LOOKING FOR NON-PUBLICS

Preface by Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan

Edited by **Daniel Jacobi** and **Jason Luckerhoff**

Edited by **Anik Meunier** and **Jason Luckerhoff**

The *Culture et publics* collection brings together original works on culture and its audiences. More specifically, it explores the field of cultural mediation, i.e., the analysis of cultural actors' professional practices, the methods they employ, and their impact on different types of audiences. All forms of culture are included, from live performance to heritage and museums. The word *publics* ("audiences") is deliberately pluralized to emphasize the collection's special interest in innovative forms of cultural mediation aimed at broadening access to particular forms of culture. In a museum context, the notion of cultural mediation obviously incorporates the concept of non-formal education, or in other words, the various forms of knowledge mediation that occur outside of school. These include the heritage–and museum–related mediation practices known as museum education.

The *Culture et publics* collection publishes works that analyze original mediation, interpretation, and communication techniques, or that draw on attendance studies or other surveys of cultural and museological practices. It includes theoretical, empirical, historic, and conceptual studies rooted in the humanities and social sciences, but with a particular focus on approaches used in communication, education, and museology.

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PREFACE

ON *PUBLICS, NON-PUBLICS, FORMER PUBLICS, FUTURE PUBLICS, ALMOST PUBLICS,* AND THEIR STUDENTS AND GENEALOGIES

Elihu Katz and **Daniel Dayan**

The central question of this book – the question of *non-publics* – triggers immediate curiosity. However, we ask readers to momentarily postpone the satisfaction of their legitimate curiosity and to accompany us for four brief prefatory explorations. The first situates Jacobi and Luckerhoff's work in the context of intellectual history and stresses the diversity of disciplines that have dealt with *publics*. The second compares different sorts of publics and equally heterogeneous sorts of non-publics. Inspired by media studies, the third focuses on audiences and raises a paradoxical question: Could we propose audiences as examples of non-publics? Finally, the fourth asks whether the status of publics is that of discursive form or observable sociation.

We shall then leave the floor to Luckerhoff and Jacobi and their collection of systematic and carefully argued essays, hoping to have offered some useful contextualizations to their provocative book.

1.
FIRST EXPLORATION: PUBLICS, NON-PUBLICS AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Several strands of research contribute to the important issues addressed in this book. One strand can be traced to Gabriel Tarde's (1898) proposal that the newspaper took "crowds" off the street and transformed them into "publics." "Publics," for Tarde, consisted of individuals reading about the issues of the day, forming opinions, coming together to discuss and, ultimately, act on them, notably by voting.

Following Tarde, sociologists at the University of Chicago proposed to distinguish not only between crowd and public, but between different types of crowds and the "masses." (Blumer, 1939). These efforts gave rise to the branch of sociology known as collective behavior, which addressed the dynamics of fads, fashions, rumor, scandal, public opinion, and the like. It seems as if mainstream sociology became uneasy about these unstable processes, and it is a good guess to say that communications research became the beneficiary of this unease.

Radically different definitions of the concept of *public* have since been proposed, ranging from people who are single-mindedly engaged, even for a short while, with an everyday issue or performance to individuals who are at least aware of each other, and/or estimate what similarly engaged others are thinking. Noelle-Neumann (1984), Price (1992), Herbst (1993), Dayan (below) and many others have grappled with this issue, sometimes echoing Tarde himself. But almost none of them have dealt directly with the non-public of the disenfranchised – those who do not take part.

Two notable exceptions are public opinion research and political science. While defying more sophisticated definitions of public, public opinion researchers are deeply concerned about respondents who say "don't know" or give "no answer." Although opinion pollsters do not use the term *non-publics*, they worry about them, at least for statistical reasons, especially those respondents who are not sure whether they will vote or not. As for political scientists concerned with the problem of non-voting, they come even closer to the problems addressed in this volume, from both normative and theoretical points of view.

More humanistically oriented students of audience also have a contribution to make (Butsch, 2008; Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Livingstone, 2005).

Historians show how excluded citizens were ultimately invited into the noble courts to witness previously restricted performances, and how these paved the way for theaters and concert halls, which opened their doors to anybody who could afford the price of admission (R. Katz, 1986). This is where the non-publics of the arts came to prominence. Walter Benjamin (1968) thought that "mechanical reproduction" might enfranchise them.

Early research on radio anticipated Jacobi and Luckerhoff's interest in non-publics by some 60 years, but subsequently – and unfortunately – abandoned this missionizing. At the time, a group around Paul Lazarsfeld felt that the new medium might spur interest in reading and the arts among its mass audience. A good example is Edward Suchman's (1941) "Invitation to Music: A Study of the Creation of New Music Listeners by the Radio." Suchman compared devotees who were raised on classical music from childhood with those who discovered it on the radio. One major finding of the study was that the newly converted were far more likely to be men than women. Indeed, Suchman (later amplified by Susan Douglas, 1999) goes on to suggest that "radio tends to even out sex differences since it had made men more interested in music and women more interested in the news." Suchman also found that aspirants to upward mobility were among those who found radio music useful for their "anticipatory socialization."

In recent years, there has been a notable surge of interest and research in the publics and non-publics of the arts (Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Katz, 1999). Bourdieu (1984) was one of the earliest to undertake this kind of investigation, from which emerged the concept of "cultural capital." Related research comes also from the direction of so-called "time-budget" research, a method pioneered in Eastern Europe (Szalai, 1972) and pursued by academics (Gershuny, 2000; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004; Katz & Gurevitch, 1976; Robinson & Godbey, 1999) and public broadcasting organizations such as NHK and BBC.

The present volume raises all the right questions: It asks whether there are different kinds of non-publics; why museum attendance has fared better than in the other arts; why museums "try harder" to justify their legitimacy; whether blockbuster exhibitions really enlist more regular clientele; whether the price of admission makes a difference in attendance; and – most difficult of all – whether modes of reception and interpretation vary with differences in socialization, other background variables, and individual values. (EK)

2.
THE DIVERSITY OF NON-PUBLICS:
FORMER PUBLICS, FUTURE PUBLICS

Publics are far from constituting a monolithic ensemble, an obedient army marching in tight formation. By the nature of their concerns, they can be divided into at least three different types. First there are *political publics*, which could be called "issue-driven" publics after Dewey's model. Political publics are flanked on one side by *taste* or *aesthetic* publics, which are oriented towards "texts" or "performances," and on the other side by *recognition-seeking publics* for whom mere visibility tends to be a goal in and of itself (Dayan, 2005a, 2005b; Ehrenberg, 1986). Recognition-seeking publics (such as publics of soccer or popular music) use their involvement with games or performances to endow themselves with visible identities.

Aesthetic publics (the reading publics of literature, the active publics of theater, the connoisseur publics of music and the arts) have always been singled out as exemplary by theorists of the public sphere, and by Habermas in particular. Yet, despite their apparently privileged status, aesthetic publics have often been ignored, or analyzed as mere training grounds for much more widely studied political publics. Salons, for example, were initially celebrated before they came to be considered as mere antechambers to the streets. Interestingly the publics that tend to be most studied are political publics. Aesthetic publics have been often neglected. This is why approaches that pay more than a lip service to aesthetic publics, such as those of Jacobi and Luckerhoff, or Ikegami (2000), are so important.

Of course the three types of publics outlined above are ideal types. We know they often overlap in reality. But aside from overlapping or "morphing" into each other, they share an important dimension. Publics have careers. They have biographies. They go through different stages, including birth, growth, fatigue, aging, death, and sometimes resuscitation. We shall discuss the circumstances of their birth below. But let us first address the moments and ways in which publics fade or disappear and become non-publics.

First of all, publics can die a natural death. They can become non-publics because what brought them to life no longer exists or no longer attracts their attention. But we should also consider other, less consensual possibilities such as exclusion or suicide.

Publics can disappear because they have been made invisible, or because they chose to become invisible. Sometimes there is no public to observe because a given public is denied visibility. The media – midwives in other circumstances – become abortionists. Every day,

potential publics disappear down the drain of unrealized destinies. They become non-publics because they are made invisible. Sometimes, however, publics put an end to their own visibility. They are intimidated. They panic and turn into "marrano" publics. Like Harry Potter, they choose to don the mantle of invisibility (Dayan, 2005a; Noelle-Neuman, 1984).

Most of the non-publics discussed here tend to be publics that used to exist and exist no longer. But the temporality of non-publics also includes *not yet publics*, those that have the potential to exist as they linger in limbo, waiting to be born. Such publics – like Sleeping Beauty – await their prince charming (be it a text, an event, or a situation), and the kiss of life that will bring them into existence.

And there is yet another unexpected yet well-known form of non-public: the *audience*. Allow us to explain. (DD)

3.
FULL PUBLICS, ALMOST PUBLICS AND NON-PUBLICS: THE QUESTION OF AUDIENCES

Publics in general can be defined in terms of the social production of shared attention. The focusing of collective attention generates a variety of attentive, reactive or responsive *bodies*, including publics, audiences, witnesses, activists, bystanders and many others. Among these bodies, two deserve special attention, since, in many ways, they are constructed as antonyms. *Publics* and *audiences* fulfill different roles in the economy of social attention. They also differ in relation to the autonomous or heteronomous nature of their visibility

Publics are generally conceived as mere providers of attention, as responding bodies, willing or unwilling resources that seekers of collective attention can turn to for sustenance. Yet publics are not always mere providers of attention. Some publics themselves call for attention and try to control it. They are both seekers and organizers of the attention of other publics (for the issues they promote). Many publics thus have something in common with Moscovici's "active minorities." They act as "opinion leaders" on a large scale. Like the media, such publics are providers of visibility, or agents of deliberate "monstration" (Dayan, 2009). In comparison to these "full" publics, audiences, no matter how active, are still confined to the receiving end of the communicative process.

The question of attention is linked to the question of visibility**.** Full publics not only provide attention, they receive it. They need other publics to watch them perform. They are eager to be seen. They strike

a pose. Their performances may be polemical or consensual, but they cannot be invisible. Such publics must "go public" or they stop being publics. Not so for audiences. Audiences often remain invisible until various research strategies quantify, qualify, and materialize their attention. For audiences to become visible, one often needs the goggles of methodology (Dayan, 2005a).

Thus, if we use *public* as a generic term, and if we choose visibility as the relevant criterion, we can speak of two types of public. The first type – the *full* public –performs out in the open. It is a collective whose nature consists in being *visible*. One could describe it as "obvious." No matter how intellectually active, the second type – the *audience* – does not perform in public. It remains in the private sphere. If a collective at all, an audience is an *invisible* one. In reference to Barthes (1970), we could define audiences as "obtuse" publics (Dayan, 2005a).

Of course, we should not forget that obvious and less obvious publics are often composed of the same people. Publics easily become audiences and vice versa. They are not separated by some conceptual iron curtain, but rather by a stage curtain that separates – in Goffmanian fashion – public performance (full publics) from non-performance (almost publics, audiences) (Dayan, 2005b). In the political domain, full publics stop being audiences when their concern for an issue prevails over their engagement with the narrative that raised the issue, thus triggering public engagement. It is this "coming out" in public that transforms an audience into a full public. Of course, that same full public can revert to the status of a mere audience when other issues are concerned.

To conclude these reflections on publics and audiences, two points should be made. First, in contrast with full publics, audiences, which have been described here as "almost publics," "obtuse publics," or "non-performing publics," appear to provide an interesting example of non-publics. Yet it seems more constructive to describe them as another form of public. (After all, in many languages, *public* is a generic word encompassing all sorts of collective attention providers, including those generally understood to make up an "audience") (Dayan, 2005b; Livingstone, 2005). Nevertheless the distinction between full publics and audiences remains useful since it allows for further differentiating of actual non-publics from "non-audiences" (Fiske, 1992; Dayan, 1998).(DD)

4.
A GENEALOGICAL VIEW OF PUBLICS: *PERSONAE FICTAE,* DISCURSIVE BEINGS, OBSERVABLE REALITIES

Speaking of non-publics presupposes, of course, an ontology of publics. Publics are at once discursive constructions and social realities. Must we choose?

For Schlegel, "public" was not a thing, but a thought, a postulate, "like church." A similar awareness of possible reification is expressed by literary historian Hélène Merlin (Merlin, 1994), for whom the public stems from a *persona ficta*, a fictive being. Of course church – or, more precisely, the unity of church – is indeed a postulate. But any sociologist would point out that church is also an organized body, a political power, a land owner, and an economic institution. An ambivalence concerning the real status of publics, or as it was put recently, "the real world of audiences," lingers to this day (Hartley, 1988; Sorlin, 1992).

Yet, following Hartley's insight, it seems clear that publics – whether simultaneously or at different times – do belong in Popper's three universes: (1) publics are notions, ideations, or as Schegel puts it, "postulates"; (2) publics offer specific registers of action and specific kinds of subjective experiences; (3) publics constitute sociological realities that one can observe, visit or measure. Thus we might view publics as a process that combines (1) a *persona ficta* and (2) the enactment of that fiction, resulting in (3) an observable form of sociation. What this sequence suggests is the essential role played by the *persona ficta* – the "imagined public" – when it comes to generating actual publics (Dayan, 2005a).

A public is a collective subject that emerges in response to certain fictions. Thus, as John Peters remarked, a propos Habermas, 18th century publics emerge through reading and discussing newspapers where the notion of "public" is itself being discussed (Peters, 1993). Observable realities are born from intellectual constructions. A given *persona ficta* serves as a model for an observable sociation. What is suggested here is that the observable realities differ because the constructions that begot them also differ.

In the situation described by Peters, "public" belongs to the category of collective subjects that are imagined in the first person by a "we." As such, it is one among many examples of imagined communities, the most famous of which is, of course, the "nation" (Anderson, 1983). But publics are not always imagined in the first person. Only obvious

publics result from autonomous processes of imagination. In the case of other publics, imagination relies on heteronomous processes: the adopted fiction is often projected by outside observers.

Heteronomous processes, like autonomous processes, lead to observable realities. But they do not lead to the same realities. Different types of publics can indeed be linked to the professional bodies that produced them and to the professional or lay uses they allow. Thus the audiences of quantitative research could be described as the result of a demographic imagination. They are the version of publics that demographers construct. Similarly, meaning-making audiences could be described as semioticians' publics. They are produced by reception scholars, either for academic purposes (extending to the discourse of users' (readers or spectators) know-how gained in the analysis of texts) or for ideological purposes (rebutting Adorno's "great divide" and redeeming the "popular").

Both result in observable facts. Yet a demographer's audience and a semiotician's audience are quite different. An empirical object that consists in being counted is not the same as one that consists in being listened to. When demographers look at publics, they see age groups or classes. When semioticians look at publics, they see interpretive communities.

A last point concerning the type of public described earlier as "obvious" or "autonomous." While such a public may appear to be self-produced by its members, it is also modeled by the narratives of journalism, since, beyond the publishing of polls, much of journalistic production consists in what one could call "publi-graphy," the chronicling of publics. In a way, autonomous publics – whether political or cultural – are only autonomous up to a point. They are also children of the journalistic imagination.

What this genealogical analysis means is that different types of publics are born in the eyes of their observers. It is therefore essential to closely watch those who watch publics. Who is interested in publics? The question of *who* immediately translates into the question of *why*. Why should this or that *persona ficta* be conceived at all? What purposes do they serve? Publics often start their careers as a glint in the eye of observers. This glint is performative. Let us now turn to Jacobi and Luckerhoff and ask them: Why study non-publics? (DD)

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EDITORS' NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORDS *"PUBLIC"* AND *"NON-PUBLIC"*

Why did we choose not to translate "*public*" and "*non-public*" and to use the neologism *non-public*?

Certain non-francophone readers will no doubt wonder at the use of the word "*public*" and the neologism "*non-public*" in this volume, although these expressions have become quite common in Europe. "*Non-public*" was used for the first time in May, 1968, by those working professionally in the cultural domain in France. At the time, they were gathered in Villeurbanne at the head office of the TNP (French National Popular Theatres), and they used this notion in a very militant way to describe all those who were excluded from culture, and whom they considered to have a fundamental right to all cultural offers. In 1973, in his book *L'Action culturelle dans la cité*, Francis Jeanson reexamined the notion, this time making a distinction between the regular audience (*public*), the potential audience and the non-audience (*non-public*). For Jeanson, the expression *non-public* needs to be defined in relation to *public*, to which it is opposed as an antonym. He said in 1973:

> When I proposed the expression *non-public* to designate those who are excluded from culture I could not have imagined the surprising misunderstandings to which it would give rise for years to come. And yet, the efforts that I had to make to dissipate those misunderstandings allowed me to understand their very roots. For me, and, I believe, for many of my colleagues, the *non-public* was the vast majority of the population: all those men and women to whom society does not supply (or even refuses) the means to "choose freely." What we wanted was for this population to "break out" of its present isolation, to break free of its ghetto, by becoming more and more active in the historical and social contexts. We wanted this population to free itself more and more of the mystifications of all kinds that tend to make it, within itself,

an accomplice to the very situations that are inflicted upon it. We wanted, from the very beginning, to turn cultural initiatives into an "enterprise of politicization,"[1] (Own translation)

In English, neither "*public*" (which might be understood as being "not private") nor "*non-public*" are easy to translate.[2] The problem was confirmed by several anglophone researchers with whom we discussed the question. Dr. Christopher Plumb, Temporary Lecturer in Museology from the Centre of Museology, University of Manchester, considers that "*public*" has several connotations and meanings, and that "*non-public*" has no meaning for anglophones. Jocelyn Dodd, Director of the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester also believes that English speakers would be perplexed by the term "*non-public*" and that it would make no sense to them. However, if we used the common words like "audience" or "non-spectators" to designate those who simply go or do not go to museum institutions or to the cinema, we would somehow miss the singularity carried by the notion of "*public*" and "*non-public*." We are fully aware that these terms might be irritating for a British reader, especially as they are found throughout this multi-author book but "audience" and "missing or absent audiences" simply do not suit because of their passive character. "Visitors" and "non-visitors" can only be used for museums, art galleries and festivals and do not suit the cinema, for which we would need to talk about "viewers," "spectators" or "audience." Furthermore, "participants" and "non-participants" are too vague and do not really capture the dimension of a collective and conscious act that the French term "*public*" evokes. So, even if we must leave our anglophone readers a little perplexed, we have chosen to keep the French expressions as they stand. They represent a particular notion that dates to a specific moment in history and, by its very singularity, seems to capture the real desire in France to democratize culture. Since the 2010 publication of this review in French, a more recent article has been written in English and published in the *Journal of Science Communication*, in which the author refers to "different kinds of publics: target public, public, non-public, potential public" (Van Roten, 2011: 2).

