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## WHY CULTURAL ATTITUDES AND LIFESTYLES REMAINS SO STRATIFIED AND DIFFERENTIATED IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL GLOBALISATION?

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A well-established tradition of research in the social sciences insists on the symbolic dimensions of social stratification and social classes' relations in contemporary societies that are not reducible to their relations in the sphere of production. First and foremost, many authors, from Halbwachs and Veblen to Bourdieu, have intended to challenge the predominantly "production-based" conception of social classes, inherited from the Marxian tradition, insisting on what could be designed as a "consumption-based" theory of social classes, in which people tend to differentiate themselves from each other on the base of their patterns of consumption expenditures, lifestyles, tastes and habits in such diverse areas than clothing, food or cultural activities, but also on the base of their moral or political values, and even their religious or spiritual beliefs.

These two conceptions – production-based and lifestyles-based theories of social classes – are in fact far from being mutually exclusive, to the extent that the social stratification of lifestyles often extends and expresses the social cleavages that originate in the sphere of production. But the lifestyles-based theory nonetheless suggests the relative autonomy of people lifestyles as to the purely economic factors. In particular, in the sphere of consumption, the behaviours patterns are merely considered as an exclusive matter of price/earning optimization, but entail a cultural and social framing of people choices and preferences.

In this paper, we will try to evaluate the relevance of this "consumption-based" or "lifestyles-based" orientation and, perhaps more generally, the relevance of all the class-schemes that focus on the symbolic dimensions of social interactions, be they religious, spiritual or cultural, in a broader sense. We will exemplify our argument by a focus on the domain of cultural practices, understood in a narrower sense than its usual anthropological definition. Hereafter, we will thus take into consideration a field of practices that encompasses the consumption of cultural goods such as books or records, together with practices such as movie going, TV watching, museums visits, concerts and theatre attendance. In other words, all the activities that concern the cultural domain understood as a specific field of activities. A special attention will be put on the more "legitimate" practices – i.e. those belonging to the sphere of the so-called "highbrow culture" - which are reputed to be the more socially distinctive ones.

As far as the field of cultural practices entails both cultural habits and cultural tastes, it is of special interest for our theoretical purpose, as it is a domain in which one could expect that the economic constraints are not the only constraints that influence the kind of choices people make. In other words, a domain in which the social differentiation of attitudes is also a matter

of social dispositions that involves various aspects of the environment in which people live and in which they grew up. In addition, cultural field also appears as a field in which some structural change, namely the standardisation of the production of cultural goods and the globalisation of cultural markets, as well as the school expansion that many contemporary western societies experienced during the last decades, would lead to expect a somehow declining social differentiation of attitudes.

More generally, as we recall in the first part of the paper, sociology has experienced in recent years, especially from the mid eighties to the late nineties, a growing scepticism about the relevance of the social class concept that need to be connected to the alleged declining strength of the association between class location and cultural attitudes (I). Relying on a set of empirical evidence gathered from a series of surveys made by the French Ministry of Culture from 1973 to 2008, the paper afterwards tends to demonstrate, though, that people's habits and attitudes in that matter are not significantly less socially stratified and differentiated in 2008 than they were in 1973 (II). We then outline and confront the main competing interpretations of this enduring stratification, which deal with the notions of status exhibition and status seeking, on the one hand, and with the notions of socialization and cultural *habitus*, on the other (III). We finally discuss the possible extent of a lifestyles depiction of actual class-schemes to other societies than the ones were the empirical and theoretical discussions recalled in this paper have been mainly elaborated (IV).

