

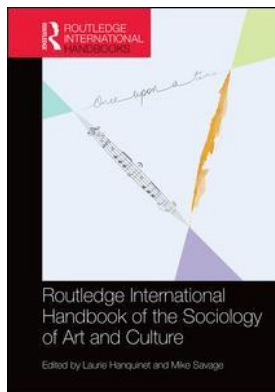
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The sociology of cultural participation in France thirty years after *Distinction*

Philippe Coulangeon

Bourdieu's lasting influence in France as regards the sociology of art and culture is threefold. First, more than thirty years after the publication of *Distinction* and ten years after the author's death, references to Bourdieu remain central for French sociologists studying art and culture. For many scholars, post-*Distinction* cultural sociology was inescapably shaped by the book's bold theoretical proposals, which required sociologists to take sides with respect to its arguments. Ironically, positions on Bourdieu's sociology of culture became themselves a matter of 'distinction' among academic circles, as they were subjected to the kind of relational analysis promoted by Bourdieu himself. As a result, *Distinction* has not only been a landmark in cultural sociology, but it has also contributed to in-depth changes in the rules of French cultural sociology which, since 1980, has appeared highly structured and has distanced itself from *Distinction's* theoretical framework.

But *Distinction's* impact was not limited to academics. It also influenced cultural policies during this period, in a country where public funding for art and culture has long been driven by a concern for democratization. Although Bourdieu's academic legacy in cultural sociology obviously reaches well beyond French borders, as the chapters of this volume attest, the political dimension of Bourdieu's legacy is more specifically restricted to France.

Finally, *Distinction's* public impact is not limited to its influence on cultural policy making. In France, as seen elsewhere (Coulangeon and Duval 2014), *Distinction* was not originally read by academic circles only. It has also been extensively critiqued in the media by French conservatives who tend to consider his conceptualization of cultural production and reception as both reductionist and relativist. This criticism was notably developed by young French essayists of this time, in reaction to what they called the '68 thinking', which was associated with the May 1968 protests in France (Ferry and Renaut 1985). References to *Distinction* have also been implicit in many criticisms addressed to what were seen as the harmful influence assigned to Bourdieu in cultural and educational matters (Finkelkraut 1987). More broadly, French conservatives used to read Bourdieu as a mere variant of Marxism, at a time when French intellectuals remained highly influenced by post-Marxist leading authors, such as Louis Althusser, about whom Bourdieu was fiercely critical (Bourdieu 1975).

Interestingly enough, these three dimensions of Bourdieu's legacy often intertwine. In particular, some academic criticisms of Bourdieu echo those coming from the public

sphere. For example, a significant amount of sociological controversy surrounding the diffusion of Bourdieu's theses about art and culture address the sociological reductionism with which he is also often credited by cultural production and mediation professionals. Similarly, some current debates on the democratization of culture also match questions being raised in cultural sociology regarding issues such as cultural legitimacy, cultural eclecticism and so on. Nonetheless, in what follows, these dimensions are by and large addressed separately. Additionally, as cultural sociology can be wide ranging, this chapter will mainly focus on cultural participation and the social stratification of cultural practices and tastes, which of course does not mean that Bourdieu's impact in cultural sociology is restricted to these topics.

The first part of this chapter reviews the current state of post-*Distinction* French cultural sociology, dealing more specifically with the fate of some of Bourdieu's main concepts in the sociology of cultural practices. The second part addresses more explicitly Bourdieu's legacy in the sociology of cultural participation by examining Bourdieu's direct and indirect influence on French cultural policy making and expertise. Finally, the last part of the text gives insight on contemporary cultural French divisions in relation to the theoretical and political issues raised by Bourdieu's legacy.