We would like to think that our Anglophone readers will bear with us, enjoy reading this work and perhaps even consider using this somewhat original linguistic creation in the future.

The Editors, Daniel Jacobi and Jason Luckerhoff

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1. Francis Jeanson (1973). *L'action culturelle dans la cité*. Paris: Seuil, p. 30.
2. As we have chosen to keep the neologism of the French term "*non-public*," it seemed logical to use the American homographic translation of the French "*public*," which we know is not used by British researchers. We hope they will forgive us.

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INTRODUCTION
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Daniel Jacobi and **Jason Luckerhoff**

Editors

How important is artistic or literary creation to the *public*? Are cultural quality and creativity in any way related to the nature of the target public? Why should the quality of art depend on the size of viewership? And what does being a member of the *public* entail? Is it sufficient to attend, witness or participate in order to be considered part of the *public*? What are the implicit conditions to be a member of the public – in terms of taste, knowledge of rules and deportment which, beyond simple know-how, define a relationship with a cultural sphere, whether the relationship be detached, eclectic or passionate? Is taste for artistic and literary creation spontaneous, or is it simply the result of intense and steady practice?

In the case of cultural heritage, what comprises the opposition between *public* and *non-public*? Is it the same as in any segment of high culture? What really differentiates *public* from *non-public*? Do members of the public feel they belong to a cultural elite? Is it possible to define the basic conditions of being part of the public? Are those massive crowds drawn towards major monuments in cities an indication of a burst of interest in culture?

For years researchers have grappled with the notion of *public*. Indeed, from a theoretical perspective (the opposition between production and reception implies specific research focusing on readership, listenership and viewership) and the perspective of media economy (audience measurement requires developing quantitative tools to control and measure audience size), the relevance of this type of research is self-evident.

Immediately following the publication of Daniel Dayan's article, "*À la recherche du public*," appearing in an issue of Hermes (1993), researchers pinpointed the arbitrariness and very conventional aspect of the notion of *public*. In fact, the articles in this issue depict audience behaviour as a heterogeneous reception limited neither to the confines of compliant ratification of media content offerings nor to the plethora of attitudes and postures prevailing among those adverse to the media.

What is the thrust of the notion of *public*? How does an arbitrary heterogeneous aggregation of individuals of diverse origins manage to exhibit commonality and cohesion to the point of constituting a public? As a social entity, the public – so called, and rightly so because it does indeed exist in the here and now as participants in a cultural happening – is different from the rest of the population, which on the converse, is not present and not part of the happening.

Considerations of *public* with regard to high culture (theatre, museums and art exhibitions, classical music, dance, avant-garde films, etc.) are rather different. A long-standing debate over unequal accessibility to this sophisticated form of culture still prevails. The main preoccupation of culture experts has been to foster what has been referred to as the democratization of a form of culture that, in their opinion, is too often, and very unfairly so, reserved for the elite. In this vein, the Declaration of Villeurbanne (1968) written by Francis Jeanson in France introduced the notion of *non-public*, which has since been the subject of discussion and debate, dating back to 2001 in a publication in two volumes (*Les non-publics: les arts en receptions*, coedited by Ancel and Pessin, and published by L'Harmattan, 2004). Consisting of contributions from the symposium, *Sociologie de l'art* held in Grenoble, they address a socio-logical reality and empirical research, hence the shift from the notion of *potential public* to that of *non-public* entailing an imperceptible shift from a probabilistic to an investigable world (Fleury, 2004).

The invention of the notion of *non-public* and, on a wider scale, the issue surrounding *non-publics* have given rise to much debate: Target of advertising campaigns, communication research subject, object and essence of public policy, this notion refers to something that doesn't exist (Ethis, 2004) and "attests to a hierarchical categorization. . . of *publics* as good or bad" (Pérez, Soldini, & Vitale, 2004).

In other words, identifying and considering a small group as a *public* is tantamount to declaring the rest of the population a non-public (even though the latter constitutes a larger segment of the population). *A priori*, *non-public* should basically be defined as that portion of the population, that despite having the possibility of enjoying cultural offerings, does not partake of them in any way, shape or form. The notion of *public* encom-passes its opposite on the other side of the coin: the *non-public* (Jeanson, 1968).

The term *non-public* is a default designation. The harshness of the negation is equalled only by its absurdity: all those in charge of cultural apparatuses know that the main source of the public is the non-public. The transition from one status to the other appears therefore to be arbitrary, based on some sort of decision. On the other hand, is it possible to be considered a somewhat potential public without ever attending any cultural event? In this regard, it is worth noting that for a number of years, professionals in the cultural field have been using euphemistic adjectives such as *deprived*, *marginalized and excluded*, etc., to designate these publics, giving the impression that this form of exclusion was effected against the general will of concerned parties to rank among the cultural elite.

However, if the notion of non-public is antonymic, it is certainly not ancillary. If the public's authority matters, then far from being some irrelevant occasional gathering of individuals, the public appears as a vibrant group that distinguishes itself from the rest of the population through its tastes or practices. The public is a public in the true sense only because it differentiates itself from those who are both detached and disinterested. A member of the public would therefore be a conscious, consciously satisfied individual, claiming membership of the cultural audience.

However, for this opposition to be fully functional, it should be borne in mind that it is based on two unspoken assumptions: the culture being referred to and the conditions that define what a public is. First, a word about culture: does mass culture (movies, television, variety shows) with its general appeal and its capacity to garner huge audiences also generate a *non-public*? It probably does, but very little attention is paid to this phenomenon. The notion of *non-public* is mobilized mainly with regard to high culture, a culture that is not readily accessible, that is made available by merit, and requires a long period of cultural acclimatization (art history, literature, archaeology, classical music, opera, dance, architecture, historical monuments, natural heritage, and so on).

The *non-public* is not so much a group of non-participants but individuals blatantly incapable of appreciating a culture that is unfamiliar, even foreign. They cannot become a part of the public due to the significant disparity between their own culture and the more sophisticated culture of which they know nothing. For over a century, the popular education movement, in its initial project to bring public and culture closer together, has emphasized this cultural gap, which even today justifies the necessity for cultural mediation policies. The near-militant voluntarism of the active players in cultural mediation engenders certain expectations: following a large investment in cultural creation, is it not justifiable to aspire to reach the largest possible audience?

In this book, nine researchers from France, Quebec and Mexico tackle these questions through both qualitative and quantitative contributions dealing with various cultural sectors in which the question of *non-publics* remains unanswered.

Julia Bonaccorsi, Associate Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the University of Paris-Est Créteil, provides a theoretical review of the concept of *non-public* which players in cultural institutions deploy to circumscribe their action. Thus, she suggests that we consider the non-public as political as well as sociological mediation. She posits that the non-public is a sign, a fixed form that effectively evokes some sort of cultural history.

Hana Gottesdiener, Emeritus Professor at the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense and Jean-Christophe Vilatte, Associate Professor at the University of Nancy II are both members of the Centre Norbert Elias, Équipe Culture et Communication at the Université d'Avignon et des pays de Vaucluse. They compare the sociological and psychological approaches in order to better understand the factors preventing people from visiting art museums. More specifically, they focus on behaviour variations within socio-demographically homogeneous groups. They present the results of three studies: an analysis of detailed interviews, a survey by questionnaire, and the development of a measurement index for the analysis of relationships between self-image, image of visitors, and attendance.

Rosaire Garon, Associate Professor in the Leisure, Culture and Tourism Department at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and former coordinator of the Survey on cultural practices of Quebec, proposes a new perspective on the arts and culture public in Quebec and the United States. Based on the observation that, over the past few decades, cultural happenings of a more classical nature occur less and less frequently, this chapter demonstrates how cultural practices have evolved and identifies which social groups have experienced the most rapid changes. Garon draws on data from the Survey on cultural practices of Quebec and the Survey on participation of Americans in the arts.

Daniel Jacobi, Emeritus Professor and member of the Culture & Communication Laboratory (Avignon) and Jason Luckerhoff, Assistant Professor in the Letters and Social Communication Department at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, seek to provide a clearer understanding of what denotes a member of the public. They examine the implicit conditions that differentiate the two factions, even among active participants. Based on two case studies, taken from recent surveys conducted in Canada and abroad, they investigate the opposition between public and non-public and attempt to redefine the rather tenuous boundaries.

Luz María Ortega Villa, from the University of Baja California, Mexico, demonstrates how people with preferences far from the culture considered "high" or "sophisticated" are actually publics of another form of culture offering. Hence, the concept of *non-public* can be applied only because they are not publics of a certain high culture. This article identifies the individuals considered non-publics and examines the promotional strategies applied to the cultural products favoured by those who are not interested in high culture. This prompts the author to consider non-publics as social agents capable of inducing society to reflect on this issue.

Michaël Bourgatte, Doctor of Information and Communication Sciences and member of the Culture & Communication Laboratory at the University of Avignon, questions whether the public of avant-garde movie theatres can at the same time be considered a non-public of cultural and artistic films, since theatres designated for such films also screen commercial films. The author conducted two surveys in several avant-garde movie theatres. He points out that the category of non-public is a socio-discursive construction used indistinctively to categorize a group that does not patronize certain venues. He suggests that the affordances of a venue should be dissociated from actual artistic enjoyment of those in attendance.

Jacqueline Eidelman, Research Associate at the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) and Representative of the Heritage Branch of the Ministry of Culture (Department of Public Policy), demonstrates that the debate between partisans and opponents of free access often takes an ideological turn. In her opinion, the most widely held view is that introducing free access will interest only the existing public. It is thus implied that it has little to no impact on the audience democratization process. Analyzing a study of museum attendance over the past fifty years and the changes that have occurred in the sociological composition of publics, Eidelman affirms that the introduction of free access to fourteen French museums and national monuments in the first half of 2008 did in fact have an effect on the composition of publics "towards cultural democratization."

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Chapter 1

THE ROLE OF THE TERM *NON-PUBLIC*[1] IN ORDERING CULTURAL INITIATIVES
ANALYSIS OF THE MODALITIES OF THE TERM *NON-PUBLIC* IN PUBLIC SECTOR LITERACY INITIATIVES

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> Ties became stronger between librarians, educators and facilitators in a number of cities, and, as such, public readings took on a larger role in local cultural initiatives. Librarians were confronted by the problem of the non-public and attempted, in increasing numbers, to reach out to the more or less literate communities.
>
> Richter, 1979: 167; own translation

If the concept of *public* is scientifically relevant and operational (Cefaï & Pasquier, 2003; Ethis, 2002) on both sociological and methodological levels, the category of *non-public*, because it looks at something absent, a sociological intangible, leads primarily to discursive and symbolic productions, like those from community agents or public authorities.

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1. In France, *non-public* refers to the population who cannot or chooses not to participate in public sector cultural initiatives. The term is in opposition to the French term *public* which means the audience of a particular cultural *action* (initiative). Those "left out" represent a challenge to cultural planners who try to target a wide audience. Throughout the article, we will use *public* and *non-public* in the original French.

More generally, researchers frequently encounter the *non-public* category in studies on norms and values (cultural policies, institutions, and so on; Bonaccorsi, 2009). The concept is analyzed as a "public problem" (Lacerenza, 2007), and leads to exploring the process and operations that result specifically in legitimizing public resources which are used to resolve the "problem" (Gusfield, 2009).

This article proposes a theoretical review of a category defined and used by cultural agents as both an objective in itself and a tool for legitimizing their initiatives (Bertrand, 2003: 145). In cultural institutions, certain *publics* are "considered '*non-publics*,'" when they accumulate distance factors relating to cultural practices" (Mengin, 2003: 187).

In this context, researchers come to regard the *non-public* as an abstract category, mobilized by agents in cultural institutions to delineate and define the boundaries of their initiatives.

As a first consideration, *non-public* can be defined in two different ways. From a "marketing" perspective, the term refers to a target responding to the logic of quantitative visit objectives. From an ideological perspective, it borrows from the tradition of the cultural democratization ideal articulated in Jeanson's famous *Déclaration de Villeurbanne* (1973).

On the one hand, this term seems like an attempt to justify professional practices and institutions (also to define, to a certain degree, the parameters of the cultural initiative) while appearing "technocratically" in the Ministry of Culture's statistics. On the other hand, it seems to signal an ideological trend, exposed by sociologists, or brandished by cultural agents in a variety of ways, in which the social dimension dominates.

To speak of the *non-public*, as Bertrand (2003) attests, is to invoke the masses, the excluded. It is, in other words, to engage in a political characterization of society. Thus, the marketing approach will not burden itself for long with the *non-public*, preferring the issue of *public* fidelity, for instance. Jean-Michel Tobelem has this to say on the subject:

> [. . .] as for the issue of winning over "*non-publics*" (which have yet to be rigorously defined), a veritable obsession in the discourse on democratization, it must be broached with the awareness that such an approach – perfectly legitimate and worthy – requires constancy and determination in directing initiatives which are particularly heavy in human terms and in forming necessary partnerships (in the social and educational realms as well as in municipal policy, etc.) (Tobelem, 2003: 258; own translation).

Thus, Tobelem argues, the *non-public* necessitates other public initiatives outside the cultural realm.[2]

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2. Note henceforth the externalized nature of the perception of the non-public, influenced by the establishment of networks and supported by cultural organizations in a territory.

From here, depending on the enunciator and the enunciation context, one can see to what extent the *non-public* is attributed multiple and ever-changing values, analytic frameworks and symbolic content. This article will examine these shifts and differences. In other words, we hope to examine the operation of signification at work in usages of the term *non-public* using a communicational semiotic and discursive analysis.[3]

As a first step, we shall review this concept through the relevant literature (mainly sociological) and will discuss several hypotheses positing the *non-public* as a form of usage. In the second part of this paper, we will examine the formal characteristics of the negative marker "*non.*" Lastly, based on three of our previous studies, we will respond to hypotheses raised in the first two parts. By referring to our previous papers we will analyze uses of the term and conclude with questions about the rarity of its appearance.

1.1.
PERSPECTIVES ON THE *NON-PUBLIC:* THE SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION AND A REFLEXIVE APPROACH TO THE NOTION

A reading of the academic research shows that there is ongoing reflection around the concept of *non-public*.[4] The conference *Les non-publics: Les arts en réception* was a perfect example of this. This scientific exchange about the concept involved a majority of sociological approaches encountering the approaches of cultural agents (Ancel & Pessin, 2004). The main goal of the resulting publication is to take a different stance in regards to the research which has tried to resolve the opposition between *public* and *non-public* in cultural institutions.

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3. We use the same approach as a number of research studies in Information and Communication Studies examining symbolic mediations at work in communication processes. In this regard, see the article by Yves Jeanneret (2007). La prétention sémiotique dans la communication: du stigmate au paradoxe, *Semen*, Besançon, Presses de l'Université de Franche-Comté, *23*, 79–92; Jean Davallon (2004). Objet concret, objet scientifique, objet de recherche, *Hermès, 38*, 30–37; the collection of papers in Simone Bonnafous & Malika Tenmar (Eds.) (2007). *Analyse du discours et sciences humaines et sociales*, Paris, Ophrys, coll. «Les Chemins du discours», in particular, the essay by Claire Oger, "Analyse de discours et sciences de l'information et de la communication: au-delà des corpus et des méthodes."
4. In the field of reading, for example, there are papers examining degrees of sociological categorization (on investigations into reading see: Robine, 2000; Donnat, 2003.)

Specifically, the publication introduces the relatively subversive idea that culture is practiced in unexpected places and ways, as in advertising, or in conversations. This perspective may be slightly idealized,[5] but the work has the merit of breathing fresh life into studies on cultural practices. It demonstrates a strong desire to explore the theorization of the concept and it attempts to use it as a starting point for critical reflection.

This work focuses on two main ways in which the literature tries to make explicit the continuum between *public* and *non-public*:

- First, the *non-public* is seen as a sociological category, and how it operates is the primary subject of exploration. For instance, Jean-Pierre Esquenazi analyzes the dividing line between *public* and *non-public* as part of the logic of distinction (Bourdieu, 1979), and proposes, by reasserting the figure of the amateur, to treat "*non-publics* as ignored or undervalued *publics*, and not simply as absent or ignorant *publics* to allow for the possibility of reevaluating relations between art and mass culture" (2004: 92; our italics, own translation). More generally, different contributions bring up the question of the viewers' relationship to art, whether it is thought of in aesthetic terms of reception, or in degrees of involvement and commitment, and seek in this way to play with the boundaries between *public*, *non-public* or the general public. Mengin approaches the concept when investigating the scientific curiosity of non-visitors at the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, that we "*have to refrain from confining into the 'non-publics' category*" (Mengin, 2003: 199; own translation).

- Second, the *non-public* is understood within a history of cultural agents and institutions. In particular, Francis Jeanson stands out as the founding father of a concept featured in a source text: *La Déclaration de Villeurbanne.*[6]

In this historiography of the *non-public*, contradictory theories are found, like that of Laurent Fleury, who emphasizes the specific and biased role played by sociology itself in the use of the concept, where the existence of the *non-public* is perceived as inevitable (Fleury, 2007)

[. . .] Far from freeing us here, the use of the concept "*non-public*" creates an ideological effect by which the transmission-betrayal of the results of sociological studies paradoxically provoked a resurgence of the secularized myth of predestination[7] (Fleury, 2004: 79; own translation).

5. The risk is, on the one hand, polishing all the imperfections out of these practices and, on the other hand, failing to take account of the signifying effect of the transformations that these works undergo as they circulate. In particular, Heinich took Christo's wrapping of Pont-Neuf in 1985 and showed the powers of framing: "attempts to frame or reframe an object which is not merely unframed in relation to the artistic universe, as it is in relation to the ordinary universe, but also 'unframing'" (Heinich, 1990: 116).