## **I. From class cultures to post modernity**

In opposition to the long-standing assumption of both Marxist and Weberian traditions that members of a particular class tends to behave in rather homogeneous way and to share common beliefs, values, habits and tastes, many contemporary authors question the persistence of class cultures. Some of them, like Henri Mendras in France, insist on the cultural homogenisation issued from the long phase of economic growth that came after the second world war, better known in France as "*trente glorieuses*" (glorious thirty)<sup>1</sup>. According to this viewpoint, it is worth emphasizing that the exceptionally high rates of economic growth experienced by French society as many other western countries from the late forties to the early seventies have been mainly induced by the standardisation process of large-scale production. As a result, this period should have also been characterized by a standardisation of lifestyles, patterns of consumption, and, finally, beliefs, values and cultural attitudes. More recently, economic globalisation would have reinforced this process, resulting in an increasingly globalized culture. In the specific field of cultural goods production and markets, globalisation, along with the opportunities carried out by the Internet and all the information and communication technologies, has undoubtedly fostered the emergence of a global culture. The increasing dematerialization of the cultural goods that goes along with the development of the Internet and numeric techniques and tools also fosters by itself a major change in the accessibility to culture, in so much that a growing number of cultural goods are today becoming quasi 'non-rival' goods. To the extent that the amount of consumption available for one individual is nearly not affected by the amount of consumption available for the others, the access to culture is nowadays virtually decreasingly socially stratified by the constraints of scarcity.

Other contemporaneous sociologists, like Paul W. Kingston, question more radically the accuracy of the class-cultures scheme, to the extent that "there are few signs of distinctive

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Mendras, *La Seconde Révolution Française 1965-84*, Paris Gallimard, 1994 (the second French Revolution, 1965-1984)

class-rooted cultural dispositions”<sup>2</sup>. To be sure, the debate on the “end of class” scenario, particularly vivid during the nineties, has particularly challenged the possible identification of relevant cultural set of attitudes, beliefs, practices and tastes attached to each kind of class location. Among many others, the contribution of Pakulsky and Waters to the debate on the death of class also suggest that class influence could be today transcended by other sources of collective aggregation and identification, such as gender, generation, local identities, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc<sup>3</sup>. This argument appears somehow in line with the more radical viewpoint of ‘post-modern’ philosophers and sociologists who insist on the social indeterminacy of lifestyles<sup>4</sup>. For most of these authors, lifestyles are not only slightly correlated with class locations, but, in a sense, social identity is increasingly considered as a by-product of lifestyle rather than a mirror of class location. Furthermore, this post-modern orientation leads to a rather individualistic view of identity which denies the social dimension of taste and lifestyles. It generally fails to demonstrate its own veracity, though, as many empirical evidences of a persisting collective framing of social identities can be easily found.

## II. Empirical evidence of a the persisting strength of the class/culture association

As a part of the evaluation of its own policy of democratization of the access to cultural goods and practices, the French Ministry of culture has for a long time commissioned large-scale surveys on the French cultural practices. Since the early seventies, five consecutive surveys have thus been completed, in 1973, 1981, 1988, 1997 and 2008. These surveys, made on representative samples of a little more than 1 500 individuals in 1973, and of about 4 to 5 000 for the following ones, give a quite detailed picture of people habits in the field of cultural leisure and cultural consumption, including both ‘highbrow’ and very legitimate cultural practices, on the one hand, such as classical and contemporary literature reading, classical music listening, theatre attendance, museums visits, and ‘middlebrow’ or ‘lowbrow’ practices, belonging to popular and mass culture, on the other hand, such as TV watching, pop music listening, gambling, etc. Apart from their evaluative dimension, these data sets are of particularly great interest for sociologists as to the empirical measurement of the ‘symbolic boundaries’ that cultural habits and attitudes raise between individuals, communities or social classes. Examining in details the social distribution and incidence of all the cultural practices and cultural goods encompassed by these survey would clearly exceed the limits of this paper. Subsequently, the scope of the paper will be restricted to the practices that are reputed to be the more socially cleaving, according to Bourdieu’s ‘Distinction’ theory, namely, all the practices that belongs to the so-called ‘highbrow’ culture.

Taking account of the comparability constraints observed from one survey to another, we will then consider more precisely the nine indicators described in **table 1**.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul W. Kingston, *The Classless Society*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Jan Pakulski and Malcolm Waters, *The Death of Class*, Sage publications, 1995

<sup>4</sup> See for example Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991; Mike Featherstone, 1991. *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, Sage publications, London; Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage Publications, London, 1992; Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000.

