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# The Omnivore and the 'Class Defector'. Musical Taste and Social Mobility in Contemporary France

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The Omnivore and the 'Class Defector'.  
Musical Taste and Social Mobility  
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Philippe Coulangeon

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## Résumé :

Une grande partie de la recherche en sociologie de la culture s'inscrit aujourd'hui dans le cadre du paradigme de « l'omnivorité ». Selon ce paradigme désormais bien établi, les différences sociales observées en matière de goûts et de pratiques culturelles s'interpréteraient aujourd'hui davantage en termes d'éclectisme et d'ouverture à la diversité qu'en termes d'opposition entre culture savante et culture populaire. En mobilisant des données françaises relatives aux goûts musicaux, il apparaît en fait que, sous réserves d'une catégorisation adéquate des différents genres musicaux, le clivage savant/populaire demeure pertinent dans ce domaine. On s'intéresse ensuite aux effets de la mobilité sociale sur la formation des goûts. En utilisant un type de modèles statistiques particulièrement adaptés à l'étude des effets de mobilité – les modèles dits « à référence diagonale » - on montre que les goûts des personnes en situation de mobilité procèdent de l'influence combinée de leur classe sociale d'origine et de leur classe de destination, mais que la seconde influence tend malgré tout à prévaloir. En outre, l'analyse ne confirme pas l'hypothèse couramment évoquée d'une corrélation positive de la mobilité et de l'éclectisme des goûts. Les personnes en situation de mobilité, et plus particulièrement de mobilité ascendante, tendent à manifester des goûts plus « savants » qu'éclectiques. De ce point de vue, l'attraction exercée par les répertoires savants sur les personnes en situation de mobilité illustre le pouvoir symbolique que la norme de légitimité culturelle continue d'exercer sur les croyances et sur les pratiques.

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## Abstract:

A large part of current research in cultural sociology highlights the so-called 'omnivorous' paradigm. According to this now well-established paradigm, social differentiation of cultural tastes and practices could no longer be addressed in terms of mass vs. elite culture but rather in terms of eclecticism and openness to diversity. Based on French data on musical tastes, this paper first argues that, provided the use of an adequate categorization of genres, the highbrow/lowbrow divide remains highly pertinent in contemporary France. The additional contribution of the paper relates to the way social mobility affects the formation of people tastes. Making use of a class of statistical models specifically designed for the analysis of mobility effects – the so-called diagonal mobility models -, the paper shows that mobile people's taste results from an unbalanced mixing influence of their class of origin and of their class of destination, where the latter tends to prevail, though. In addition, the analysis set out in the paper does not support the common assumption of a positive correlation between mobility and taste eclecticism. Socially mobiles and especially upwardly mobiles are more likely to display highbrow rather than eclectic musical tastes. Finally, the stronger attraction exerted by the highbrow pattern on the upwardly mobiles' taste illustrates the symbolic power that the traditional notion of cultural legitimacy still exerts on people beliefs and practices.

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A large part of current research on cultural tastes and/or habits focuses on the so-called 'omnivore' paradigm (Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). According to this paradigm, social differentiation of cultural tastes and practices could no longer be addressed in terms of mass vs. elite culture, but rather in terms of eclecticism and openness to diversity. The robustness of this paradigm has been largely established since the mid 1990's, in the United States (Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996; López-Sintas and Katz-Gerro, 2005) as well as in many other western countries (Relish, 1997; Van Rees *et al.*, 1999; Van Eijck, 2001; López-Sintas and García-Alvarez, 2002 and 2004; Coulangeon, 2005; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005, 2007a and 2007b).

The extent to which this new paradigm really challenges former patterns remains highly questionable though (Peterson, 1997; Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007). Whether or not omnivorousness would constitute a coherent and unambiguous set of cultural dispositions, formed by 'the appreciation of all distinctive leisure activities and creative forms along with the appreciation of classic fine arts' (Peterson, 1992: 252), is sometimes questioned (Warde *et al.*, 2007). The growing eclecticism of the upper-middle class observed in many western countries may not reflect any substantial change in individuals' cultural dispositions and attitudes. It may rather reflect a structural change in the upper middle-class composition as a consequence of which the growing eclecticism observed in this class at the macro-level may result from the growing social and cultural diversity of its members' social backgrounds (Van Eijck, 1999; DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004; Van Eijck and Knulst, 2005).

This paper aims to reconsider the meaning of the omnivorous pattern with regard to the impact of social mobility on cultural attitudes and tastes, focusing more specifically on musical tastes. So far, the impact of social mobility on cultural attitudes (Van Eijck, 1999; Daenekindt and Roose, 2013) has not been subject to the same attention comparatively to its impacts on other dimensions of people's behaviour, especially political attitudes. By contrast, cultural sociology has long devoted a lot of attention to musical tastes (Schuessler, 1948; Bourdieu, 1984[1979]) and musical tastes have been at the core of the omnivore-related literature (Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Bryson, 1996, 1997; Van Eijck, 2001; Coulangeon, 2005; Coulangeon & Lemel, 2007; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007a). As music is not part of the school culture to the same extent as literature, for example, musical listening habits and preferences are deemed to be particularly divisive and influenced by primary groups – i.e. family, peer group, ethnic community, etc. The claim that parental influence would exceed that of education in the cultural domain as a whole (van Eijck, 1997) would then be specifically relevant in the musical domain. Besides, musical tastes seem more suitable for survey questionnaires than many other kind of cultural tastes, since they can be recorded using a relatively stable set of genres. In that sense, musical tastes can be understood as an acceptable proxy of people's aesthetic and cultural dispositions in a broader sense, and are particularly suitable for testing social mobility effects on cultural attitudes.