6. Jeanson wrote again on these issues shortly before his death in August of 2009 (1973, 2009).

7. Here, Fleury is touching on the idea of risk in using a concept "that could lead the institutions involved into fatalism when confronted with a seemingly insoluble question" (Mengin, 2003: 187; own translation).

Contributions by Lacerenza (2004), Bertrand (2003) or Denizot (2009) all use the same institutional analysis.

These latter approaches however differentiate depending on the cultural form under consideration (theatre or reading). Theatre involves a number of different cultural agents and institutional venues (Avignon Theatre Festival, the TNP [the Popular National Theatre[8]], etc.) that represent the milestones of these different approaches. The theories proposed by Lacerenza, Bertrand and Denizot differ depending on the institution concerned, and their research studies seem to forge new links between these milestones, and they may change the balance in the roles the milestones have played in cultural history. The origin of the word *non-public* born in the sphere of live performance enriches the historiography of cultural policy and modes of initiative while simultaneously being nourished by this same history.

As for reading, the concept *non-public* is framed by policy directives implemented by librarians and associated with books (encouraging reading and encouraging reading well) (Bertrand, 2003). Public initiatives in reading evoke the *non-public* as a community who remains outside the library walls or who does not have access to reading. This question evolves depending on the historical cultural viewpoint held by the librarian concerned; "the messianic dimension of mass education, and the political dimension of democratization have atrophied today into a 'do-gooder self-critical' discourse" (Bertrand, 2003: 153; own translation).

This quick survey thus shows the various questions raised by researchers around the concept of the *non-public*. It also demonstrates the shifting meanings of the term *non-public* as the academic research is trying to conceptualize it.[9] The *non-public* seems "invalid" or scientifically inefficient. We would go further than Emmanuel Ethis's statement that "the *non-public* does not exist" (Ethis, 2004; our italics; own translation), and assert that it does not exist even as a scientific concept.

As the main users of this word seem to be cultural agents, one might well inquire what they are doing with it these days. In interviews conducted during several of our studies, the *non-public* was seldom mentioned. It is strangely absent in the oral discourse, or is replaced by syntagms and synonyms with more positive connotations in written discourse, as in the examples below:

- encountering **marginalized publics**;
- the **lack of familiarity** with books from childhood;

8. Founded in 1920 by Firmin Gemier in Paris, the National Popular Theatre is directed by Jean Vilar in 1951 and became very innovative in relation to the public.
9. Note, in particular, that far from "speaking for the agents," or reifying the non-public, certain researchers investigate the word *non-public* as a detectable (Fleury, 2004; Denizot, 2009; Bertrand, 2003), a pattern in a history of cultural policies: "the plural of the seminar's title [is] far from reifying a naturalized, homogeneous entity" (Fleury, 2004: 81; own translation).

- sending the library activity **closer to people who do not usually visit it**;

- Encourage families **to spend time in the company of books** and stories.[10]

Finally, what good is it to examine the concept of *non-public* if it is neither a relevant sociological categorization nor a concept nor a category with any real use for professionals in their work? Our general working hypothesis is that the *non-public* is a sign, a fixed form serving as a useful operator in evoking a cultural history, and that it redefines itself as it is used in institutional discourses and practices.[11] The original intent of Jeanson's declaration, which was both political and provocative, loses its relevance when it becomes operational in specific cultural initiatives.[12] The *non-public* is invoked in his discourse of "rupture." In a sense, one can articulate this shift as follows: the word *non-public* provides a framework for the initiative undertaken, both authorizing and justifying it. "To some extent, it acts like a stereotype, both identifiable and active" (Paveau, 2006: 57; own translation).

The fixing of meaning at work in this "formula" is as effective for scientists as it is for cultural agents. One might use the word *non-public*, for example, simply as a sign to politicize culture or perhaps to define the ethos of the enunciating institution.

But the rarity of its usage should not be overlooked. Our second hypothesis is that the word *non-public* is not used much (anymore?). Its usage differs in this way from formulas observed by Alice Krieg-Planque which, on the contrary, display an extreme volatility and mobility over long periods of time in heterogeneous, media-influenced and political "discursive environments" (Krieg-Planque, 2009).

This fixed form is influenced by the operation of the ostentatious negative: *non-*. As a sign, it allows the possibility and signifying value of other words: *non-user, non-reader, non-viewer*. Sociological studies on cultural behaviors and *publics* clearly deal with these derivative processes. Depending on the sector, one finds *non-readers* (reading), *non-users* (Internet, library) *non-musicians* (music), *non-viewers* (live performance), *non-visitor*s (museums), and so on. The use of a negative in this context is part of a dichotomous representation of the practice, which might consider a *weak reader* to be closer to a *good reader* than

10. Catherine Trautmann (July 17, 1998). Official circular, Program: "Contrats Ville-Lecture."
11. The issue of fixing an expression was theorized by Alice Krieg-Planque, in particular, in relation to political and media discourse. She shows how the circulation of expressions entails their constant redefinition (Krieg-Planque, 2009).
12. We observed a similar process in analyzing the three discourses in relation to the institutionalization of the coordination of community agents into a "Villes-Lecture" network (Bonaccorsi, 2009).

to a *non-reader*.[13] "On a variety of subjects, speakers process typologies allowing them to classify and categorize objects in the world" (Paveau, 2006: 188; own translation).

1.2.
WHAT LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS TEACHES US ABOUT THE *NON-PUBLIC*

The negative marker in "non-public" comprises a syntagm, which resembles a negative morpheme (e.g. immobile). Studies by linguists investigating the negation have shown how complex this operation is (Touratier & Zaremba, 2007). Without delving into a complete review of this research, we will outline a few interesting elements.

First, Ducrot speaks of a polemical negation (as opposed to descriptive), in that it is a "refutation of the corresponding positive statement" (Ducrot, 1973: 123; own translation), as in the syntagm "non-smoker."

Let us consider the following oral example, taken from an investigative conversation: "There are partners, and then there are intermediaries, and then other institutions, and then *publics*, which are *non-publics*."[14]

Primarily then, *non-public* seems less a refutation than a sub-group of "public" (part of a whole).

As Antoine Culioli observes, "if the negation is an inverter, it produces results that vary according to the thing to which it is attached" (Culioli, 1990: 100; own translation). One is confronted by a phenomenon that cannot be expressed by the logical formula $p \rightarrow -p$, but $p \rightarrow p'$ (p' refers to "other" than p').

In the example above, p' refers to an otherness that can only be represented as follows: $p' \rightarrow p$, a value identified by the phrasal context *which are*.[15] Thus the negative marker *non* – in this context does not refer to a refutation, but redefines the meaning of *publics*, understood here as a target of cultural initiatives. In other words, *publics* are not non-(*non-publics*): $-p' \rightarrow p$ is impossible.

Using Culiolian enunciation models allows us to grasp what is at play in the gap between these two words and that we analyze as coming from an enunciative position taken by cultural institutions. The above

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13. In this regard, it is interesting to note that statistical interpretation produces the break by reassembling the items it is elaborating (among others, Donnat, 1998).
14. Interview, Curator, Bibliothèque municipale, Marseille (2000). Non-directive interview about the mediation devices established by the library team.
15. Obviously, the interview situation leads to reformulations and redefinitions in the course of oral discourse.

analysis that treats the *non-public* as a subgroup of *public* is not entirely satisfactory in this regard. Finally, there seems to be a pre-discourse shift, *publics* being considered as participants in cultural events according to a system which assigns pre-defined roles.[16] *Non-publics* evokes a different pre-discourse with tension between two modes of discourse – one opposing the *publics* of libraries and one ideologically referencing cultural initiatives. The term *non-public* refers here to cultural democratization policy directives and the promotion of reading. This allows for the possibility of the following formulations: *non-visitor, non-reader, the public that does not usually visit.*

This example opens perspectives on the issue at hand. How does one qualify the gap between *public* and *non-public?* What lies behind this negative marker for the institutions and the communities in question? Essentially, the task is to describe how, according to the institutions, a path between the possibilities operates by marking the positions of enunciator and co-enunciator:

> [. . .] every marker supplies the story of a construction by which
> we generate a bifurcation, an enunciating reference point,
> the designation of subjective positions, our selection from a given
> starting point, one representation in a pondered choice of
> representations (Culioli, 1990: 102; own translation).

The *non-public* cannot be understood as a reverse image of the concept of *public*, even if the *non-public* does indeed take shape in relationship to a specific, restrictive definition of *public*.

This semantic mobility and instability is particularly interesting and merits investigation for three specific reasons:

- First, the *non-public* is frequently replaced by other negative syntagms (*non-viewer, non-reader, non-user, etc.*) or even substantives like *illettré*, as previously mentioned. These shifts and derivations do not merely demonstrate semantic mobility, but also the signifying capacity of the syntagm *non-x*.[17]

- Next, the gap also suggests a border, a limit from which things shift. Ethis's work demonstrates the invalidity of sociologically considering a split between *public* and *non-public*[18] (Ethis, 2004); nevertheless, the issue of borders continues to exist in the discourse and practice of cultural agents, who wish to "address a tangible population" (Jeanson, 1973: 49; own translation).

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16. We borrowed the concept of pre-discourse from Marie-Anne Paveau, meaning "the group of collective, pre-discursive frames having an instructional role in producing interpretations of the meaning of speech" (Paveau, 2006: 14; own translation). Unlike referentials, pre-discourse manifests a linguistic dimension. It participates in formal speech production.
17. Francis Jeanson (1968), in *La Déclaration de Villeurbanne* uses "the uncultured" from the very first sentence.
18. The split dilutes into a "viewer-in-development."

- Finally, the position of enunciator is complex and cannot be defined merely by its position in a context of cultural initiatives, but also in a setting of "collective pre-discursive frameworks," in which geographical considerations are central.

This paper is based on three studies we carried out between 1999 and 2004 to investigate the three specific approaches delineated above.

- Firstly we shall revisit the issue of public sector reading initiatives, by considering, from a diachronic point of view, institutional production of a discourse about the *non-public*. In particular, we shall examine the derivative form of *non-public* known as "*illettré*"[19]. From this first discursive environment, we will refine reflections on the border and the rupture that arise in the definition of the category of *non-x*.

- Next, we shall examine a cultural institution through the prism of its communications practices and analyze its specificity as the crystallization of relations between the institution and its public(s). This second discursive environment enriches reflections generated in the first point by allowing for a situated approach to the issue of symbolic and spatial borders.

- Finally, a particular cultural mediation practice will constitute the third discursive environment. In this final instance, we shall examine how the *non-public* is perceived in the cultural initiatives of a "street library." An analysis of symbolic and spatial shifts will conclude this study on borders.

1.3.
THE TEST OF FIELDWORK ON NON-X: "ILLETTRÉS," "ORDINARY PEOPLE" AND "THE HIGH-DENSITY SUBURBS"

- Our research into discourses concerning the imperative to read focused on a set of discourses justifying cultural programs in a variety of different contexts that we have called enunciation contexts (Bonaccorsi, 2009).

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19. The French term *illettrés* applies to people who have received education but have not learned to read and write. In contrast, *analphabétisme* describes a population who cannot read or write because they were never educated. We will use illiteracy (*illettrisme*) and analphabetism (*analphabétisme*) to express the distinction between these two concepts, even though the English does not carry the same meaning. It should also be noted that *Illettrisme* is a neologism in French, created in 1981 by the non-profit organization Aide à Toute Détresse Quart-Monde. It was the object of a national political campaign in the 1980s to prevent *Illettrisme* (which, since 2000, has become the Agence nationale de lutte contre l'illettrisme).

First, it is worth re-situating the issue of public reading in a long history of public intervention, and of mediators who standardized and regulated the transmission of texts in society by determining genres, *publics*, places and ways of reading (Chartier, 1993). From 1882 to the period between the wars, reading policy was closely managed by the state. This public intervention led reading to evolve from simply learning a technique to the issue of transmission of a communal literary heritage. The Ferry laws emphasized the importance of textual comprehension, which became the crucial goal of learning to read. At the beginning of the century, reading as a deciphering tool became reading as a literary act that could become a cultural pastime.

This history shows the changing game of an axiological structuring of practices and modalities of initiative which, over the centuries, led to an institutional formalization of reading.

The rupture between reading as a technique and reading as a literary act is apparent in the many ways the state attempted to encourage the general population to read: censorship, official decrees and programs accompanying literary training in the 19th Century and the complex and often ambiguous structuring of public libraries. One also can see this rupture changing and being re-invented with each different institution or cultural agent, thus generating a multitude of binary representations of the world: Latin/French, well-read/poorly-read, church scholars/secular scholars, elite/masses, man/woman, and so on.

Fleury underscores the performativity of the word *non-public*, which produces a clear break between two groups defined by cultural event attendance, "the installation of a radical otherness" (Fleury, 2007: 72; own translation). Thus, "cutting the *public* into two categories: *public* and *non-public* made possible the sectarian behavior of rejecting an ontologized part of the population" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, we would argue that this analysis based on the *Déclaration de Villeurbanne* should be tempered for two reasons. Historically speaking, this presumed division is not new, despite Fleury's claim to the contrary. He relies on a very specific value of the *public*, that of the 17th Century salons, which he fails to recognize as being a construction of that particular period (Merlin, 1994). We believe that if the word *non-public* does involve a division, it is part of a tradition which could take a number of different paths depending on the cultural form in question. Reading policy, for instance, is remarkably influenced by an ambiguity between the institutions responsible for public policy (libraries) and the practice of private reading, to the point that the *non-public* of libraries could be both a non-user/non-visitor and a non-reader (Poissenot, 2001).

And yet, reading policy must deal with a new category emerging at a time when "alphabetization" programs seem to have failed: that of *illettrisme*.[20] A major shift took place in 1972, prompted by community organizations critical of the poor statistics in reading practices. Their request for state intervention to promote reading gave a new, radicalized intransitive meaning to reading. The prescriptive policy used since the Revolution (a policy guiding the reader towards legitimate books) gave way to a policy that was both educational and cultural, since the problem involves schools as much as it involves libraries. "If reading is a social necessity and a cultural value, then not reading becomes a social pathology" (Chartier & Hébrard, 2000: 200; own translation).[21]

The non-reader or the *non-public* is separated from the *illettré* in subtle ways, but they all define themselves in relation to the ideal figure of the reader, the hermeneutic: one who builds meaning from what he is reading. The semantic uncertainty underlying the term *illettrisme* is caused by an ambivalence between a technical value of reading as a decoding system, and a symbolic value. Bernard Lahire shows that ATD Quart-Monde (Aide à Toute Détresse Quart-Monde), which, in its earliest texts, highlighted cultural issues more than social issues, and was the first to separate *illettrisme* from the question of poverty (Lahire, 1999). This 1980s "*illettrisme*" crisis brings up concepts of memory and school reading, associating words, sentences and texts with activities of interpretation and distancing, analysis and mastering the meaning. Mastery over one's life by free and enlightened citizens is a model that spills over the boundaries of reading into culture in its broader sense. In this context, the "assisted" *non-reader* becomes the exact opposite of the *reader*, who is free and autonomous in his interpretation; in short, a "true citizen." The reader then becomes co-author and active interpreter of the text, deriving emotions and pleasure from reading without any mediation. He is both free and autonomous in the production of meaning. Bourdieu calls this activity "pure reading" (Bourdieu, 1979, 1992). The *illettré*, as a symbol, corresponds to a certain cultural and social division extending beyond reading policy.[22] In this way, the *illettré* legitimises public and associative initiatives in two ways. Firstly, as a transversal figure, who glides from one network organization to the next, be it inter-ministerial (justice/culture) or local (school/library/

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20. The take-over of reading since the 1950s aims at progress, which it imagines as strong, of the reading *publics*. In fact, since the start of the 20th Century, school has played its role in making the French population literate, and for the past fifty years or so, most French people have known how to read and write. The reforms undertaken for public reading in the 1970s are unrelated to the issue of basic reading skills, and aim at a wider distribution of free, pluralistic culture, in addition to supporting creative writing.

21. Several works have shown the constructed dimension of illiteracy, seen as a "public problem." The figures remain highly debatable depending on the community agents involved. See Lahire (1999) in particular.

22. "People who are illiterate, as defined by cultural institutions, can appear to be the absolute 'non-public,' perhaps they are the farthest removed from cultural resources, if we listen to the concentric metaphors underlying public cultural policies founded on a desire to democratize access to legitimate works of art" (Bordeaux, 2006: 16; own translation).

associations/theatre). Secondly, the *illettré* becomes a protagonist who justifies in counterpoint these public initiatives by characterizing them as inchoative mediation tending towards an idealized form of reading, that is unconnected to the social realm or to actual practice and is without any form of mediation.

- The second case-study is based on research carried out on the relationship between the Merlan National Theater (Scène nationale) in Marseilles and its *public* (Bonaccorsi, 2008) which led us to analyze communication documents produced by this same theater between 1993 and 2004, all related to work produced during that time.

These documents, taken over five-year periods, are remarkably heterogeneous, varying according to who wrote them, his or her personal background and personal vision. The format of these documents, the quality of paper, the iconographic and graphic creativity, the generic variety (television programs, playbills, newspapers, flyers, etc.) renewed the debate around the cultural project of each new season in the Merlan Theater. In 1993 this project was entitled "A Program for Cultural Initiatives." The theater is located in the city's suburbs, and its "objectives" in 1993 were'discussed' with the *public* in a patchwork of texts, laid out in photo-montages featuring a superhero director flying over the surrounding high-density tower blocks. The theater is in a building which shelters other public municipal facilities (the police station, library, social services and a hypermarket). It looks out over a four-lane highway. This location in the city is abundantly represented in promotional material as well as the question of how the institution positions itself in terms of cultural policy. In 2001, postcards were distributed bearing the following message: "The culture for tous, Part II," playing around humorously with the mission of cultural democratization.

The word *non-public* is nowhere to be found in this collection of promotional documents, except in the following quotation[23]:

> Don't repeat this. All the bumpkins, barbarians, hooligans, the
> *non-public*, and the uncultivated masses have always devised
> effective ways of resisting thievery and contempt. . .
> (Hurstel, 1988; quoted in the Scène nationale's programme;
> own translation).