**Table 1:** The nine elementary variables taken into account in the scale of highbrow culture participation

Number of book read during the last 12 months	0 : none 1 : 1-9 2 : 10-19 3 : 20 and over
Movie going	0 : none 1 : 1 or 2 times 2 : 3 to 10 3 : 11 and over
Museums	1 : Yes 0 : No
Ancient monuments	1 : Yes 0 : No
Classical music concert	1 : Yes 0 : No
Theater	1 : Yes 0 : No
Ballet	1 : Yes 0 : No
Listening jazz music	1 : Yes 0 : No
Listening classical music	1 : Yes 0 : No

Seven of these nine variables are dummy variables, coded 1 when the corresponding activity has been experienced at least one time during the year preceding the survey, and 0 otherwise. The two remaining variables, about movie-going and reading, for which the relevant cleavage is not only the opposition between participants and non-participants, but rather the frequency and intensity of the practice, can be considered as scale variables, ranking people from non-participants to intense participants. Summing the scores recorded in each of these nine variables gives a scale that can be considered as a synthetic scale of the respondents' proclivity towards 'highbrow' culture, as regards to its arithmetic properties. To be sure, the nine elementary variables display a Cronbach alpha coefficient – that is a multi-correlation coefficient – slightly superior to 0.7, which is the usual value over which a scale built on the addition of its correlated elementary components is regarded as internally consistent. In other words, a Cronbach alpha, which vary from 0, when the variables are not correlated at all, to 1, when they are all perfectly correlated, displaying a value at least equal to 0.7 indicates that the scores obtained on its elementary components can be considered as related by a same latent – i.e. unobserved – dimension. Finally, the observed values range from 0, when people have not experienced any of the practices included in the scale, even at the weakest level of participation, to 15, when they experienced all of them at the highest level.

Besides, respondents are classified in each of the five surveys in accordance to their socio-professional group (Farmers, Tradesmen and shopkeepers, Higher grade professionals, Lower grade professionals, Non manual workers, Manual workers), in order to test for the accuracy of the statistical association between social position and proclivity towards 'highbrow culture', as measured by the previously defined scale. **Table 2** displays the cross-classification of these two variables over the five surveys.

**Table 2:** Score on the highbrow culture scale by year and occupational group (row percentages)

		Score on the highbrow culture scale					
		Low (0-2)	Moderately Low (3-4)	Moderately High (5-7)	High (8 and over)		
1973	Farmers	0.55	0.28	0.13	0.04	1.00	Khi2 119.6 ddl=10 p<.0001 Cramer's V 0.28
	Tradesmen and shopkeepers	0.28	0.26	0.30	0.16	1.00	
	Higher grade professionals	0.03	0.03	0.38	0.56	1.00	
	Lower grade professionals	0.03	0.13	0.34	0.50	1.00	
	Non manual workers	0.12	0.19	0.45	0.24	1.00	
	Manual workers	0.27	0.21	0.36	0.15	1.00	
1981	Farmers	0.57	0.25	0.16	0.03	1.00	Khi2 151.2 ddl=10 p<.0001 Cramer's V 0.22
	Tradesmen and shopkeepers	0.30	0.28	0.22	0.20	1.00	
	Higher grade professionals	0.10	0.11	0.29	0.50	1.00	
	Lower grade professionals	0.09	0.17	0.39	0.35	1.00	
	Non manual workers	0.19	0.26	0.37	0.18	1.00	
	Manual workers	0.35	0.29	0.28	0.07	1.00	
1988	Farmers	0.53	0.28	0.14	0.05	1.00	Khi2 180.7 ddl=10 p<.0001 Cramer's V 0.21
	Tradesmen and shopkeepers	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.15	1.00	
	Higher grade professionals	0.03	0.06	0.25	0.66	1.00	
	Lower grade professionals	0.10	0.19	0.31	0.41	1.00	
	Non manual workers	0.17	0.27	0.34	0.21	1.00	
	Manual workers	0.31	0.30	0.28	0.11	1.00	
1997	Farmers	0.57	0.21	0.19	0.03	1.00	Khi2 150.7 ddl=10 p<.0001 Cramer's V 0.25
	Tradesmen and shopkeepers	0.34	0.43	0.19	0.05	1.00	
	Higher grade professionals	0.03	0.12	0.32	0.53	1.00	
	Lower grade professionals	0.09	0.22	0.43	0.26	1.00	
	Non manual workers	0.31	0.32	0.28	0.08	1.00	
	Manual workers	0.45	0.31	0.19	0.05	1.00	
2008	Farmers	0.48	0.34	0.15	0.03	1.00	Khi2 189.3 ddl=10 p<.0001 Cramer's V 0.21
	Tradesmen and shopkeepers	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.16	1.00	
	Higher grade professionals	0.06	0.12	0.30	0.52	1.00	
	Lower grade professionals	0.12	0.19	0.40	0.29	1.00	
	Non manual workers	0.25	0.29	0.33	0.13	1.00	
	Manual workers	0.38	0.32	0.23	0.06	1.00	

