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Gender and highbrow cultural participation in the United States

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Abstract

Empirical analyses of cultural choice consistently report that gender is an essential determinant of cultural participation. In particular, women are significantly more likely than men to participate in high-status cultural activities. However, research on the determinants of the gender gap in high culture remains scarce. Using recent data on the United States (Survey of Public Participation in the Arts 2008), this research integrates several explanations of the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation. Specifically, the models explore the effect of (1) early socialization in the arts and socioeconomic status; (2) differential involvement by gender in the labor force; and (3) the influence of marriage on women's and men's cultural participation. A key result is that the gender gap in highbrow culture can be traced partly to differences in early socialization in the arts for women and men. Several employment-related variables also reinforce the gender gap in cultural participation.
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1. Introduction

One of the most consistent findings in empirical research on cultural consumption is that gender is an essential determinant of cultural participation. Specifically, women participate more than men in high-status cultural activities. Women are more likely than men to read fiction (Douglas, 1977; Tepper, 2000), to go to art museums and to attend classical concerts, opera concerts, live plays, and dance performances (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000; Cheerbo and Peters, 1995; DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985; Donnat, 2004; Dumais, 2002; Kane, 2004; Lizardo, 2006a; Robinson, 1993).

For scholars studying cultural consumption, these results are puzzling. The sociological literature has strongly emphasized how high culture is connected to high socioeconomic status: a

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taste for highbrow culture and participation in classical cultural activities work as a symbolic boundary distinguishing dominant social groups from less prestigious groups (Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio, 1982; Lamont and Lareau, 1988). Nonetheless, women, a dominated group in many ways—mostly in terms of relative income (Blau and Kahn, 1994), career and professional responsibilities (Baron and Bielby, 1986), and, until recently, educational attainment (Buchmann et al., 2008)—assign more legitimacy to high culture than do men, and women's cultural participation cannot be traced to socioeconomic status alone.

This puzzle calls for an empirical examination of the determinants of the gender gap in highbrow culture. Yet research on the topic remains relatively scarce. As DiMaggio (2004, p. 99) notes, "The relative neglect of gender has been something of an embarrassment to research on cultural capital." It is therefore essential to take a closer look at the gender gap in cultural participation.

Using recent data on the United States (the 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts), my research explores two questions. First, is there still a gender gap in highbrow cultural participation today in the United States? Unsurprisingly, the answer is yes. Second, what are the determinants of the gender gap? To address this, the article integrates several lines of inquiry: (1) early socialization in the arts and socioeconomic status; (2) differential involvement by gender in the labor force; and (3) the influence of marriage. The analysis reveals that early socialization in the arts is the most important determinant of the gender gap, but other employment-related variables—such as having an occupation in the educational and cultural sectors—also play a role in reinforcing differences between women's and men's cultural consumption. Yet none of these factors fully accounts for the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation.

This paper is organized as follows. First, I review the literature on gender and highbrow cultural choice. I discuss several hypotheses that have been offered to explain the gender gap in cultural participation. Second, I describe the source of data and present measures and methods. Third, I put the hypotheses to an empirical test. I conclude with a discussion of the results.

2. Literature review

Why do women participate more than men in highbrow cultural activities? The literature emphasizes three areas of investigation for explaining the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation: early socialization in the arts in relation with socioeconomic status, the structure of employment and the workplace culture, and marital status and spousal influence. These arguments are not mutually exclusive. Rather, most of the processes delineated below can be combined in explaining why women participate more than men in highbrow culture.

2.1. Early socialization in the arts and socioeconomic status

Early socialization in the arts plays a central role in shaping the esthetic tastes of individuals. It influences their life chances as well. The literature on early socialization and stratification provides important insights into this process. Bourdieu was the first to emphasize strongly how early socialization matters in defining one's "habitus," a transferable system of cognitive and practical dispositions essential for appreciating art-works (Bourdieu, 1984; Lizardo, 2004). The habitus of children born in upper-middle and middle class families helps them to acquire an "embodied" cultural capital—here, a taste for and an understanding of highbrow culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Lamont and Lareau, 1988). According to Bourdieu (1984), the fraction of the elite possessing more cultural capital than economic capital (that is, the relatively more educated but less wealthy fraction of the dominant groups) is characterized by a specifically "legitimate"

esthetic habitus bolstering group solidarity and effectively enforcing social closure. The ''legitimate'' habitus consists of a set of esthetic taste, skills, and discourses that emphasize the disinterested appreciation of demanding works of art, as well as a specific attention to their form rather than content, in a Kantian tradition.

Following Bourdieu's insights, scholars have explored the different ways in which cultural capital contributes to the reproduction of social stratification. In particular, sociologists have documented the impact of early socialization in the arts on later success in the educational system—using both qualitative and quantitative methods (for a review, see Lareau, 2000). In particular, DiMaggio (1982) specifies two models for this phenomenon. In the ''cultural reproduction'' model (closer to Bourdieu's original formulation), the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment is particularly strong for children from high-status families. In this model, the whole process is driven by early socialization within the family. In the ''cultural mobility'' model, on the contrary, cultural capital can be used as a resource by children coming from low-status families: cultural capital has an effect on educational attainment independent of family background. DiMaggio shows that the situation of women is best described by the ''cultural reproduction'' model, in which the accumulation of cultural capital through exposure to artistic activities has a larger impact on the grades of women whose fathers were highly educated (compared to the impact of the same activities on the grades of women with less-educated fathers). Men are more likely to be described by the ''cultural mobility'' model, in which the influence of cultural capital is more substantial on the grades of men with less-educated fathers (DiMaggio, 1982, p. 196; Dumais, 2002). Other instances of research using the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts find support for both models (Aschaffenburg and Maas, 1997), but also notes that early socialization in the arts within the family has more powerful effects than art education at school (see also Kraaykamp, 2003; Nagel et al., 2010). This trend of research on early socialization, cultural capital, and socioeconomic status emphasizes the different modalities of early socialization in the arts and its role in reproducing social stratification. Yet an important aspect of stratification—gender—often remains underexplored in these analyses.

