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Global exposure: an alternative pathway to understanding cultural omnivorousness in East Asian societies

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Abstract

Previous studies on cultural taste build a class-omnivorousness framework. However, the conceptualization and measure of cultural omnivorousness are highly Western. To examine how cultural omnivorousness is shaped in non-Western societies, this study develops two dimensions of cultural omnivorousness and expands the meaning of social class from socioeconomic status to global exposure. Using data from the East Asian Social Survey, this study finds that the level of global exposure is significantly correlated with vertical cultural omnivorousness (i.e., the appreciation of both high-brow and lowbrow music) in China, Japan, and South Korea; however, the correlation between the level of global exposure and horizontal cultural omnivorousness (i.e., the appreciation of both transnational and traditional music) varies among the three countries. The findings show the diverse nature of cultural consumption in East Asia and challenge the Western discourse in the cultural sphere.

Keywords: Global exposure, Cultural omnivorousness, Music taste, East Asia

Introduction

Cultural sociology has been interested in tastes for decades. The tradition of taste study in cultural sociology can be dated back to Max Weber's discussion on lifestyle (Weber 1978) and Pierre Bourdieu's class analysis of taste distinction (Bourdieu 1984). Inspired by this tradition, sociologist Richard Peterson, together with his colleagues, developed the idea of "cultural omnivorousness" to indicate class-based cultural taste (Peterson and Kern 1996; Peterson and Simkus 1992). Cultural omnivorousness refers to the acceptance of multiple cultural forms. Specifically, cultural omnivores are those who prefer multiple and more cultural objects than others do. Following this sociological term, the relationship between social class and cultural taste has been well documented, most of which support the conclusion that people from the upper class are more prone to accept and appreciate cultural forms of diversity (e.g., Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Peterson and Kern 1996; van Eijck 2001; Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). However, these studies are seemingly challenged by their parsimonious use of social class and the West-specific measure of cultural omnivorousness.

The parsimonious use of social class is manifested by the unidimensional conceptualization of social class in most contemporary research on cultural taste (Lizardo and Skiles 2012). For instance, socioeconomic indicators (i.e., income, occupation, and education) are the most commonly used proxy to measure social class (e.g., Garcia-Alvarez et al. 2007; Snowball et al. 2010; Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). Although some studies make attempts to expand the meaning of social class from socioeconomics to social status and investigate subpopulations within the social class (e.g., Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Lamont 1992; Ollivier 2004; van Eijck 2001), the multi-dimensional nature of social class has not been well explored (Lizardo and Skiles 2012).

The West-specific measure of cultural omnivorousness implies that previous measures of cultural omnivorousness are highly contextualized in Western societies and may not apply to East Asian societies. Starting from Peterson and Kern (1996), research uses a set of West-specific musical forms (such as classical music, jazz, rock music, and country music) to fathom people's music tastes. However, this measurement is problematic and inconsistent across societies and over time (Brisson 2019; Nault et al. 2021). Katz-Gerro (2002) shows that current measures of cultural taste and its relationship to social stratification differ by national case, even among Western societies. In such a notion, cultural omnivores are a group of people who are specialized in Western countries (Warde et al. 2007). Therefore, when cultural omnivorousness is to be examined in non-Western societies, ad hoc adjustments should be made to measure contextualized and localized cultural taste patterns (Brisson 2019).

Music aesthetic is particularly setting-specific (Matsue 2008). While music genres (such as jazz and rock) are traditionally appreciated in Western societies, they are likely to be appreciated as transnational culture or "foreign culture" in non-Western societies like East Asia (although these societies may have their own forms of jazz and rock music). Therefore, Guillen (2001) questions whether there is so-called global culture in the making. He calls for contextualized perspectives to social science studies in cross-national scenarios. In this vein, a close look at cultural omnivorousness in the East Asian context is necessary to expand our current understanding of cultural taste beyond the Western model.

In this study, I focus on cultural omnivorousness in terms of music appreciation in three East Asian societies (China, Japan, and South Korea). Two aspects of attempts are made to expand the Western understanding of cultural omnivorousness in prior research. First, I develop two dimensions of cultural omnivorousness: vertical cultural omnivorousness (VCO) and horizontal cultural omnivorousness (HCO). VCO indicates the disposition of appreciating both highbrow and lowbrow music genres in a cultural hierarchy, while HCO indicates the disposition of enjoying both local and transnational music. Based on these two dimensions, four types of cultural omnivorousness (both VCO and HCO, exclusive VCO, exclusive HCO, and neither VCO nor HCO) are created. Second, I extend the meaning of social class from socioeconomic status to global exposure and hypothesize that people with a higher level of global exposure are more likely to be cultural omnivores. Using data from the East Asia Social Survey (EASS) 2008, this study examines the hypotheses proposed. Although the correlation between global exposure and cultural omnivorousness varies among three East Asian societies, the findings reveal that global exposure has become an

alternative aspect of social class in explaining people's likelihood of cultural omnivorousness in East Asian societies.

How to interpret cultural omnivorousness in East Asia?

The setting-specific understanding of cultural omnivorousness

Bourdieu (1984), whose seminal work *Distinction* has attracted widespread attention from cultural sociology, has linked social class to cultural tastes and opened a new path for studies in culture and stratification. Departing from his correspondence analysis that class position reflects taste profiles, his followers (as well as critics) discovered the omnivorous disposition in the upper class, arguing that climbing the social ladder expands cultural openness (e.g., Peterson and Kern 1996; van Eijck 2001; Katz-Gerro 2002; Chan and Goldthorpe 2011; Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). Among them, Peterson and Kern's (1996) groundbreaking study *Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore* is the most influential. In the work, they roughly divided music genres into two categories—highbrow and lowbrow—and labeled individuals who appreciate both highbrow and lowbrow music “omnivores,” which formed the foundation of the “class-omnivorousness” framework (Nault et al. 2021; van Eijck and Knulst 2005).

Over the past two decades, sociologists have tested the class-omnivorousness framework in different social contexts and cultural domains (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Jarneš 2015; Katz-Gerro 2002; Rankin and Ergin 2017). Although they confirm the general conclusion that the upper class tends to be culturally omnivorous, some important variations are also found in different settings. For example, Katz-Gerro (2002) reveals that definitions of “highbrow” culture and its relationship to social stratification differ by national case. Rankin and Ergin (2017) show that the local/global, besides the high/low divide, is a critical symbolic boundary shaping cultural taste in a non-Western country. As Karademir-Hazir and Warde (2015) note, some past research has relied on the taken-for-granted understanding of the highbrow/lowbrow divide in studying cultural taste, there are reasons to rethink whether this setting-specific understanding applies to East Asian societies (Brisson 2019; Matsue 2008).