Source: French ministry of Culture, surveys on cultural participation 1973, 1981, 1988, 1997 & 2008

All active people, 15 years and over

A rapid look at the five contingency tables included in **table 2** displays an obvious relation between the two variables, whatever the year under consideration. Moreover, the application of some more elaborated techniques, described in **appendix**, would show that the strength of this association has remained quite constant between 1973 and 2008.

As regards to the synthetic scale under consideration in the previous analysis, the death of class cultures thesis does not appear to be particularly supported. Of course, it should be worth elaborating a little more precisely on this very broad result. Particularly, one could suspect that all the cultural practices and all the cultural goods under consideration in these surveys are not subjected to the same evolutions. It is highly possible that whereas the intensity of the class/culture association remains constant or even increases in some practices or goods, it actually decreases in others. Moreover, this quite constant association does not mean that nothing had change between 1973 and 2008. Many scholars, following both Paul DiMaggio and Richard Peterson's contemporary works on cultural attitudes, claim that the traditional 'highbrow/lowbrow' divide, particularly emphasized by Bourdieu in 'Distinction',

would have been progressively replaced by the so-called ‘omnivorous/univorous’ one<sup>5</sup>. In other words, the cultural specificity of the upper classes would no longer primarily consist in their special familiarity with highbrow culture, contrasting with middle and, even more, working classes, but, increasingly, in the scope and variety of their practices and tastes. The ‘omnivorousness’ of the ‘happy few’, as a socially constructed aptitude to transcend the frontiers between cultural domains and repertoires, would thus contrast with the ‘univorousness’ of the working classes, somehow confined in narrower and more exclusive cultural repertoires. But taking these alterations into consideration does not obliterate the accuracy of the class cultures scheme. What has probably changed over years is the content of cultural cleavages between social groups or classes, but not the reality and the strength of this cleavage. Anyway, whatever the remaining strength of the association between class location and cultural attitudes, and whatever the kind of cultural cleavage it entails, the origin and nature of this association are themselves subject to discussion.

### **III. On the nature of the class/culture association: status exhibition or cultural *habitus*?**

Aside from the discussion on its reality and intensity, the class/culture association has also induced competing interpretations. The first class of interpretations, mainly anchored in Max Weber’s sociology and Thorstein Veblen’s elaborations on the leisure class, relate to a status argument: cultural practices and consumption, more than other commodities, operate as social status markers. In that sense, people’s involvement in practices would be deeply associated with the anticipated profits carried out by their involvement. It is clearly the kind of argument supported by the Veblen’s notion of ‘conspicuous consumption’: people does not only – if not necessarily – consume the goods they consume and take part in the activities in which they participate because of the primary utility or satisfaction that goods and activities provide us. They also and, sometimes primarily - and even exclusively - behave as they do because that their behaviour demonstrates, and somehow, reinforce their status.