French cultural sociology after *Distinction*

The persisting impact of *Distinction* in French cultural sociology has been both theoretical and methodological. On the theoretical side, the book introduced concepts such as cultural capital, habitus, field and homology, which helped sociologists to rethink the relationships between social classes and tastes, attitudes and lifestyles in a way that is familiar today to almost every social scientist working in the cultural domain. It also introduced some methodological innovations that profoundly influenced social science practices in this area. That said, until recent years (Lebaron and Le Roux 2014), there has been no real debate among Bourdieu and his followers on the issues posed directly in *Distinction*. After this work, Bourdieu's main publications focused on topics such as academics, higher education, the State, the literary field, journalism and economics. He also published several theoretical and political books. Of course, some of those works led him to reinvestigate certain aspects of *Distinction*. However, he did not revisit cultural practices, and thus *Distinction* should be considered his definitive contribution to the topic (Coulangeon and Duval 2014).

As regards to the methodological aspects of *Distinction*, the combination of quantitative and qualitative materials on which the book relies is probably one of its main legacies. Then as now, many French sociologists' approach to cultural topics has mixed a comprehensive analysis of ethnographic material and a statistical analysis of survey data, as Bourdieu did. But the most significant and influential methodological innovation introduced by *Distinction* was undoubtedly the use of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which was developed in the 1960s by a team of French mathematicians headed by Jean-Paul Benzécri. Breaking with the variable-oriented statistics that had been dominant in statistical sociology since the 1950s, MCA gave substance to the concept of homology in the realms of tastes, lifestyles and social positions (Rouanet, Ackermann and Le Roux 2000).

More generally, this methodology is inseparable from the relational approach linked to the notions of field and social space developed by Bourdieu in the 1970s. In this regard, tastes, attitudes and practices are not considered as substantial properties of individuals, nor even of the social groups to which they belong. In that sense, many of the current debates inspired by *Distinction*, especially those regarding 'omnivorousness', are couched within a more orthodox neo-positivist perspective. This is particularly the case in the 'omnivore'

debate, where the highbrow/lowbrow boundary tends to be artificially rigidified, whereas in Bourdieu's perspective the border between cultural repertoires was considered fluid, continuously redefined due to the dynamics of the field (see chapters by Karademir Hazır and Warde and by Gayo-Cal in this volume). This is probably one of the reasons why Bourdieu, and his closest colleagues at the *Centre de sociologie européenne*, took very little part in these debates. Another benefit of this relational approach is its two-sided nature. Indeed, unlike more conventional approaches, it allows art and culture production and consumption to be simultaneously related together. This perspective was abundantly illustrated by Bourdieu himself, in relation to literature (Bourdieu 1996) and fine arts (Bourdieu 2013), in particular, and by some of his followers (cf. Sapiro 2002 and Sapiro 2003 on literature; and Duval 2006 and Duval 2011 on cinema). However, with the exception of some works on reading practices (Mauger and Fossé-Poliak 1998; Mauger, Fossé-Poliak and Pudal 1999) and recent methodological development in the geometric data analysis applied to cultural practices (Lebaron and Le Roux 2014), the sociology of cultural practice as such was not developed very much by Bourdieu's direct collaborators.

Nonetheless, the sociology of cultural practices has greatly expanded in France since the eighties, with growing numbers of PhD thesis, articles and books. Much research that has flourished in this area has often been preceded by a partial refutation or recasting of some of the book's core hypotheses, such as the homology thesis or the notion of cultural legitimacy. In 1989, two formerly close associates of Bourdieu, Claude Grignon and Jean-Claude Passeron, published a book, *Le savant et le populaire*, in which they argued there was a legitimist bias in Bourdieu's approach of popular culture. In their view, Bourdieu's analysis of popular culture in terms of its distance from dominant culture was overly exclusive and failed to properly appreciate its relative autonomy (Grignon and Passeron 1989). They also distance themselves from the pessimistic mass culture theorists (Marcuse 1964; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002), whose views on popular culture as structurally alienated they rejected. But according to them, taking the autonomy and dignity of popular culture into account does not mean that they deny its cultural domination. Finally, their book can be read as an attempt to combine Bourdieu's approach with the theoretical contributions of cultural studies. In fact, in the 1970s, Bourdieu himself heavily contributed to the introduction to France of authors such as Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart and Paul Willis.

