CultureCase

The music tastes of each generation are shaped by what genres are popular during youth

This research was conducted by **Hervé Glevarec, Raphaël Nowak** and **Dominique Mahut** at **PSL Research University Paris, France** and **Griffith University, Australia**

Summary

This paper examines at the relationship between age cohorts and music taste by analysing data from French surveys over the span of four decades. As in previous research, it showed that people's music tastes differ according to social class and age, and that there is a good deal of eclecticism in people's tastes. The authors conclude that there is 'a correlation between the formation of individuals' music tastes and the music genres that are prominent at a particular time' and that people are especially attached to music that is in circulation when they are young. This is important for understanding how people acquire taste and what their music listening says about their social status. Most research in this field talks about musical taste, social class, age and education as if the types and variety of music on offer during one's formative years was constant throughout different generations.

The research is based on data from a nationally representative survey of the French adult population in 2013

The survey asked people about their music-listening habits in relation to 13 genres of music: 'French chanson and variety'; 'international variety'; 'rock'; 'pop'; 'hip-hop and rap'; 'RnB'; 'electronic music and techno'; 'jazz'; 'world and traditional music'; 'classical music'; 'metal and hard rock'; 'opera'; and 'other music genre'. The survey also collected a variety of demographic data including education and profession.

The research also compared the musical tastes of people from surveys back in 2008 and 1973

Those surveys also captured the respondent's age. The genres which could be compared through these three surveys were ‘chanson and variety’, ‘rock’, ‘jazz’, and ‘classical’ music. This comparison showed that ‘age cohorts tend to preserve their music tastes over time’ after they were formed in people's youth.

Keywords

music **France** **survey**

Title	Tastes of our time: analysing age cohort effects in the contemporary distribution of music tastes
Author(s)	Glevarec, H., Nowak, R. & Mahut, D.
Publication date	2020
Source	Cultural Trends, Vol. 29, Iss. 3, pp. 182-198
Link	**https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2020.1773247**
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By **Culture.Case** | | **Consumer behaviour in arts and culture** , **Developing new audiences in arts and culture**

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