This argument, which is equally present in Max Weber’s concept of status group, Thorstein Veblen’s notion of ‘conspicuous consumption’ and even Bourdieu’s theory of distinction have been recently highly supported by John Goldthorpe and Tak Wing Chan as to the explanation of social differentiation in the sphere of cultural activities, leisure and consumption<sup>6</sup>. It appears partially unconvincing, though. Indeed, this argument pretends to explain both practices accomplished in the public sphere, for which the status exhibition or status seeking mechanism can be realistically supported, and practices that does not take place in the public sphere, for which the status argument appears much more problematic. It is also a particular aspect of Bourdieu’s *Distinction* thesis that can be discussed. Bourdieu definitely considered the social space of tastes and lifestyles as an analogy of the field of forces of the physicists. This means that tastes and distastes were actually considered in his view as a result of attraction and repulsion phenomena, and that all practices could be to some extent explained by the various profits attached to them, even – and perhaps essentially – by the symbolic ones

But, contrary to the other authors previously mentioned, Bourdieu’s view on these questions is definitely twofold, in so much that the lack of explanatory power of the so-called

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<sup>5</sup> See Paul DiMaggio, “Classification in Art”, *American Sociological Review*, 1987, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 440-455; Richard A. Peterson & Albert Simkus, ‘How Musical Tastes Mark Occupational Status Groups’, in M. Lamont & M. Fournier (Eds.), *Cultivating Differences. Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality* (pp. 152-186). Chicago, Londres: The University of Chicago Press, 1992 ; Richard A. Peterson, “The rise and fall of highbrow snobbery as a status marker”, *Poetics*, 1997, 25(2-3), pp. 75-92.

<sup>6</sup> See Tak Wing Chan et John Goldthorpe, « Class and Status: The Conceptual Distinction and its Empirical Relevance », in *American Sociological Review*, Volume 72, Number 4, August 2007 , pp. 512-532(21)

distinction process could be compensated by another causal mechanism, which is in fact of a very distinct nature. This alternative argument is fundamentally related to the process of socialization, and more precisely, in Bourdieu's theoretical world, to the *habitus* concept. The *habitus* concept is defined by Bourdieu as a

“system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor”

Pierre Bourdieu, 1972, *Outline of a theory of practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In other words, the *habitus* encompasses a system of coherent dispositions, that results from the whole socializing experiences of the individual, and that allows people to behave in the social world and interpret it in a way that is specific to their social experience and to the common experience of all the persons belonging to the same social groups and that came through the same social experiences. Dialectically understood as the internalization of the exterior (i.e. social structures) and as the externalization of the interior (i.e. psychical dispositions), the *habitus* also makes people adopt behaviours structurally adapted to their social position in various field of their life (work, consumption, values, politics, family life, leisure, cultural practices, etc.)

Although highly questionable in much of its implications, particularly if interpreted in an excessively deterministic sense, the *habitus* concept, by the accent put on the role of socialization, make comprehensible the remaining class/culture association in a context of cultural globalisation and massification. Even if the symbolic profit of the familiarity with high culture – or, including Peterson's omnivorous argument, with cultural diversity - becomes decreasingly relevant, this familiarity remains structurally unequal. According to their socializing experiences, people's opportunities towards cultural goods are definitely not the same. As a matter of fact, there is many empirical evidences that people's cultural attitudes are highly correlated with their level of education but also with their social origin, that is to say with both primary and secondary socialization. In that respect, the combination of various and potentially contradictory socializing experiences questioned the global coherence of the individual's dispositions hypothesized by Bourdieu's definition of *habitus*. As stated by Bernard Lahire, a French contemporary sociologist that has recently developed a rather stimulating and constructive critique of Bourdieu's *Distinction* thesis, the internal coherence of the cultural dispositions of people subjected to a potentially high number of socializing experiences is nothing less than evident<sup>7</sup>. That cultural *habitus* can be quite incoherently diverse and contradictory becomes probably more frequent as the school expansion progress, as it has been the case in France during the last 20 years. It is then highly possible that, as long as school expansion foster upward mobility, even moderately, the cultural and lifestyles characteristics of the French upper classes become increasingly heterogeneous.