The connection between gender, early socialization in the arts, and socioeconomic status can be established drawing on research that is more directly interested in gender inequality. Gender scholars have long noted the centrality and permanence of the Victorian doctrine of the ''separate spheres,'' which emphasizes the gendered distinction between public and private spaces: in the economic and political realms, men have a central role as citizens and workers, while the family is a ''haven in a heartless world'' where women take center stage and seem to have unlimited power over the household and children's education (Ferree, 1990, p. 872; Kerber, 1988; Laslett and Brenner, 1989). High culture participates in this gendered process because it is widely seen as a feminine realm, particularly in the United States (Douglas, 1977; Flint, 1993; Gray, 2000; Tepper, 2000). Collins (1988, 1992) provides a more theoretical elaboration of this idea and highlights that the gendered division of status labor is socially stratified. While men specialize in the household's productive responsibilities (the class sector, along Weberian lines), women are in charge of the family's status work. In other words, they take care of the household's status needs and public self-presentation. Collins establishes an analogy between these strategies of status display and Goffman's dramaturgic analysis: he describes women as ''Goffmanian laborers'' in charge of creating and sustaining, through daily efforts, the ''frontstage'' and official presentation of the family's social identity. According to Collins (1988, 1992), this gendered status work differs depending on class background. In working class households, women's status work deals with the cleanliness of the home, cooking, and consumerism. In high-status households, women participate in voluntary organizations and in highbrow cultural activities.

It is therefore not surprising that middle and upper-middle class parents particularly encourage girls to participate in cultural activities—as they think that artistic and literary activities are appropriate for girls (Octobre, 2005). In families with a high socioeconomic status, parents play an essential role in influencing the artistic formation of their children: they gather information on arts classes, pay for the lessons, and drive children to their different after-school activities (Levey, 2009). Using American data, Dumais (2002, p. 52) reports that girls outnumber boys in each one of the following activities: art lessons, music lessons, dance lessons, library visits, concerts, and visits to art museums (see also DiMaggio, 1982; Kaufman and Gabler, 2004; Tepper, 2000).

To summarize, one could expect women to participate more in highbrow cultural activities because they were socialized to appreciate the arts during their childhood to a greater extent than men. According to Collins (1988, 1992), this phenomenon should be particularly strong in middle and upper-middle class families. Drawing on these different insights, I make several hypotheses regarding the relation between early socialization in the arts, socioeconomic status, gender, and highbrow cultural participation as an adult. In the hypotheses below, both parental education and education are understood as indicators of socioeconomic status.

Hypothesis 1. Women participate more than men in highbrow arts activities because they were more likely to take art lessons during their childhood.

Hypothesis 2. The positive effect of parental education on arts participation is stronger for women than for men.

Hypothesis 3a. The positive effect of education on arts participation is stronger for women than for men.

However, the effect of education on women's cultural participation compared to men's is more ambiguous than what is indicated above. Indeed, education could also have a negative influence on the gender gap in cultural participation. As described above, previous research shows that cultural capital and educational attainment go hand in hand. Cultural capital is necessary to succeed in the higher educational system, and likewise, higher educational curricula promote a taste for high culture (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979). Consequently, when education increases, participation in high culture should also increase.

But in this self-reinforcing process, women have a comparative advantage, so to speak. As noted above, because of the separate spheres phenomenon, women are already socialized during their childhood to appreciate high culture more than men. One could therefore expect women's patterns of cultural participation to be less transformed than men's as their educational level increases. Therefore, the effect of education on participation in the arts should be less important for women than for men. In other words, the gender gap in high culture should be smaller for highly educated respondents, compared to other respondents. From this line of thought stems a hypothesis that directly contradicts Hypothesis 3a:

Hypothesis 3b. The positive effect of education on arts participation is stronger for men than for women.

2.2. Employment status and workplace culture

A second direction of research on gender and cultural participation focuses on the effect of employment in explaining why women participate more than men in highbrow cultural activities. Three main arguments emerge: the ''time constraint'' argument, the ''cultural occupations'' argument, and the ''workplace culture'' argument.

A first body of research explores the relation between work status and highbrow cultural consumption. It hypothesizes that women who work outside the home only part-time or not at all will participate more in high status cultural activities than women who work full-time because the former have more free time (Tepper, 2000). Because women are more likely to work part-time or to be unemployed than men, it would explain the gender gap in cultural participation. However, as Tepper rightly notes, one should be careful when relying on the part-time/full-time distinction: the decision for a woman to work part-time (or not to work) might reflect a traditional ideology (''women's work is in the home''). Women working part-time might participate more than other women in highbrow cultural activities, not because of their employment status, but because of their gender ideology—that is, the belief that women should devote most of their time to the household and not to a paid occupation (Tepper, 2000, p. 260). Tepper further specifies ways to control for this problem, but here I only focus on the first part of his argument to derive the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. Women participate more than men in highbrow arts activities because they are less likely to work full-time.

A second body of inquiry emphasizes the kind of occupations held by women. Collins (1988) argues that, because of the gendered division in status labor, women are more likely to work in the cultural and educational sectors. He states, ''—this enables [women] to short-circuit the loop between class and culture. Their class position may be more modest than their cultural level, because they work where the culture is produced, and so to speak, pilfer it for themselves in the process of purveying it to others'' (Collins, 1988, p. 40). According to this argument, women are more likely than men to work in the culture-production sector. In turn, these occupations are associated with a higher level of cultural capital. Hence, occupational specialization contributes to explaining the gender gap in highbrow cultural activities. Bihagen and Katz-Gerro (2000) put this argument to an empirical test, using data on cultural consumption in Sweden. They find that respondents inside and outside the culture-production sector do not have significantly different levels of participation in highbrow culture, and that gender differences are not smaller within the cultural sector. These findings cast doubts on the ''cultural occupations'' argument, but it has not been tested on American data.

Hypothesis 5. Women participate more than men in arts activities because they are more likely to specialize in the educational and cultural sectors.