In the first part of the article, I question the common measure and understanding of taste eclecticism in much of the omnivore-related literature, which often leads, I argue, to a rather trivial and possibly misleading notion of what taste eclecticism consists of. I then suggest that a more appropriate measure of musical tastes opens the way to a better understanding of the cultural impact of social mobility on cultural attitudes. I also review the main theoretical hypotheses found in the literature on the subjective consequences of social mobility and explore their implications on cultural sociology. In the second part of the article, based on the analysis of recent French data, I expound on and test a set of hypotheses related to the shaping of musical tastes and to the impact social mobility has on it. As France is often considered to be a country where the norms of cultural legitimacy still exert a strong influence in social life (Lamont, 1992), it seems particularly relevant to measure the impact of social mobility on cultural attitudes in such a context.

## 1. Theory

### 1.1. Omnivorousness and the blind spot of mass-culture

Regardless of its empirical robustness, the omnivorous/univorous divide highlighted by most of the current research in the field of cultural practices is far from being unequivocal (Warde *et al.*, 2007; Warde and Gayo-Cal, 2009; Atkinson, 2011). The meaning of this now widespread divide is notably obscured by a certain misconception of the very notion of mass-culture and the disruption it creates in the definition of the frontier between the so-called highbrow and lowbrow repertoires. Many contemporary cultural sociologists, whatever their position in the omnivore/univore vs. highbrow/lowbrow debate is, probably fail to adequately identify this issue.

This failure is highly dependent on the common aggregation of all non-highbrow cultural genres in a huge and indistinct lowbrow category, as with the pop item in music. What is currently termed as lowbrow or pop is indeed an aggregate of very heterogeneous genres, from mass-produced cultural goods to quite confidential sub-cultural repertoires. Omnivorousness cannot be adequately grasped when relying on such a crude categorization. In addition, Frankfurt School philosophers' intuitions on that matter probably deserve to be considered more seriously than they often are: a large amount of mass-produced and mass-consumed items are not clearly connected to the class divisions that they precisely contribute to hide (Gartman, 1991). In that sense, the taste for mass-culture can loosely be considered by itself as a social marker, although the exclusive access to and taste for it is statistically much more frequent in the lower classes than it is in the upper classes. Omnivorousness cannot then be simply defined by the mixing of highbrow (e. g. classical music or opera) and mass-produced cultural items, to the extent that the former are much more clearly class-related than the latter.

In the musical field, the alleged omnivore/univore contrast might often correspond in that sense to a more trivial observation than usually claimed. To the extent that the mass-produced pop-music is at present time pervasively present in mass-media and casually accompanies many circumstances of the daily life, a pure highbrow orientation of music listening habits, defined by the total rejection of mass-produced pop

music, becomes increasingly unrealistic. As a result, people listening to both classical music or opera and mass-produced pop music, when contrasted to people who only listen to the latter, are predominantly distinguished by the fact they also listen to classical music. As a consequence, such a mix fails to define by itself a truly omnivorous cultural disposition and should remain more adequately described in terms of highbrow/lowbrow contrast. In other words, true omnivorousness involves more than a mere contamination of elite culture by the most widespread artefacts of mass-culture. It may also involve the consubstantial appreciation of more confidential sub-cultural or counter-cultural items. In that sense, the adequate measurement of omnivorousness requires a greater disaggregation of the range of musical genres that enables a more accurate appreciation of the diversity of musical listening habits than the crude opposition between classical and pop music.

## 1.2. Social mobility and cultural change

The impact of social (or educational) mobility on people's cultural habits and/or tastes has not hitherto been considered as systematically as its impact on political values or behaviours (Blau, 1956; Bendix and Lipset, 1959). The traditional claim that social mobility would negatively impact class cohesion (Sorokin, 1927) is for instance reflected in the vast literature on class voting (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Clark, Lipset and Rempel, 1993; Manza, Hout, and Brooks, 1995). Similarly, mobility would encourage *exit* rather than *voice* (Hirschman, 1970) and may deprive the dominated classes from their potential leaders (Sorokin, 1927; Mills; 1951). In this vein, mobility appears as a threat to class formation and mobilization. More generally, social mobility is deemed to weaken criticism, to encourage conformity to the dominant norms and values (Merton, 1968) and to produce political conservatism among upwardly mobile people (Tumin, 1957; Bendix and Lipset, 1959). In addition, these threats would act even when mobility only exists as a potentiality, through the mechanism of anticipated socialization (Merton, 1968).

In the cultural domain, conformist orientations often appear as a corollary of upward mobility too. But, as suggested by Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural goodwill' (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]), they evoke an attribute of the middle-class as such rather than of the upwardly mobiles. More recently, social mobility has been predominantly related to the issue of cultural eclecticism. In that respect, it has often been claimed that social mobility (Van Eijck, 1999) together with educational expansion (DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004; Van Eijck and Knulst, 2005; Coulangeon, 2008) would increase the cultural heterogeneity of the upper class. The growing 'omnivorousness' (Peterson, 1992) of the upper class, as well as the correlative decline of its highbrow exclusiveness, would then chiefly result from the aggregation of individuals of increasingly diverse social and cultural background. This 'compositional interpretation' (De Graaf, Nieuwberta and Heath, 1995) of the rising cultural eclecticism of the elites does not imply any change of the individuals' behaviours. For example, if the upper class 'inheritors' who traditionally favour classical music and opera are challenged by a growing number of newcomers who prefer jazz or rock, this results in a greater omnivorousness of the upper class as a whole while at the individual level, people from heterogeneous backgrounds may remain perfectly univores. In many western countries, taste eclecticism and cultural syncretism of the upper-middle class is then likely to be a by-product of the incorporation of a growing number of newcomers who do not share the same socializing experience and cultural references than their immobile counterparts. Therefore, to the extent that cultural markers are an essential component of class differences, one can argue that

social mobility intrinsically threatens the existence of a class society with clear-cut class cultures and identities (Kingston, 2000).