A clear illustration of this phenomenon can be found in the cross tabulation of people class position and origin, on the one hand, and cultural attitudes, as measured by the synthetic scale

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<sup>7</sup> See Bernard Lahire, *La culture des individus, Dissonances culturelles et distinction de soi*, Paris, La Découverte, 2004.



used in previous analyses. Hereafter, we cross-tabulate the score on the highbrow culture scale previously defined and categorized in four modalities, and a position/origin variable defined by the occupational category of the respondents and their social origin (e.g. occupational group of the father). These cross-tabulation is only done for the data of the 2008's survey and, due to the necessity to keep a minimal number of persons in each category, the origin/position variable is also code as a four category variable, as follows:

- 'upper-upper', for upper position and upper origin,
  - 'upper-lower', for upper position and lower origin,
  - 'lower- upper', for lower position and upper origin,
- and
- 'lower-lower', for lower position and lower origin.

Both upper origins and positions aggregate higher and lower grades professionals, whereas both lower origins and positions aggregates farmers, tradesmen and shopkeepers, manual and non-manual workers. The cross-tabulation of the two variables, as shown in **table 3**, clearly indicates that cultural attitudes are simultaneously influenced by social origin and positions.

**Table 3:** Score on the highbrow culture scale by origin and position in 2008 (row percentages)

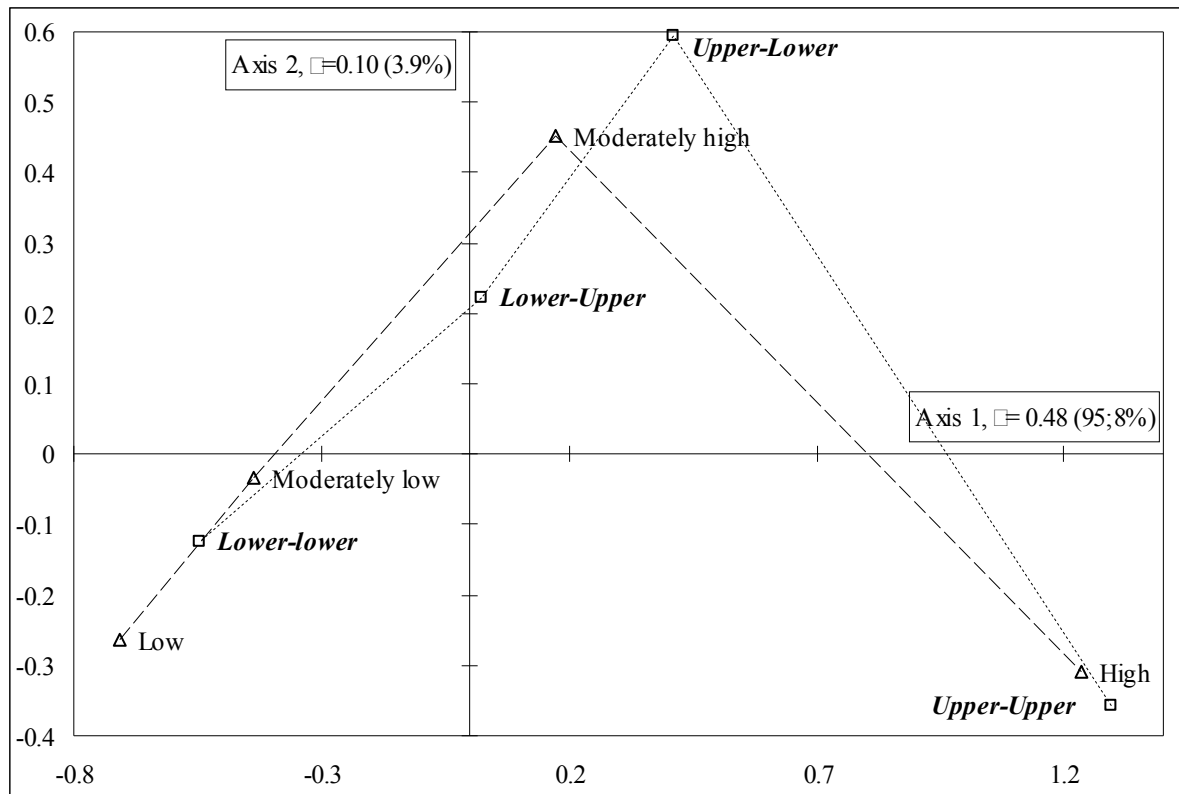
	Low (0-2)	Moderately Low (3-4)	Moderately High (5-7)	High (8 and over)	
Upper-Upper	0.05	0.11	0.32	0.52	1.00
Upper-Lower	0.15	0.20	0.40	0.26	1.00
Lower-Upper	0.22	0.28	0.32	0.19	1.00
Lower-lower	0.36	0.32	0.25	0.07	1.00
All	0.25	0.26	0.30	0.19	1.00