Others criticized the social determinism and fatalism of Bourdieu's theses. Jacques Rancière, among others, argued that Bourdieu overstated the kind of cultural alienation that doomed the dominated to passively suffer from their domination due to the ignorance of the origin of their domination. On the contrary, he insisted on the relative clear-sightedness of the dominated and on the opportunities of cultural and political emancipation that exist as far as people are not locked in the culture of their class (1991; 2012).

In another vein, the cultural studies tradition inspired a more radical criticism of *Distinction* in France, mainly rooted in the field of media studies. During recent years, several French scholars (Macé and Maigret 2005; Glévarec and Pinet 2012) have called into question the very notion of cultural legitimacy in this era of mass and media culture where the boundaries between popular and high arts are becoming increasingly fuzzy. The blurring of the symbolic boundaries at work is strengthened, they argue, by the fact that these industries structurally stimulate diversity, continuously supporting the renewal of cultural norms and fashions. Finally, they advocate a sociology of individuality and diversity rather than a sociology of distinction and symbolic domination (Glévarec and Pinet 2013).

Other authors insist on the declining power of school education, where cultural norms increasingly compete with mass culture and creative industry prescriptions, so much so that

teenagers, in particular, may experience a kind of ‘inverted’ domination of mass over legitimate culture (Pasquier 2005). Cultural domination, if any, is much more difficult to exert in a society where the cultural norms of the prescribers are manifold than it is in a society where the dominant can quietly rely upon the school cultural monopoly, like in France in the 1960s at the time when the raw empirical data used in *Distinction* was collected.

In a quite different register, and more inspired by Boltanski and Thévenot’s theoretical model of justification logics (2006), Nathalie Heinich investigated the diversity of the axiological repertoires of taste judgements that ordinary people employ when exposed to contemporary art, insisting on the mix of ethical and aesthetic registers displayed by ordinary taste judgements (Heinich 1998). In a related vein, the pragmatist approach to taste has also been investigated by Antoine Hennion and his colleagues since the 1990s. This approach can be seen as another productive break from Bourdieu’s theoretical framework in French cultural sociology (Hennion, Maisonneuve and Gomart 2000; Hennion and Fauquet 2001). They developed a constructivist conception of taste built on the idea of the amateur, which draws on specific skills developed by music lovers. At odds with the notion of *habitus*, they particularly stress the idiosyncratic nature of the field-related amateurs’ competences. In their view, the skills developed by amateurs in relation to their commitment in one cultural field or genre are not systematically transposable from one domain to another.

The relationship between tastes and skills is also at the core of Bernard Lahire’s ‘dispositionnalist’ sociology (2011). Lahire’s analysis of the socio-genesis of taste relies on the sociology of *habitus*, but Lahire strays from Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* on two points. First, somewhat like Hennion and his co-authors, Lahire insists on the non-transferability of dispositions that he intrinsically considers domain-specific (Lahire 2014). People may be highly skilled in one artistic or cultural domain or genre and not in others, even when they are similar. As a result, he argues that people are very likely to display more dissonant cultural profiles than those postulated by theories of *habitus* (Lahire 2008).

But Lahire does not challenge the relevance of the very notion of *habitus*. Rather, he merely questions its postulated unity, which is also affected by the plurality of the social and cultural environments that people get involved in during their life, which most often result in a set of heterogeneous dispositions (Lahire 2003; Lahire 2004). Consequently, Lahire argues that people’s practices, when considered in a wide variety of fields, are seldom as coherent as the theory of *habitus* suggests. The plurality of dispositions and *habitus* fragmentation were acknowledged in some of Bourdieu’s later works (Bourdieu 2004; Bennett 2007). The plurality – and plasticity – of *habitus* can thus be seen as a promising extension rather than a refutation of Bourdieu’s theses.

