contagious—but only to a degree, as the significant squared coefficient (-.0015) indicates a tipping point. Thus, too many entries by living composers in one year crowd out the number of entries in the following year. These 1445 living composers would ultimately
account for 22,119 performances by major orchestras, some 25% of the total during this time period. While living composers fared better as a group than their US counterparts, they too did not topple the emphasis on the classics and other works from the past—a situation that persists to the present (Dowd/Kelly 2012).

The first analysis of the popular music field spans from the last quarter (October-December) of 1940 to the last one of 1990 (see Table 2). Models (i) through (l) examine the entry of non-US performers into the mainstream charts and, hence, the field as a whole. Three of the models reveal that one tenet of commodification—that dealing with the move from centralized to decentralized production—has a significant impact. As recording firms collectively expand the number of distinct labels in operation, this proliferation of units helps international acts make their way into the mainstream market. Models (j) through (l) show that other actors have a significant impact. Traditional network radio—which proved helpful to orchestral composers—here serves as an impediment to non-US performers; hence, the waning of such radio benefits these musicians. Meanwhile, the racial integration of the AFM also creates a field conducive to performers from abroad. Finally, model (l) shows that contagion has a significant impact—but additional analysis finds no tipping point, so that non-US acts are not crowding each other out of the field. The 1019 non-US performers entering the pop music field would ultimately account for 3714 hits songs during this time frame.

The second analysis of the popular music fields begins in the last quarter of 1942—starting after the R&B market was established and, thus, creating the possibility for crossover success. Models (m) though (p) deal with the entry of such crossover acts. Three of the models show that only one of the tenets of commodification significantly matters—this time, the one dealing with corporate
dominance. Regardless of the extent of decentralization, heightened dominance by a few large firms leads to few crossover entries. This resonates with research suggesting that these corporations keep separate the various genres with which they deal (Hitters/van der Kamp 2010; Negus 1999). Models (o) through (p) show the relevance of other actors. The AFM recording ban that created an opening for new performers of all types (Dowd 2004), also does so for crossover performers. Traditional network radio raises yet again another impediment to popular musicians, with its decline auguring well for the entry of crossover acts. Finally, model (p) shows the significant impact of contagion—one that occurs without a tipping point. That is, there is more than enough room in the popular music field for such acts, with audiences apparently not tiring of them. Indeed, the 1002 crossover performers entering the field would eventually account for 6700 hit songs—more than 25% of the total during this timeframe.

6. CONCLUSION

One prominent stream of lifestyle research addresses the musical preferences and activities of individuals—heeding particularly their engagement with classical music (an indicator of cultural capital), as well as with a broad range of musical genres (an indicator of cultural omnivorism). In marshalling survey and interview data, this research often emphasizes the broader historical context in which such musical engagement is located. For example, some wonder about the continued salience of cultural capital in recent times, especially as eclecticism is apparently becoming more commonplace (e.g. Coulangeon/Lemel 2007; DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio/Muhktar 2004; Peterson/Rossman 2008. While this emphasis on historical context is laudable, it also faces an empirical challenge: much of the data marshaled by researchers
address but a limited slice of time. In the United States, for instance, nationally representative surveys of musical tastes go back to 1982, while some specialized surveys of students can extend back to 1960 (see DiMaggio 1982a, 2009; Dumais 2002; Peterson/Rossman 2008).

Institutional scholarship suggests a way around such an empirical challenge. It does so by theoretically and analytically emphasizing the confluence of actors involved in “fields” of musical production—actors that include the audiences for a given genre (those typically tapped by survey questions), as well as the organizations involved in the creation and dissemination of such a genre (those unaddressed by the typical survey). DiMaggio’s (1982b, 1991, 1992, 2009) work is exemplary in this regard given his focus on the US field of classical music. Rather than take that musical classification as given—which survey research often does—he explores how and when it took root in turn-of-the-previous-century and how it became widespread given the efforts of various actors (e.g. cultural entrepreneurs, orchestras, universities). Of course, audiences figure in this analysis—be they the cognoscenti who were originally motivated to construct such a field or those who were eventually “cultivated” for participation via family socialization and / or educational instruction (see also Aschaffenburg/Maas 1997; DiMaggio 1982a; Dumais 2002).