Source: French ministry of Culture, surveys on cultural participation 2008

All active people, 15 years and over

For each origin/position couple, the modal value is spectacularly situated on the diagonal of the table, contrasting the 'lower position-lower origin' to the 'upper position-upper origin', whose modal category on the highbrow culture scale are, respectively, low and high. In addition, the downwardly and upwardly mobiles are situated, as regard to the modal category of the response variable, at an intermediate position. These results suggest a kind of 'symbolic' bargaining of the socially mobile between the behavioural and cultural norms of their groups of origin and destination. This point can be suggestively illustrated by a correspondence analysis performed on this contingency table, which graphical representation of the two fist axis of inertia are displayed in **figure 1**.

**Figure 1:** Map of the first two axes on the correspondence analysis (CA) on the contingency table position-origin×score on the highbrow culture scale



The first axis, which absorbs a little more than 95% of the total inertia of the cloud of observations, not surprisingly contrast the extreme categories, both in terms of social position and origin and in terms of proclivity towards ‘highbrow’ culture. The second axis, which is of quite secondary importance, as it absorbs a very residual part of the inertia, contrasts the intermediate categories to the extreme categories, in the two cross-tabulated dimensions. Finally, this result suggests that the social differentiation of attitudes towards highbrow culture is highly structured by the attitudes of the extreme and extremely ‘pure’ categories, which are ‘pure’ in terms of the internal coherence of their socialization, by contrast with the others, subjected to the contradictory influences of their origin and destination environments.

#### IV. Future agenda for the lifestyles perspective in social stratification research

A possible conclusion of the observations made on the social differentiation of cultural attitudes and practices in contemporary France in the context of globalisation is that one would expect the *habitus* mechanism and, more generally, the socialization influence to be increasingly meaningful - although increasingly complex and potentially conflicting - and the *status* argument to be decreasingly relevant. Although quite dynamic, contemporary research on the symbolic and cultural dimensions of social stratification seems nonetheless excessively devoted to the study of contemporary western societies. This western world bias often entails a very simplistic view of growing social complexity together with increasing secularization of social life as a characteristic of post-industrial western world, versus an alleged merely materialistic – and more basic - logic of the social stratification of others, whereas many other research traditions in social sciences display plenty of empirical evidence of the absolute

fallacy of this representation. In that sense, building comparative research frameworks that encompass a larger geopolitical area than just Western Europe and North America should be a relevant challenge for the future of research in this domain.

This research agenda should also be implemented by a more systematic attention to the social and historical variations of the distinctive power of goods and practices. It is indeed nothing less than evident that all societies experience the same ‘symbolic grammar’ of goods and practices. Whereas some consumption goods – say for example, cars or clothes – may preserve a high distinctive power in some societies, they may be, at the same time, decreasingly distinctive in others. Comparing both the competing relevance of *status* and *habitus* or socialization logics in various historical and geographical contexts and the list of goods and practices subjected to symbolic distinction in different societies should be a promising research agenda for the future.

**Appendix:** a log-linear and log-multiplicative modelization of the strength of the occupational group/score on the highbrow culture scale association from 1973 to 2008

The five contingency tables reproduced in **table 2** are subjected to a set of four nested log-linear and log-multiplicative models, in order to give a more accurate measurement of the variations in the intrinsic strength of the association between occupational group (O) and score on the highbrow culture scale (H) across the five surveys (S). Indeed, the usual measures of the statistical association between categorical variables, like the independence chi square test, cannot adequately quantify the evolution of the strength of the association between the cross-tabulated variables, as the margins of the contingency tables are not constant. Namely, there is neither the same proportion of farmers and managers, for example, in 1973, 1981, 1988, 1997 and 2008, and nor the same proportion of, say, ‘low’ and ‘moderately low’ respondents on the highbrow cultural scale. The log-linear and log-multiplicative modelization can hopefully overcome this constraint. We then apply the four following models to the 5×6×4 contingency table reproduced in **table 2** (5 surveys, 6 occupational groups, 4 modalities on the scale), each of them entailing an a priori hypothesis about the evolution of the strength of the statistical association between occupational group and score on the highbrow culture scale.