Finally, a great deal of research in France, like in other Western countries, pits the theoretical framework inherited from Bourdieu against the hypotheses drawn from Richard Peterson’s thesis regarding the growing cultural eclecticism of the culturally and socially well-to-do (Peterson 1992, and see more generally, Karademir Hazır and Warde in this volume). Whereas some authors consider Peterson’s findings to be a radical invalidation of Bourdieu’s thesis (Glévarec 2013; Glévarec and Pinet 2013), others tend to combine the two theories (Coulangeon 2004; Coulangeon and Lemel 2007), and consider eclecticism to be a particular expression of the distinctive aesthetic disposition in a changing cultural context, as is the case in other countries (Lizardo and Skiles 2012). As a result, the rather extensive critiques made upon Bourdieu’s arguments by French scholars do not mean that the posterity of *Distinction* is due to the fact that it constitutes a convenient foil for the critics that indirectly help to sustain it. The persisting influence of *Distinction* in the field of cultural sociology is rather predominantly due to the fact that it is still a stimulating framework to work with

when considering the cultural dimension of class and social inequalities. As a generic process, distinction remains a structuring force of social relations, even if its actual manifestations are constantly renewed.

Bourdieu's legacy, from cultural sociology to cultural policies

Cultural sociology is certainly one of the areas where research orientations are the most closely defined by non-academic interests. This is especially the case for the sociology of cultural participation, which has been tightly shaped in France by the close collaboration between policy makers and social scientists that began immediately after World War II. Joffre Dumazedier, the leading French sociologist of leisure, was recruited by the French planning agency soon after the war ended, where he promoted the concept of cultural development that has been the cornerstone of French cultural policy since the 1950s (Dubois and Georgakakis 1993). A few years later, in 1963, Augustin Girard founded the research unit of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs, which became a meeting place for scholars – mainly social scientists – and policy makers (Girard and Gentil 1983). Sociology of culture and cultural policy studies' expertise has long been used together, especially during the implementation of repeated surveys on cultural participation commissioned by the Ministry's research unit. These largely quantitative surveys provided social scientists and policy makers with the statistical data that allowed them to measure and analyse the social determinants of cultural practices in a context where, since Malraux's nomination to the ministry of cultural affairs in 1959, cultural policies were mainly aimed at democratizing access to arts and culture. As noted by Vincent Dubois, this use of scientific expertise was certainly part of a strategy aimed at promoting the idea of culture as a legitimate policy domain (Dubois 2011).

Dubois highlighted the paradoxical influence Bourdieu had on the development of French cultural policy since the early 1970s (Dubois 2011). According to Dubois, while Bourdieu had a sizeable impact on the intellectual background of cultural policy makers and experts, his impact on the actual orientations of cultural policies was very limited. He collaborated on some occasions with the Ministry's research unit, such as on the survey of the European museum-going public, which Bourdieu used for his book *The Love of Art* (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schnapper 1990). This can be seen as the prototype for a series of surveys on French cultural practices commissioned by the Ministry starting in 1973 that are still the source of a large amount of research on cultural participation. In addition, the interest in the social determinants of inequalities in access to culture featured in Bourdieu and Darbel's book also has enabled some intellectual agreement with the promoters of a cultural policy principally aimed at reducing these inequalities (Donnat 2003). However, Bourdieu's sociology included critical arguments that profoundly challenged the beliefs and practices of cultural policy makers. These arguments were twofold. First, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital profoundly challenged the received wisdom of the diffusion of arts and culture as a result of an 'elective shock' with no need for specific and systematic mediation, an idea that was at the core of Malraux's conception of democratization. In contrast, Bourdieu and his colleagues' analyses highlighted the crucial impact of family and education on the unequal access to art and culture. As a result, these analyses emphasized the limitations of the democratization strategy and suggested, by contrast, the outline of an efficient policy focused on the distribution of educational resources and cultural capital. However, as demonstrated by Dubois, such a recommendation was particularly unacceptable to the cultural policy makers of the time who were imbued with an anti-pedagogical conception of cultural policy that contravened the principles of popular education and socio-cultural animation that had characterized the

cultural policy of the Third and Fourth Republics (from 1870 to 1940 and from 1946 to 1958) (Dubois 1999; Dubois and Laborier 2003).