### 1.3. Social mobility and the Culture of individuals

It is not clear whether the impact of social mobility on cultural as well as political attitudes can be reduced to the aforementioned compositional dimension though (VanEijck, 1999). Social mobility may also affect individual behaviour directly. This individual impact of social mobility entails the potentially conflicting combination of what is commonly termed in the Durkheimian tradition as 'primary' and 'secondary' socialization (Durkheim, 1956 [1922]). Since Bourdieu's elaborations on the concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990 [1982]), primary socialization in the class of origin is often considered to predominantly influence the most deeply anchored cultural dispositions, such as tastes and ways of speaking (Bernstein, 1971). These deeply anchored dispositions can therefore be in conflict with the norms and habits that socially mobile people acquire later in their class of destination.

This conflicting combination sometimes creates 'anomie' (Durkheim, 1985 [1897]) or at least some psychological discomfort. As to cultural tastes and attitudes, it might be expected that social mobility, and especially upward mobility, affects people's self-esteem. Their social integration may also be affected in situations where cultural manners or tastes inherited from their class of origin contradict those of their class of destination. This kind of 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger, 1957) would then be usually resolved by a gradual realignment of these mobile people on the ruling norms of their class of destination. Furthermore, some scholars interpret this changing behaviour in terms of 'over-conformity' or 'over-adaptation' (Wilensky, Edwards, 1959; Merton, 1968). Bourdieu and Passeron described a similar phenomenon in cultural attitudes for which they observed a higher deference to cultural legitimacy norms among upwardly mobile French students than among those from upper class origin (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979 [1964]). This realignment process is generally considered as asymmetrical, though. Upwardly mobiles are expected to conform to the norms of their class of destination more than the downwardly mobiles do. The remaining influence of primary socialization would then be stronger for the latter than it is for the former.

Traditionally widespread in the field of electoral behaviour studies (Bendix and Lipset, 1959), this realignment hypothesis has been subject to sustained criticism. Relying on the political acculturation model of Peter Blau (Blau, 1956), various scholars claim that political attitudes of socially mobile people tend to reflect a fairly balanced influence of their primary and secondary socialization. This leads to the formation of attitudes midway between those of people's class of origin and class of destination (Lopreato, 1967; Abramson, Books, 1971; Jackman, 1972; Thompson, 1971; Segal, Knoke, 1971). In cultural matters, this 'intermediate pattern' also appears more likely to occur than any strict realignment. People's tastes and attitudes result from the combination of both primary and secondary socialization, rather than from the exclusive influence of either the cultural norms of their class of origin (complete inheritance hypothesis) or the norms of their class of destination (complete acculturation hypothesis). This competing influence can also be expressed in the terms of *habitus clivé* (Bourdieu, 2004; Bennett, 2007) or *plural* (Lahire, 2010 [2001]). This opens the opportunity to interpret the omnivores' cultural syncretism not as reducible to a compositional effect but as deeply anchored in intra-individual cultural variations (Lahire, 2003, 2008). In

other words, considered at the individual level, omnivorousness would also be a by-product of social mobility, resulting from the mixing influence of primary and secondary socialization.

## 2. Hypotheses

The first hypothesis to be tested is that, conditional on an appropriate measure of musical taste, the Omnivore/Univore divide is not exclusive to an overarching Highbrow/Lowbrow pattern (H1). In other words, when relying on an adequate disaggregation of musical genres that not only contrasts classical music and/or jazz to a broad and fuzzy pop music category, patterns of musical consumption are likely to encompass highbrow, lowbrow and eclectic profiles rather than an exclusive omnivore/univore contrast.

The second hypothesis relates to the impact of social mobility on the probability of the various profiles previously identified. More precisely, I advocate that mobile people are more likely to be omnivores than non-mobiles (H2) because they experience a wider variety of socializing influences. Omnivorousness is then viewed as a consequence of *plural* socialization (Lahire, 2010 [2001]).

The third hypothesis refers more specifically to the way social mobility affects people taste. What is at stake here is the measure of the competing influence of primary and secondary socialization from which proceeds the shape of socially mobile individuals' tastes. This competing impact will be addressed by means of the test of three variants of the aforementioned 'intermediate pattern', (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013):

– The socialization pattern corresponds to the situation in which people behaviour is predominantly influenced by their primary socialization (H3a).

– The adaptation - or re-socialization – pattern corresponds to the situation in which people behaviour is predominantly influenced by their secondary socialization (H3b).

– The third pattern, often referred to in terms of status maximization (Nieuwebeerta, de Graaf, Ultee, 2000) or maximalization (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013), corresponds to a more complex configuration where people tend to align their behaviour with the one of their highest status reference group, i.e. the norms of the class of destination for the upwardly mobiles and the norms of the class of origin for the downwardly mobiles (H3c).

In the last configuration (maximization), the relative influence of primary and secondary socialization depends on whether people experience downward or upward mobility. Whereas downwardly mobile individuals will tend to keep the norms of their class of origin, upwardly mobile people will tend to adopt those of their class of destination. Concerning musical taste, one can expect this process to operate. Downwardly mobiles individuals will tend to align on the musical norms of their class of origin, whereas upwardly mobiles people will tend to align on those of their class of destination.



### 3. Data and methods

#### 3.1. Data and variables of interest

The data under consideration stem from the Survey on Cultural participation commissioned by the French ministry of Culture in 2008. This survey covers the whole population of people aged 15 and above (N = 5004). In order to analyse of the impact of social mobility, we restrict our sample to the professionally active or ex-active people, whose current or last occupation is filled in, as well as their father's occupation when they were 15 years old (N = 3831). One could of course question this highly male-biased understanding of social mobility. Various studies have demonstrated that cultural transmission is a highly gendered phenomenon (Mohr and DiMaggio, 1995), and have insisted on mothers' influence in this process. Accordingly, mother's occupation, or, at least, both mother's and father's, could preferably be taken into consideration. As many respondents' mothers belong to generations in which the employment rate of women was rather small, the operationalization of the mother's class would be quite problematic though. Consequently, in what follows, social class of origin is only referred to father's occupation.