This intriguing choice of advertising documents from the Merlan Scène nationale seems to address a population that supports the institution and sees it acting for cultural change The "Program for Personal Re-education through the Communal Practice of Art" (published in September 2000) formally outlines the institution's principles. These

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23. In interviews that we carried out or in the director's discourse, we observed a repetition of the word *ordinary people* to designate the non-public.

documents are written by various practitioners of the theater, and the resulting content shows a lack of distinction between amateurs, professionals and the theater's managing team. The result is one big theater family, with direct connections between artists and audience (*public*). The season programs are embellished by quotes from Renoir, Vilar, Gombrowicz, Mallarmé, etc. which help describe this cultured community, and by statements from artists participating in theater workshops, where for each artistic moment the position of artist/audience, amateur/professional is unclear.

The complexity of the design elements and slogans, which make reference to other public relations documents helps to create a relationship of familiarity with the theater's *public*. From these documents, one can thus imagine a "family" composed of the "dynamic triangle of amateur-professional-*public*" cited by Ferdinand Richard when he evoked the model of using industrial areas as cultural venues, which he described as "the instigator of an artistic project" (Lextrait, 2001: 219; own translation).

The *public* is supposed to achieve a semiotic interpretation of the *non-public*: the Other, an external figure. The previously cited example of the quote by Hurstel suggests this distancing posture: the non-public is externalized.

First of all, the following statement – "Only seven years and already four subscribers" – on a public relations document refers to the first representation of one type of *non-public* in the season's program. This "spectator-subscriber", is perceived as being bourgeois, a consumer of the whole program, a viewer in need of reassurance who believes in "theater-as-nobler-than-life," in what Peter Brook calls deadly theater, "theater where every form starts dying the moment it is created" (Brook, 1977: 60; own translation). Furthermore, the proximity of the Carrefour hypermarket lends itself to a critique of the theater-consumer society and the homogenization of individuals, but it also renders ironic the one-size-fits-all slogan "no more cultural ping pong" found in other communications documents. This non-public is associated with cultural practices which deviate from the relations the theater wishes to establish with its *public*. It is similar to the kind of victimized *public* described by Jeanson: "mystifications of all kinds tending to make him accomplice to the very real situations inflicted upon him" (1973: 120; own translation).

Second, the location of the theater in a very poor neighborhood forces the team to be aware of "people not in the habit of going to the theater" – in other words, their next-door neighbors. In 1995, an article was published reporting aesthetically on a day-in-the-life of a family named "***"[24]. This text constructs a visual representation of poverty and the *non-public* by featuring Polaroid photographs of everyday objects, like a bidet, a diaper, a sink, etc., in monochromatic grey-green, and

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24. *NK 1314,* 4. Dairy cows don't go to the Theater: "People in a subsistence state," "people from around town," "inhabitants from across the street."

imposing on the reader a sad and squalid universe. In a collage of fragments of life, the following terms punctuating the text reflect an unhappy existence – Kiravi wine, Quick fast-food restaurant, Carrefour Hypermarket, prison, Down syndrome, a teen mother, TV. A play on the concepts of empty and full is created as the page is full of endless chatter (entire lines) about insignificant activity juxtaposed with the supposed treasures of theater and culture. The article is aimed at the Merlan Theater's *public*. As M.* puts it, "You can tell the rich that. . ." which reinforces the closing comment: "Tonight, like all other nights, the * did not go to the theater." In the last lines,[25] the enunciator re-appropriates the term "dairy cow," used by M* to describe himself in order to address the "rich" public that attends theatre, does not drink Kiravi, and so on.

The implicit comment endorsed by the theater's director and the graphic artist in the two texts accompanying the "article" help construct a *non-public* for the Merlan Theater's project that reflects social and cultural impoverishment, just as in the case of *illettrés*.

Non-publics are represented on the basis of a referent, the territory, with parameters that are both social and symbolic. Objects, spaces, an urban décor offered in words or pictures in the season's program or on posters in town suggest two representations of *non-public* to their "ideal" *public*: on the one hand, a passive subscriber and consumer; on the other, an impeded *non-public*, nearby, often referred to in the public relations documents and bearing the name of "the ordinary people," or "local inhabitants."

The institution establishes frameworks for its relationship to its public on the basis of geographic location. The relationship with those nearby (disadvantaged local inhabitants) is expressed by outreach programs; the relationship between the institution and its *public*, generally not living locally, is expressed by using written-visual public relations documents representing local inhabitants. Thus dialogue takes place at superimposed, unequal levels.

- A third research study on a specific cultural initiative was carried out in a high-density suburb ("cité" in French) in Lille on the subject of "public street readings": street libraries. It led us to describe the symbolic dimension of this extra-mural initiative, based on ethnographic observations of the cultural context and a corpus of professional discourses (professional conferences, interviews with the agents, etc.)

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25. "In our country, we had a lot of music halls. In France, culturally, we've been deadened". "At first we didn't go out because of language and cultural problems. We wouldn't have understood anything. Now we don't go out because we got into the habit of not going out and thinking it's not for us dairy cows." *NK 1314*, 4, Dairy cows don't go to the Theater.

Street libraries are a model that crystallizes a democratic vision of libraries (Bonaccorsi, 2001).[26] They want to be "a neutral space within the high-density suburb that is not reserved only for those who can read and write, but that it can become a welcoming cultural space for users who might be either *illettré* or illiterate" (Perez, Soldini, & Vitale, 2001: 367; own translation). The street library volunteers that we observed spoke about the institution's opening up to other possible skills: social mediators and/or volunteers from associations, who train librarians and then participate in public readings,

The word *street* in "street reading" has a different meaning here than the one used by Philippe Chaudoir (2000). When he refers to street art, he understands it as a public space. For this paper, *street* means a precise targeting of the *non-public* as a future *public*, as a *public waiting to be born*.[27] "The library as a closed space of undifferentiated reading of all texts for all *publics* is being challenged by a new definition: the library as an agent in the fight against non-reading, the *non-public* of *illettrisme* in the open space of the city" (Saez, 2003: 217; own translation).

The analysis of the corpus of material from conferences attended by publishing industry professionals and mediators reveals the absence of the word *non-public*. However, other terms were substituted:

- Population that does not have frequent access to books

- Population that does not visit the library

- Initiatives for meeting people that do not usually visit libraries

- Outreach initiatives

- People in clear economic difficulty

- From people in social difficulty

- These people.[28]

Because they are targeted by cultural initiatives, the *non-public* becomes the *public*, even when defined by negatives such as "do not visit" or "who don't have." These negatives restrict the group, just as the demonstrative pronoun "these" is sufficient to evoke the library or book's *non-public* that the outreach programs need to encounter. The street thus becomes an ideal place for such an encounter.

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26. "Street library" is a term designating one of the social and cultural practices of librarians: professionals travel to a public space and read books to children from the neighbourhood.
27. "The act of reading is not limited to deciphering, but demands recourse to a cultural and linguistic capital that was stored in memory at a very early age," Catherine Trautmann (July 17, 1998). Program "Contrats Ville-Lecture."
28. Proceedings from the Symposium "Les métiers de l'éveil au livre" (June 1999). Nord-Pas-de-Calais. In this paper we researched the occurrences of the word *public* in the proceedings from the symposium.

At the neighborhood level, living in a space means living both inside and outside the walls. The semi-public space between the high-rise apartment blocks in the high-density suburb in which the street reading initiative takes place, is an archetype of the "suburb" itself for the outside world. The inhabitants need to do their shopping outside of the district and the children are not free to move around outside the neighborhood on their own. The street library is thus isolated from the rest of the neighborhood, and must make an effort to approach the inhabitants. This extra-mural library has had to find its place within the surrounding low-income housing estate, mapping a territory of its own, within three separate places in the neighborhood: the multimedia library as a focal point and two streets within the district, on the other side of the visual border created by the aerial metro of Lille.

Moving physically and metaphorically in and out of the public space fits with the conviction behind street libraries: The space is taken over and organized in perfect harmony with the symbolic, cultural connection sought after at the micro level in a city neighborhood.

This cultural initiative reveals the power of books. The junction with social problems also gives books a palliative social capacity due to their presence as objects and by their content. The local inhabitants can perhaps enjoy community attachment and social investment by entering inside the library's walls.

The street library volunteers call the main neighborhood library a physical environment where they can serve as intermediaries. But the library also signifies a specific relationship to books and to writing, which is standardized and structured. The form "street library" is placed within the ideological space of the main library, within its ideological halo. In fact the street library has gone beyond the main library in its "mission" by bringing together volunteers from different fields, each with their own view of the book and its role.

Street libraries imply several types of mediation, including material, cultural and institutional types, involving displacement from one symbolic space to another. We have already discussed how the objects of mediation proposed by the institution intersect with the place of mediation. So by taking over a public space, the extra-mural library delineates a material and symbolic territory. The architectural space of the low-housing estate is associated with a dense symbolic space, as it conjures both local neighborhood history and images of a stereotyped suburb (lacking in identity, culture, and so on). These spaces feed each other without any particular rupture or creation of a neutral, independent space for reading.

The mediation involved here thus expands to what might well be its real cultural significance by demonstrating the encounter, and material, temporal and spatial tensions between definitions of what culture is, and by challenging the very idea of a rift between culture and life.

CONCLUSION

> Non-practice is not a positive act to be studied as such; that is to
> say as simply a negative mirror image of what practice is. It cannot
> be thought of in the same terms as practice
> (Ethis, 2007: 248; own translation).

In this article, we have tried to show the relevance of a communications analysis in exploring sociological categories related to cultural practices, and what use cultural agents make of such categories. The focus on three case studies has allowed us to identify three ways that the word *non-public* is used both at the discursive level and also in cultural practices:

- First, it is worth noting that the *non-public* mutated into a form asserting social divisions. The *illettré* is a category allowing for both the specification and radicalization of this division by situating it sociologically and culturally, because this *non-public* is associated as much with economic poverty as it is with an inability to read and write.

But an analysis of the use of the word *illettré* also allows us to see how the meaning gradually converges with the initial usage of the word *non-public* by Jeanson (*uncultured*), that is a political usage. The initial scientific definition of *illettrisme* is watered down to vague concepts of equality and citizenship. Thus, if the *illettré* is not a replacement for the *non-public*, it overshadows the discourses of injunction and the attempts by cultural agents at legitimization of their initiatives.

- Second, we have observed how the *non-public* takes on material form in visual and discursive representations of the territory, depend-ing on the position chosen by the cultural team in place. The semiotization of *non-public* is accomplished in a hybrid manner by the symbolic operator, which is an explicit reference to the question of cultural initiative (*The Culture for tous, Part II*[29]). Through its geographical and ideological position, the theater enunciates its *non-public* as two forms of *otherness*. On one hand, the word "ordinary people" is substituted for *non-public* as a positive category even if, from a semiological standpoint, this person from the neighborhood is an Other. On the other hand, the *non-public* is presented as an anti-viewer, a consumer whose cultural activity is illegitimate. In both of these cases, the enunciator defines himself as the Other.

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29. Communication tool, postcard, 2000– 2001.

- Third, targeting an audience for cultural initiatives is equivalent to a specific modality of initiative, *in situ*, in the street. With regards to the cultural initiatives, the *non-public* is embodied less by individuals than by the social and physical space transformed by the introduction of a new instrument. The "street-reading" device places books in an unusual context far from their usual setting; the library, and empowers them to build a sensitive relationship with the *non-public* who lives in high-density suburbs. When a street-reading volunteer comes to a neighborhood, it is a concrete physical gesture that transforms an idea of encounter into a practice and announces it publicly. The *non-public* is thus designated within the urban space as a group of people to be rehabilitated and transformed into a *public* residing within the high-density suburbs.

By referencing three empirical studies, all of which use an ethno-semiological methodology, we hope to offer readers clues for interpreting the concept of the *non-public* in the context of discussions with cultural agents and in research projects.

Furthermore, to go beyond the sociological viewpoint regarding the existence and relevance of the category, one may view the *non-public* as a sign from which "an order of initiatives" might emanate. The "order" here comes from the internal workings of discourse described by Foucault:

> [. . .] where discourse exercises its own control; rules concerned with the principles of classification, ordering and distribution. It is as though we were now involved in the mastery of another dimension of discourse: that of events and chance (Foucault, 1972: 220).

Foucault's insistence on discourse as non-revelatory of a pre-existing social system ("discourse as operator and not a surface for inscribing") is stimulating. This idea reverberates with the urgent issues raised by studies of cultural objects.

From the standpoint of a researcher in Communication and Information Sciences, the challenge is not to define the *non-public* sociologically with reference to the institution or the cultural practice. However, we are positing the *non-public* as a starting point for further discussions on the issue of borders (the same and the Other). Thus, the *non-public* can help researchers understand and interpret the initiatives of cultural institutions.

The analysis in this article shows how an "order of initiatives" functions in a territorial representation of the *public*. The *non-public* is defined as being exterior. It is a starting point from which an initiative organizes itself physically (territory) and symbolically. It is a projection that renegotiates and clarifies the role of an institution and its responsibilities.

Referred to explicitly and implicitly in documents produced by cultural institutions at different symbolic levels, the *non-public* thus reveals more about the political relationship between institutions and the public space than about the cultural initiatives themselves. The work of institutions to identify and define the *non-public* leads to a shift in the representations and enunciators, depending on the territory (from the topographical, social and symbolic standpoints). As such, the *non-public* can be viewed as much as a political mediation as a sociological one, a necessary component of an "order of initiatives" that not only identifies the targeted population, but also proposes an interpretation of the public space in which the cultural institution is implicated.

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Chapter 2

PERSONALITY
A FACTOR INFLUENCING ART MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

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In research studies on museum attendance, the most common approach is sociological, but introducing a psychological perspective should enable us to understand what leads to establishing or not establishing a visiting practice. Particular attention will be given to those personality traits that might impede a decision to visit.

Examining barriers to museum visits involves specifying which categories of people the investigation will select. One idea might be to work only with the *non-public*, but for whom should this designation be reserved? Those who have never been to a museum in their entire lives? Or those who have made no visit over the past year? In *Les pratiques culturelles des Français. Enquête 1997* (Donnat, 1998), findings showed that 23% of French citizens aged 15 or over had never been to a museum, whereas 67% had not visited a museum within the last 12 months.

In a study on museum practices in France carried out in 2005,[2] the CRÉDOC (Centre de recherche pour l'étude et l'observation des conditions de vie) surveyed people who declared they had not visited a museum within the previous 12 months (67% of the sample) on the reasons why they had not gone in that period of time. Forty-three percent of them (or 29% of the population) answered that it did not interest them (Goldstein & Bigot, 2007). Are they the ones that should be studied or should we not select, following the classification of statements about museums proposed by this same study, all those whom it is more or less difficult to convince to come to, or to return to the museum? In addition, account must be taken of those who are "reluctant" or "critical" (33%), not to mention "impervious" (13%).

In addition, we know that visitors' "careers" are sometimes continuous, other times discontinuous, and that one may be a visitor differently at different times in one's life (Eidelman & Roustan, 2007). Each person can, therefore, at different times in his or her life be a more or less receptive *public* (Azam, 2004). Any categorization of the *publics* of cultural facilities seems both porous and arbitrary, as Donnat and Octobre remark (2002).

To the extent that the distinction between *public* and *non-public* underlines the existence of a cultural barrier or phenomena of cultural exclusion, we prefer, like de Mengin (2002), to investigate the distinction between visitors and non-visitors. In our work on the barriers to art museum visits, we chose to categorize the respondents based on their stated attendance over the previous 12 months.

To understand what differentiates varying types of practitioners, or what characterizes a lack of practice, we first examined socio-demographic variables. In a study on art museum *publics* in Europe published in 1969, Bourdieu and Darbel found an over-representation of visitors with secondary or higher education and belonging to the highest socio-professional categories. Since then, all investigations, whether French or foreign, whether undertaken at the homes of those surveyed or at the exit to a museum, have confirmed the weight of cultural and economic capital (Donnat, 1998; Mironer, 2001). And yet, behaviour within socio-cultural categories is not homogeneous. This variability is what interested us.

How are museums perceived by the *public* and by the *non-public*? A great number of research papers can be found informing us about the perception of this or that museum by its *public*. A number of studies examine the actual and potential *public* of a particular museum. Finally, and much more rare, are the national studies which cover the population as a whole.

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2. A study on a sample of 2,000 people, representative of the French population, aged 18 or over.

In two already dated national studies, one Canadian (Dixon, Courtney, & Bailey, 1974), the other American (National Research Center of the Arts, 1981), what is striking is everyone recognized museums as important institutions for the country. In confirmation of this importance granted to museums, the vast majority of the population were in favour of allocating public funds to museums, which was not the case for other cultural institutions.

Recognizing a museum as important to the community did not, however, necessarily lead to taking a personal interest in the museum. A third of the Canadians declared that they had little interest in museums (50% of non-visitors and 21% of visitors); 35 years later, we found this same proportion in the CRÉDOC study cited above. Although the respondents emphasized ties between education and museums, and perceived as normal the efforts demanded of children, they did not necessarily wish to expend such efforts themselves during voluntary leisure activities. A study undertaken recently in Arles (Jacobi & Denise, 2007) produced the following findings: those who had not visited the MDAA (Musée départemental de l'Arles Antique), or who had no intention of doing so, nevertheless perceived the Museum as being, above all, an educational device.

Two studies undertaken respectively in Germany, in Karlsruhe (Klein & Bachmayer, 1981), and in England, in Hull (Prince & Schadla-Hall, 1985), examining the population of a city with several museums, showed similar results concerning attitudes to museums. In general, people questioned about a specific museum or about museums in general might have a positive image of these institutions while not visiting them or not having any intention to do so.

Thus a number of observations enabled us to set our own course of research: first of all, representations concerning museums may be similar while behaviour adopted regarding them differs. Moreover, significant individual differences in practice exist within a single socio-demographic class. By comparing the psychological traits of those visiting museums to those not visiting them, we might clarify the findings of investigations into museum practices.