First, the same music genre may have different cultural meanings in Western and East Asian societies. Music genres, whether highbrow or lowbrow, may all be regarded as transnational music forms that are imported from foreign countries in non-Western settings (Chen 2019; Rankin and Ergin 2017). The appreciation of them requires similar economic and global resources. Second, East Asian societies also have their own traditional (local) music that is not considered in the current “highbrow-lowbrow” divide. These traditional music genres do not fit in the current cultural hierarchy and reflect a horizontal stratification in cultural taste. In this vein, we also need an alternative horizontal classification that measures whether people enjoy multiple forms of music with various cultural meanings (Goldberg 2011).

In this study, I propose the “transnational-local” divide.¹ Similar to Goldberg's (2011) understanding that contemporary music is invading and should be set apart from

¹ The “transnational-local” divide resembles the “contemporary-tradition” divide in Goldberg's (2011) study. In line with Goldberg's classification, transnational music in East Asia represents the invading contemporary music, while the local music corresponds to the traditional indigenous music.

traditional music, I assume that all West-rooted music genres (such as classical music, rock, jazz, and country music) are transnational cultural items and different from traditional East Asian music. East Asian consumers learn to appreciate transnational music genres in the global market, while they keep appreciating indigenous music in the local market. Although non-Western societies also have their own forms of rock, jazz, and popular music, their cultural meaning is different from that of traditional music (Goldberg 2011; Otmazgin 2005; Snowball et al. 2010). For this reason, I define those who appreciate both transnational and local music forms as “horizontal omnivores.”² Correspondingly, I also use the classic definition of omnivorousness and define those who appreciate both highbrow and lowbrow music as “vertical omnivores.”

Intersecting the “highbrow/lowbrow” divide and the “transnational/local” divide, I create four types of cultural omnivorousness. If people enjoy transnational music regardless of its highbrow/lowbrow status or local music, they are located into the type of “both VCO and HCO.” If people appreciate both highbrow and lowbrow transnational music but show no interest in local music, they are located into the type of “VCO only.” If people appreciate local music and either highbrow or lowbrow transnational music, they are located into the type of “HCO only.” If people enjoy and only enjoy local music, or they only appreciate either highbrow or lowbrow transnational music, they are located into the type of “neither VCO nor HCO.”

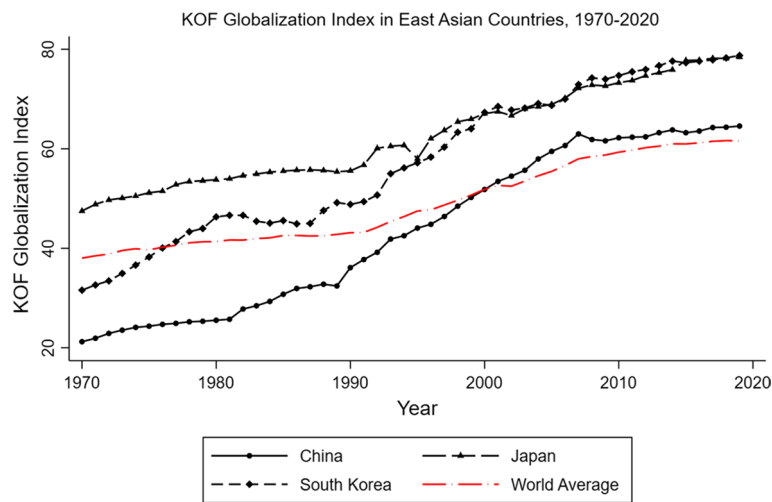
Global exposure and cultural omnivorousness

The class-omnivorousness framework argues that higher-status people tend to enjoy a culturally omnivorous taste (Peterson and Kern 1996). Van Eijck (2001) and Goldberg (2011) have, respectively, made attempts to modify this framework, but their findings ultimately support class determinism. Many other studies have also evidenced the correlation between cultural omnivorousness and proxy variables for social class, such as education, occupation, and economic level (e.g., Bryson 1996; Chan 2019; DellaPosta et al. 2015; McCown et al. 1997; Villarroya and Llopis-Goig 2021; Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012).

Although this class-omnivorousness framework is demonstrated robust in different social settings, important variations are found (Katz-Gerro 2002; Rankin and Ergin 2017). For example, Rankin and Ergin (2017) conclude that the local/global, besides the high/low divide, is a critical symbolic boundary shaping cultural taste and interpreting cultural omnivorousness in a non-Western country. Nault et al. (2021) expand social class from education to childhood experiences. As the concept of social class is multi-dimensional (Hansen and Toft 2021), it is necessary to move social class beyond economics and education when investigating cultural taste, so that we can advance our understanding of the current class-omnivorousness framework. In this vein, following the transnational/local divide, I extend the meaning of social class to an understudied dimension of global exposure and examine the association between global exposure and different types of cultural omnivorousness.

The globe is now deeply influenced by and culturally inseparable from globalization (Mori 2009). In the context of globalization, cultural products flow worldwide and are

² People who appreciate at least one music form of imported music and at least one music form of local music are labeled as a horizontal omnivore.



Source: KOF Swiss Economic Institute

Fig. 1 KOF Globalization Index in China, Japan, and South Korea, 1970–2020

appreciated by consumers from all over the world. Cultural hybridization emerges and spreads from Global North to Global South (Cakmakli et al. 2017; Goldberg et al. 2016; Lukose 2005; Machida 2012). Both foreign and local cultural products are dispersed in the daily lives of consumers from all class backgrounds in the global cultural market (Bonner and du Gay 1992; Cicchelli et al. 2016; Crompton 1992; Featherstone 1991; Rankin and Ergin 2017). Therefore, the mechanism underlying the class-omnivorousness link is beyond the classic understanding that the upper class has easier access to highbrow or transnational cultural products. Rather, the logic lies in whether consumers are globalized enough to accept and appreciate cultural products of diversity.

At the individual level, globalization exposes individuals to diverse cultural forms (Hong and Cheon 2017). Studies have evidenced the tendency that more globalized consumers tend to have a more inclusive consuming style in the cultural market (Erikson 1996; Johnston and Baumann 2007; Rossel and Schroedter 2015). These studies imply that the level of global exposure influences people's understanding and appreciation of transnational cultural products. Therefore, I propose that the level of global exposure is associated with cultural omnivorousness in non-Western societies.