Another research strategy would have been to focus on educational rather than social mobility by comparing respondents' highest degree with their parents' educational achievement. Measuring social mobility based on educational mobility is indeed a fairly common and valid approach, as the net impact of education on cultural attitudes is known to be greater than the impact of all other socio-demographic characteristics (DiMaggio and Useem, 1978; Daenekindt and Roose, 2013). Although the survey includes questions on the educational attainment of both respondents and their parents, the high number of missing values as to the latter and the uncertain reliability of many responses make this research strategy inadequate in this case.

Class is addressed through a five-category variable: Farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen (Class I), Senior managers, professionals, business owners (Class II), Middle managers (Class III), Routine non-Manual workers (Class IV) and Manual workers (Class V). Upward mobility is defined as the situation of all people belonging to classes II or III and whose fathers belonged to classes I, IV and V, in addition to people belonging to class II whose father belonged to class III. Downward mobility is symmetrically defined as the situation of people belonging to classes I, IV or V and whose fathers belonged to classes II and III, in addition with people belonging to class III whose father belonged to class II.

Musical taste is addressed in this survey through questions on attendance to live music events and questions on listening to music through media. The analysis is deliberately restrained to the second kind of indicators. Not only because the list of musical genres is much more detailed when it comes to listening to music through media but even more because these two kinds of practices are not comparable as to their statistical incidence in the whole population. If listening to music through media is one of the most common cultural practices, the attendance of live music events remains one of the most unusual.: whereas 70 % of

the respondents included in the sample did not attend any live music event during the year preceding the survey, only 17 % of them said they never listen to music through media<sup>1</sup>.

Questions on music listening through media include a question on the preferred musical genre which usefulness is limited because it does not allow for multiple responses. As a result, the omnivore pattern, if any, is by construction not detectable on this basis. The analysis is then focused on the question on people musical listening habits, which is not strictly equivalent to musical tastes, although it can be realistically assumed that the two are tightly correlated. A list of 26 genres was thus proposed to the respondents, among which they were asked to designate those they most often listen to, without any limitation in the number of genres respondents were allowed to mention. After aggregation of the least often mentioned genres (i.e. mentioned by less than 2% of the respondents), the list of genres is reduced to the 11 items enumerated in **table 1**.

**Table 1: List of the 11 musical genres mentioned as the most often listened to with percentages of citations**

French pop	0.66
Foreign pop	0.34
Classical	0.30
Rock	0.26
World music	0.24
Jazz	0.19
Techno	0.10
Opera	0.10
Other	0.07
Rap	0.06
Metal	0.06

Source: Survey on French Cultural participation, 2008; active and ex-active people aged 15 and above (N = 3831)

### 3.2. A latent class analysis (LCA) of the patterns of musical consumption

For the analysis of respondents' patterns of musical consumption, a latent class analysis (LCA) is applied to the distribution of the 11 musical genres mentioned as the most often listened to, following a standard analytical strategy (see for example Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007a). The aim of LCA is to identify a categorical latent variable that explains correlations between the manifest indicators – here, the 11 binary variables on musical genres – of a given phenomenon. This latent variable is unknown. Its modalities form the latent classes or clusters across which respondents are distributed according to the pattern of associations between their responses on the manifest indicators so that, conditional on membership in these classes, the indicators become statistically independent of each other (McCutcheon, 1987).

<sup>1</sup> This distinction is reinforced by the following observation: a little more than 35% of the respondents reported that they never attended any live music event during their entire life. By contrast, 30% of them listen to music through media every day, and more than 60 % at least several times a week.

Formally, a latent class model with T latent classes and three categorical variables A, B, C with I, J, K categories can be expressed as follows:

$$P_{ijkl} = P_{ij|k} \cdot P_{i|j} \cdot P_{j|k} \cdot P_{k|l}$$

Where  $P_{ijkl}$  is the probability that a respondent is found simultaneously at level  $i$  of variable A, level  $j$  of variable B, level  $k$  of variable C and belongs to the latent class  $l$ ,

$P_{k|l}$ , stands for the probability that a respondent belongs to the latent class  $l$ ,

$P_{i|j}$ , stands for the conditional probability that a respondent that belongs to the latent class  $l$  is found at the level  $i$  of the manifest variable A, and so on for the two other manifest variables B and C2.

### 3.3. A multinomial diagonal mobility model (DMM) approach of the impact of social mobility on musical taste

In the second step of the analysis, the latent categorical variable obtained by means of the LCA is introduced as the dependent variable of a diagonal mobility model (DMM) (Sobel, 1981, 1985). This kind of model is specifically designed to address the impact of social mobility. Given that the dependent variable under consideration in the model is multinomial (e.g. the three latent clusters), the underlying function of the model is a multinomial regression. The aim of the diagonal mobility – or reference – model is to model the cross-tabulated distribution of a given outcome by class of origin and class of destination of the respondents. The diagonal cells of this cross-tabulation correspond to the outcome mean values observed for the immobile respondents (i.e. those whose class of origin and class of destination are the same). In accordance with the implicit hypotheses of the model, these mean values are supposed to represent the typical behaviour of the ‘core’ members of each class. The dependant variable of the model corresponds to the values of the off-diagonal cells of the table, modelled as a function of the mean values reported in the diagonal cells of the table, i.e. of the mean values that are observed among the immobile respondents of the classes of origin and destination. Formally, the general expression of these models consists in the estimation of the value of a given dependent variable  $Y_{ijk}$  for an individual  $k$  of class of origin  $i$  and class of destination  $j$  as a function of the mean values  $\mu_{ii}$  of the immobile respondents of the class of origin and of the mean values  $\mu_{jj}$  of the immobile respondents of the class of destination, as follows:

$$Y_{ijk} = \mu_{ii} + \mu_{jj} - \mu_{ii} \mu_{jj} + \sum \mu_{ii} \mu_{jj} + \mu_{kk}$$

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<sup>2</sup> All models are fitted with Latent Gold 4.5 (Vermunt and Magidson, 2005).

where  $p$  and  $(1-p)$  stand for the relative impact of the class of origin and class of destination mean outcome values  $\mu_i$  and  $\mu_j$  on the off-diagonal cells of the table. Where also the sum of the relative weights of origin and destination  $p$  and  $(1-p)$  are constrained to equal 1, and the  $i$  number of categories of the class of origin to equal the  $j$  number of categories of the class of destination. Finally, the  $\beta$  parameters measure the impact of the set of control variables included in the model (namely age and gender) and the  $\epsilon_{ijk}$  represents the error term, as in ordinary regression techniques.