The second critical argument provided by Bourdieu relates to the notion of the ‘cultural arbitrary’ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979, 1964) that calls into question the aim of the cultural democratization policy and not just the limitations of the means by which it was implemented. What was principally at stake in that critique was the legitimist orientation endorsed by a policy that aimed to democratize access to highbrow culture without any consideration for the underlying process of arbitrary symbolic domination that separated the highbrow from the lowbrow and thus reproduced class privilege (Ahearne 2006). It is in that context that an alternative conception arose in the late 1960s in response to the obvious limitations of cultural democratization and the theoretical criticisms that had been addressed to it.

By insisting on individual autonomy and creativity, this emerging conception argued that ‘true’ cultural democracy implied a wider recognition of cultural diversity. Hence, whereas cultural democratization, through its focus on the diffusion of high culture (such as opera and classical music), resulted in a clear rejection of popular education, amateur practices and the products of cultural industries outside the cultural policy area, cultural democracy was rooted in a much more relativist conception of cultural norms, according to which cultural policy might primarily support people’s own cultural flourishing in a plurality of ways, whether artistic, recreational or educational (Santerre 2000). In other words, cultural democracy was aimed at breaking with the rather paternalistic approach of cultural ‘enlightenment’ that prevailed in the cultural democratization doctrine (Bjørnsen 2012). Culminating in the 1980s, when Jack Lang was the Minister of Culture, the assimilation of these pluralistic and relativist concepts was associated with some extension of the cultural policy domains that contributed to eroding the symbolic barrier between culture and leisure, highbrow and lowbrow arts, arts and entertainment, among other things. It also revived the popular education movement and has been progressively integrated in the elaboration and practice of cultural policy since the mid-1970s.

That being said, the influence that Bourdieu’s argument of ‘cultural arbitrary’ might have exerted on the conception of cultural policy is quite uncertain and rather ambiguous. It is not at all sure that Bourdieu would have totally adhered to the ‘cultural democracy’ doctrine. As he stated in *Pascalian Meditations*,

‘cultural policies’ directed towards the most deprived are condemned to oscillate between two forms of hypocrisy.... On the one hand, in the name of a respect that is at once condescending and without consequences for cultural particularities and particularisms that are largely imposed and suffered, and which are thereby redefined as choices ... one encloses the dispossessed in their condition by failing to offer them real means of realizing their restricted possibilities. On the other hand, as the educational system now does, one universally imposes the same demands without any concern for equally universally distributing the means of satisfying them, thus helping to legitimate the inequality that one merely records and ratifies, while additionally exercising (first of all in the educational system) the symbolic violence associated with the effects of real inequality within formal equality.

(2000: 76)

As demonstrated in this quote, which most likely illustrates a slight shift in Bourdieu’s opinion between his writing from the 1960s and that of the 1970s, sociological criticism has not been exclusively addressed to the cultural arbitrary of cultural democratization universalism.

Bourdieu also demonstrated his scepticism regarding the cultural relativism associated with the cultural democracy doctrine. The influence that cultural sociology has had on the French conception and implementation of cultural policies cannot be reduced to this rather pessimistic conclusion, however. Many cultural policy actors and advisers, well aware of the limits of cultural democratization, are much more positively convinced of the virtues of cultural democracy. Indeed, the doctrinal controversy in cultural policies not only mirrors the influence Bourdieu had in the field in the 1960s and 1970s, but since it is an ongoing controversy, it also parallels more recent debates on cultural inequalities in social sciences (Coulangeon 2013), such as the ‘highbrow/lowbrow’ vs. ‘omnivore/univore’ debate.