Proposing the level of global exposure as one of the correlates of cultural omnivorousness is not to refute the classic class-omnivorousness framework. Rather, it is to complement the framework in non-Western settings. The level of global exposure is one of the dimensions of social class at the individual level (Tsai and Appelbaum 2010), thus investigating global exposure is expanding the meaning of social class. Moreover, if the level of global exposure is demonstrated to be associated with cultural omnivorousness in East Asia, we can add contextualized knowledge to the current class-omnivorousness framework (Brisson 2019).

East Asia as a case

In recent decades, the world has undergone comprehensive globalization. According to the KOF Globalization Index (see Fig. 1), the level of globalization has risen steadily

around the world from 1970 to 2020 (Gygli et al. 2021). East Asian societies (China, Japan, and South Korea) have experienced even more rapid growth in the level of globalization in the recent five decades. For example, China's growth rate of globalization has reached 4.5 times the global average, and the levels of globalization in these three countries have surpassed the global average since the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is of great necessity to employ the globalization lens when studying cultural practices and cultural consumption in East Asian societies (Mori 2009).

East Asian societies are diverse from Western countries in their cultural traditions (Inglehart and Baker 2000), so the definitions and cultural meanings of omnivorousness also differ. The music genres used to measure cultural omnivorousness (regarding musical taste) all originated from Western societies. That is not to say East Asian societies have no their own rock, pop, or classical music. Rather, these musical forms in East Asia usually contain transnational elements and are different from their indigenous cultural genres (Otmazgin 2005). For instance, one recent study demonstrates that the organizational forms of art galleries in China follow but diverge from the foreign models (Kharchenkova 2019). When Western culture is invading the music industry, traditional Japanese and Korean music is still well preserved, although new forms of hybrid K-pop and J-pop emerge (Iwabuchi 2016; Jin and Ryoo 2014).

For these reasons, East Asia provides good scenarios to test the globalization perspective in explaining cultural omnivorousness. Besides, the "transnational/local" divide also applies to East Asian societies. The literature on cultural omnivorousness can benefit from a close look at music taste and its correlates in East Asia.

Data, measure, and method

Data

This study uses data from the 2008 East Asian Social Survey (EASS). EASS is a biennial project with a different theme every two years. The theme for EASS2008 was "Globalization and Culture." EASS2008 was conducted in three East Asian societies: mainland China, Japan, and South Korea. The surveys conducted in each society all employed multistage sampling. The Chinese survey was conducted by Renmin University. The Japanese survey was conducted by the Osaka University of Commerce. The South Korean survey was conducted by Sungkyunkwan University. In EASS2008, 3010 Chinese residents, 2160 Japanese residents, and 1508 South Korean residents were surveyed. After casewise deletion for missing values, 2964 Chinese samples, 1819 Japanese samples, and 1293 South Korean samples are kept in this study.

Measure

Dependent variables

The dependent variable of this study is cultural omnivorousness. EASS2008 contains a series of questions about respondents' music tastes, including the appreciation of classical music, rock music, jazz music, pop music, and traditional music. According to Peterson and Simkus (1992), classical music and jazz music are classified as highbrow music, and pop music and rock music as lowbrow. The concurrent appreciation of highbrow and lowbrow music is conceptualized as vertical cultural omnivorousness (VCO). As discussed before, both highbrow and lowbrow forms of music are transnational music

for East Asian consumers. The concurrent appreciation of any transnational music genre and traditional music is conceptualized as horizontal cultural omnivorousness (HCO). Notably, this measure does not distinguish respondents with a “highbrow and traditional music” taste composition and those with a “lowbrow and traditional music” taste composition, although I acknowledge they are two groups of people. Also, those who only appreciate transnational music or who only like traditional music cannot be identified using this measure. Findings should be read with this caution.

After gauging VCO and HCO, I also intersect them and create four categories of cultural omnivorousness (both VCO and HCO, exclusive VCO, exclusive HCO, and neither VCO nor HCO) to indicate people’s cultural tastes. Exclusive VCO refers to a non-traditional omnivorous appreciation of diverse music genres. Exclusive HCO refers to an appreciation of both traditional and transnational genres but is either highbrow or lowbrow. They are two types of incomplete cultural omnivorousness in the context of East Asia.

It is also noteworthy that the music items (classical music, rock music, jazz music, pop music) used to measure cultural omnivorousness are West-rooted. It will be ideal to find some local highbrow and lowbrow music to examine cultural omnivorousness in East Asia. However, the current survey (as well as other potential surveys) does not provide the information needed, so I expediently use these music items in this study. When using them, I’m highly aware that they are transnational forms of cultural products, so I also use HCO to supplement the findings and use global exposure to interpret how transnational cultural omnivorousness becomes possible in East Asian societies.

Independent variables

There are two sets of independent variables in this study: socioeconomic indicators and global exposure indicators.

Previous studies usually use socioeconomic indicators to indicate social class (e.g., Garcia-Alvarez et al. 2007; Snowball et al. 2010; Yaish and Katz-Gerro 2012). Following their research, I also use self-rated social class, education, and household income to gauge the socioeconomic dimension of social class. Self-rated social class is measured by respondents’ self-perception of their social position in a 1–10 scaled hierarchy. Education is measured by the highest degree. Due to the different currencies used in the three countries, I use relative income rather than absolute income to measure their household economic level. I quarter respondents’ household income in their country separately and label them by the quartile they are in. For example, the first quartile indicates that respondents have the lowest (0–25 percentile) level of household income in their country, and the fourth quartile indicates that respondents have the highest (76–100 percentile) level of household income in their country. In this way, people are comparable in different settings.

I also expand the meaning of social class from socioeconomic status to global exposure. However, there is no academic consensus on how individual global exposure is fathomed (Tsai and Iwai 2013). What scholars agree on is that individual global exposure reflects people’s openness to international and transnational recognition (Kearney 1995; Tsai and Iwai 2013). Hence, I use four different binary indicators to gauge respondents’ global exposure. The first indicator of global knowledge is measured by the question

“How often do you talk to others on international issues?” If the respondent discusses international issues at least once a week, she is coded as “with global knowledge.” The second indicator of global traveling is measured by the question “Have you traveled to any European or American countries?” Respondents who have such traveling experiences are coded as “global travelers.” The third indicator of global social ties is measured by the question “Do you personally know anyone from European or American countries?” Respondents who have such global acquaintances are coded as “having global social ties.” The fourth indicator of English literacy is measured by respondents’ ability to read English texts. If the respondents can successfully comprehend English-written short articles, she is coded as “literate in English.” All these four indicators are binary with a value of either “0” or “1.” I treat them as continuous and add them up to make a global exposure index so that the analyses can be simplified. The range of the global exposure index is 0 to 4. Different from the socioeconomic indicators that measure people’s access to various cultural products, these four indicators reflect respondents’ chance of exposure to transnational and global culture, as well as their ability to understand and appreciate transnational cultural products.