The purpose of this paper was to show the utility of this institutional approach—not casting it as a replacement to current research on lifestyle but as a complement that can provide the historical vantage suggested by those who study such things as omnivores. My strategy was twofold. First, I drew upon previous scholarship to provide a broad overview of two US fields of musical production—those devoted to classical and popular music, respectively. Here, I noted the cultural entrepreneurs who established key organizations (nonprofit orchestras, recording
firms) while also attracting audiences, the logic by which those organizations would come to operate, and other key actors who entered each musical field. Second, I provided additional analyses that illustrated how such field-level factors can shape the range of “products” available to audiences—the types of composers that they encounter in concert halls and the types of pop performers that they encounter in hit songs on the radio and elsewhere.

One lesson is particularly notable in both of my strategies: the fields of classical and popular music each grew more differentiated across time. Regarding classical music, DiMaggio once remarked that it contains the seeds of its own destruction. We see evidence of that in this paper. Orchestras grew less likely to celebrate few classic composers over time—especially as they expanded the number of performances offered in a given season. The media industries that initially emphasized the importance of classical music also made it more varied—particularly when featuring the music of “non-classic” composers, be they American born or still living. Meanwhile, as universities expanded their music curricula, they also inspired increased consideration of many types of music and creators—including those previously unaddressed by orchestras (Dowd et al. 2002), as well as U.S. composers. Given this historical trend of differentiation, it is not surprising that classical music is losing its hegemonic position among contemporary audiences (see DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio/Muhktar 2004; Peterson/Rossman 2008). It is also not surprising that some are becoming increasingly eclectic in the present—particularly as the US popular music field is also becoming more differentiated across time. Though not necessarily the site of continual innovation and diversity (see Dowd 2000, 2007), this field is marked by an increasing emphasis on specialized music and audiences—beginning with those associated with blues, jazz, and country, and subsequently with R&B and
rock (see also Dowd 2003; Phillips/Owens 2004; Roy 2004)—as well as a growing acceptance of various types of musicians—including women, African American, international and crossover performers. Once seeking to limit and shape the range of music offered, record corporations and traditional radio networks soon lost the audience that they sought to control—causing them to alter their approach to both music and listeners. In the process, producers and others began to cater to such specialized tastes, increasingly so across the decades.

Of course, the present paper has its limitations. First, the focus on the (distant) past for both fields should not distract from salient developments of the present. In the classical music field of the 2000s, for instance, differentiation can be especially pronounced, as when small orchestras specialize in offering only music by living composers (Dowd/Kelly 2012). In popular music of the 2000s, recording corporations and other organizations are having to respond anew to audiences with highly specialized tastes—particularly when those audiences can mobilize via new social media to create grass-roots fields of their own that can connect people from around the world (Dowd 2011). Second, my emphasis on particular institutional logics in each field should not obscure how those logics can travel across fields. In fact, some scholars point out that the current field of classical music in the US—in the face of declining funding and shrinking audiences—is witnessing a growing logic of commodification, whereby market concerns may challenge, if not trump, the aesthetic concerns associated with the logic of canonization (e.g. Glynn/Lounsbury 2005). Meanwhile, scholars of popular music convincingly show that a logic of canonization is becoming more pronounced in that field—with “classics” of rock and other genres touted as works of art (e.g. Schmutz/Faupel 2010). Such developments too could prove challenging for the once-elevated position of classical music among audiences.
Finally, as is true of many institutional works, I have focused here on the meso-level of the field while not explicitly connecting that level to the broader macro-level of the modern worldview. In short, I have tried to demonstrate the utility of the institutional approach without exhausting its full range of possibilities.

REFERENCES


### TABLE 1: Negative Binomial Regression Estimates for the Annual Number of Entries by Two Composer-Types into the Classical Music Field

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NOTE: Unstandardized coefficients; numbers in parentheses are standard errors
N=127 (years); * p < .05 & ** p < .01 (one-tailed tests)
### TABLE 2: Negative Binomial Regression Estimates for the Quarterly Number of Entries by Two Performer-Types into the Popular Music Field

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<td>-.427.70 (-415.95)</td>
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**NOTE:** Unstandardized coefficients; numbers in parentheses are standard errors
N=201 for Non-US Performers (quarters); N=197 for Crossover Performers (quarters); * p < .05 & ** p < .01 (one-tailed tests)