Finally, a recent piece of research emphasizes the role of workplace culture in explaining differing rates of cultural consumption between men and women. Lizardo (2006a, p. 18) argues that there is ''no such thing as 'the' gender gap in highbrow cultural choice.'' He shows, instead, that the gender gap only occurs among respondents who are also part of the labor force. For retired people and students, he reports no significant difference between the cultural consumption of men and women. Additionally, Lizardo relies on Bourdieu's theory of class fractions and reports that ''as the volume of economic capital increases relative to cultural capital, men reject highbrow culture at a faster rate than women, thus increasing the gender gap in 'market oriented' fields'' (Lizardo, 2006a, p. 12). According to Lizardo, the gender gap in high culture is driven by gender differences in the workplace, because women are less likely to become alienated from high culture in the workplace: ''women who work in ''market oriented'' fields. . .are less likely than men who work in the same fields to reject the dominant culture of their superiors in favor of other forms of coordination culture'' (Lizardo, 2006a, p. 11). The sixth hypothesis tests the implication of Lizardo's argument.

Hypothesis 6. The positive effect of being active in the labor force on arts participation is stronger for women than for men.

2.3. Marital status and spousal influence

Marital status also has an impact on the difference between men and women's highbrow cultural participation. Sociologists have emphasized that research on cultural consumption has paid scarce attention to social networks (Lizardo, 2006b) and peer groups (Pasquier, 2010). The family—and especially spousal influence on cultural participation—is a good entry point to understanding the processes at stake. Previous research has shown that, among cohabiting heterosexual couples, women are more likely than men to take the lead in cultural activities, especially when they have a large amount of cultural capital (or when their cultural capital is more important than that of their husbands) (Silva and Le Roux, 2011). In addition, Upright (2004) provides two main findings based on a subsample of the 1992 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts on married couples (Upright, 2004). First, he shows that individual arts participation is indeed influenced by the spouse's artistic and social background. When one's spouse has high levels of arts socialization and educational attainment, one is more likely to attend arts events with or without his or her spouse—even when individual attributes are controlled for statistically. Second, Upright reports that these processes are gendered: men whose wives have higher arts socialization and education will be more likely than comparable men to attend art events, even after controlling for the husband's attributes. Therefore, the gender gap in highbrow arts activities should be smaller when people are married than when they are not, because women will increase the rate of arts participation of their spouses.

Hypothesis 7. Women participate relatively more than men in highbrow arts activities when they are not married (single, divorced, or widowed) than when they are married.

3. Data and measures

In this article, I rely on an American source of data, the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). The SPPA was conducted by the Bureau of the Census as a supplement to the Current Population Survey in 2008, and 18,444 completed surveys were collected from a sample of U.S. households using a stratified, multi-stage, clustered design. I introduce below the different variables included in the analysis. A table of summary statistics for all the variables can be found in Appendix A (Table A1).

3.1. Dependent variable

First, the ''highbrow'' or ''legitimate'' cultural activities under consideration need to be defined. Instead of imposing a pre-constructed definition of legitimate culture, I explore the structure emanating from the data and draw on the methods developed in previous articles on cultural participation (Katz-Gerro, 2002; Lizardo and Skiles, 2009; van Eijck, 2001). I rely on a factor analysis (principal component factor) on all the out-of-home leisure and cultural activities that could be found in the SPPA 2008. The questions considered are: attending a classical concert, attending an opera, attending a live play, attending a dance performance (modern dance and ballet), attending a jazz performance, visiting an art museum, visiting a historic site, going to a

movie, going to a sports event, participating in a sports activity/participating in exercise programs, and doing an outdoor activity (camping, hiking, canoeing). The formulation of the questions on performing arts is the following: ''With the exception of elementary or high school performances, did you go to ___ during the last 12 months?'' For visits to museums or historic sites, the formulation is: ''During the last 12 months did you visit ___?''

I do not take into account reading, listening to music, or other cultural activities taking place at home. Indeed, it seems clear that the constraints limiting cultural consumption are different for out-of-home and at-home activities. In particular, geographical location, income, and the presence of children at home are essential factors explaining variation in out-of-home cultural participation. In contrast, reading or listening to music at home follows different patterns. Hence, my analysis is limited to out-of-home activities, and the dependent variable emerging from the factor analysis will only be constituted of benchmark cultural activities. This analytic decision is quite common in research on cultural capital using the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, which has a very large range of cultural variables (for example, see DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004; Peterson and Rossman, 2008).

Table 1 presents the findings of the factor analysis. For each factor, I consider the loads above 0.5. A ''leisure'' factor and a ''highbrow'' factor emerge. The ''leisure'' factor shows high loads for so-called ''middlebrow'' activities: visiting a historic site, going to the movies, attending a sports event, and participating in a sports activity. It explains 21.7% of the variance. The ''highbrow'' factor is loaded by high-status cultural activities: attending a classical concert, an opera, a live play, a dance performance, a jazz performance, or visiting an art museum. It explains 21.55% of the variance, almost as much as the leisure factor.

I rely on this latter factor analysis to create a ''highbrow participation'' variable.[1] This variable is an index taking into account all the activities scoring above 0.55 in the second factor: classical

Table 1
Factor analysis on leisure and cultural activities.

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Classical concert	0.1160	0.7042
Opera	−0.0496	0.5720
Live play	0.1721	0.5872
Dance	0.1058	0.5997
Jazz	0.1658	0.5806
Art museum	0.4487	0.5523
Historic site	0.5283	0.4036
Movies	0.6475	0.1191
Sports events	0.6533	0.0940
Sports activity	0.7237	0.0905
Outdoor	0.6724	0.0858
Variance explained	21.70	21.55

Source: SPPA 2008, unweighted data.
Highlighted results: loads >0.50.

[1] It should be noted that I do not take into account the activities with high loadings on the leisure factor in the rest of the analysis. These activities (visiting a historic site, going to the movies, attending a sports event, participating in a sports activity) did not overall reveal an overwhelming gendered pattern: women were more likely than men to visit a historic site, go to the movie, and participate in a sports activity, while men were more likely than women to attend a sports event.

concert, opera, jazz concert, dance performance, live play, and art museum. Cronbach's alpha of the index is 0.67, which is an acceptable score (Agresti and Finlay, 1997; Cortina, 1993).