Although studies on representations about museums are frequent, the issue of non-attendance has rarely been examined from the viewpoint of the image that people hold of visitors. Note that in the work carried out in Karlsruhe (Klein & Bachmayer, 1981) a study was done on the image of museum visitors, and that this image is similar in both the visitors' group and the non-visitors' group. Our work on the image of museum visitors introduces a different perspective as it relates the self-image that respondents have to representations they hold of the typical museum visitor. This approach derives from theories on the concept of self (Huteau & Vouillot, 1988).

As our specific interest is art museum attendance, we took into account studies on the psychology of aesthetics investigating the relationship between aesthetic preference and personality. These studies were generally carried out in the lab. Stimuli introduced to study this relationship included pictorial displays created for the needs of the study and reproductions of paintings. Most of the studies offered a preference task in which, for each piece of artwork, subjects had to indicate their degree of appreciation, or, for each pair of artworks presented, subjects had to choose which of the pair they preferred. Personality measures were taken for field dependence-independence (Child, 1965; Savarese & Miller, 1979; Tobacyk, Myers, & Bailey, 1981), tolerance of complexity, and tolerance of ambiguity (Child, 1962, 1965; Day, 1966). There was also a dogmatism scale (Day, 1966), an introversion-extraversion scale(Day, 1966; Hornowski, 1977; Roubertoux & Carlier, 1969; Wiedl, 1977), one for conservatism (Furnham & Bunyan, 1988; Wilson *et al.*, 1973), a sensation-seeking scale (Furnham & Bunyan, 1988; Rawlings, 2000; Tobacyk *et al.*, 1981), a scale for anxiety (Heinrichs & Cupchik, 1985; Machotka, 1982), for openness to experience (Rawlings *et al.*, 2000) and for neuroticism (Rosenbluh, Owens, & Pohler, 1972). For our research, we chose a personality inventory used recently, the NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1998), based on the five factors model, openness to experience being, of the five personality domains, the one most closely linked to aesthetic experience. In fact, one of the six facets of this domain, the aesthetic facet, measures subjects' tendencies to accept and look for new aesthetic experiences.

In this article, we will present some of the results of three research studies[3] investigating, in a complementary manner through the questions asked and methodologies adopted, the issue of barriers to museum attendance. We have chosen to focus on art museums because they are the most frequently visited and the most elitist.

In-depth interviews of "practitioners" and "non-practitioners" led to speculation about the psychological risks taken depending on whether or not art belonged to the visitor's "world," and to distinguishing different types of non-practitioners. We use the term risk, because, as we shall see, going or not going to a museum is a behaviour with significant consequences regarding identity construction. Presented with an object considered to be a work of art, people can feel threatened when analyzing their own reactions.

A questionnaire survey which included a personality measurement was used to compare the weight of different types of variables that might play a role in establishing museum practices.

Lastly, we continued our research on the role of personal variables by developing a measuring instrument which allowed us to study the relationship between the visitor's self-image, his or her own image of a museum visitor and attendance.

2.1.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRACTITIONERS AND NON-PRACTITIONERS

In this first investigation, in order to move beyond the effect of socio-demographical variables, we thought it would be interesting to work on cases that did not conform to the statistical predictions possible for the total population. So we compared practitioners and non-practitioners with equivalent socio-demographic characteristics. Our main aim was to understand how one could become a practitioner while possessing characteristics least likely to encourage access to traditional cultural outings. Symmetrically, we tried to determine why those with favourable characteristics did not necessarily choose to visit art museums (Gottesdiener, 1992).

To answer this double question, we selected a highly divergent population obtained by crossing the variable for art museum attendance with the variable for socio-professional category.[4] Furthermore, all the people surveyed were Parisians, to remove the variable for availability of cultural resources, and the participants were men or women under 35 years old (the cut-off point for "young" in the *Les pratiques culturelles des Français*). This age corresponds to a structuring period of particular interest in a study on potential resistance to museum visiting or the overcoming of such resistance, taking into account the constraints or encouragement offered by one's professional or family milieu.

Around thirty in-depth interviews were conducted and became the object of a thematic content analysis. After this initial work, we felt it would be interesting to focus our efforts on regular practitioners and use another approach, that of group discussion. Two groups were formed: one comprising employees, the other management executives. In this way, certain issues that had appeared to be crucial could be explored afresh. We were thus able to confirm the results of the first analysis, but the dynamic created by this new situation also encouraged new themes to emerge.

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4. The choice of modalities of variables takes into account the inquiry into the cultural practices of French citizens and aims to maximize differences between subjects in different categories. For attendance categories we chose: no attendance, occasional attendance (once over the previous year), regular attendance (five times or more over the year), and for Professions and Socio-professional Categories (SPC) we classified by: people in managerial positions or people with intermediary professions whose fathers are in managerial positions or with intermediary professions/people who are neither in managerial positions nor in intermediary professions whose fathers are neither managers nor in intermediary professions.

2.1.1.

ENCOUNTERING A WORK OF ART, AND HOW THE VISITOR TAKES RISKS

The museum experience is unique because it allows an encounter with a "real" work of art. But beyond a perception of the work and an emotional reaction to the work, what is at stake is oneself face-to-face with the work. This dimension is hugely apparent in the group of management executives labelled "frequent" (having made over five visits during the year). Confronted with the work of art, these visitors analyse themselves as subjects capable of asserting tastes, feeling emotions and employing critical skills. This confrontation, when put to the test, entails risks. Certain ratings reveal the anguish of finding oneself alone, without a safety net, at risk of a failed encounter with the work of art, and beyond this, with oneself.

With the discussion group of "frequent" employees, the register is slightly different. The fear explicitly expressed by one participant of "not feeling at home, of feeling alone in this world" was one we heard from other participants, stated more vaguely, and which we will encapsulate here in the expression "It's not my world."

For this group, visual arts are not part of their family culture but, thanks to certain personal experiences, these participants come to understand the precious nature of works of art. Their question as to which world is at play opens doors to other worlds: those of experts and artists. Appropriation of the cultural field in question is manifested by identification with either experts or with artists through desire: desire for what one does not possess, and for what is perceived as wealth in the hands of others.

Remarkably, and contrary to all expectation, both the above worlds appeared accessible. Of course, some participants said they were awed or intimidated, but this in itself is not insurmountable. Thus, a scholar who knows a lot, who understands everything at a glance, embodies for these employees the figure of an ideal initiator. Over time, their experience grows. Some of them even take an interest in technique and begin to paint. It is worth noting that the respect afforded art does not elicit excessive inhibition in these participants. At their modest level, even taking up painting becomes possible.

Thus we discovered that anticipation of confrontation with a work of art provokes fear as much in executives as it does in employees. Employees, who have to enter a foreign world, fear losing their usual reference points. Management executives, aware that more is at stake than confronting a recognized body of knowledge, fear the fact that their own self-image is at risk.

The most scared are those for whom art is "naturally" part of their world (the executives). For this group, encountering a work of art whose value is socially recognized (the work is in a museum) sparks self-questioning (who am I if I can't be moved by this work of art?) if the encounter fails and nothing is elicited in the visitor by the work of art. The risk involved is not linked merely to social identity (I am in upper management. I should feel the effects of art because it is part of my world), but also to the subjects themselves and the question of their personal worth.

For those who feel they are infiltrating a new world (employees), what matters is the possibility of entering it, and the anxiety is therefore somewhat milder, because the fear is of a new world. If employees feel intimidated and excluded, it is easier for them to reject museums and works of art, claiming that this is not their world.

The Other, the initiator or a simple companion can offer assistance in combatting fear. The family surrounding the executive or, in the case of employees, an initiator from outside the family circle (a friend, a partner, an enthusiastic teacher) can step in. Museum practices are often established in the context of affective relationships, usually during childhood or adolescence. On the one hand, continuity is important along with identification with parental models. On the other hand, an affective relationship outside of the family can allow separation from the family milieu and the adoption of new cultural models that then become valued.

2.1.2.
NON-PRACTITIONERS BETWEEN EXTREMES: ASSERTION, GUILT, OR NON-GUILT

An analysis of the discourse of executives and employees who had not visited a museum within the previous 12 months and whom we designated as non-practitioners allowed us to distinguish very different approaches to museum attendance. Two extreme tendencies were detected in the executives: assertion and guilt. For employees, we noted more a form of non-practice without any particular sense of guilt or doubt.

All the executives who had not visited a museum over the last 12 months had however visited them in childhood and as students. Most often, since starting their careers, they had attended them only very sporadically, but the world of museums was not unknown to them. Executives who do not attend museums refrain deliberately, or because there has been no true appropriation of these places, which they regret.

Executives who say they choose not to go to museums invoke several types of justifications: a weak interest in the visual arts, the refusal of a sheep-like or bourgeois cultural practice that is no longer elitist enough, too great a respect for art, or a relationship with art that clashes with the public nature of the visit.

When a weak interest in the visual arts is asserted, they usually claim an interest in other cultural domains. Even if no other cultural interest exists, there is still no criticism of art; the value of art is acknowledged but subjects state that they are unable to appreciate it. Being unable to appreciate art is experienced as self-deprecating as we shall see a little further on regarding those who appear to submit to non-practice rather than choosing it.

Executives sometimes claim they are refusing to follow the crowd because they like non-conformity or refuse to succumb to social pressure. They might also refuse to join in a practice that is no longer sufficiently elitist.

So when an executive admits that he or she does not attend the museum, he might insists on the validity of his choice. He wants to show he is capable of maintaining a privileged relationship with art but that he refuses what a visit to such an institution implies. In particular, he blames the context and conditions of the visit.

For executives attending museums a desire for elitism can also exist but, in this case, strategies must be set up to avoid mixing with the crowd, in order to maintain the feeling of participating in an elitist activity.

A form of reverence for the sacred nature of art further dictates that certain people cannot imagine entering into this temple without making certain mental preparations that they are never prepared to make. Indeed, this reverence implies that the relationship to art can be intense, resulting in a fear of expressing emotion before a crowd of visitors incapable of real communion with the works of art.

If certain executives claim to dislike museums, other executives have trouble admitting they are not practitioners. They used to go with their families or with their school. As university students they still attended occasionally. It was insufficient, however, to establish a practice.

For these executives, there was no real initiator. Their taste for art was always weak. In general, as a result, they tend to distance themselves from the cultural milieu and separate their studies from culture.

These executives feel guilty because attending the museum was once part of their world. They accuse themselves of lacking will and courage. Some of them feel trapped, conditioned by the type of studies they are doing (most often scientific), or by an overly absorbing job, which pulls

them away from art. The discourse on incomprehension is more painful than it is with employees, because their degree of expectation differs. They feel that they should be able to comprehend.

They feel the need to be helped by a museum action or by someone. However, they already know that this "someone" will not be their spouse, because their spouses are not interested in art, even when they are also executives. The odds are fairly high that the "someone" in question will not materialize.

The choice of investigating working people under 35 underlines barriers linked to changes in status. Executives switch from student status, which had been rich in opportunity, to professional status and being the head of families, which limits the possibility of developing a visiting practice.

Employees who do not attend museums have had only the briefest contacts with museums, usually during a school excursion, often obligatory in nature and requiring a homework assignment.

For some members of this group matters are clear. Museums are not for them and they admit this with no particular sense of guilt or loss. Museums do not concern them because these institutions simply do not figure in their lives. They do not criticize museums. Their lack of interest in art is noted but not defended as is the case with some executives. Visiting demands both an effort and a desire that simply do not exist.

This analysis suggests that thinking of museum visits solely in terms of social conditioning and practices of distinction is inadequate. We have shown that the principal barriers to practice are the perspective of the intellectual effort required and the importance of emotional investment. Indeed, visits to museums spark fear in certain visitors. Thus the constant references to experts and specialists, people of competence, with the underlying fear of not measuring up to the task.

Adopting this perspective takes us beyond the model of cultural consumerism, in which an individual's approach to the museum object is socially determined, to insist on the importance of the symbolic aspects of self-construction. If we want people to establish a museum practice, we must question what kind of reception they receive there.

2.2.
FACTORS INFLUENCING
ART MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

In a research study on access to contemporary art[5] (Gottesdiener, Vilatte, & Vrignaud, 2007), sociological and psychological variables were used, as were forms of data processing permitting a comparison of the respective weights of each of these variables.

The variables were identified in studies and research papers on museum attendance or on artistic taste. These determining factors reflect:

- school artistic instruction or extra-curricular and current artistic practice;

- visiting conditions in childhood or adolescence;

- influence of family, friends or others as recognized by the respondent;

- aesthetic tastes;

- personality;

- demographic or socio-professional traits of subjects and their families.

To study the specificity of these factors which determine access to contemporary art, a comparison of factors determining the practice of visiting contemporary art museums and those of visiting other museums or art exhibitions[6] was carried out.

For the personality study, we used the NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1998). This inventory, which uses the traits approach to personality (tendencies to generate, with relative temporal stability and relative coherence across situations, structured clusters of thoughts, emotions and actions), was designed to put into practice the Five Factor Model of Personality.[7] Among these factors, "Openness to Experience" – the ability to seek and live new experiences – is, perhaps, one of those most closely linked to aesthetic experience. Beyond the "Aesthetics" facet (the tendency of subjects to accept and seek new aesthetic experiences),

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5. We have used the separation proposed by the Musée national d'art moderne between modern art and contemporary art, a period which began in the 1960s.
6. Questionnaires were distributed as a voluntary assignment to 422 psychology students at the undergraduate and Master's levels in two universities in the Paris area (Paris X-Nanterre and Paris VIII-Vincennes).
7. This theory asserts that personality can be summed up by five exhaustive dimensions. These five dimensions are: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness. By situating the position of subjects within each dimension, it is possible to comprehend their personalities through their relations to others, their experience, their feelings, and to assess their attitudes and motivations. Each of these factors comprises six facets, allowing for refinement of the analysis.

Openness to Experience comprises a "Fantasy" facet (attraction to fantasy and dreams), a "Feelings" facet (seeking emotion), an "Actions" facet (preference for novelty and variety), an "Ideas" facet (interest for new ideas and theories) and a "Values" facet (the capacity to question values).

To study the effects of different variables on attendance, a variable was created for museum attendance. This variable allowed subjects to be sorted into four groups: those who do not visit either fine arts museums or museums of modern and contemporary art, those who visit only fine arts museums, those who visit only museums of modern and contemporary art and, finally, those who visit both two types of museums.

Next, the discriminant analysis method was used, as it permits determination of belonging to a group using variables taken from prior analyses.[8] With this method,[9] a score was calculated from which the software sorted each respondent into one of the four groups. The dependent variable thus obtained was called the "classifying score," as it allowed each person to be classified into one of the groups studied. Quality of classification was assessed by comparing the original classification (done on the basis of answers to survey) to the classification carried out using discriminant analysis.

As you can see (Table 2.1), distribution into groups was much better than it would have been had it been carried out randomly and, over all, the results were good. In fact, the prediction of belonging to a group of young adults who attend only museums of modern and contemporary art or to a group of young adults who attend both museums of fine arts and museums of modern and contemporary art is perfect:

- The 33 individuals who, based on their own statements, visited only museums of modern and contemporary art obtained a "classifying score" assigning them to the museum of modern and contemporary art category only;

- 92 out of the 94 who stated they had visited both museums of modern art and museums of fine art were correctly classified.

8. These analyses can be found in our report (Gottesdiener, Vilatte, & Vrignaud, 2007).
9. We used a discriminant analysis method based on the Partial Least Squares algorithm (on the PLS approach, see Tenenhaus, 1998; Vrignaud, 1999) implanted in SIMCA software, version 9.0 (Wold & Ketaneh, 2001) due to the high frequency of missing data.

Table 2.1. Classifications based on stated attendance and based
on discriminant analysis

CLASSIFICATION FROM ANSWERS TO SURVEY	CLASSIFICATION FROM DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS*				
	1	2	3	4	Total
1. Neither of the two types museums was visited	106	85	0	0	191
2. Only a museum of fine arts was visited	0	21	70	0	91
3. Only a museum of modern and contemporary was visited	0	0	33	0	33
4. Both types of museums were visited	0	0	2	92	94
Total	106	106	105	92	409

*The four groups were defined in the same way as the four groups shown in rows.

Moreover, when errors of classification occurred, they were not too great because they involved two proximal groups (for example, of the 191 subjects who stated they had visited no museum, 106 were correctly classified and 85 were classified as visiting a fine arts museum.) Therefore, the variables upon which subjects were classified into one of the four groups were relevant.

With regards to the influence of different variables on classification, the discriminant analysis method supplied the weight of variables which allowed people surveyed to be classified into groups. The higher the weight, the more the variable influenced the classification.

At least at the descriptive level, it is possible to compare the weight of sociological and psychological variables by examining the coefficients shown in Figure 2.1. Only significant coefficients at a $p = 0.05$ threshold appear on the graphic. These coefficients indicate the weight of the explanatory variable on the variable to be explained. The closer the value is to +1, the more the increase in the explanatory variable is felt in the variable to be explained.
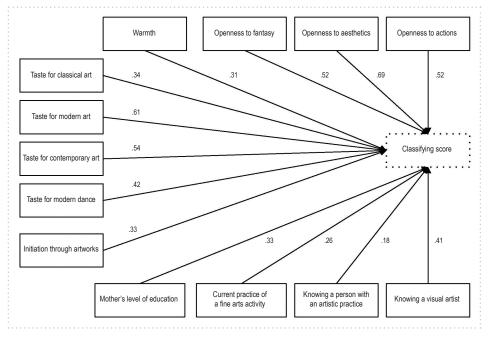
Figure 2.1. Variables that influence classification in the four groups

The coefficients obtained for the facets of the Openness dimension are higher than those of the Extraversion dimension (0.69 for Openness to aesthetics or 0.52 for Openness to actions, compared to 0.31 for "Warmth"[10]). The most important influencing factors for visiting art museums are therefore personality traits and a taste for art. Their coefficients are higher than those observed for family (mother's level of education), or the practice of a fine arts activity (around 0.50 compared to coefficients of around 0.30).

Certain observations can be drawn from these results. The sample used in this study is rather specific. It is, by its construction, homogeneous regarding educational level and age but, if account is taken of the other factors capable of explaining differences observed in museum attendance, it is clear that all the analyses we carried out confirmed the dominant influence of personality and taste. The effects of taste might have seemed obvious, but this was not the case for personality.