These models correspond to a more general class of models designed for situations of status-inconsistency (Hendrickx *et al.*, 1993). They were initially used on data on fertility decisions (Sobel, 1981, 1985; Sorenson, 1989), and then predominantly applied to data on voting behaviour (De Graaf and Ultee, 1990; Weakliem, 1992; Clifford and Heath, 1993; Breen and Whelan, 1994; De Graaf *et al.*, 1995; Nieuwertaa *et al.*, 2000), political values or moral orientations (Tolsma *et al.*, 2009). More occasionally, they have been applied to data on personal satisfaction (Marshall and Firth, 1999), consumption and lifestyles (De Graaf, 1991) and cultural participation (Van Berkel and De Graaf, 1995; Daenekindt and Roose, 2013).

Hereafter, the analysis of the effects of social mobility on musical taste is based on the application of the diagonal mobility models approach to the case of a multinomial categorical outcome defined by the latent classes identified in the previous step of the analysis.

Sobel's original model was designed for predicting a metric dependent variable, using an OLS linear regression. Various extensions of the initial model have been used with binary categorical outcomes, especially in the field of electoral sociology. In that case, the model relies on a binomial logistic regression instead of a linear regression. When it comes to multinomial dependent variables, the model can be expressed as follows:

$$P_{ijk} = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \mu_i + \beta_2 \mu_j + \beta_3 X_{ijk}}}{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \mu_i + \beta_2 \mu_j + \beta_3 X_{ijk}} + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \mu_i + \beta_2 \mu_j + \beta_3 X_{ijk}} + \sum_{c \neq i, j} e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 \mu_i + \beta_2 \mu_j + \beta_3 X_{ijk}} + \epsilon_{ijk}}$$

where  $P_{ijk}$  is the probability of cluster  $c$  for the respondent  $k$  from class of origin  $i$  (i.e. father's class) and class of destination  $j$  (i.e. respondent's class). The  $\mu_{ic}$  and  $\mu_{jc}$  parameters correspond to the mean probabilities of cluster  $c$  for the socially non-mobile members of the class of origin and of the class of destination. The  $p$  and  $(1-p)$  parameters have the same meaning than in the standard DMM model.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Three profiles of music listeners

The results of the latent class analysis carried out on the distribution of the 11 musical genres' items show that a model postulating three latent clusters fits the data satisfactorily according to the  $p$ -value criterion ( $p$  larger than .05)<sup>3</sup>. According to the BIC criterion (the smaller, the better), the 6-cluster model could have been preferred though. Given that the 4-, 5- et 6-cluster solutions turned out to be unstable (i.e. the successive computations of the model do not always produce the same estimated conditional probabilities and the same estimated sizes of the clusters), I favour the five per cent criterion and adopt the 3-cluster solution.

**Table 2: Latent class measurement models fitted to data on musical listening**

# clusters	L <sup>2</sup>	df	p	BIC
1	3465.33	2036	0.0000	13333.46
2	2240.59	2024	0.0005	14459.19
3	1554.86	2012	1.00	15045.91
4	1300.36	2000	1.00	15201.40
5	1155.36	1988	1.00	15247.39
6	1048.11	1976	1.00	15255.63
7	989.34	1964	1.00	15215.39

Source: Survey on French Cultural participation, 2008; active and ex-active people aged 15 and above (N = 3831)

The estimated relative sizes of the clusters and the estimated conditional probabilities are reported in **table 3**. The first profile of music listeners, with an estimated probability of a little more than 65%, is characterized by a quite exclusive taste for French pop music, which is the only genre with a conditional probability superior to 50 %. The second cluster, with an estimated relative size of 25%, is much smaller than the first one. It similarly displays a high conditional probability for French pop music (70%) but an even higher conditional probability for classical music (85%). The last cluster is even smaller (9%) and displays conditional probabilities above 50% for six of the 11 genres (French pop, foreign pop, rock, world music, jazz and classical music).

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<sup>3</sup> In what follows, the word 'class' will exclusively designate social classes, whereas the latent classes resulting for the latent class analysis will be preferably termed as 'clusters'. Given that hereafter the LC technique is used as a clustering method rather than as a truly latent variable modelling technique, this lexical convention does not alter the meaning of the analysis (see Vermunt and Magidson, 2009, pp. 89-106)

**Table 3: Estimated relative sizes of latent clusters and conditional probabilities of the musical genres most often listened under the 3-cluster model**

	<b>French Pop Univores (FPU)</b>	<b>Highbrow (H)</b>	<b>Omnivores (O)</b>
Relative size	0.654	0.254	0.092
French pop	0.632	0.705	0.758
Foreign pop	0.366	0.143	0.708
Classical	0.045	0.856	0.555
Rock	0.239	0.104	0.815
World music	0.164	0.334	0.512
Jazz	0.067	0.355	0.563
Techno	0.09	0.02	0.383
Opera	0.001	0.304	0.224
Rap	0.093	0.001	0.348
Metal	0.046	0.002	0.301
Other	0.069	0.059	0.080

Source: Survey on French Cultural participation, 2008; active and ex-active people aged 15 and above (N = 3831)

Although the first cluster can be unambiguously labelled as French pop univore and the third as truly omnivorous, the second one is less easy to qualify. To the extent that the French pop item is quite equally present in all of the three clusters, with an estimated conditional probability of 63 to 76%, its combination with classical music is hardly sufficient to qualify the second cluster as truly omnivorous. What distinguishes this cluster from the other two is that in addition to the common listening of French pop music, people who belong to this cluster also and predominantly listen to classical music. In comparison with the third cluster, it corresponds more to a conventional highbrow profile than to an authentically eclectic one. However, it is worth bearing in mind that to the extent that cluster 2 is nearly three times as frequent as cluster 3, the highbrow profile is much more likely than the omnivorous one.