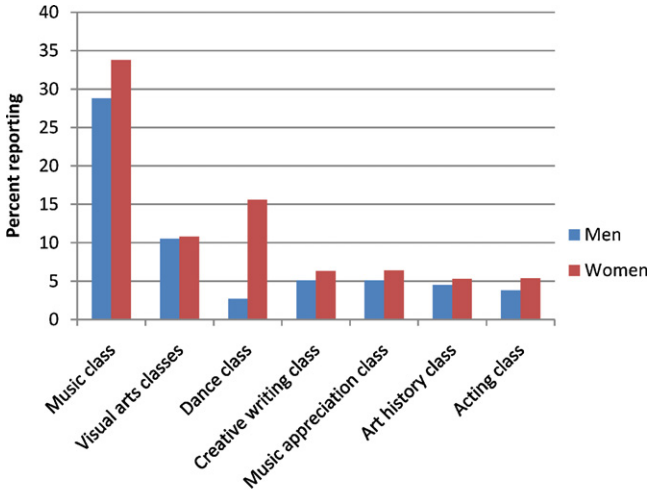
A bivariate analysis of the cultural participation index shows that women participate more than men in highbrow cultural activities: on average, women have been to 0.88 distinct highbrow cultural activities during the past 12 months, while men have been to 0.66 distinct cultural activities. This difference is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Detailed descriptive statistics on the cultural participation index can be found in Appendix A (Table A2).

3.2. Independent variables

Gender is a dichotomous variable (female is equal to 1).

The SPPA asks several retrospective questions about art lessons taken before the respondent was 18 years old: music classes, visual arts classes, acting classes, dance classes, creative writing classes, art history classes, and music appreciation classes. In this sample, 39.1% took at least one art lesson during childhood. Descriptive statistics show a marked gender gap in early art classes: 42.6% of women took at least one lesson before they were 18 years old, while only 35.3% of men did and this difference is highly significant. Fig. 1 describes the gender gap by type of lesson. Women are more likely than men to have taken any kind of art lessons during their childhood. The gender difference is particularly marked for dance lessons (15.6% of women have taken dance lessons versus 2.7% of men).

In the regression models, the "early socialization" variable is a dichotomous variable taking into account all the retrospective questions asked about art lessons taken during childhood. The variable equals one when the respondent has taken at least one art lesson during childhood; it is null otherwise. Because of the sampling design of the SPPA in 2008, these questions were asked to a subset of the sample (Module D, "Arts learning," $N = 6528$). This subset was randomly selected (for more information on the sampling design, see Triplett, 2009; for descriptive statistics about the Module D subsample, see Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix A).



Source: SPPA 2008. Weighted data.

Fig. 1. The gender gap in early art lessons.

Education comes with five categories: less than high school, high school graduate, some college, college graduate, and graduate education (''some college'' is used as the reference category in my regression models).[2] Parental education takes the larger value of either the father's or the mother's years of schooling. When there is missing information for father's education, then mother's education is used instead (and vice versa).

Marital status is a dichotomous category (being married is equal to 1).

Following Lizardo's operationalization, the respondent is considered to be active in the labor force when he or she has reported working in the past week and is between 25 and 64 years old (Lizardo, 2006a, p. 15).[3] Active respondents are considered to be working full-time when they currently work more than 39 hours a week.

Following Bihagen and Katz-Gerro's method for testing the ''cultural occupation'' argument (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000, p. 334), I create a dummy variable equal to 1 when the declared occupation of the respondent is either part of the ''arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations''[4] or part of the ''education, training, and library occupations.''

The regression models also control for a set of relevant demographic and socioeconomic variables. Age is a categorical variable with four categories: 18–34 years old, 35–44 years old, 45–59 years old, 60 years old and up. In the SPPA, the variable for family income has 16 categories. It adds the personal incomes of all household members and takes into account disposable income as well as other sources of income.[5] I recoded the variable to create income midpoints in dollars for each category. Region has seven categories: New England, Middle Atlantic, Midwest, North Central, Southeast, Mountains, and Pacific. Metropolitan status has three categories: metropolitan, non-metropolitan, or non-identified. Race (non-White = 1) and ethnicity (Hispanic = 1) are two dichotomous variables. I control for the presence of children under 18 years old at home.

3.3. Model

The dependent variable in the model is an index counting the number of times the respondent went to highbrow cultural activities in the past 12 months. Poisson regressions are usually the most appropriate for count data. However, the dependent variable is characterized here by overdispersion and a large number of null values (68.6% of the cases, Table A2) and Poisson regressions are not adequate in these cases. Hence, I use another regression model from the Poisson family instead: a negative binomial regression (Land et al., 1996). The dependent variable in this type of regression takes the form of expected log counts. Similar results were found using a logistic model with a dichotomous dependent variable (having participated in any kind of arts activity in the past twelve months or not).

[2] I found comparable results when I used a continuous variable (years of schooling) for education.

[3] Similar results were found when the definition of being active in the labor force did not entail any age restriction.

[4] This variable is the only one detailing the specialty of the occupation held by the respondent, and not only the sector recode (being a janitor in a publishing company would then count as an occupation in the publishing sector) or the occupational recode (which does not mention the sector of activity).

[5] More precisely, the income variable encompasses earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, disability benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, estates and trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, financial assistance from outside of the household, and other income.

Table 2
Summary of the hypotheses, variables, and methods.