Control variables

Control variables include gender (1 = male), age, marital status (1 = married), religious affiliation, employment, and urban residence status. Gender and age influence individuals’ cultural tastes (Crowther and Durkin 1982; McCown et al. 1997). Marriage also changes people’s cultural choices through the spousal effect (Childress and Friedkin 2012). The urban and rural residence also affects the likelihood of cultural omnivorousness (Rankin and Ergin 2017). All these variables are controlled in the following model estimations.

Method

In this study, I use logit regression models to examine the correlation between global exposure and cultural omnivorousness (VCO and HCO). I also use multinomial logit regression models to predict different types of cultural omnivorousness. All model estimations are conducted in each country (China, Japan, and South Korea), respectively. Post-estimations are made and the correlations between global exposure and cultural omnivorousness are figured based on the results of the models.

Findings

The level of cultural omnivorousness varies among three East Asian societies. As shown in Table 1, around 20% of the Chinese respondents are vertical omnivores. This number is higher in Japan and South Korea. Around 42% of Japanese respondents and 44% of South Korean respondents are vertical omnivores. Horizontal cultural omnivorousness exhibits a different distribution. Japan has the least horizontal omnivores. Slightly more than one-quarter of Japanese respondents are horizontal omnivores. This number is more than 28% in China and around 47% in South Korea. Intersecting VCO and HCO, we can also detect that South Korea has the least respondents who are neither vertical nor horizontal omnivores and that it has the most respondents who are both vertical and

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

	Full sample %/Mean (S.D.)	China %/Mean (S.D.)	Japan %/Mean (S.D.)	South Korean %/Mean (S.D.)
Country				
China	48.78			
Japan	29.94			
South Korea	21.28			
<i>Cultural omnivorousness indicators</i>				
VCO ^{abc}	32.34	20.92	42.61	44.08
HCO ^{abc}	31.52	28.51	25.45	46.95
Types of cultural omnivorousness ^{abc}				
Neither VCO nor HCO	50.94	60.59	46.62	34.88
VCO only	17.54	10.90	27.93	18.17
HCO only	16.72	18.49	10.78	21.04
Both VCO and HCO	14.80	10.02	14.68	25.91
<i>Socioeconomic status indicators</i>				
Self-rated social class (1–10) ^{abc}	4.78 (1.82)	4.59 (1.96)	5.11 (1.67)	4.75 (1.61)
Education level ^{abc}				
Less than high school	38.84	61.91	15.28	19.10
High school	33.84	22.84	46.89	40.99
College and above	27.25	15.25	37.82	39.91
Household income level				
1st quartile	24.62	25.54	24.53	22.66
2nd quartile	27.09	28.24	24.46	28.15
3rd quartile	23.26	21.49	26.99	22.04
4th quartile	25.03	24.73	24.02	27.15
<i>Global exposure indicators</i>				
Global knowledge ^{abc}	28.65	29.42	24.63	32.56
Global traveling ^{abc}	18.93	11.05	33.81	16.04
Global social ties ^{abc}	9.93	6.33	11.98	15.31
English literacy ^{abc}	15.73	11.77	17.26	22.66
Level of global exposure (0–4) ^{ab}	0.76 (0.89)	0.64 (0.66)	0.88 (1.02)	0.87 (1.04)
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender (1 = male)	47.33	47.71	46.89	47.10
Age (18–98) ^{ac}	45.46 (15.81)	43.05 (14.16)	51.44 (17.08)	42.58 (15.27)
Marital Status (1 = married) ^{abc}	75.76	82.69	71.36	66.05
Religious affiliated ^{abc}	26.94	9.62	31.89	59.71
Having a paid job ^b	64.14	65.52	64.16	60.94
Urban residence ^{bc}	69.83	65.01	64.10	88.94
N	6076	2964	1819	1293

^a Significantly different between the Chinese sample and the Japanese sample at $p < .05$ level

^b Significantly different between the Chinese sample and the South Korean sample at $p < .05$ level

^c Significantly different between the Japanese sample and the South Korean sample at $p < .05$ level

horizontal omnivores. In contrast, China is the least culturally omnivorous among the three societies.

This disparity in cultural omnivorousness seemingly corresponds to the difference in global exposure. Although the distributions of four global exposure indicators vary among three societies, South Korea has the highest average level of global exposure (when the indicators are added up) whereas China has the lowest. The differences and

Table 2 Correlation matrix of key variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) VCO	1.000								
(2) HCO	0.212	1.000							
(3) Self-rated social class	0.089	0.010	1.000						
(4) Education level	0.297	-0.003	0.253	1.000					
(5) Household income level	0.083	-0.009	0.164	0.237	1.000				
(6) Global knowledge	0.090	0.056	0.105	0.173	0.071	1.000			
(7) Global traveling	0.196	-0.025	0.159	0.336	0.069	0.085	1.000		
(8) Global social ties	0.132	0.022	0.023	0.237	0.067	0.113	0.314	1.000	
(9) English literacy	0.227	-0.009	0.156	0.382	0.068	0.172	0.197	0.275	1.000

the correspondence are statistically significant. Following, I use statistical models to further confirm the association.

Before I conduct model estimations, I make sure that the indicators used are not over-correlated with each other. As shown in the correlation matrix (Table 2), the two dependent variables of VCO and HCO are not highly correlated. Therefore, the typology by intersecting VCO and HCO is statistically meaningful. Moreover, the four global exposure indicators are neither highly correlated with each other. The variance inflation factor (VIF) test also shows that there is no problem of multicollinearity among the indicators.

Table 3 presents how VCO is shaped in China, Japan, and South Korea, respectively. Models 1, 3, and 5 reveal that socioeconomic status, except for education, is not explanatory for the likelihood of VCO in East Asian societies. Well-educated East Asian residents are more likely than their less-educated counterparts to become vertical omnivores. However, self-perception of social class and household income level are not significantly correlated with VCO. After adding the global exposure index to the models (see models 2, 4, and 6), the coefficients of socioeconomic status indicators become smaller.