Finally, this result is quite supportive of the first hypothesis: the omnivore profile does not obliterate the highbrow one, and, as expected, the Omnivore/Univore divide is not exclusive of an overarching Highbrow/Lowbrow pattern. This result does not correspond to what is commonly observed in other studies on that topic. For example, Chan and Goldthorpe, in their analysis of musical tastes and consumption in the UK, do not identify any real highbrow profile, and conclude that the omnivore/univore divide gives a better account of taste differentiation than the highbrow/lowbrow one. But their conclusion is most probably affected by their very crude categorization of musical genres, including an overly aggregated approach of the lowbrow musical genres. Indeed, they only differentiate opera and operetta, jazz, classical music, and, due to the design of the survey from which their data is extracted, an all-encompassing pop and rock category (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007a). And, indeed, following the same categorization than Chan and Godthorpe gives very similar results on French data: when all musical genres but jazz, opera and classical musical are aggregated in a single category, the latent class analysis results in a rather clear differentiation

between univores and omnivores, with no obvious highbrow/lowbrow divide<sup>4</sup>. But it is no longer the case when the analysis is based on a more disaggregated categorization, as displayed in **table 3**. In other words, it is only when a rather detailed list of genres and sub-genres is taken into consideration that true omnivorousness can be correctly distinguished from the common access to and taste for mass-culture that can cohabit with a more distinctive access to and taste for highbrow culture. It is all the more noticeable that the third cluster identified by the LCA combines classical music, opera and jazz with French and foreign pop, rock and world music, with no special emphasis on the most lowbrow stigmatized genres, such as rap and metal, confirming that genuine omnivorousness hardly corresponds with an undifferentiated eclecticism (Bryson, 1996).

#### 4.2. Social mobility and musical taste

The impact of social mobility on taste is then investigated through the set of diagonal mobility models summarized in **Table 5**. These models estimate the relative impact of the class of origin and the class of destination of the respondents on their distribution across the three aforementioned clusters, controlled for age and gender introduced as covariates. Models A and B correspond respectively to a complete inheritance and to a complete acculturation pattern, with  $p$  equalling 1 in model A and  $p$  equalling 0 in model B. Model C corresponds to a strict definition of the intermediate pattern, where  $p$  equal 0.5, that means a strictly equivalent influence of origin and destination. Finally, Model D does not include any constraint on  $p$ . Model A, B and C are nested in model D, and according to the likelihood ratio test displayed in the table, Model D provides a better fit to the data. It can then be considered as a baseline for further investigation. As a result, neither the complete inheritance nor the complete acculturation models are supported by the data, whereas the 'intermediate pattern' is. Mobile respondents' distribution across the three latent clusters is then expected to be halfway between the distribution observed in their class of origin and in their class of destination. But unlike model C, Model D does not implies a strictly equivalent influence of origin and destination. It then opens up the possibility for two alternative variants of the 'intermediate pattern', namely the socialization (H3a) and adaptation (H3b) patterns, which depend on the estimated value of  $p$ . Whereas the socialization pattern corresponds to a situation where  $p$  is greater than 0.5, the adaptation – or re-socialization -pattern corresponds to a situation where  $p$  is smaller than 0.5.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the BIC criteria, a 2-cluster solution is then acceptable. The first cluster includes 75% of the sample and roughly corresponds to the Univore cluster of the analysis displayed in table 3, with 87% of the respondents in this cluster mentioning pop music, whereas none of the other three genres is mentioned by more than 9% of the respondents. The second cluster includes the remaining 25% of the sample, with 89% of the respondents mentioning classical music, 88% mentioning pop music, 47% mentioning jazz and 38% mentioning opera.

**Table 5: Goodness of fit statistics for diagonal reference models predicting respondents’ music listening profiles**

Model		L2	df	diff L2	p	AIC	BIC	
A	Complete inheritance (p = 1)	-2766.99	14	D - A	68.55	<.001	5562.0	5649.5
B	Complete acculturation (p = 0)	-2724.46	14	D - B	26.02	<.001	5476.9	5564.4
C	Strict intermediate pattern (p = 0.5)	-2702.35	14	D - C	3.92	<.05	5432.7	5520.2
D	Baseline model	-2698.44	15				5426.9	5520.6
E	Maximization hypothesis	-2693.61	17	E - D	4.83	<.01	5421.2	5527.5
F	Downward mobility impact	-2697.82	17	F - D	0.62	n.s.	5429.6	5535.9
G	Upward mobility impact	-2694.02	17	G - D	4.42	n.s.	5422.0	5528.3

Source: Survey on French Cultural participation, 2008; active and ex-active people aged 15 and above (N = 3831)

The models were specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Model A: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model B: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model C: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = 0.5 * \pi_{ijk} + 0.5 * \pi_{jkk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model D: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model E: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = (\pi + \pi_{ijm}) \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model F: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k} \\
 \text{Model G: } \pi_{ijk} &= \frac{\pi_{ijk} \pi_{jkk}}{\pi_{jkk}} = \pi_{ijk} + \pi_{ij\cdot} + \pi_{i\cdot k}
 \end{aligned}$$

Model E introduces a dummy variable  $x_{ijm}$  that scores 1 for upwardly mobile individuals and 0 otherwise. In this model the weight parameter of the class of origin equals  $(p + m)$  for upwardly mobile individuals and  $p$  otherwise. A negative and significantly distinct from zero value of  $m$  corresponds to the maximization hypothesis (H3c): upward mobility reduces the relative weight of origin and enhances the relative weight of destination.