Hypothesis	Variable type	Statistical method
H1. Early socialization in the arts	Dichotomous variable: art lessons during childhood	Direct effect on the gender coefficient
H2. Parental education	Father's or mother's years of schooling	Interaction term
H3a. Education (positive effect on the gender gap)	Dichotomous variables: "college graduate" or "graduate education"	Interaction term
H3b. Education (negative effect on the gender gap)	Dichotomous variables: "college graduate" or "graduate education"	Interaction term
H4. Full-time work	Dichotomous variable	Direct effect on the gender coefficient
H5. Educational and cultural jobs	Dichotomous variable	Direct effect on the gender coefficient
H6. Active in the labor force	Dichotomous variable	Interaction term
H7. Marriage	Dichotomous variable	Interaction term

Previous analyses of the gender difference in cultural consumption often ran separate models on two subsamples, the male and the female parts of the population. In contrast, I do not split my sample by gender and I test all my hypotheses on the same sample with interaction terms—which is more statistically sound because it allows me to measure significance instead of approximately comparing the coefficients of interest and their standard deviations on various subsamples (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 547). The hypotheses call for different methods of empirical test. Hypothesis 1 (early socialization), Hypothesis 4 (part-time jobs) and Hypothesis 5 (cultural occupations) are tested by examining how the coefficient of gender changes when new variables are entered into the models. Hypothesis 2 (parental education), Hypotheses 3a and 3b (education), Hypothesis 6 (active in the labor force), and Hypothesis 7 (marriage) are tested with interaction terms between the variable "female" and the other variable under consideration. For the first set of hypotheses, I argue that a new variable mediates the effect of gender. Hence, I look at the direct effect of the variable on the model. For the second set of hypotheses, I hypothesize that some variables have a different effect on men's and women's cultural participation and I use interaction terms to test this. Table 2 summarizes the different hypotheses, variables, and statistical methods used to test them.

In a model with an interaction term, the coefficient for the interaction term, as well as the coefficients for each of the variables used in the interaction term, should always be interpreted as describing conditional effects, rather than general relationships between variables. In other words, while the coefficients in a model without any interaction term describe the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable regardless of the level of other independent variables, the coefficients in a model with interaction terms make sense only as long as the level of the other independent variables is also taken into account (Friedrich, 1982).[6]

[6] Friedrich also provides an alternative method to calculate what he calls "conditional" standard errors, more adequate in case of interaction terms than the "general" standard errors provided by statistical packages such as STATA (Friedrich, 1982, p. 809). More generally, he recommends caution when analyzing the "general" (or "additive") standard errors in case of interaction terms and notices that they may be too conservative given the structural multicollinearity between the interaction term and its constituent variables. Unfortunately, he demonstrated his method for OLS regression and not negative binomial regression. Yet his note of caution regarding the significance of interaction terms (i.e., the idea that interaction terms may appear to be statistically insignificant when in fact they should be significant) should be kept in mind when reading the results presented below.

Several points should be noted regarding the structure of the data. First, because the questions on early socialization in the arts were asked only to a subset of the SPPA sample, and because part of my analytic method is to compare coefficients across models, I run all my models on the Module D (''Arts learning'') sample, which is randomly selected from the SPPA sample. Hence, my total number of observations is limited to 6528 respondents (Appendix A). As a robustness check, I ran the models that did not include any variable on early socialization on the complete SPPA sample and found similar results (see Appendix B). Second, within the Module D subsample, missing data were deleted using list-wise deletion in STATA. Finally, given the complex sampling design of the SPPA data, I used the relevant sampling weights (MWGT and CWGT) for all the descriptive statistics, but did not include them in the regression models (for a discussion, see Gelman, 2007; Windship and Radbill, 1994).

4. Results

In this section, I present my empirical analyses. In addition to a confirmation of the gender gap using 2008 data, a key result is that early socialization in the arts is an important determinant of the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation: it accounts for more than 25% of the difference between women and men. In addition, two employment-related variables—working in the educational and cultural sectors and working full-time—account for smaller portions of the gender gap. The other hypotheses are disconfirmed, and approximately 60% of the gender gap cannot be attributed to any of the hypothesized causes.

The models presented in Table 3 test the hypotheses delineated above.[7] The baseline model (Model 0) documents that there is indeed a strong gender gap in highbrow cultural participation, even when controlling for the socioeconomic and demographic variables. The difference in the logs of expected counts for highbrow participation is expected to be 0.27 units higher for females compared to males, controlling for everything else. This gender coefficient (0.27) is highly significant. Unsurprisingly, higher education and parental education have a positive and significant effect on highbrow cultural consumption. Regarding the influence of age, only the oldest group (60 years old and up) has a positive and strongly significant effect on highbrow cultural participation once controlling for socioeconomic and demographic variables. Finally, being married has a significant negative influence on cultural participation: married respondents participate less in highbrow cultural activities than do single people.

Model 1 tests the effect of early socialization in the arts on the gender gap in cultural participation. Early art lessons are a strong predictor of adult cultural participation. The coefficient for early lessons is positive (0.74) and it is significant at the 0.001 level. The coefficient for gender decreases by 26% between Model 0 and Model 1 (from 0.27 to 0.20): early socialization in the arts accounts for more than a quarter of the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation. The other coefficients in the model remain stable. Hence, the first hypothesis is supported by the data.

Model 2 examines the effect of having an occupation in the cultural or educational sectors. The effect of cultural and educational jobs is positive (0.20) and significant. Compared to Model 1, there is a slight decrease in the coefficient for gender (from 0.20 to 0.18). The fifth hypothesis receives modest support.

[7] In the models presented, I keep all the variables in all the models, therefore controlling for all the possible effects. I found similar results when I introduced variables one by one to the baseline model.

Table 3
The determinants of highbrow cultural participation.