As for personality and variables that might influence the construction of certain traits, once the effect of the mother's level of education on attendance was noted,[11] it was important to verify the possible

10. "Warmth" is one of the six facets of the "Extraversion" factor. People with a high score in this facet are affectionate and friendly. The facets of the "Openness to Experience" factor are listed above.
11. It is of note that for the father's education level, the coefficient is not statistically significant. This result raises questions about the role of the mother on family visits to the museum.

existence of an effect of the latter on personality. An analysis of the effects[12] of the mother's education level on personality variables and then on visits allowed us to conclude that the indirect effects[13] of the mother's level of education on visits, through the personality, were not significant. This variable cannot, as such, explain the effects of personality.

Regarding classification of individuals into the four groups (Table 2.1), it is of note that among those stating they had visited neither type of art museum during the previous year, some (85) nevertheless had social and personality traits corresponding to those of subjects who attended fine arts museums. They did not go, but they could have gone. These people are the ones whom initiatives made by museums have the greatest chance of attracting. In contrast, for another group (106), museum initiatives would have less chance of attracting a visit because their personality traits corresponded more to those of subjects who did not visit any art museums.

With regards to variables exerting an effect on visits, the profile of young adults (70) who stated that they attended fine arts museums, but who were classified by the analysis as attending museums of modern and contemporary art (see Table 2.1), was similar to that of young adults who did, in fact, attend museums of modern and contemporary art.[14] The difference lay in the latter's taste for modern and contemporary art or their personal acquaintance with an artist.

For the individuals involved, the difference between attending museums of fine art and attending museums of modern and contemporary art is not as great as we tend to think. There seems to be continuum rather than a break.

In conclusion, the simultaneous consideration of a set of different types of causal factors revealed the complexity of trying to categorize publics and discern actions to encourage access for the greatest possible number of people to different forms of art. All we can do is try to diversify these actions. Thus, talking about the personality's influence might seem incongruous to those who need to think in terms of cultural initiatives. Nevertheless, personality might be taken into account in distinguishing educational approaches to adopt.

12. A path analysis was established with the help of AMOS 4.0 software (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999).
13. The effects of variables can be "direct" (A → B) or "indirect" (A → B → C, the effect of A on C is indirect, as it passes through B).
14. For each independent variable, we examined the averages of scores obtained by each of the four groups.

2.3.
SELF-IMAGE, VISITOR IMAGE AND MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

Within the framework of a psychological approach to museum atten-
dance, referring to the notion of self gives weight to subjective expe-
rience and the way in which people see themselves, to their attitudes,
beliefs and feelings about themselves, to the way in which they live,
structure and elaborate their internal experience and behaviour (Huber,
1977). The notion of self is important because it enables researchers to
take into account the meaning of people's behaviour and lived expe-
rience, their ability to understand themselves and to determine, to a
certain extent, their behaviour in general. Representations of self are
used as a process to explain behaviours. The self refers to information
about the self accumulated over a lifetime. These facts, stored in memory,
inform people of their abilities, past accomplishments, potential and
future aptitudes. Thus the self enables people to make decisions, choose
and adopt behaviours in a given situation. In this way, the self partic-
ipates in the triggering and direction of motivation.

The research presented here related the self-image of people surveyed
to the representations they have of museum visitors (Gottesdiener,
Vilatte, & Vrignaud, 2007). Research studies were carried out on the
assumption that when people have to make decisions regarding the
choice of a social situation or, at least, when they have to express a
preference concerning this situation, the result is a matching strategy
between possible self-images (images selected by subjects from a reper-
toire of possible images of themselves) and prototypical or representative
images of people in the situation under consideration (Huteau &
Vouillot, 1988). Thus, it becomes possible to predict people's choices or
preferences. The smaller the distance between the two images, the
more the social object is preferred. Thus choice or preference results
from a need to maintain and reinforce personal identity.

A three-part survey was presented to 381 subjects.[15] The first part
involved self-image, the second the image the respondent had of visitors
to museums of fine arts, and the third part investigated museum prac-
tices and socio-demographic data.[16] In the first envelope, subjects
found a list of 24 adjectives with which to describe themselves. In the
second envelope, the same list of 24 adjectives was offered, and this

15. The sample comprises students from the Université de Paris X-Nanterre or from Nancy II,
and from the École du Louvre, but also 111 working people (70 of whom were contacted
through adult education classes at the university and 41 of whom were contacted outside
the university). Among the people surveyed, 28% were under 21 years of age, 36% were
between 21 and 29, and 36% were 30 or over; 67% were women.
16. Each part of the questionnaire was placed in a separate envelope. The subjects were asked
to respect their order scrupulously, and to open the next envelope only after responding to
the contents of the preceding envelope.

time subjects had to describe a visitor to a museum of fine arts as they imagined him or her to be. Among the 24 adjectives, 12 described the museum visitor,[17] while 12 others referred to personality traits from Gough's A.C.L. (1982) and had no relation to the image people had of such a visitor. These latter "neutral" adjectives were included as distractors.[18]

The focus here was the relation between, on the one hand, the average distance between self-image and visitor image for the 12 adjectives for visitors of art museums and for the 12 neutral or distractor adjectives,[19] and, on the other hand, attendance over the past year at museums of fine arts and museums of modern and contemporary art.[20] For each adjective, the distance was calculated going from self-image to visitor image.

In general, the greater the distance between the two images, the more the subject's self-image differs from that attributed to the visitor of a museum of fine arts. Conversely, the smaller the distance between the two images, the more subjects perceive themselves as similar to visitors. The distance between the two images is positive when subjects believe an adjective describes them better than it describes a visitor of a fine-arts museum. In contrast, it is negative when subjects believe the adjective proposed describes them less well than it qualifies visitors to fine arts museums.

More specifically, with regards to neutral or distractor adjectives, we do not expect to find differences in distances depending on museum practices. Nevertheless, it is possible for distances between the two images to be positive, as subjects can attribute to themselves what they generally believe to be qualities. The use of neutral adjectives allows us to check whether answers to the survey are valid.

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17. In the principal social sciences databases, no studies were found on representations of museum visitors, except for Karlsruhe's now-dated study cited in the introduction. We therefore had to create a measuring instrument. In a first research study on the image of museum visitors, carried out with 170 undergraduate students studying Education at Université Nancy II, several types of tasks were proposed (tasks for producing or identifying adjectives). The adjectives retained were those most frequently used during the tasks that were most useful in distinguishing people who attended fine arts museums from people who did not.
18. Examples of "neutral" adjectives: direct, efficient, happy; examples of "relevant" adjectives: attentive, calm, cultivated.
19. For each adjective, the distance between the two extreme responses ("Does not describe me at all"/"Describes me perfectly") was divided into five equal zones. This permitted the assignment of a number to the position of the cross on the line separating the two extreme responses. The result was a five-point scale, with "1" corresponding to the zone around the "Does not describe me at all" response, and "5" to the zone around the "Describes me perfectly" response. A numerical value could then be attributed to each judgement made by a subject about an adjective capable of describing the subjects themselves or visitors to fine arts museums to see whether there was any difference in judgement or not.
20. For all people surveyed, museum attendance was evaluated using three possible responses ("not visited," "one or two visits," "three or more visits" over the previous year).

The results analysis confirmed that a correlation exists between self-visitor distance and attendance (Table 2.2).[21] The subjects who visited a minimum of three museums of fine arts and three museums of modern and contemporary art over the previous year had a positive mean distance between their self-image and the image they have of a museum visitor, while those who had not or had rarely visited (one or two visits) these museums had a mean distance between the two image profiles that was negative. Thus, when subjects visited art museums fairly regularly, they believed these adjectives characterized their own personalities more than they described visitors to museums of fine arts, while the contrary could be seen when subjects had no visiting practice or a weak visiting practice. These latter subjects viewed themselves as different from museum visitors, as not possessing the visitor's qualities. Thus, because they feel that they lack these qualities, their hesitation in attending museums becomes understandable.

Table 2.2.   Relation between Self-image and fine arts museum
Visitor-image Mean distance and Attendance
at art museums

ART MUSEUM ATTENDANCE DURING THE YEAR		DISTANCE SELF-VISITOR "RELEVANT" ADJECTIVES	DISTANCE SELF-VISITOR "NEUTRAL" ADJECTIVES
	N[1]	Mean distance[2]	Mean distance
Museum of fine arts			
Not visited	131	-5.75	6.97
One or two visits	104	-3.34	7.73
Three or more visits	77	3.01	8.05
Museum of modern and contemporary art			
Not visited	146	-6.53	7.48
One or two visits	101	-1.74	6.95
Three or more visits	60	4.29	8.35

1. Total participation is only 312 for museums of fine arts and 307 for museums of modern and contemporary art, because only those who gave answers for all questions were kept for the calculation of the two distances for attending each type of museum.

2. The mean was calculated on the set of 12 adjectives and on the number of respondents.

21. We tested the hypothesis of the existence of a difference between the means with variance analysis (ANOVA) using SPSS. For fine arts museums and relevant adjectives, the test was significant: $F_{(2.309)} = 25.14$; $p \leq 0.001$; for neutral adjectives, the test was not significant: $F_{(2.309)} = 0.675$ ($p \geq 0.50$). For museums of modern and contemporary art and relevant adjectives, the test was significant: $F_{(2.304)} = 34.98$; $p \leq 0.001$; for neutral adjectives the result was not significant: $F_{(2.304)} = 0.56$ ($p \geq 0.60$)

We wanted to confirm tendencies observed on the basis of attendance measured by the number of visits over the past year. An approach by the number of museums visited over several years seemed interesting, as it would reflect a practice observed over the long-term.

In the research presented above, subjects living in Paris[22] received an additional task: marking on the museum list in the *Officiel des spectacles*[23] all the Parisian museums that they had ever visited, no matter how long ago in their lives. The *Officiel des spectacles* list comprises 98 museums, with temporary exhibitions featured under another heading. Not all of the institutions listed are museums in the strict sense of the term but we wanted to keep the list as it was offered to readers. The link between museum attendance and the distance between the visitor's self-image and his/her image of a museum visitor could thus be examined with a different measure of attendance.

A link does exist between Self-image and Visitor-image distance and the number of Parisian museums attended. When fewer than 20 museums were visited, the distance was negative (-2.4). When at least 35 museums were visited, the distance was positive (5.4). The more the respondents had visited museums, the more often the adjectives used to describe visitors to museums of fine arts were used in self-description (Table 2.3).[24] Respondents saw themselves as sharing a large number of qualities attributed to visitors of museums, and could only envisage themselves as continuing to attend museums.

Table 2.3.   Relation between Self-image and fine arts museum
            Visitor-image Mean distance and Attendance
            at Parisian museums

NUMBER OF MUSEUMS ATTENDED		DISTANCE SELF-VISITOR "RELEVANT" ADJECTIVES	DISTANCE SELF-VISITOR "NEUTRAL" ADJECTIVES
	N	Mean distance	Mean distance
Under 20 museums	52	-2.4	7.83
Between 21–34 museums	48	0.84	9.77
35 museums or more	47	5.4	8.28

At the conclusion of this research study, our observation that the weaker the museum practice is, the greater the distance between the qualities we think we possess and the qualities we attribute to museum visitors explains why, in this case, people hesitate to attend museums. The activity demands an effort that they do not feel capable of making.

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22. The 192 subjects lived in Paris. Only 165 indicated both museums visited and intentions to visit.
23. This is a weekly publication that lists different shows in Paris.
24. We tested the hypothesis of the existence of a difference between means with variance analysis (ANOVA) using SPSS. The test was significant with relevant adjectives: $F_{(2.144)} = 6.46; p \leq 0.005$, but not with neutral adjectives $F_{(2.144)} = 0.62; (p \geq 0.50)$.

Instead of denying this effort by proposing an ostensibly playful or fun approach at the risk of losing credibility with this *public*, museums might instead support their effort, firstly by helping people to accept it and by refraining from idealizing museum visitors and museum visits.

CONCLUSION

These research studies show the advantage of multiplying approaches in order to understand better the barriers to visiting art museums. They also show how important it is to refine our understanding of non-visitors and of museum visitors in general. It will be necessary to re-examine the issues of the initiator, of influencing factors and also the image of museum visitors by comparing different museums.

In addition, investigating attendance of exhibition sites cannot be done without investigating their characteristics, what activities they allow, what elements encourage access or make it more difficult. In the investigation of influencing factors, no account was taken of the weight of visit experiences related to the sites visited, and a study on what might constitute relevant descriptors of these sites and experiences is required to improve understanding of the interactions between visitors and museums.

In our studies, we showed the links between personality traits or self-image and museum attendance. We cannot, however, speak of causality, as only longitudinal and complex data collection will allow us to use the term causality *stricto sensu*. Nonetheless, at the time of this investigation we can speak of the effect of certain personality traits on the number of visits over the previous year rather than the inverse effect. Personality traits create structured sets of thoughts, feelings and actions in multiple situations and with a certain temporal stability. It is, however, difficult to imagine that museum attendance alone might determine a personality trait.

Focusing on personality does not mean we underestimate the role played by other factors, in particular, socio-demographic characteristics. Among the sociological and psychological variables that we chose to include in our study on factors determining attendance at art museums, personality seemed to play the most important role in explaining the individual differences observed. Because our sample was made up of students, however, our work was done on differences in attendance within a homogeneous group in terms of education level and age. It would be important to verify that in other homogeneous groups, or in a representative sample of the French population, personality is really predictive in terms of practice and that the respective weights of determining factors are the same. Remember that one of the reasons

we chose a student population was the possibility of conducting a personality survey. Today, a short version of the survey is available which could easily be used in a traditional investigation by survey.

Emphasizing the risks of confronting oneself and one's deficiencies during a visit in order to show the role of personality or self-image suggests that museum visits engage people more profoundly than we ordinarily think or state. This helps to explain why changing tastes and behaviours is not simple. These studies should enable us to investigate the characteristics of an environment that might favour the development of certain traits like Openness to Experience. Furthermore, our results challenge the ability of the most commonly used incentive actions to change practices. These actions make no immediate provisions for establishing conditions likely to modify, beyond the image of the museum, the image of museum visitors and even the visitor's self-image.

The issues of art education in schools and of mediations proposed by museums remain largely unexplored. The objectives announced could be analyzed and their effects evaluated. We support the conclusions of the symposium *Évaluer les effets de l'éducation artistique et culturelle*, in particular when Lauret (2008) insists on the diversity of aims expected of education in art and culture, and when he questions the skills and aptitudes it could cultivate and develop. He also expressed a wish that research projects try to show the effects of education in art and culture on cultural practices, and in particular on attendance in cultural institutions.

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Chapter 3

THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLICS AT ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EVENTS IN QUEBEC AND IN THE UNITED STATES
A SITUATION APPRAISAL

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The field of cultural practices underwent profound transformations in the second half of the 20th century. The main measuring instruments available for observing this change are investigations into cultural practices, into how people spend their time and into household expenditures. All of these studies offer glimpses of a restructuring of cultural spaces on the basis of parameters which, while not always socially explicit, leave no doubt as to their reconfiguration according to factors linked to modernity, to generational affiliation, and to technological development. The main factors determining these practices still remain at work, but they are manifest today in contexts different from those of the past and produce effects on social groups that are not the same as those of previous generations. The role of school in transmitting cultural values has been transformed, for instance, with the democratization of education (Coulangeon). Likewise, the family has seen its role of socializing children to culture change due to the effect of the media, peers,

social networking over the Internet, and cell phones (De Singly, 2003; Fleury & Singly, 2006). The development of cultural and media industries, often centred on entertainment, has increased the supply of cultural resources and changed relations to art and literature. Following changes made to the structure of professions and in the population's socio-demographic composition, both social status and stratification, as well as the factors explaining them, now operate differently in structuring the cultural field and cultural capitalization (Coulangeon, 2003).

Social mechanisms of cultural differentiation now operate in new ways: eclectically, according to Donnat (1994), or through omnivorous consumption, according to Peterson (1996; 2004). In forming cultural values, this new system gives less weight to groups of affiliation and leaves more room for personal values.

In the 1980s, Holbrook and Hirschman, following other authors, altered our perception of rational consumers by highlighting consumer subjectivity with its aesthetic, symbolic and hedonistic dimensions (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook, 2000; 2001a; 2001b). In postmodern society, consumption in general, like the consumption of cultural products, derives increasingly from values linked to entertainment and expression. As these motivations are fairly endogenous, cultural references, valued according to social position, lose their importance. Even if inequalities of taste persist, they will tend to reflect individual choices rather than be expressions of the ruling class (Ollivier & Fridman, 2001). According to Peterson, however, the fact remains that new mechanisms of distinction are emerging whose main characteristic is openness to the diversity of cultural products and to a multiplicity of experiences. These objects and experiences can belong to the domains of both high and popular culture (Peterson, 1996; 1997; 2004). Is it not time to reconsider the notion of *non-public* in the light of these new conditions of cultural participation?

With the exception of cinema and listening to music and to the media, studies on cultural practices incessantly reveal a large proportion of the population that does not participate in a range of cultural activities when these activities are examined individually. Moreover, even if someone is part of the *public* of one activity and part of the *non-public* of another, an appreciable portion of the population does not participate in cultural activities at all, or participates very little, even when these activities are grouped into large categories.

These reflections led us to question the notion of the *non-public*. It seems like a malleable concept referring us to the corollary conception we hold of the *public* itself, and even more fundamentally, of culture. Even if the notion of culture has expanded over the past decades and *non-public* has changed from the notion proposed by the *Déclaration de Villeurbanne*, for the purposes of this article we will limit our analysis primarily to participation in the arts in two different societies with

contrasting characteristics. On the one hand, we have the Quebec society with its French-speaking majority, in which culture is regarded as a national issue necessary for the assertion of the Quebec identity and supported by a pro-active cultural policy. On the other hand, we have the American society, highly heterogeneous and deeply attached to personal values in which culture and leisure are part of an expressive individualism in the pursuit of happiness (Madsen, 2003).