As shown in **table 5**, the comparison of the quality of fit statistics of model E and model D display a tiny improvement associated with the former. Model E also displays a smaller AIC than model D. Whereas the BIC criteria should rather advocate in favour of model D, Model E will then be retained as the best model. By contrast, the two last models F and G, which add to model D a dummy covariate that denotes the intrinsic impact of upward (model F) or downward (model G) mobility on the relative probability of the three profiles of musical listeners, does not provide any significant improvement of the quality of fit to the data,



when compared to model D<sup>5</sup>. As a result, the second hypothesis (H2) according to which upward mobility would by itself favour a specific musical consumption profile – i.e. the omnivorous one – must be rejected. Finally, the choice between the three variants of H3 - H3a, H3b and H3c - requires a detailed inspection of the parameters estimates of model E.

**Table 6: Parameters estimates from the diagonal mobility model E**

	H vs. FPU		O vs. FPU		O vs. H	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
<i>Mobility parameters</i>						
p: weight of origin	0.448***	(0.075)	0.448***	(0.075)	0.446***	(0.076)
m: maximization parameter	-0.205#	(0.123)	0.250	(0.198)	-0.347	(0.305)
<i>Estimates parameters of immobiles</i>						
μ11 : Farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen	-0.494***	(0.135)	-0.133	(0.193)	0.269	(0.282)
μ 22 : Senior managers, professionals, business owners	1.266***	(0.109)	1.018***	(0.167)	-0.362*	(0.150)
μ 33 : Middle managers	0.390***	(0.102)	0.484**	(0.182)	0.062	(0.152)
μ 44 : Routine non-Manual workers	-0.290*	(0.147)	-1.020***	(0.208)	-0.504	(0.316)
μ 55 : Manual workers	-0.871***	(0.117)	-0.349*	(0.145)	0.535**	(0.187)
<i>Covariates</i>						
Age	0.053***	(0.003)	-0.029***	(0.004)	-0.082***	(0.005)
Sex (male is the reference category)	0.360***	(0.091)	-0.130	(0.132)	-0.510**	(0.156)
Intercept	-1.744***	(0.157)	-2.021***	(0.205)	-0.324	(0.260)

\*\*\* p <.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, # p<.1

Source: Survey on French Cultural participation, 2008; active and ex-active people aged 15 and above (N = 3831)

At a first glance, the examination of the mobility parameters reproduced in **table 6** seems supportive of the adaptation - or re-socialization – pattern (H3b), in that sense that the estimated value of *p* is less than 0.5. Socially mobile individuals’ tastes would then be predominantly influenced by their class of destination (i.e. by the mean probability of the different clusters among the non-mobile respondents of their class of destination). But, when considering more precisely the contrast between the Highbrow and the FPU profiles, the complete examination of the mobility parameters displays a somewhat different pattern. In that case, the slightly significant negative value of the maximization parameter *m* indicates an attenuation of the influence of the class of origin (and a reinforcement of the influence of the class of destination) for the upwardly mobile respondents. This does not completely validate the maximization hypothesis (H3c), though, to the extent that both upwardly and downwardly mobiles are primarily influenced by the behavior of their class of destination. But it suggests at least that as to the relative probability of the Highbrow profile contrasted with the FPU one the re-socialization process operates more strongly for the upwardly mobiles than it does for the downwardly mobiles. In other words, the attraction of the class of destination behavior is stronger for the former than for the latter, and the cultural realignment of the upwardly mobiles is likely to be more pronounced.

Besides, the examination of the parameter estimates associated to the class variable gives some additional indication on the social factors of musical taste under the hypothesis summarized in model E. Net

<sup>5</sup> In model F, the dummy covariate D denotes the impact of downward mobility, and in model G, the dummy covariate U denotes the impact of upward mobility.

of age and gender, the impact of class on the relative probability of the Highbrow profile, when contrasted to the FPU one, displays a strong social gradient. Senior Managers, Professionals and Business Owners (class II) and, to a lesser extent, Middle Managers (class III) are positively associated with the relative probability of this profile and negatively associated with the relative probability of the FPU one. Conversely, the other social classes are negatively associated with the relative probability of the Highbrow profile and positively associated with the relative probability of the FPU one.

The same holds partially true as to the relative probability of the Omnivorous profile, except that the positive coefficient associated to class II in the contrast between the Omnivorous and the FPU profiles is relatively weaker than the coefficient associated to this class in the contrast between the Highbrow and the FPU profiles. On the opposite side of the social scale, the negative parameters associated to the manual workers and small self-employed in the contrast between the Omnivorous and FPU profiles are themselves considerably weaker than the corresponding parameters observed in the contrast between the Highbrow and FPU profiles. In other words, insofar as both the Highbrow and Omnivorous profiles are socially distinctive, when contrasted to the more common FPU one, the contrast between the upper and lower classes is greater as to the relative probability of the Highbrow profile. On the contrary, the difference between the parameters associated to the middle managers, on the one hand, and the routine non-manual workers, on the other, is greater in the contrast between the Omnivorous and the FPU profiles than it is in the contrast between the Highbrow and the FPU profiles. When it comes to the upper and lower fractions of the intermediate classes, the Omnivorous profile seems thus more socially distinctive than the Highbrow one.

To finish with, the negative parameter associated to class II in the contrast between the Omnivorous and the Highbrow profiles suggests a higher attraction between the upper classes and the latter profile than between the upper classes and the former one. In that sense too, the positive parameter associated to Class V suggests that the lower classes are culturally more distant from the Highbrow profile than from the omnivorous one. All in all, these results suggests that the social contrast between Highbrow and Lowbrow musical taste remains stronger than the social contrast between omnivores and univores as such, to the extent that the sharpest differences in Omnivorousness lie in the intermediate strata of the social scale.

Lastly, a complementary look at the impact of the control variables shows a significant impact of gender on the relative probability of the highbrow cluster when contrasted to the FPU one and a rather stronger impact of age on the relative probabilities of both the Highbrow and the Omnivorous profiles. Women are more likely than men to belong to the Highbrow profile than to the FPU one, and age increases the relative probability of the Highbrow profile and reduces the probability of the Omnivorous one. Lastly, when contrasted to the Highbrow one, the Omnivorous profile appears less likely for women than for men and its relative probability is negatively correlated with age.