The level of global exposure is significantly correlated with VCO in all three East Asian societies. In specific, for each point increase in the level of global exposure, the odds ratio of VCO increases by around 46% ($e^{.381} - 1 = .464$) in China. Similarly, it increases by 51% ($e^{.413} - 1 = .511$) and 19% ($e^{.176} - 1 = .192$), respectively, in Japan and South Korea. Figure 2 illustrates the correlation between the level of global exposure and the likelihood of VCO in three countries, respectively. The figure shows that global exposure has a larger association with VCO in China and Japan than in South Korea. However, the average probabilities of VCO are higher in Japan and South Korea than in China no matter how the level of global exposure changes.

Table 4 presents how HCO is shaped in three East Asian societies. Results show that socioeconomic status indicators are not significantly correlated with the likelihood of HCO. However, the level of global exposure is significantly associated with the likelihood of HCO in China. With each point increase in the level of global exposure, the odds ratio of HCO increase by 40% ($e^{.340} - 1 = .405$) in China. The level of global exposure is also found to be correlated with HCO in Japan, but only marginally (at the $p < 0.1$ level). With each point increase in the level of global exposure, the odds ratio of HCO only increases by 9% ($e^{.086} - 1 = .090$) in Japan. The level of global exposure

Table 3 Logit regression models on vertical cultural omnivorousness

	China		Japan		South Korea	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Socioeconomic status indicators</i>						
Self-rated social class	0.053* (0.027)	0.043 (0.027)	−0.010 (0.031)	−0.029 (0.032)	−0.005 (0.036)	−0.021 (0.037)
Education (rf. Less than high school)						
High school	0.498*** (0.122)	0.400** (0.124)	0.936*** (0.175)	0.928*** (0.182)	0.279 (0.173)	0.268 (0.177)
College and above	0.676*** (0.143)	0.287+ (0.159)	1.677*** (0.188)	1.393*** (0.200)	0.670*** (0.189)	0.560** (0.196)
Household income level (rf. First quartile)						
Second quartile	0.055 (0.185)	0.119 (0.188)	−0.099 (0.196)	−0.060 (0.202)	−0.027 (0.217)	−0.022 (0.220)
Third quartile	0.253 (0.178)	0.323+ (0.180)	0.208 (0.142)	0.203 (0.147)	−0.075 (0.252)	−0.062 (0.257)
Fourth quartile	0.425* (0.182)	0.464* (0.184)	0.089 (0.157)	0.102 (0.163)	0.097 (0.270)	0.034 (0.273)
<i>Global exposure index</i>						
Level of global exposure		0.381*** (0.074)		0.413*** (0.055)		0.176*** (0.049)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Gender (1 = male)	0.066 (0.101)	0.034 (0.103)	−0.466*** (0.104)	−0.468*** (0.107)	−0.458*** (0.119)	−0.560*** (0.122)
Age	−0.084*** (0.024)	−0.071** (0.025)	0.034 (0.021)	0.034 (0.021)	0.034 (0.023)	0.035 (0.024)
Age square/100	0.053+ (0.027)	0.041 (0.028)	−0.039+ (0.020)	−0.037+ (0.021)	−0.030 (0.024)	−0.029 (0.024)
Marital status (1 = married)	−0.191 (0.153)	−0.141 (0.157)	0.062 (0.129)	0.028 (0.134)	−0.229 (0.155)	−0.129 (0.158)
Religious affiliated (1 = yes)	0.220 (0.159)	0.227 (0.161)	0.237* (0.112)	0.166 (0.116)	0.201+ (0.112)	0.190+ (0.113)
Paid job (1 = yes)	−0.116 (0.136)	−0.152 (0.137)	−0.235+ (0.138)	−0.209 (0.142)	0.149 (0.164)	0.145 (0.166)
Urban (1 = yes)	0.425** (0.131)	0.405** (0.132)	0.260* (0.105)	0.151 (0.109)	−0.282+ (0.164)	−0.315+ (0.167)
Constant	0.272 (0.471)	−0.115 (0.485)	−1.929*** (0.505)	−2.040*** (0.520)	−0.807 (0.545)	−0.880 (0.553)
Log-likelihood	−1355.6	−1331.1	−1193.1	−1135.6	−994.9	−971.6
N	2964	2964	1819	1819	1293	1293

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

is not significantly correlated with HCO in South Korea, and the direction of the correlation is found reversed. With each increase in the level of global exposure, the odds ratio of HCO is predicted to decrease by 2% ($1 - e^{-0.086} = .024$) in South Korea. Figure 3 illustrates the correlation between global exposure and HCO in the three societies, respectively. There is an obvious increase in the predicted probability of HCO as the level of global exposure grows in China. However, the predicted probabilities of

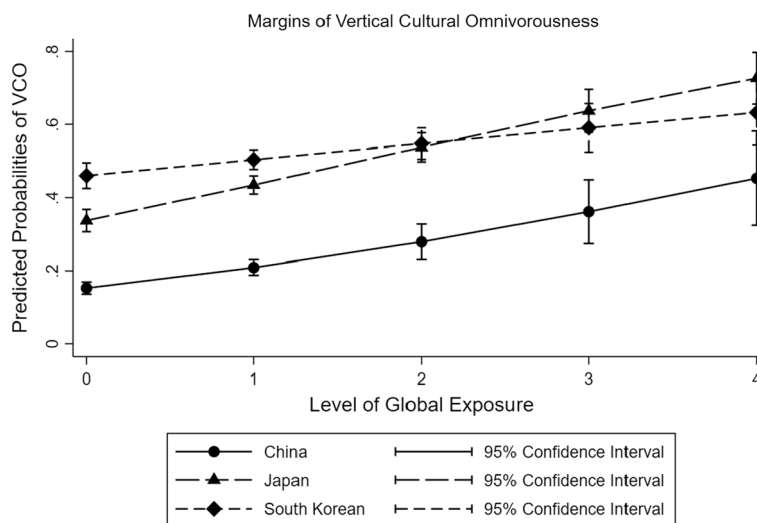


Fig. 2 Predicted correlation between global exposure and vertical cultural omnivorosness in China, Japan, and South Korea

HCO in Japan and South Korea are relatively steady no matter how the level of global exposure changes. When the level of global exposure is zero, the predicted probability of HCO is around 25% in China, much smaller than that (50%) in South Korea. When it grows to four, the predicted probability of HCO increases to around 55% in China, higher than that (45%) in South Korea.