The traditional ‘highbrow/lowbrow’ divide has long prevailed in the sociology of culture, ranking practices and tastes along a mass/elite spectrum. Not reducible to Bourdieu’s legacy (Levine 1988; Gans 1999), it was particularly well-adapted to the underlying approach towards cultural inequalities that inspired the cultural democratization doctrine. The emergence of the so-called ‘omnivore/univore’ research agenda in the mid-1990s profoundly challenged this traditional perspective to the extent that the remaining class gradient henceforth became predominantly defined in reference to the amount and diversity of cultural repertoires people practiced (Peterson 1992; Peterson and Simkus 1992). It is worth noting that when this research agenda arose in the United States in the wake of Peterson’s work, the idea that the spectrum of diversity in cultural practices and tastes could become a social marker in and of itself had already been proposed in France by Olivier Donnat, a French researcher who had been in charge of the design and implementation of the surveys of cultural practices at the Ministry of Culture since the late 1980s. In a book published in 1994, Donnat reformulated the issue of cultural inequalities, still central in the definition of cultural policies, in terms of exclusion rather than in terms of distinction, contrasting people enjoying access to a large amount and a wide diversity of cultural goods and practices to people almost entirely excluded from the cultural domain (Donnat 1994). Since then, the growing popularity of these issues has most likely contributed to the expansion of the scope of cultural policy beyond the field of legitimate culture, since cultural inequalities are no longer exclusively defined in terms of a privileged access to high arts and culture. In that sense, cultural sociology not only informs cultural policies, it also enlightens the changing nature of the cultural divisions that affect French society.

Contemporary French cultural divisions in the light of Bourdieu’s sociology of culture

Recent empirical findings suggest increasingly unequal access to most cultural goods and amenities since the 1980s in France, regardless of the level of cultural consecration (Coulangeon 2013). In other words, the social space of cultural practices is persistently and chiefly structured in France by the same underlying principle which distinguishes those who appear more or less culturally engaged that has also been identified in other countries (Le Roux *et al.* 2008). At first glance, this may appear as consistently supportive of the omnivorous argument, if not convergent with the thesis of a decreasingly qualitative differentiation of class cultures and an increasingly quantitative distinction in access to a rather homogeneous mass culture (Wilensky 1964; Gartman 1991).

But this prevailing factor of the differentiation of cultural attitudes and practices is perhaps not just an issue of ‘size’, given that it does not indefinitely contrast the availability of all cultural goods and practices with their unavailability. In particular, both in the early 1980s and currently, the level of cultural engagement remains strikingly and negatively correlated

with TV watching. People who spend a lot of time watching TV systematically display a weak commitment to other cultural practices. On the other hand, those highly involved in a variety of cultural practices generally spend very little time watching TV. This observation would certainly be strengthened by taking into account the different kinds of TV programs people watch. In addition, it is worth noting that TV watching is deeply rooted in contemporary working class culture (Schwartz 1990; Morley 1992). TV watching is indeed one of the rare cultural practices that is more intense among working classes than in any other social group and the television set in contemporary France is the only household good for which ownership is greater at the bottom than at the top of the social structure (INSEE 2011). Conversely, the cultural disqualification of and distance from television in France is nowhere greater than it is among upper classes (Boullier 1988; Lahire 2004). Accordingly, even when compounded with some scale of cultural diversity and eclecticism, the ranking of cultural repertoires is still relevant and certainly remains a matter of class (Coulangeon 2013).

Other research also suggests that illegitimate leisure practices in France, such as hunting, that are predominantly practised by the working class and in the rural areas are also strongly correlated with TV watching and negatively correlated with all other cultural activities (Coulangeon and Lemel 2009). Thus, this cultural engagement factor is often misleadingly interpreted as an indication of weakening cultural boundaries. This deceptive interpretation is frequent since a lot of available survey data on cultural practices relies on a disproportionate number of indicators tied to highbrow and middlebrow cultural practices and a symmetrically low number of indicators on the most common or illegitimate cultural practices. Including a more balanced number of legitimate and illegitimate items in survey questionnaires would make the highbrow/lowbrow divide more salient.

A second dimension of the differentiation of cultural practices and attitudes that emerges from empirical observation relates to the contrast between unequally established repertoires. In France, as in other contemporary contexts, the contrast between the 'established' and 'emergent' repertoires (Le Roux *et al.* 2008) is strongly related to age. Age is certainly a structuring variable that other contemporary French cultural sociologists have explored more than Bourdieu did (Pasquier 2005; Glévaec 2010). At the time when Bourdieu wrote *Distinction*, cultural attitudes, tastes and practices were already heavily structured by age (Herpin 1980; De Saint-Martin 2014). However, observed differences in cultural practices among age groups are quite ambiguous. First, all differences related to age measured in cross-sectional surveys unavoidably blend the life-cycle position with the birth cohort. In addition, it is by no means self-evident that age differences should always be interpreted in terms of cultural domination, to the extent that emergent repertoires are not systematically subordinated to established repertoires.