Using data from the enquiry into cultural practices in Quebec and from the survey of public participation in the arts in the United States, we will discern emerging trends in participation in cultural activities, and specifically in artistic activities, over the last decades. We will also investigate the principal factors determining this participation in order to verify whether, in two highly different societies, some of these determining factors might be the same, indicating a certain universality; or if, on the contrary, they are contingent upon a given society at a given era. Indeed, we have tried here to identify factors that might explain why people with high educational capital do not participate in artistic activities. We hope that these analyses will allow us to examine the necessity of widening the debate over *publics* and *non-publics* by contextualizing it around the distinctive natures of societies and by basing it on a more appropriate notion of culture for the postmodernist era.

3.1.
THE TREND IN PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

3.1.1.
DECREASING PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

For several decades in many countries a trend of decreasing participation in the interpretive arts has been apparent. In the United States, DiMaggio observed this phenomenon in the period from 1982 to 2002. As can be seen in Table 3.1, data from the last National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA, 2008) confirm a continuing decline in the American population's interest in the interpretive arts and in heritage institutions, with the exception of art museums and galleries.

In Quebec, the downward trend is less pronounced, visible mainly in attendance at the theatre, ballet and in visits to crafts fairs.[1] Table 3.2 offers a glimpse of changes occurring in the period from 1979 to 2004.

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1. For the purpose of this research, the reference population in Quebec is also 18 years or older. The 15–17 year old portion of the Quebecer sample was excluded from the analysis. This explains why the data shown here might differ slightly from data published by the

In Table 3.2, which shows the Quebec situation, we can see that attendance at classical concerts, art museums, historical sites and monuments were spared the downward trend, and that heritage institutions even experienced a significant increase in participation. However, other cultural activities, like reading, which are not mentioned in the table, have declined in popularity over the last decades. Moreover, even if the rate of participation did not change much or even increased, the average age of the audience grew year after year, due to weak renewal of the *publics*, and to the number of baby-boomers. As they reach retirement age, many baby-boomers revive the cultural practices of their youth neglected during the most active phases of their professional lives. These apparently stable rates of participation in fact hide the precarious nature of these *publics*.

Table 3.1.   Percentage of the American population, 18 and over, attending selected activities, 1982–2008

ACTIVITIES	1982	1992	2002	2008	% VARIATION 1982–2008
Live Classical Music Performance	13.0	12.5	11.6	9.3	−28.5
Live Opera	3.0	3.3	3.2	2.1	−30.0
Non-Musical Plays	11.9	13.5	12.3	9.4	−21.0
Live Ballet Performance	4.2	4.7	3.9	2.9	−31.0
Art Museum or Gallery	22.1	26.7	26.5	22.7	+2.7
Parks or Historical Buildings	37.0	34.5	31.6	24.9	−33.7
Crafts Fair or a Visual Arts Festival	39.0	40.7	33.4	24.5	−37.2

Source: SPPA 1982, 1992, 2002, 2008.

Table 3.2.   Percentage of the Quebec population, 18 and over, attending selected activities, 1979–2004

ACTIVITIES	1979	1989	1999	2004	% VARIATION 1979–2004
Classical Music Concert	13.2	13.9	12.2	14.0	+6.1
Opera or Operetta	n.a.	5.7	9.5	5.0	n.a.
Theatre	30.1	27.7	28.2	28.3	−6.0
Ballet or Classical Dance	7.3	8.3	4.8	2.9	−60.3
Art Museum or Exhibition	23.2	27.7	30.5	32.8	+41.4
Historical Site or Heritage Monuments	30.4	37.4	39.2	40.5	+33.2
Art And Crafts Fairs	43.8	25.1	22.0	22.2	−49.3

Source: *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 1979, 1989, 1999, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

A comparison of Tables 3.1 and 3.2 also shows that the decline in participation in the arts affected the United States harder than it did Quebec. The generally weaker rates observed in the United States are intriguing. We do not think that the general level of education can explain it. In fact, OECD education indicators show that Canadian and American levels are more or less equal (OECD, 2008). Other factors must therefore be involved in shaping cultural practices in the United States.

This decline in arts activity is more pronounced among groups which are more receptive to novelty, like young people, students and higher education segments of the population. Thus, paradoxically, the *non-public* of traditional culture is growing faster among the most culturally active groups. These groups, as we shall see, concentrate less and less frequently their practices around a core of traditional art and culture, and more by moving and expanding their cultural life towards the other forms that culture is now assuming. An expansion of young people's cultural repertoire is also being observed in Europe (Virtanen, 2004), which has led Hersent to state that we could witness a number of major changes in the cultural behaviour of young people (Hersent, 2003).

In a context like this, cultural capital based on the capacity for artistic appreciation becomes less influential in the choice of practices. DiMaggio and Mukhtar use these ideas to explain the decline in the role of the arts in forming cultural capital (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004). According to these authors, the devaluation of arts as cultural capital can be seen in the decline in participation rates in activities associated with high culture, especially among the young and higher education people. The space freed up by a diminished interest in artistic activities allows an opening for other activities that could just as easily belong to popular or media culture as to high culture.

As Tables 3.3 to 3.6 show, the most profound changes regarding traditional culture, in both the United States and in Quebec, have occurred in social categories where cultural interest was the most active: the youth and the higher education population.

We need to remember that the cultural values of young people at the end of the 20th century differed from those in the 1970s and 1980s. The student population, at least in Quebec,[2] is no longer defined by classicism, and its participation in the arts, heritage and literature does not differ much from that of the population as a whole. People with higher education are also increasingly distancing themselves from practices associated with traditional culture. These groups, among whom a decline in traditional practices has been observed, are some of the most open to cultural innovation and diversity. Are they the avant-garde, anticipating faster than other, more conservative groups the behaviours that will prevail in several years?

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2. In our American data file we have no variable for identifying the student population.

Table 3.3.   Percentage of the American population, 18 to 24,
attending selected activities, 1982– 2008

ACTIVITIES	1982	1992	2002	2008	% VARIATION 1982– 2008
Live Classical Music Performance	11.0	10.3	7.8	6.9	–37.3
Live Opera	2.0	2.7	2.0	1.2	–40.0
Non-Musical Plays	10.7	13.2	11.4	8.2	–23.4
Live Ballet Performance	3.9	4.8	2.6	2.5	–35.9
Art Museum or Gallery	22.7	29.4	23.7	22.9	+0.9
Parks or Historical Buildings	34.8	32.7	28.3	21.9	–37.1
Crafts Fair or a Visual Arts Festival	34.5	37.3	29.2	17.8	–48.4

Source: SPPA 1982, 1992, 2002, 2008.

Table 3.4.   Percentage of the Quebec population, 18 to 24,
attending selected activities, 1979– 2004

ACTIVITIES	1979	1989	1999	2004	% VARIATION 1979– 2004
Classical Music Concert	12.4	8.5	8.8	8.0	–35.5
Opera or Operetta	n.a.	4.4	5.2	3.8	n.a.
Theatre	40.4	33.4	32.7	29.8	–26.1
Ballet or Classical Dance	8.2	10.6	4.6	4.1	–50.0
Art Museum or Exhibition	21.9	25.3	32.2	31.1	+42.0
Historical Site or Heritage Monuments	38.8	34.8	37.9	41.2	+6.2
Art and Crafts Fairs	49.1	18.5	14.6	16.9	–65.6

Source: *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 1979, 1989, 1999, 2004, Ministère de la Culture,
des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

Table 3.5. Percentage of the American population, with a university degree, attending selected activities, 1982–2008

ACTIVITIES	1982	1992	2002	2008	% VARIATION 1982–2008
Live Classical Music Performance	33.1	28.0	25.9	20.1	–39.3
Live Opera	8.0	8.0	7.9	5.2	–35.0
Non-Musical Plays	30.2	28.1	25.5	19.8	–34.4
Live Ballet Performance	11.0	10.1	9.0	6.3	–42.7
Art Museum or Gallery	49.2	51.6	50.5	44.5	–9.6
Parks or Historical Buildings	66.6	56.6	53.0	42.3	–36.5
Crafts Fair or a Visual Arts Festival	62.6	57.6	50.1	37.8	–39.6

Source: SPPA 1982, 1992, 2002, 2008.

Table 3.6. Percentage of the Quebec population, with 16 or more years of education, attending selected activities, 1979–2004

ACTIVITIES	1979	1989	1999	2004	% VARIATION 1979–2004
Classical Music Concert	33.1	29.9	22.3	22.7	–31.4
Opera or Operetta	n.a.	14.2	13.4	8.9	n.a.
Theatre	62.5	47.3	41.2	35.0	–44.0
Ballet or Classical Dance	16.8	18.1	7.4	3.9	–76.8
Art Museum or Exhibition	49.5	56.2	50.4	50.1	+1.2
Historical Site or Heritage Monuments	62.0	53.6	55.8	54.7	–11.8
Art and Crafts Fairs	68.9	36.0	25.1	22.1	–67.9

Source: *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 1979, 1989, 1999, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

Moreover, in the United States the group aged 45 to 54 decreased its participation in the arts from 2002 to 2008. The Quebec data, dating from 2004,[3] do not unequivocally show such a trend. In fact, the 55-and-over population in Quebec intensified its traditional practices to such an extent that the *public* of this culture now comprises mostly older groups. As we shall see further on, this is a generational phenomenon. Examining cultural practices according to generation allows for the application in Quebec of different models of cultural appropriation, some founded on cultural values defined by authority, specifically in the

3. The study on the cultural practices of Quebecers was renewed in 2009. Unfortunately, the data are unavailable at the time of writing this analysis. It will, however, be interesting to see if trends recently observed in the Unites States are occurring in Quebec as well.

older generations, and others organized around the subjectivity of cultural consumption, especially among young people. Other models of cultural appropriation will most probably emerge with the Internet, where references become those of peers with whom one has online contact, of discussion forums or of social networking with Facebook and Twitter (Cardon & Granjon, 2003; Donnat & Lévy, 2007).

3.2.
CHANGES IN PRACTICE: FROM TRADITIONAL PRACTICES TO "OMNIVOROUS" CONSUMPTION, THE CASE OF QUEBEC

As was previously mentioned, interest in culture in its traditional forms is declining. Other Quebec analyses, which include a bigger group of practices regarding traditional culture (20 activities), show a slightly different situation from the one we have outlined so far. In fact, they show growth in participation in these traditional forms over the 1979–1989 decade, the year 1989 being the peak year. This decade was a period of intensive investment by government in cultural production and distribution, and a time during which nationalist ideology fuelled popular expression. Cultural participation was, at the time, inseparable from assertions of identity. It expressed itself in a great interest devoted to the preservation of heritage (both moveable and immoveable) and to culture-related skills. The ensuing decline, after 1989, can be attributed to the emergence of new forms of participation generated by industry and the media, and to an ideological shift concerning the goods produced by these industries within Quebec symbolism. Production of these goods became less and less often associated with Quebec identity and the nationalist project.

Far from indicating an overall decline in cultural activity, the remarks above point to a restructuring of certain activities. The partial retreat from some cultural fields frees up time for interest in other domains, not necessarily the same as those abandoned. Opposition between high and low culture, between cultivated or learned culture and popular culture is, perhaps, overly reductive. We are witnessing a "hybridiza-tion of cultivated culture," to use Donnat's (2003) expression. Studies done on culture, specifically with the help of correspondence analysis or cluster analysis (Donnat, 2004; Garon & Santerre, 2004) show that patterns of preferences are not determined only by social class or cultural capital, but are shaped by structures that give them cohesion.

If this is so, social structure and cultural practice will perhaps not be the perfect match they were before. Analyses of the cultural practices of Quebecers in 2004 suggest as much (Garon & Lapointe, 2009).

We could not, as we did for traditional culture, measure the extension of the cultural field to recent forms of cultural output over several decades because a number of practices are relatively recent, issuing from the development of the cultural, media and technological industries. Therefore, we limited our study to data from the Quebec survey of 2004 and created two types of index, one for traditional activities and the other for a wider range of activities encompassing home practices, outings and committed practices.[4] In this way we could highlight the cumulative and diversified aspect of cultural practices, their degree of eclecticism or "ominivorousness," to use Peterson's expression.

One of the interesting things revealed by the aggregate index is that it confirms the wider diversity of practices in groups among whom we previously discerned a decline in traditional practices. As mentioned before, we are experiencing a restructuring of cultural practices, the size and speed of which depend on parameters of socio-economic status. Table 3.7 shows the scores of two aggregate indexes according to age group, education level and socio-economic status. The education level variable contains the biggest differences. School seems, thus, to be the institution that ensures the acquisition of cultural capital, which acts in a more or less diffuse manner in different cultural spheres. The correlation between the overall index and the socio-economic status, measured here by a combination of education level and household income, is less strong than if we take the education level alone, which clearly indicates that educational capital and economic capital are not distributed together in a single package, and that school is unequalled in the acquisition of cultural habits.

An analysis of these indexes according to age group raises other questions. Although the traditional culture index rises with age, at least until 65, the eclecticism index takes the opposite trajectory: high in young people and declining with age. All of the indexes used in creating the eclecticism index, such as home practices, committed practices and outings, go in the same direction. This indicates that the widening of the cultural universe is relatively recent, that it is spreading to different spheres of cultural and social activity and that it is more pronounced in the younger generations. Eclectic participation, like participation in traditional culture, increases in linear fashion with socio-economic status. The observations of Peterson, Chan and Goldthorpe concerning the correlation between omnivorous consumption and social stratification are thus

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4. The report on the survey on cultural practices in Quebec, 5th edition (2009) contains details on creating these different aggregative indexes.

confirmed (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007a, 2007b; Peterson, 1996, 1997, 2004). Moreover, there is a generational effect, at least in Quebec, overlapping the effect of social stratification.

Table 3.7. Traditional culture index score and eclecticism index score per age group, education level and socio-economic status, population 18 or over, Quebec, 2004

VARIABLES	GROUPS	INDEX OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE (20 ACTIVITIES)*	INDEX OF ECLECTISM (55 ACTIVITIES)*
Age	18–24 years	–8.0	18.0
	25–34 years	–4.0	2.5
	35–44 years	–0.1	5.0
	45–54 years	8.9	1.4
	55–64 years	13.0	–4.8
	65 and over	–5.7	–23.9
Education Level	Elementary	–71.3	–81.7
	Secondary	–34.9	–33.9
	College	6.4	14.7
	University	44.7	34.0
Socio-economic Status	Low	–48.2	–52.7
	Medium low	–18.6	–12.1
	Medium high	29.2	17.7
	High	39.3	41.4

* Mean = 0.

Source: *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

There would seem to be a certain polarization of fields of interest linked to social standing and generation, although each factor keeps its own effect too. With identical socio-economic status, cultural differences are much greater in the older generations than in the younger ones, which could indicate greater cultural homogeneity in young people than in their elders. The relationship to traditional culture continues to differentiate with socio-economic status, but it intensifies with age. On the other hand, the eclecticism index behaves quite differently. While there is a big difference in intensity in older generations, it hardly exists in younger groups. Goods from the cultural and media industries reach young people regardless of their social standing, while institutional culture remains differentiated among them in this regard. In the long term, however, there will be a trend towards greater homogeneity of cultural practices. This could result from, among other things, higher education levels of the population and its regulating effect on cultural and social distances.

3.2.1.
THE MAIN DETERMINING FACTORS OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PRACTICES

In the following pages, we will explore more fully the main determining factors of traditional cultural practices in the United States and in Quebec. By limiting the exercise to American data from 2008, and to Quebec data from 2004, we can extend the area of traditional practices slightly to include, under the theme of dance, both modern dance and folk and ethnic dancing in addition to ballet. We can also add "big readers": those who read 20 books or more over the year preceding the enquiry. Table 3.8 specifies the activities used in the American study on participation in the arts (2008) and in the Quebec study on cultural practices (2004).

Table 3.8.   List of activities used in the comparison of cultural practices between the United States (2008) and Quebec (2004)

Interpretive Arts	Classical Music Concert Opera, Operetta Theatre, Non-Musical Play Ballet, Classical Dance
Heritage Institutions	Art Museum, Galleries Parks, Historical Sites or Heritage Monuments
Fairs and Festivals	Art and Crafts Fair
Reading	20 or more Books a year

Participation in traditional cultural activities appears to be less strong in the United States than in Quebec. Of the eight activities used in the comparison, the American rate was always weaker than the Quebec rate. Table 3.9 shows participation rates for each of the activities as well as the average number of activities to which participants devoted themselves. Out of the total population studied, the average number of activities in which people participated in the United States was 1.1, whereas it was 1.7 in Quebec. The difference is less accentuated, however, when only the participating population is taken into consideration (2.3 in the United States and 2.5 in Quebec).

Table 3.9.   Percentage of the population, 18 and over, attending
            selected activities and average number of activities,
            United States (2008) and Quebec (2004)

ACTIVITIES	UNITED STATES (2008)	QUEBEC (2004)
Interpretive Arts		
Classical Music Concert	9.3	14.0
Opera, Operetta (%)	2.1	5.0
Theatre, Non-Musical Play	9.4	28.3
Ballet, Classical Dance	7.0	13.9
Heritage Institutions		
Art Museums, Galleries	22.7	32.8
Park, Historical Sites or Monuments	24.9	40.5
Fairs and Festivals		
Art and Crafts Fairs	24.5	22.2
Reading		
Reading 20 or more Books a year	10.2	19.4
Summary		
One or other of 8 above Activities	50.1	68.7
Average number of activities, participants	2.3	2.5
Average number of activities, total population	1.1	1.7

Sources: SPPA, 2008. *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

We have not carried out a more detailed analysis of each of the practices according to groups of socio-economic variables. In this comparative analysis, we opted instead for a more global measure of participation, distinguishing participants from non-participants regardless of activity.

3.3.
PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Participation in the arts and in cultural events is not monolithic. It takes different forms in different people: certain prefer the interpretive arts, others visual arts and yet others, literature. We could not, therefore, restrict participation to a single kind of activity, but we instead widened it, as far as possible, to include the different forms it might take. Given the available data, we defined participants as people who devoted themselves to one or another of the eight activities already mentioned, that is 50.1% of the American population and 68.7% of the Quebec

population. Respondents who participated in one or another activity obtained a score of one, and non-participants, a score of zero. Then we carried out a logistical regression analysis using this variable for the United States and for Quebec, with a set of co-variables that we tried to make as consistent as possible between the two studies. Table 3.10 shows all of the variables used in the regression analysis model.