The first model, written as follows,

$$\text{Log}(m_{ohs}) = \lambda + \lambda_o^O + \lambda_h^H + \lambda_s^S + \lambda_{os}^{OS} + \lambda_{hs}^{HS}$$

corresponds to the **null association model**. Assuming that the occupational group O and the score on the scale H are independent in each survey, it expresses the quite unrealistic hypothesis of a complete equality of opportunity among the different social groups and gives a reference for assessing the extent to which more realistic models fit the data more closely.

The second model, labelled as the **constant association model**, assumes that all the odds ratios which measure the association between occupational group O and scores H are constant over the five surveys. In other words, it expresses the hypothesis of a constant inequality of the proclivity towards highbrow culture:

$$\text{Log}(m_{ohs}) = \lambda + \lambda_o^O + \lambda_h^H + \lambda_s^S + \lambda_{os}^{OS} + \lambda_{hs}^{HS} + \lambda_{oh}^{OH}$$

The third model, generally referred as the **‘Multiplicative uniform association model** (see Xie, 1992 and Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992), decomposes the occupational group/score association and its variation over the five surveys as the product of a common pattern (the  $\psi_{oh}$  parameters) and a survey-specific parameter ( $\beta_s$ ). This third model is able

to detect differences over surveys in the strength of association. More precisely, assuming that  $\beta_{1973}$  is set at 1, estimating  $\beta_s$  as less than 1 (respectively more than 1) for a subsequent survey will correspond to all estimated logged odds ratios moving towards 0 (respectively away from 0), i.e. will correspond to the association becoming weaker (respectively stronger) than in the first survey.

$$\text{Log}(m_{ohs}) = \lambda + \lambda_o^O + \lambda_h^H + \lambda_s^S + \lambda_{os}^{OS} + \lambda_{hs}^{HS} + \beta_s \psi_{oh}$$

The fourth and last modeled, referred as **Regression-type association model** (see Goodman & Hout, 1998 & 2001), implies:

$$\text{Log}(m_{ohs}) = \lambda + \lambda_o^O + \lambda_h^H + \lambda_s^S + \lambda_{os}^{OS} + \lambda_{hs}^{HS} + \lambda_{os}^{OS} + \gamma_s \varphi_{os}$$

While the  $\lambda_{os}^{OS}$  parameters establish the baseline (stable over surveys) pattern of association between occupational group and the score H, the  $\varphi_{os}$  parameters represent the part of the association which varies over the surveys and the magnitude of the  $\gamma_s$  parameter determines the strength of the adjustment of the association for each survey  $s$ . As a consequence, this fourth model is able to detect differences over surveys in both pattern and strength of association.

The choice between these models is referred to their quality of fitting to the data. Various criteria are usually applied, among which the dissimilarity index (ID, that is the proportion of observations uncorrectly classified by the model), the log-likelihood ratio  $\Delta G2$  from one model to another and, above all, the *Bayesian Information Criterion* (BIC), that measures the parsimony of the model (e.g. the equilibrium between complexity and efficiency of the model). As a rule of thumb, the lesser the BIC, the better the model. Applying these criteria, the constant association model, which correctly classifies more than 96% of the observations and minimizes the BIC, appears clearly as the best model

Model	G2	ddl	ID	$\Delta G2$	$p$	BIC
1 null association model	2362	75	17.5%			1626.1
<b>2 constant association model</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-466.7</b>
3 Multiplicative uniform association model	80	56	2.7%	96.6%	0.204	-438.4
4 Regression-type association model	54.8	42	2.1%	97.7%	0.033	-336.5

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