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender (women = 1)	0.27*** (0.04)	0.20*** (0.04)	0.18*** (0.04)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.06)	0.32*** (0.20)
Age 18–34 years old	0.04 (0.07)	−0.03 (0.07)	−0.03 (0.07)	−0.00 (0.07)	−0.01 (0.07)	−0.00 (0.07)
Age 45–59 years old	0.13~ (0.07)	0.12~ (0.06)	0.12~ (0.06)	0.12~ (0.07)	0.12~ (0.07)	0.12~ (0.07)
Age 60 and older	0.31*** (0.08)	0.29*** (0.08)	0.30*** (0.08)	0.27*** (0.08)	0.26** (0.08)	0.27*** (0.08)
Education						
Less than high school	−1.08*** (0.12)	−0.91*** (0.12)	−0.90*** (0.12)	−0.88*** (0.12)	−0.88*** (0.12)	−0.87*** (0.12)
High school graduate	−0.68*** (0.06)	−0.57*** (0.06)	−0.57*** (0.06)	−0.56*** (0.07)	−0.56*** (0.07)	−0.56*** (0.07)
College graduate	0.37*** (0.06)	0.34*** (0.05)	0.33*** (0.05)	0.36*** (0.06)	0.38*** (0.08)	0.37*** (0.08)
Graduate education	0.71*** (0.07)	0.62*** (0.06)	0.59*** (0.07)	0.61*** (0.07)	0.71*** (0.09)	0.70*** (0.10)
Parental education	0.08*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Married	−0.21*** (0.05)	−0.19*** (0.05)	−0.19*** (0.05)	−0.18*** (0.05)	−0.18*** (0.05)	−0.22** (0.07)
Early socialization		0.74*** (0.05)	0.73*** (0.05)	0.73*** (0.05)	0.74*** (0.05)	0.73*** (0.05)
Cultural occupation			0.20** (0.07)	0.16* (0.07)	0.17* (0.07)	0.18* (0.07)
Working full-time				−0.12~ (0.07)	−0.12~ (0.07)	−0.13~ (0.07)
Gender × College grad.					−0.04 (0.10)	0.01 (0.10)
Gender × Graduate Educ.					−0.18 (0.12)	−0.14 (0.12)
Gender × Parental education						−0.18~ (0.09)
Gender × Employment status						−0.17 (0.10)
Gender × Marriage						0.05 (0.09)
Constant	−2.43*** (0.15)	−2.52*** (0.15)	−2.52*** (0.15)	−2.49*** (0.15)	−2.52*** (0.16)	−2.76*** (0.19)
Observations	5366	5366	5355	5085	5085	5085
Pseudo *R*-squared	0.104	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.126	0.127
Ll	−5405	−5282	−5275	−4973	−4971	−4968

Source: SPPA 2008.
Standard errors in parentheses.
~ $p < 0.1$.
* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

Model 3 further adds the variable on full-time work. Working full-time has a negative influence on arts participation, but it is only significant at the 0.1 level. Introducing this new variable in the model further decreases the coefficient for gender, even if the change is very small (from 0.18 in Model 2 to 0.17 in Model 3). This change is consistent with the fourth hypothesis, but the effect of working full-time is weak.

Model 4 adds two interaction terms between female and higher education (B.A. and graduate education): the coefficients are negative but do not reach significance. These results do not support the idea that graduate education has a negative impact on the gender gap. There does not appear to be any issue of collinearity in this model: I ran several variance inflation factor (VIF) tests, which provide indexes measuring how much the variance of specific coefficients is increased because of other (and possibly multicollinear) variables: they were all very low (<5) (Agresti and Finlay, 1997; O'Brien, 2007).

Finally, Model 5 introduces interaction terms between gender and parental education, between gender and employment status,[8] and between gender and marital status. The coefficients for these interaction terms do not take the expected sign, and none of them is significant. Thus the remaining Hypotheses (2, 6, and 7) are not supported by the data.

5. Discussion

Why do women participate more than men in highbrow cultural activities such as classical concerts, operas, theater, and art museums? An examination of the determinants of women and men's highbrow cultural consumption shows that no single explanation accounts for all differences.

The main result is that early socialization in the arts plays a central role in shaping the cultural participation of women and men. Because girls are more likely than boys to take art lessons and classes during their childhood, they remain more interested in the arts as adults: more than a quarter of the gender difference in cultural participation can be traced to gender differences in artistic socialization during childhood. This finding is very promising, but leads to additional questions. First, what kinds of childhood training are most influential in shaping the future cultural participation of women and men, private lessons or art lessons taken at school? Previous research indicates that private lessons might have a more important influence on people's esthetic tastes (Aschaffenburg and Maas, 1997; Kraaykamp, 2003; Kracman, 1996; Nagel et al., 2010), but these analyses focus less on gender difference than on socioeconomic variation in cultural participation. Unfortunately, because of the framing of the questions on early art lessons in the 2008 SPPA, one cannot distinguish between private lessons and art lessons taken at school.[9] A second interesting question regards the balance of student choice and parental pressure in the process through which children get enrolled in art lessons. Is parental pressure stronger for girls than for boys? Does the balance change as children grow up?

[8] I replicated the exact method used by Lizardo (2006a) and still found different results when I controlled for socioeconomic variables, which is probably due to the larger number of observations in the 2008 SPPA. These analyses are available upon request.

[9] There is a question in Module D of the SPPA that is formulated in this way: "Excluding lessons or classes offered in elementary or high school, were any of the ___ lessons or classes (name/you) took as a child private lessons?" Unfortunately, the meaning of "private" is confusing here: it could mean individual lessons as well as collective lessons for which one has to pay. I chose not to analyze this variable because it was too ambiguous.

Another finding provided by the statistical analysis is that employment-related factors also play a part in reinforcing the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation. A robust result is that occupations in the cultural and education sectors mediate the gender gap in cultural participation: women are more likely than men to hold these occupations, and this difference partly explains why they participate more than men in highbrow culture. This finding is interesting because it could indicate that the separate spheres might be moving to the marketplace: the gendered division of status labor highlighted by Collins (1992) also occurs when women choose to work in industry sectors that are considered more feminine.

Finally, there are several reasons to expect a disappearance, or at least a decline, in the difference between women's and men's arts participation for younger cohorts. Indeed, both the condition of women and the status of high culture have been dramatically transformed in the past decades in the United States. I delineate these two changes below, before underlining how they could affect the gender gap in cultural participation for younger cohorts.

First, the situation of women in American society has been transformed substantially in the past 60 years. The massive entry of middle-class and upper-middle class women into the paid labor force began in the 1950s (Goldin, 2006). A rapid increase in the proportion of women in the higher education system also started in the 1950s: women now earn 58% percent of all bachelor's degrees in the United States (Buchmann et al., 2008, p. 326; Jacob, 1996). In addition, the feminist revolution largely challenged the traditional division of labor between women and men and the model of the ''separate spheres'' (Ferree, 1990), leading to a broad cultural reassessment of women's proper role both in the family and in the workplace.