The findings on VCO and HCO reveal that global exposure is associated with VCO in all three East Asian countries but with HCO only in China. They also suggest that VCO and HCO are two different dimensions of cultural omnivorosness. Therefore, I intersect VCO and HCO to make a four-category typology of cultural omnivorosness and conduct multinomial logit regression models on it. Table 5 shows the model estimations. When compared with neither VCO nor HCO, global exposure is helpful in turning Chinese and South Korean residents into all other types of cultural omnivores (both VCO and HCO, exclusive VCO, and exclusive HCO). However, it is only associated with a higher likelihood of exclusive VCO (but not other types) in Japan.

In sum, the results reveal that people with a higher level of global exposure are more likely to be exclusively vertical (but not horizontal) omnivores than non-omnivores in China, Japan, and South Korea. They are also more likely to be exclusively horizontal omnivores and completely omnivores in China and South Korea. To put it another way, global exposure is beneficial for all types of omnivorosness in China and South Korea and is beneficial for vertical omnivorosness in Japan, relative to non-omnivorosness. Figure 4 illustrates the correlation between the level of global exposure and the probabilities of four types of cultural omnivorosness. In China, the level of global exposure is shown to increase the probabilities of exclusive VCO, exclusive HCO, and both VCO and HCO. The magnitudes of the influence are relatively consistent. In Japan, the level of global exposure is shown to only increase the probabilities of exclusive VCO while decreasing the probability of exclusive HCO and neither VCO nor HCO. In South Korea, the direction of the correlation between the level

Table 4 Logit regression models on horizontal cultural omnivorousness

	China		Japan		South Korea	
	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<i>Socioeconomic status indicators</i>						
Self-rated social class	0.031 (0.022)	0.023 (0.022)	0.030 (0.034)	0.025 (0.035)	0.025 (0.039)	0.036 (0.039)
Education (rf. Less than high school)						
High school	0.217* (0.107)	0.160 (0.108)	0.376* (0.162)	0.358* (0.166)	−0.292 (0.183)	−0.291 (0.187)
College and above	0.116 (0.138)	−0.151 (0.153)	0.193 (0.185)	0.162 (0.197)	−0.389+ (0.199)	−0.340+ (0.207)
Household income level (rf. First quartile)						
Second quartile	−0.085 (0.148)	−0.060 (0.149)	0.057 (0.211)	0.111 (0.215)	0.256 (0.231)	0.182 (0.234)
Third quartile	−0.109 (0.150)	−0.093 (0.151)	0.021 (0.163)	0.023 (0.166)	0.321 (0.266)	0.259 (0.270)
Fourth quartile	−0.163 (0.156)	−0.159 (0.157)	−0.292 (0.178)	−0.274 (0.180)	0.189 (0.283)	0.159 (0.286)
<i>Global exposure indicators</i>						
Level of global exposure		0.340*** (0.069)		0.086+ (0.052)		−0.024 (0.610)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Gender (1 = male)	−0.121 (0.086)	−0.175* (0.087)	0.145 (0.116)	0.119 (0.118)	−0.139 (0.126)	−0.142 (0.129)
Age	0.079*** (0.021)	0.086*** (0.022)	0.209*** (0.027)	0.208*** (0.028)	0.152*** (0.025)	0.157*** (0.026)
Age square/100	−0.094*** (0.024)	−0.101*** (0.024)	−0.167*** (0.025)	−0.166*** (0.025)	−0.124*** (0.025)	−0.128*** (0.026)
Marital status (1 = married)	0.212 (0.140)	0.231 (0.142)	0.158 (0.146)	0.152 (0.148)	−0.032 (0.163)	−0.012 (0.166)
Religious affiliated (1 = yes)	0.193 (0.136)	0.185 (0.137)	0.119 (0.120)	0.087 (0.122)	0.221+ (0.118)	0.212+ (0.120)
Paid job (1 = yes)	0.040 (0.116)	0.036 (0.117)	−0.361* (0.150)	−0.371* (0.152)	−0.088 (0.169)	−0.106 (0.171)
Urban (1 = yes)	0.038 (0.104)	−0.010 (0.105)	−0.176 (0.116)	−0.187 (0.119)	−0.387* (0.176)	−0.382* (0.178)
Constant	−2.702*** (0.442)	−2.949*** (0.455)	−7.300*** (0.736)	−7.283*** (0.743)	−3.756*** (0.599)	−3.926*** (0.610)
Log-likelihood	−1753.8	−1738.5	−991.9	−966.9	−909.7	−891.3
N	2964	2964	1819	1819	1293	1293

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

of global exposure and different types of cultural omnivorousness resembles that in Japan; however, the magnitude is much smaller. Given the different globalization levels of these three countries,³ we may conclude that the level of global exposure plays a more important role in shaping cultural omnivorousness in less globalized countries.

³ According to the KOF globalization index, China is less globalized than Japan and South Korea in the year 2008.

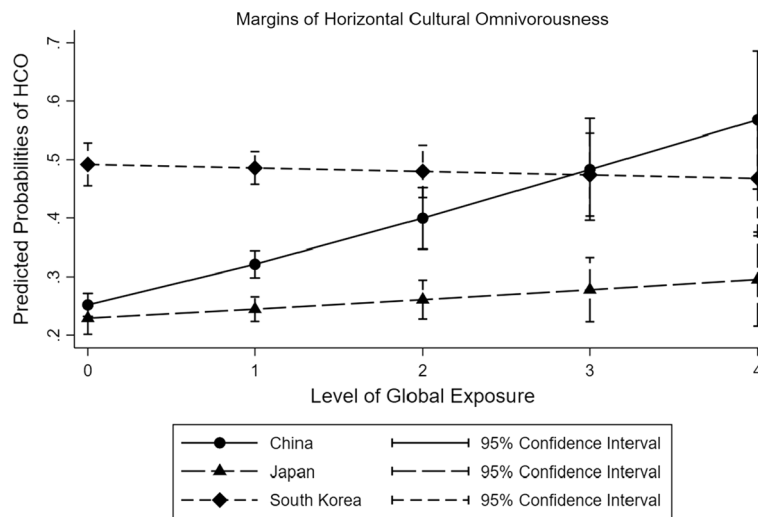


Fig. 3 Predicted correlation between global exposure and horizontal cultural omnivorosness in China, Japan, and South Korea

It is noteworthy that exclusive VCO and exclusive HCO are of particular interest, so I also conduct regression models for them (shown in Table 6 in the “Appendix”). Exclusive VCO (VCO but not HCO) refers to a non-traditional omnivorous appreciation of diverse music genres. Exclusive HCO (HCO but not VCO) refers to an appreciation of both traditional and transnational genres but either highbrow or lowbrow. They are two types of incomplete cultural omnivorosness in the context of East Asia. The results reveal that global exposure is associated with exclusive VCO in all three countries, whereas it is associated with exclusive HCO only in China. In South Korea, global exposure is even negatively correlated with exclusive HCO. That is to say, in South Korea, highly globalized people are likely to forgo traditional music and exclusively appreciate all types of transnational music. In Japan, global exposure is linking consumers to more transnational genres while not affecting their appreciation of traditional music. In China, global exposure is enhancing consumers’ appreciation of genres of all types.