Therefore, these differences might be better interpreted in terms of temporal change and integrated in the underlying dynamics of fields, which was theorized by Bourdieu himself (Bourdieu 1983). These dynamics suggest that cultural divisions change over time but that some of the underlying factors of distinction remain. Nonetheless, a retrospective analysis of French data shows that today's individual disparities in terms of emergent and established practices, attitudes and tastes are perhaps no longer as distinctive as they were in the early 1980s (Coulangeon 2013). In other words, the kind of cultural legitimacy that is attached to the historical canon is probably weaker today than it was thirty years ago. This declining power of the canon might be partially related to the economic transformation of the cultural sector, increasingly based on the saturation of cultural markets by an oversupply of constantly renewing products. But this changing economic regime does not fundamentally alter the process of distinction, in which expressions are just becoming more versatile and less immediately visible.

Conclusion: Emerging cultural divisions and the question of mass culture

I have shown that Bourdieu's legacy in France is complex and ambivalent. In one respect, his legacy is very powerful. Thirty years after *Distinction*, cultural practices are still essentially seen in France as a matter of class competition and class boundaries. Of course, the social structure of cultural attitudes and tastes has been substantially and continuously renewed. In France as in other Western countries, the focus is increasingly, and probably will continue to be, on emergent cultural divisions and resources (Prieur and Savage 2013). As for emergent divisions, recent research tends to focus less on class and more on alternative principles of stratification, such as gender (Octobre 2011), ethnicity (Voisin 2013) and age and generation (Donnat 2011).

Among the emergent cultural resources that are of growing sociological concern, special attention should be paid to the impact of cosmopolitan cultural resources, which are of rising importance in a globalized world (Calhoun 2002, 2007; Prieur and Savage 2013). Multicultural capital is an increasingly valued form of cultural capital among the French upper class (Wagner 1998, 2010). Cosmopolitanism is particularly encouraged among the upper class in various ways, including the early promotion of the virtues of travelling during childhood and the transmission of cosmopolitan skills in education (Weenink 2008). This is especially the case in many elite French schools such as Sciences Po and the most prestigious business schools (Wagner 2007). It should be noted, however, that most of these cosmopolitan resources, and especially their linguistic components, cannot be acquired and transmitted only at school. Indeed, foreign language fluency has more to do with diffusion and repeated exposure to informal interactions than with scholastic training. Consequently, the symbolic and cultural inequalities that come hand in hand with unequal access to these resources cannot easily be compensated for by the education system. One can then conclude that the social value attached to cultural and symbolic resources that are imperfectly accessible through educational achievement strongly reinforces the non-egalitarian structure of class relationships in a way which suggests that the principles Bourdieu elaborates in *Distinction* remain valid.

The sociology of cultural practices has also been characterized in recent years by a growing focus on mass and media culture (Macé and Maigret 2005). This rising concern for mass culture should make it possible to dispel some of the ambiguities that affect the alleged eclecticism of elite taste. To the extent that a large amount of mass-produced and mass-consumed items are not clearly connected to the class divisions that they precisely contribute to hiding (Gartman 1991), the taste for mass culture displayed among the upper class does not substantially weaken these class divisions. In another words, the fact that the culturally well-to-do also increasingly consume the most common and widely advertised mass-produced cultural items might be rather trivial. Wine connoisseurs also drink tap water.

We can therefore see that despite the particular controversies Bourdieu has left behind him, his approach continues to have power, even in very different conditions, but that we need to be attentive to new perspectives. Whereas taste eclecticism of the elite does not abolish cultural domination, cultural domination is certainly more difficult to exert in a media-saturated environment where the dominant must constantly reassert their domination against the onslaught of a growing diversity of cultural prescribers.

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