A second interesting transformation regards the evolution of highbrow culture as a status marker in the United States over the past decades. Several scholars have emphasized a marked decline in arts participation in most Western countries, but particularly so in the United States. DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004) report large declines in attendance rates between 1982 and 2002 for most high-culture activities. According to the authors, this decline is even stronger for younger age groups, which is consistent with Peterson and Rossman's (2008, p. 308) finding that the median age of art attendees has significantly increased for all high-culture activities. DiMaggio and Mukhtar interpret their results not in terms of a general ''meltdown'' scenario where all forms of cultural capital are disappearing, but more as a redefinition of the cultural boundaries distinguishing a cosmopolitan upper-middle class from other social groups. This decline in highbrow arts participation is in line with the literature on omnivores and omnivorousness. Several seminal articles on the musical tastes of Americans have emphasized that highbrow exclusivity (''snobbism'') might be replaced by omnivorousness: individuals like a larger range of musical genres than before (e.g., Peterson and Kern, 1996). Scholars have found omnivores in many countries; they have developed several different methods in order to properly measure omnivorousness (Goldberg, 2011; Peterson, 2005); and a vibrant discussion has emerged regarding how to interpret these changes within the Bourdieuian framework of cultural capital and distinction (Atkinson, 2011; Bennett and Silva, 2011; Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007; Holt, 1997). The ''omnivores'' theory sheds new light on the decline in highbrow cultural participation: people might participate less in ''classical'' cultural activities because they appreciate a more diverse set of cultural items than in the past. This trend should be particularly marked for younger cohorts, who are reported to be more omnivorous than older cohorts (García Alvarez et al., 2007; Peterson and Kern, 1996).

How do these two transformations—the change in the situation of women and the marked decline in high-culture arts participation—influence the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation? I know of no previous research that has explored this question, but one could

expect a decline, or even a disappearance, of the gender gap in high culture for younger cohorts, for two reasons. On the one hand, if women's educational attainment and participation in the labor market are becoming more and more similar to men's over time, then all the hypotheses that analyze the gender gap in cultural participation in terms of gender differences in educational attainment or labor market participation should be supported for older cohorts, but less so for younger cohorts. On the other hand, if high culture is losing ground as a status symbol, and if omnivorousness is the new relevant form of cultural capital for younger cohorts, then the hypotheses that understand the gender gap in highbrow culture in terms of cultural capital and early socialization should not be supported by the data for younger cohorts.

Unfortunately, the data used here do not allow for a joint analysis of age groups, early socialization in the arts, and gender differences in highbrow cultural participation because the sample size is too small to test all of these variables together. Further research could explore this question using other sources of data and alternative research methods.

6. Conclusion

This analysis provides several insights into the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation. First, I update the record by documenting the persistence of the difference between women's and men's cultural participation using data from 2008. Second, I show that several determinants should be taken into account in order to understand the gender gap in highbrow culture. The results indicate that women's higher cultural consumption can in part be traced to early socialization in the arts, and that employment-related variables also play a supporting role in reinforcing the gender gap in highbrow cultural participation. Nonetheless, even after controlling for these factors and exploring a number of interaction effects, a sizable—and unexplained—difference between women and men remains.

More generally, this paper makes a contribution to the analysis of early-life socialization. Although socialization in the arts during childhood is a central tenet of Bourdieu's theory of cultural stratification, the topic has remained underexplored—particularly by means of empirical research on cultural consumption, and especially where gender inequality is concerned. Through the lens of gender, my analysis provides additional insights on the relationship between early differences in artistic socialization and the later stratification of cultural participation.

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Appendix A. Descriptive statistics

Table A1
Summary statistics of the variables.

	Whole sample		Module D subsample	
	%	N	%	N
Core questions				
Classical concert	9.31	18,343	9.47	6523
Opera	2.14	18,341	2.12	6528
Live play	9.41	18,294	9.31	6521
Dance performance	7.04	18,281	7.31	6523
Jazz performance	7.82	18,390	8.05	6521
Art museum	22.74	18,248	22.73	6524
Historic site	24.91	18,212	24.11	6522
Module C questions ''leisure''				
Movies	53.34	9937	53.57	2242
Sports event	30.57	9955	30.37	2243
Sports activity	57.24	9943	55.23	2243
Outdoor activity	28.18	9937	24.83	2245
Index of highbrow cultural participation	0.58	18,201	0.59	6539
Module D questions ''arts learning''				
Music classes	31.37	6559	Same	Same
Visual arts classes	10.66	6572	–	–
Acting classes	4.63	6569	–	–
Dance classes	9.38	6570	–	–
Creative writing classes	5.75	6563	–	–
Art history classes	4.92	6558	–	–
Music appreciation classes	5.74	6558	–	–
Sociodemographic variables				
Gender (women = 1)	51.72	18,444	51.61	6528
Income				
Less than 5000	1.87	16,548	2.48	5888
5000–7499	1.87	16,548	2.26	5888
7500–9999	2.03	16,548	2.68	5888
10,000–12,499	2.72	16,548	3.15	5888
12,500–14,999	2.59	16,548	2.87	5888
15,000–19,999	4.28	16,548	4.94	5888
20,000–24,999	5.63	16,548	6.44	5888
25,000–29,999	6.03	16,548	5.94	5888
30,000–34,999	6.19	16,548	6.71	5888
35,000–39,999	5.06	16,548	5.76	5888
40,000–49,999	9.34	16,548	9.25	5888
50,000–59,999	8.71	16,548	8.54	5888
60,000–74,999	11.55	16,548	10.74	5888
75,000–99,999	13.52	16,548	12.18	5888
100,000–149,999	10.66	16,548	9.21	5888
150,000 or more	7.96		6.86	5888
Education				
Less than high school	14.82	18,444	15.98	6528
High school graduate	30.40	18,444	31.66	6528
Some college	27.30	18,444	27.16	6528
College graduate	18.35	18,444	17.39	6528
Graduate education	9.14	18,444	7.81	6528