I also treat the type of cultural omnivorosness as an ordinal variable and conduct ordered logit regression models for it (shown in Table 7 in the “Appendix”). When the order follows Both VCO and HCO > VCO > HCO > Neither VCO nor HCO, global exposure best predicts the outcomes. For this reason, VCO is a more globalized cultural omnivorosness than HCO, especially in South Korea.

Conclusions and discussions

The findings partly support the hypothesis that global exposure is correlated with cultural omnivorosness in East Asian societies, depending on how cultural omnivorous is measured and which society is examined. Specifically, global exposure is well associated with all types of cultural omnivorosness in China, whereas it is only correlated with VCO in Japan and South Korea. Although there is no sufficient evidence to unravel how these differences are made, one possible explanation lies in the different levels of globalization in these three countries. Since China is less globalized than Japan and South Korea, it is reasonable to assume that global exposure plays a more important role in

Table 5 Multinomial logit regression models on types of cultural omnivorousness

	China			Japan			South Korea		
	Model 13			Model 14			Model 15		
	VCO versus Neither	HCO versus Neither	Both versus Neither	VCO versus Neither	HCO versus Neither	Both versus Neither	VCO versus Neither	HCO versus Neither	Both versus Neither
<i>Socioeconomic status indicators</i>									
Self-rated social class	0.076*	0.033	0.031	-0.057	0.014	0.006	0.022	0.087	0.014
	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.050)	(0.045)	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.049)
Education (rf. Less than high school)									
High school	0.564***	0.193	0.356*	1.543***	0.339	0.788***	0.316	-0.472 ⁺	0.005
	(0.170)	(0.129)	(0.166)	(0.303)	(0.216)	(0.224)	(0.301)	(0.245)	(0.234)
College and above	0.321	-0.326	0.134	2.109***	0.177	0.967***	0.694*	-0.514 ⁺	0.201
	(0.209)	(0.200)	(0.217)	(0.315)	(0.275)	(0.258)	(0.319)	(0.281)	(0.260)
Household income level (rf. First quartile)									
Second quartile	0.433	0.040	-0.113	-0.064	0.141	0.029	0.107	0.296	0.144
	(0.265)	(0.175)	(0.242)	(0.253)	(0.289)	(0.284)	(0.332)	(0.322)	(0.289)
Third quartile	0.633*	-0.043	0.048	0.199	-0.104	0.232	-0.022	0.323	0.192
	(0.248)	(0.181)	(0.234)	(0.174)	(0.247)	(0.211)	(0.391)	(0.376)	(0.335)
Fourth quartile	0.725**	-0.187	0.183	0.163	-0.268	-0.127	0.114	0.258	0.179
	(0.254)	(0.192)	(0.237)	(0.193)	(0.266)	(0.235)	(0.415)	(0.400)	(0.357)
<i>Global exposure indicators</i>									
Level of global exposure	0.445***	0.471***	0.196**	0.410***	0.127	-0.056	0.526***	0.361***	0.123 ⁺
	(0.096)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.088)	(0.995)	(0.095)	(0.099)	(0.079)	(0.058)
<i>Control variables</i>									
Gender (1 = male)	0.180	-0.143	-0.169	-0.596***	0.085	-0.220	-0.473**	0.019	-0.540***
	(0.139)	(0.105)	(0.135)	(0.130)	(0.171)	(0.152)	(0.176)	(0.181)	(0.162)
Age	-0.096**	0.086**	0.011	0.034	0.272***	0.182***	-0.007	0.151***	0.159***
	(0.036)	(0.027)	(0.033)	(0.026)	(0.046)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Age square/100	0.046	-0.103***	-0.033	-0.045 ⁺	-0.221***	-0.149***	0.006	-0.117***	-0.132***
	(0.043)	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.027)	(0.041)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Marital status (1 = married)	-0.162	0.260	0.042	0.081	0.317	0.086	-0.019	0.156	-0.143
	(0.206)	(0.178)	(0.213)	(0.162)	(0.221)	(0.186)	(0.244)	(0.229)	(0.208)
Religious affiliated (1 = yes)	0.171	0.151	0.332	0.128	-0.007	0.219	0.226	0.209	0.346*
	(0.221)	(0.166)	(0.205)	(0.143)	(0.178)	(0.157)	(0.162)	(0.168)	(0.150)
Paid job (1 = yes)	-0.279	0.035	-0.059	-0.086	-0.265	-0.499*	0.303	0.016	-0.003
	(0.186)	(0.140)	(0.180)	(0.172)	(0.224)	(0.196)	(0.250)	(0.245)	(0.215)
Urban (1 = yes)	0.614**	-0.024	0.228	0.311*	-0.089	-0.098	0.039	-0.109	-0.555*
	(0.193)	(0.122)	(0.171)	(0.135)	(0.169)	(0.151)	(0.292)	(0.241)	(0.218)
Constant	-0.309	-3.266***	-2.245***	-2.859***	-9.591***	-6.986***	-1.250	-5.004***	-3.978***
	(0.676)	(0.576)	(0.671)	(0.647)	(1.270)	(0.894)	(0.813)	(0.883)	(0.756)
Log-likelihood	-2968.10	-2035.50	-1797.20						
N		2964			1819			1293	

Standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

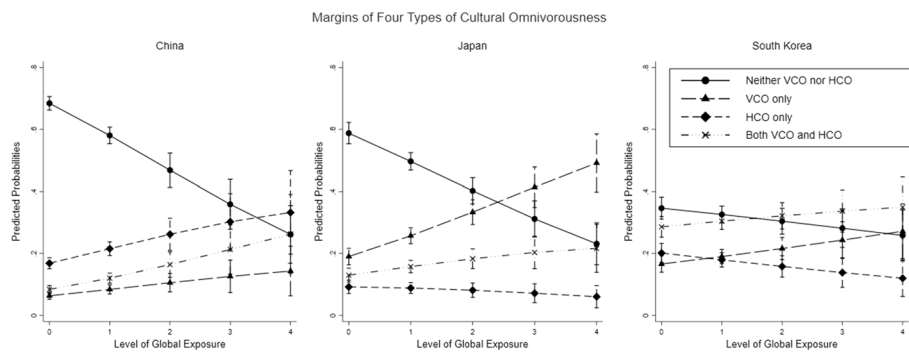


Fig. 4 Predicted correlation between global exposure and types of cultural omnivorosness in China, Japan, and South Korea

shaping cultural omnivorosness in less globalized countries. However, explaining the regional variation is not the focus of this study. Rather, this study aims to interpret whether and why the correlation between global exposure and cultural omnivorosness is possible in East Asian societies.