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

In this article, I proposed an empirical reappraisal of the way class location and social mobility affect the formation of cultural attitudes through the canonical example of the distribution of musical tastes. I first established that, provided the use of an adequate, disaggregated list of musical genres, the latent-class modeling of tastes still support the highbrow/lowbrow divide. Indeed, the two biggest clusters of the 3-class solution of the latent-class model correspond to a clearly lowbrow one and a relatively clear highbrow one, whereas the truly omnivorous profile is relegated in a smaller third cluster. The highbrow and omnivorous clusters identify two alternative patterns of cultural distinction which are predominantly differentiated by gender and, above all, age. It is nonetheless noticeable that the highbrow inclination is more closely related to the upper classes than is the omnivorous disposition. Net of age and gender, Manual Workers are less unlikely to belong to the Omnivorous profile than to the Highbrow one, whereas members of the upper class remain more likely to be Highbrow than Omnivorous.

The main result of the analysis, though, is that highbrow distinctive behaviours are much more common than omnivorousness. This finding sounds slightly in contradiction with the prevailing assertion that cultural distinction, if any, would be nowadays first and foremost a matter of cultural diversity. My claim is that this seemingly counter-intuitive result is mainly due to the loose categorization of over-aggregated musical genres on which the sociological analysis of taste often relies. It also highlights a frequent underestimation and misconception of the question of mass-culture in the current omnivorous literature. When combining French pop with classical music listening, as do the respondents of the second cluster defined by the latent-class model, what is intrinsically meaningful is the listening to the latter, and not the listening to mainstream pop music, i.e. the kind of music that almost everybody listens to on the radio or, today, on the internet, at least passively or rather nonchalantly, which is precisely one of the intrinsic characteristics of mass-culture. It is the reason why this second cluster cannot be considered as really omnivorous, but rather highbrow.

The additional contribution of the paper relates to the way social mobility affects the formation of people tastes and their distribution across the three latent clusters identified in the analysis. The main result is that taste formation results from an unbalanced mixing influence of primary and secondary socialization, where the impact of the cultural norms of the class of destination tends to prevail on those of the class of origin. This prevalent impact is even particularly pronounced for upwardly mobile people in the contrast between the highbrow and lowbrow (French pop univore) profiles of musical listening. The unbalanced mixing influence of primary and secondary socialization is not fully congruent with the 'status maximization hypothesis', though. This asymmetrical impact of social mobility is thus not perfectly supported by the data on musical tastes under consideration in this paper, as, in any case, the cultural norms of the class of destination prevails. But it is worth noticing the particular strength of this prevalence when it comes to the attraction that the Highbrow profile exerts on the upwardly mobiles.

This prevalence is also convergent with the invalidation of the quite common assumption of a positive correlation between mobility and the omnivorization of taste, in line with the plural socialization model (Lahire, 2010 [2001]). The same data also indicate that mobile and especially upwardly mobile respondents

are more likely to fall into the Highbrow rather than into the Omnivorous profile of musical taste. Together, these results echo back the kind of cultural over-conformism observed in France in the mid-sixties by Bourdieu and Passeron among upwardly mobile students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979 [1964]) and illustrate the strong symbolic power that the norm of cultural legitimacy still exerts on people's beliefs and practices. The extent to which the upwardly mobiles' compliance with the cultural norms of the elite can be interpreted as an active and rational process, by which newcomers would tend to symbolically emphasize their new status by adopting the fairly modal profile of their class of destination, rather than the result of the diffuse pressure exerted on these newcomers remains controversial, though. The degree to which people's responses in survey questionnaires reflect their conformist views on culture rather than their actual cultural practices remains questionable too. In any case, upward mobility tends to produce conformity towards cultural legitimacy rather than eclecticism. In that sense, upwardly mobiles are more consistent with the ideal-typical "class defectors" than with the truly omnivores. But the implications of these findings remain questionable, due to the intrinsic limitations of the data.

First, the results displayed in this article only rely on an indirect approach of the impact of social mobility on taste, due to the individual and cross-sectional nature of the data under consideration. The subjective characteristics associated with mobility are only inferred in this article from the comparison of people's attitudes with the modal behaviours observed in their class of origin and class of destination. No attention is ever given to the very process by which the attitudes of mobile individuals may change in their life-course in relation with their social trajectory and the multiple socializing influences they are exposed to. In that sense too, the diagonal reference models used in this article do not truly address the intergenerational transmission of dispositions, but only the kind of attitudinal consistency or inconsistency people experience when their class of destination differs from their class of origin. A real investigation of people's subjective and cultural trajectories should indeed require longitudinal data as well as information on tastes of the parents of the respondents in order to measure the intergenerational continuity and discontinuity of taste associated with mobility (ter Bogt and al., 2011). In addition, the strong impact of age on musical taste, as measured by its impact on the distribution of the respondents across the three latent clusters, also advocates for a longitudinal perspective, in order to disentangle the age and cohort effects. Finally, this kind of data would also allow for a better understanding of the link between social and cultural mobility. Do people tend to conform to the cultural norms of their class of destination as a result of their social trajectory or do the prior adoption of these cultural norms condition social mobility?

A second limitation of the data under consideration in this article relates to the conventional approach of tastes through a list of musical genres. As detailed as it may be, such a list might conceal a large part of the internal divisions and hierarchies of musical genres (Glevarec and Pinet, 2012). Even though these hidden hierarchies might be better appraised with more detailed lists of genres and through the inclusion of questions on artist names and musical pieces, this purely nominal approach of taste would fail to grasp more subtle distinctions attached to the way people consume and appreciate cultural products rather than the products they consume themselves. In the musical field, a crucial part of pertinent cultural distinctions may indeed lie in the different ways of listening to the same kind of musical pieces (Atkinson, 2011). A proper approach of these distinctions would probably alter the social typology of taste on which the analysis presented in this article is based and would lead to refine its conclusions.

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