Table A1 (*Continued*)

	Whole sample		Module D subsample	
	%	*N*	%	*N*
Marriage (married = 1)	55.98	18,444	41.51	6528
Active in the labor force	64.19	18,444	62.2	6528
Full-time work	52.51	17,571	49.76	6204
Cultural and educational occupations	5.59	18,414	5.19	6519
Age				
18–34 years old	30.59	18,444	33.75	6528
35–44 years old	18.58	18,444	17.03	6528
45–59 years old	27.94	18,444	25.77	6528
60 years old and up	22.88	18,444	23.45	6528
Region				
New England	4.86	18,444	4.77	6528
Middle Atlantic	16.01	18,444	16.46	6528
Midwest	15.38	18,444	15.23	6528
North central	6.66	18,444	6.5	6528
Southeast	34.01	18,444	34.17	6528
Mountains	7.01	18,444	6.89	6528
Pacific	16.07	18,444	15.97	6528
Metropolitan status				
Metropolitan	83.28	18,444	83.03	6528
Non-metropolitan	15.94	18,444	16.22	6528
Non-identified	0.78	18,444	0.75	6528
Race (non-White = 1)	18.73	18,444	20.4	6528
Ethnicity (Hispanic = 1)	13.54	18,444	13.05	6528
Children under 18 at home	30.01	18,444	24.71	6528

Source: SPPA 2008, weighted data.

Table A2
Descriptive statistics on the cultural participation index.

Cultural participation index	Whole sample		Module D subsample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0	12,457	68.44	4484	68.59
1	2967	16.3	1046	16
2	1443	7.93	516	7.90
3	795	4.37	283	4.33
4	337	1.85	132	2.03
5	157	0.87	60	0.93
6	42	0.23	15	0.23
Total	18,201	100	6539	100

Source: SPPA 2008, weighted data.

Appendix B. Results on the whole sample and on the Module D sample

Table B1
Models on the whole sample.

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender (women = 1)	0.26*** (0.03)	0.25*** (0.03)	0.23*** (0.03)	0.28*** (0.05)	0.35*** (0.07)
Age 18–34 years old	0.03 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)
Age 45–59 years old	0.09~ (0.05)	0.09~ (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)
Age 60 and older	0.23*** (0.06)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.20** (0.06)	0.20** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)
Less than high school	−0.95*** (0.08)	−0.95*** (0.08)	−0.95*** (0.08)	−0.95*** (0.08)	−0.95*** (0.08)
High school graduate	−0.66*** (0.05)	−0.66*** (0.05)	−0.66*** (0.05)	−0.66*** (0.05)	−0.66*** (0.05)
College graduate	0.44*** (0.04)	0.43*** (0.04)	0.45*** (0.04)	0.48*** (0.06)	0.47*** (0.06)
Graduate education	0.71*** (0.05)	0.68*** (0.05)	0.69*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.07)	0.79*** (0.07)
Parental education	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Marriage	−0.21*** (0.04)	−0.20*** (0.04)	−0.21*** (0.04)	−0.21*** (0.04)	−0.22** (0.04)
Cultural occupation		0.20*** (0.06)	0.18** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)	0.19*** (0.06)
Working fulltime			−0.15** (0.05)	−0.15** (0.05)	−0.16** (0.05)
Gender × College grad.				−0.06 (0.07)	−0.04 (0.08)
Gender × Graduate Educ.				−0.21* (0.09)	−0.18~ (0.09)
Gender × Parental education					−0.04 (0.07)
Gender × Employment status					−0.08 (0.07)
Gender × Marriage					−0.04 (0.07)
Constant	−2.27*** (0.11)	−2.27*** (0.11)	−2.24*** (0.12)	−2.28*** (0.12)	−2.33*** (0.13)
Observations	9899	9880	9447	9447	9447
Pseudo *R*-squared	0.0991	0.0997	0.1005	0.1007	0.1008
Ll	−10,126	−10,105	−9614	−9611	−9610

Source: SPPA 2008.
Standard errors in parentheses.
~ $p < 0.1$.
* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

Table B2
Comparison of Model 0 on the whole sample and on the Module D subsample.

	Whole sample	Module D subsample
Gender (women = 1)	0.26*** (0.03)	0.27*** (0.04)
Age 18–34 years old	0.03 (0.05)	0.04 (0.07)
Age 45–59 years old	0.09~ (0.05)	0.13~ (0.07)
Age 60 and older	0.23*** (0.06)	0.31*** (0.08)
Education		
Less than high school	−0.95*** (0.08)	−1.08*** (0.12)
High school graduate	−0.66*** (0.05)	−0.68*** (0.06)
College graduate	0.44*** (0.04)	0.37*** (0.06)
Graduate education	0.71*** (0.05)	0.71*** (0.07)
Parental education	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Income (midpoints)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Region		
New England	0.14** (0.05)	0.13~ (0.07)
Middle Atlantic	0.13** (0.05)	0.12~ (0.07)
Midwest	0.10* (0.05)	0.20** (0.07)
Mountains	0.14* (0.06)	0.18* (0.08)
Pacific	0.27*** (0.05)	0.37*** (0.06)
Metropolitan status		
Metropolitan	0.19*** (0.04)	0.13* (0.06)
Non-metropolitan	0.13 (0.17)	−0.14 (0.25)
Marriage	−0.21*** (0.04)	−0.22*** (0.05)
Employment status (employed = 1)	0.03 (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)
Presence of children under 18 at home	−0.19*** (0.04)	−0.16** (0.06)
Race (non-White = 1)	−0.18*** (0.05)	−0.10 (0.07)
Ethnicity (Hispanic = 1)	−0.08 (0.07)	−0.05 (0.10)
Constant	−2.27*** (0.11)	−2.43*** (0.15)
Observations	9899	5366
Pseudo *R*-squared	0.0991	0.1047
Ll	−10,126	−5405

Source: SPPA 2008.
Standard errors in parentheses.
~ $p < 0.1$.
* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

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