Previous studies have agreed on a class-omnivorosness framework, emphasizing the importance of socioeconomic status (including education and occupation) in predicting cultural omnivorosness in Western societies. However, the definitions and cultural meanings of social class and omnivorosness differ by national cases (Brisson 2019; Katz-Gerro 2002; Nault et al. 2021). It is necessary to test the class-omnivorosness framework in non-Western settings. In this vein, this study expands social class from socioeconomic status to global exposure and examines how it is correlated with different types of cultural omnivorosness in East Asian societies.

Results show a positive association between global exposure and various types of cultural omnivorosness, suggesting that the unidimensional “class-omnivorosness” framework is not sufficient to explain cultural consumption in East Asian societies. The global perspective and the horizon stratification perspective complement our understanding of class-based omnivorosness. In the context of globalization, consumers from various social class backgrounds are provided with easy access to cultural products of diversity (Mazzarella 2004; Stillerman 2015). People’s global exposure determines their ability to appreciate various cultural products and ultimately become cultural omnivores. In this way, global exposure is spreading various cultural products into the lives of “global citizens” and promoting the formation of “multiculturalism” (Colic-Peisker 2011). It seems that global exposure is becoming a new line of stratification in cultural consumption in East Asia.

It is also reasonable to conclude that social mobility in terms of cultural taste and cultural consumption is being more and more possible in East Asia. To put it another way, the process of global exposure is democratizing cultural taste in East Asia. East Asia has undergone and is undergoing a full range of social changes in the center of the global stage, rather than at the margin of the global system. When transnational culture enters the local market, East Asia societies absorb them as part of the cultural industry and display them in front of the consumers instead of resisting the cultural invasion (Jin and

Ryoo 2014). Members of East Asian societies easily reach, understand, and appreciate “other” cultures. In addition, traditional musical forms (such as Chinese Peking Opera, Japanese Noh drama and Kabuki, and Korean Pansori) are preserved in these societies (Iwabuchi 2016). Social members accept and appreciate both art forms and become horizontal cultural omnivores under the influence of global exposure.

This study contributes to the previous literature on cultural omnivorousness by conditionally expanding the class-omnivorousness framework. The regional shift (to East Asian societies) indicates that the study of cultural sociology should fully consider the issue of contextualization and localization. The conceptual shift (to global exposure, VCO, and HCO) provides an alternative perspective to understanding how cultural omnivorousness is shaped in non-Western societies. As more non-Western cultures are being imported into Western societies nowadays, the findings are also believed to contribute to the cultural understanding of Western societies in a globalized context.

Despite the contributions, there are several shortcomings to be noticed. First of all, due to the survey design of EASS, the items of music genre used to measure music taste are not sufficient to support a detailed classification of cultural omnivorousness. Thus, I am cautious about how global exposure connects East Asian consumers to transnational forms of cultural products. Second, endogeneity is an unaddressed problem preventing me from detecting causality. It is possible that the appreciation of different forms of music can affect one’s global exposure. That’s why I’m careful not to use any causal conclusions. It is also possible that there are unobserved confounders (such as life experiences, genes, and family cultivation) influencing global exposure and cultural omnivorousness simultaneously. However, causality is beyond the scope of this study and is expected to be addressed in future research. Moreover, limited by the available data, this study only explores cultural omnivorousness in three East Asian societies separately. There are no comparisons within East Asian societies, between East Asian and Western Societies, or between East Asia and other low-globalized countries. Fourth, the data from EASS2008 are a bit outdated; however, this does not undermine our findings because these East Asia societies have been keeping getting more globalized over the recent decades. As a result, cultural consumption nowadays is increasingly involved in the global market (Warde 2015). We also have witnessed how techniques such as Instagram and TikTok connect global cultural forms and expose users to global culture (Marres et al. 2021). These new trends are very likely to enhance the global exposure–omnivorousness association since 2008. I hope that with the accumulation of data (especially panel data) and the development of survey methods, these problems can be solved in future related research. If people’s appreciation and consumption of more nuanced musical genres (both traditional and transnational music) can be gauged over time in different societies, detailed causal explanations will be made. I also believe that endeavors in this direction will help to depict a global panorama of cultural omnivorousness.

Appendix

See Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6 Logit regression models on exclusive VCO and exclusive HCO

	Exclusive VCO			Exclusive HCO		
	China	Japan	South Korea	China	Japan	South Korea
Level of global exposure	0.252** (0.090)	0.356*** (0.057)	0.158* (0.069)	0.248** (0.083)	-0.107 (0.092)	-0.158* (0.081)

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Social class indicators and control variables are included in all models

Table 7 Ordered logit regression models on types of cultural omnivorousness

	Both > HCO > VCO > Neither			Both > VCO > HCO > Neither		
	China	Japan	South Korea	China	Japan	South Korea
Level of global exposure	0.392** (0.060)	0.231*** (0.046)	0.071 (0.052)	0.426** (0.061)	0.308*** (0.046)	0.126* (0.081)
Cut point 1	1.051 (0.380)	3.282 (0.459)	1.955 (0.504)	0.068 (0.382)	2.598 (0.458)	1.258 (0.504)
Cut point 2	1.562 (0.381)	4.554 (0.465)	2.833 (0.508)	1.054 (0.381)	3.086 (0.459)	2.105 (0.506)
Cut point 3	2.854 (0.384)	5.254 (0.469)	3.731 (0.512)	1.986 (0.382)	4.623 (0.465)	2.956 (0.508)

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Social class indicators and control variables are included in all models

Abbreviations

VCO Vertical cultural omnivorousness
 HCO Horizontal cultural omnivorousness

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Author contributions

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Availability of data and materials

The dataset is available on the EASS official Web site for public use: <http://www.eassda.org/modules/doc/index.php?doc=intro>.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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