Table 3.11 shows the different factors favouring participation in traditional cultural activities. The order of the factors or variables is their order of entry into the model.[5] Readers can refer to Table 3.12 (p. 64) for the effects of these factors on the index of practices.

It comes as no surprise that education level is the strongest determining factor of cultural practices. All of the studies on cultural practices arrive at the same conclusion. The influence of the family milieu is, however, less frequently measured, the parents' level of education serving as an indicator. We can nevertheless take for granted that a favourable social environment during childhood and adolescence will lead to more diversified cultural experiences. Attitudes towards the arts and culture, taste and practices concerning art and culture are strongly linked to the family's socio-economic and cultural context (Gottesdiener & Vilatte, 2006). Reproducing cultural practices within a family occurs as much or more in a highly heterogeneous society, like the American society, than in a more homogeneous society like Quebec. Moreover, note that generational differences are significant in Quebec, which does not seem to be the case in the United States.

5. In this model, we used the ascending method with a likelihood ratio. Interactions between co-variables were not taken into account.

Table 3.10. Variables in the model comparing cultural practices
in the United States (2008) to those in Quebec (2004)

VARIABLES	UNITED STATES (2008)	QUEBEC (2004)
Dependant variable		
Participation in one or another of the eight activities (No/Yes)	0/1	0/1
Independent variables		
Gender	Male Female	Male Female
Age	18–24 years 25–34 years 35–44 years 45–54 years 55–64 years 65 years and over	18–24 years 25–34 years 35–44 years 45–54 years 55–64 years 65 years and over
Civil status	Married Single Widowed, separated, divorced	Married Single Widowed, separated, divorced
Education level	Less than 7 years 7 years to H.S. diploma College or equivalent University	Elementary school Secondary school College (CEGEP) University
Household size	One person Two persons Three or more persons	One person Two persons Three or more persons
Region	North-east Midwest South West	Centre Peripheral Intermediate Remote
Immigrant parents	Neither One Both parents	Neither One Both parents
Race, ethnicity/language spoken at home	White only Black only Hispanic Asian Other	French English Other
Size of urban area	Less than 100,000 inhab. 100,000–999,999 inhab. 1,000,000 or more	Less than 100,000 inhab. 100,000–999,999 inhab. Island of Montréal
Parents' Education	Low Average High	Low Average High

Table 3.11. Main explanatory factors for participation in traditional cultural activities, United States (2008) and Quebec (2004)

UNITED STATES (2008)	QUEBEC (2004)
Education level	Education level
Parents' education	Age group
Race, ethnicity	Parents' education
Gender	Region
Region	Household size
Civil status	Immigration
Immigration	
Household size	

A factor with a large influence in the United States is race or ethnicity. This latter variable is important in a relationship with culture and in the adoption of behaviours. Its influence has been observed in England (Bridgwood *et al.*, 2003) and in Philadelphia (Stern, Seifert, & Vitiello, 2008). Substantial differences can be observed in the American data between Whites on the one hand, whose participation in cultural activities is the highest, and the Black-only group, the Hispanic group and the Asian group, on the other hand, where participation is much lower. The immigration variable, which can be associated with that of ethnicity, also leads to differing behaviour, but its effect is not as obvious as race and ethnicity. It is interesting to note that people with only one immigrant parent show greater participation in cultural activities than people from the host society, or than people with two immigrant parents. In fact, cultural integration appears to be much more difficult to achieve in the United States when both parents are immigrants. In Quebec, cultural practice also varies according to immigrant status, but cultural integration seems easier to achieve, even when both parents are immigrants. Also in Quebec, participation rates of English speakers are rising compared to French speakers and those whose native tongue is something other than French or English. Values and cultural traditions vary according to race, ethnicity and language. These elements all reflect different social references for different civilizations and can be found in the cultural practices.

Table 3.12. Percentage of the population, 18 and over, attending one
            or another of the eight activities in the United States (2008)
            and in Quebec (2004)

| VARIABLES | UNITED STATES (2008) | | QUEBEC (2004) | |
	CHARACTERISTICS	%	CHARACTERISTICS	%
Gender	Male	43.3	Male	66.9
	Female	50.4	Female	70.5
Age	18–24 years	43.1	18–24 years	69.4
	25–34 years	47.3	25–34 years	67.3
	35–44 years	50.1	35–44 years	68.2
	45–54 years	51.2	45–54 years	71.0
	55–64 years	49.7	55–64 years	70.8
	65 years and over	38.6	65 years and over	65.9
Civil status	Married	50.6	Married	69.8
	Single	44.0	Single	69.5
	Widowed, separated, divorced	40.3	Widowed, separated, divorced	63.7
Education level	Less than 7 years	10.3	Elementary school	42.3
	7 years to H.S. diploma	30.0	Secondary school	56.5
	College or equivalent	53.7	College (CEGEP)	70.5
	University	70.2	University	83.4
Household size	One person	46.0	One person	64.7
	Two persons	48.8	Two persons	71.7
	Three or more persons	46.0	Three or more persons	68.3
Region	North-east	47.7	Centre	75.1
	Midwest	50.4	Peripheral	67.2
	South	40.7	Intermediate	66.2
	West	52.9	Remote	58.7
Immigrant parents	Neither	50.1	Neither	67.9
	One	54.3	One	74.0
	Both parents	33.4	Both parents	72.3
Race, ethnicity/ language spoken at home	White only	53.8	French	67.9
	Black only	28.2	English	77.1
	Hispanic	30.4	Other	69.6
	Asian	39.6		
	Other	46.4		
Size of urban area	Less than 100,000 inhab.	44.0	Less than 100,000 inhab.	63.2
	100,000–999,999 inhab.	48.1	100,000–999,999 inhab.	71.0
	1,000,000 or more	47.5	Island of Montreal	75.7
Parents' Education	Low	27.8	Low	68.4
	Average	45.5	Average	71.3
	High	73.0	High	80.7

Sources: SPPA, 2008. *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

The territorial dimension is another area where marked differences appear. Participation is weakest in the southern United States. More detailed analyses would allow verification as to whether this is due to ethnic and racial demographics in this region. In Quebec, arts activity attendance is higher in central regions (Montreal and Quebec City) than in other regions, specifically remote ones which have fewer artistic institutions. All in all, the structure of determining factors appears more complex for Americans than for Quebecers, thus reflecting greater American social diversity.

3.4.
THE *NON-PUBLIC* OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AMONG THE HIGHER EDUCATION POPULATION

The rest of this study uses the methodology previously described. Activities examined are the eight cultural activities grouped under traditional activities. Moreover, the population studied is not the total population, but one that, in both the United States and in Quebec, has attended university. For this group, we defined *non-public* as those respondents who failed to satisfy the participation criteria specified in Table 3.9. Why does this *non-public*, which possesses the highest educational capital, not participate in artistic activities? Remember that nearly a third of the American university-educated population participated in none of the eight activities, while in Quebec, the proportion was only 17%. Surely there are factors particular to each society that might explain this substantial discrepancy.

Once again, we used binary logistical regression to identify the factors for this abstention.[6] Many of the main predictors for the *non-public* of traditional cultural activities in a university-educated population are similar in both cases even if their influence differs in intensity. The age variable plays a more important role in Quebec than in the United States, while racial and ethnic origin ranks first for Americans. Table 3.13 summarizes explanatory variables regarding a segment of the educated population's reluctance to participate in traditional cultural activities.

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6. Technically, non-participants received a score of zero and participants, a score of one. As in the previous model, we used the ascending method of the binary logistical regression technique with a likelihood ratio. The interaction between co-variables was not taken into account.

Table 3.13. Main predictors of the *non-public* in traditional cultural activities among the university-educated population, United States (2008) and Quebec (2004)

UNITED STATES (2008)	QUEBEC (2004)
Race, ethnicity	Age group
Parents' education	Parents' education
Immigration status	Gender
Gender	Immigration status
Age group	Household size
Household size	Language spoken at home

Table 3.14 shows rates of *non-public* according to the predictors listed above. The influence of gender is greater in the United States than in Quebec. The effect of age in the United States is the opposite of what it is in Quebec. The *non-public* increases with age in the first case, while it decreases in the second. Another interesting point, along the same lines as the preceding observations, is the effect of having or not having immigrant parents. In the United States, educated people from families where both parents are immigrants are less attracted than others to traditional cultural activities. This trend is much less pronounced in Quebec. This effect could, however, result from the propensity to choose spouses from the same race. In the United States, a majority of Asians (94%) and Hispanics (70%) comes from families in which both parents are immigrants, while the rate is much lower for Blacks (16%) and Whites (8%). The impact of school education is, therefore, partially neutralized by the ethnic or racial origin of the family. Moreover, the education level of respondents is correlated to variables of the parents' immigration and education, which could be another explanatory factor for differences observed according to racial background. Lastly, we would like to point out that the incidence of the *non-public* of the arts is higher in people living in big American urban areas than it is in Quebec.

Table 3.14. Rate of *non-public* in traditional cultural activities in the university-educated population, United States (2008) and Quebec (2004)

VARIABLES	UNITED STATES (2008)		QUEBEC (2004)	
	CHARACTERISTICS	%	CHARACTERISTICS	%
Gender	Male	33.3	Male	18.9
	Female	26.3	Female	14.3
Age	18–24 years	26.5	18–24 years	23.0
	25–34 years	34.0	25–34 years	19.9
	35–44 years	28.0	35–44 years	16.5
	45–54 years	25.8	45–54 years	12.8
	55–64 years	28.8	55–64 years	14.8
	65 years and over	34.5	65 years and over	13.7
Immigrant parents	Neither	26.5	Neither	15.5
	One	23.9	One	22.6
	Both parents	43.7	Both parents	19.2
Race, ethnicity/ language spoken at home	White only	25.8	French	16.0
	Black only	40.6	English	13.0
	Hispanic	42.6	Other	22.9
	Asian	47.7		
	Other	30.1		
Size of urban area	Less than 100,000 inhab.	26.2	Less than 100,000 inhab.	18.2
	100,000–999,999 inhab.	28.4	100,000–999,999 inhab.	15.9
	1,000,000 or more	31.1	Island of Montreal	15.9
Parents' Education	Low	43.9	Low	15.7
	Average	30.7	Average	19.1
	High	18.9	High	14.2

Sources: SPPA, 2008. *Enquête sur les pratiques culturelles des Québécois*, 2004, Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

It would have been interesting to push further in the analysis of interrelations between factors capable of explaining how *non-publics* are formed, but this exceeds the ambitions of this article.

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that participation in artistic activities has been declining in the United States and in Quebec for several years, signalling a restructuring of cultural spaces based on parameters linked to mass culture and popular culture. This change is occurring faster in major consumers of culture: the youth and people with higher education. The article has also highlighted the main determining factors of participation by showing how their influence operates in American society and in Quebec society. Lastly, it has tried to identify certain factors that might explain why one segment of the highly educated

population refrains from participating in traditional cultural activities. In concluding this exercise, some observations can be made about the renewal of cultural practices, and new ways can be sought to define cultural capital.

It seems that the values of traditional culture have increasingly less influence on cultural practices in the United States and in Quebec. The younger generations, as well as the most educated groups, are adopting new references inspired by existential and hedonistic values. Thus schooling, despite its continuing strong impact on the acquisition of cultural habits, seems to have lost its influence in the sphere of traditional cultural activities with the arrival of generalized access to higher education. The resulting new elites, less subject to the dictates of scholarship, are open to a great diversity of cultural forms. They still love art, but their tastes are increasingly determined by their own subjectivity, wonder, pleasure and self-expression. We see signs of this in the growing crowds in art museums. This phenomenon is caused, in large part, by new museum approaches, in which exhibitions, especially large exhibitions, become events like other events in a society that prizes entertainment. Art museums seem to have put more energy into their educational role and into their economic and social integration. On the contrary, participation in the interpretive arts, like theatre, classical music concerts and ballet is more common for the older generations and the traditional elites. These trends show how the cultural field structures itself on the basis of social standing and generational affiliation. They clearly indicate that new generations are renewing cultural values in society. On the other hand, the decline and aging of the arts audience raises questions about the financial survival of artistic companies and the renewal of their *publics*. Artistic companies must train and develop their *publics* through art education (McCarthy, 2001; Zakaras & Lowell, 2008) and they must adopt communications and marketing strategies adapted to the present day if they want to keep and renew their audience (Bernstein, 2007).

Another important point worth emphasizing is the ever-increasing marginalization of the interpretive arts in American society. A minority of people attend them and those who do are mainly White and cultured. One might ask if an "American" culture exists, or whether there are several cultures beyond the culture delivered by the mass media, which changes depending on the characteristics of a given race or ethnicity. Demographic changes due to declining birth rates and renewal of the population through immigration are altering the cultural landscape of Western societies, especially in the big urban areas where the immigrant population generally lives. In these multi-ethnic communities, it is increasingly rare that the culture of one group can impose itself as the dominant culture and culture of reference. The American example is instructive in this regard. One also sees big territorial divides between a country's regions,

and between urban centres and rural areas. Fundamentally, these changes indicate that new identities are being formed, as diverse in ethnicity and race as in generation and territory, bringing with them the potential for conflict.

The approach we used in research carried out for this article was to measure arts activity, defined as attending an arts institution or reading a certain number of books. On this basis, we distinguished *public* from *non-public*, and sought out the factors involved in forming the *public*. This approach has its dangers, as it depends on behaviours occupying a marginal place in everyday cultural life. For practitioners, museum visits and outings to watch shows occur only a few times a year, while television might occupy several hours every day. Even if these outings are more characteristic of people with a greater educational capital and a higher socio-economic status, they remain exceptional moments of social distinction. This method, based on the exercise of or abstention from an activity, deserves to be explored further to obtain complementary observations of cultural practices, especially the time devoted to such activities and the expenditures made. Perhaps investment in time and money will offer another perception of people's priorities in the creation of their "cultural capital." Perhaps, for a sizable segment of the population, cultural differentiation is associated more with owning a home movie theatre and a high-definition television set than with periodic nights out to watch a play, an opera or a concert of classical music.

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Chapter 4

PUBLICS AND *NON-PUBLICS* OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
TWO STUDIES ON DIFFERENTIATED EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND DISINTEREST

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For those interested in high culture and the debate over its democratization, the issue of the *public* (or *publics*) is very important. Is the *public* the sum of those who, by taste or habit, read great literature, attend the theatre or art film houses, listen to the opera, visit several museums and monuments a year, and so forth? The high esteem and social regard enjoyed by this type of culture could explain why we consider its distribution and appropriation important objectives. This is why the issue of knowing how artistic or literary creation can affect the widest segment of the population has been used in constructing the ideology of democratization. The right of access to culture, even though it may be no more than a claim, still constitutes a central element in any cultural policy.

Counting the audience at a cultural show or the number of entries into a museum or temporary exhibition is not merely a statistical obsession. It is about assessing how artistic creation manages to affect the population. It is also a way of gauging cultural demand, of predicting fluctuations or calculating the geographical distribution and size of facilities in a territory; in short, of managing culture and ensuring its dissemination.

In most developed countries, we know that the *public* of high culture is at the most a powerful minority, stable enough and more or less loyal. It renews itself (again, more or less) from generation to generation ensuring the transmission and perpetuation of culture. And yet, as soon as the total number of viewers of a play becomes significant, or a cultural television program attracts audiences greatly exceeding the average, or a classical symphony orchestra records a hit, we are astonished.

All it takes is a temporary exhibition attracting a record number of visitors, or visits at the Louvre surpassing those at the Eiffel Tower and we declare an "art rush," or a "museum boom." As if the fact of drawing a larger public were almost extravagant, and it alone could sometimes suffice as proof of this culture's universality or, more simply, as a factor in the debate over the qualities of a cultural offering.

The willingness to open access to high culture to the *non-public*, which originated in the performing arts milieu, also infiltrated the domain of cultural heritage and museums, to the point of becoming one of the major premises of the policy of promoting monuments and collections. And thus imposing everywhere not just a revitalization of the methods of promotion and distribution (in museums, the organization of temporary exhibitions designed as events; for monuments, creating tours or interpretative tools), but also a willingness to provide the educational means and to train a new category of professionals whose duties involve facilitating the appropriation of content by placing it increasingly within the reach of the ordinary public (Jacobi, Meunier, & Romano, 2000). Mediations and mediators henceforth become the spearhead in winning over the *non-practising public*.

The *public* as a social entity – since the only certitude we possess of the relevance of this designation derives from its presence here and now and the act of consenting to take part in culture – distinguishes itself from the rest of the population, which, for opposing reasons, is not there and does not participate. In other words, identifying and recognizing a small group as *public* is tantamount to establishing the rest of population as *non-public* (even if, as is most often the case, it is the bigger segment of the population). *A priori*, then, the most basic definition of the concept of *non-public* is all those who are not *public*, thus all those who do not

participate in any way and under any circumstance. The *public* is formed in constant opposition to its twin, the *non-public*. And it will be the latter that mediators will make their mission to court and woo.[1]

And yet, are we sure what a *public* is? How does the random congregation (resulting from all kinds of heterogeneous factors) of a group of individuals, often very different from each other, manage to provide unity and consistency to a disparate group to such an extent that it creates a *public* (Dayan, 1992)? If calling this group a *public* matters, is this not because it is far from being an ordinary, intermittent congregation of individuals, distinguished from the rest of the population by its tastes or its practices? And at the end of the day, what does it mean to be a *public* of cultural heritage?

In order to function, this opposition assumes that the *non-public* is not so much a group of non-participants as a group of individuals lacking the skills to enable them to decipher and appreciate a culture which is largely unknown or even downright foreign to them. This group is incapable of becoming a *public* given the gulf separating its own culture from high culture, whose contents and appropriation codes it has not mastered.

What exactly does being a *public* mean? Is it enough to attend, to be present or to participate to be considered a *public*? Probably not. Being a *public* means showing "good taste," knowing the set of constituent rules and behaviours, and having more than just a sense of *savoir faire*. It means maintaining a sort of relationship with a cultural domain, whether this relationship be distant, eclectic or passionate. These implicit conditions for being a *public* can only result from intense, diligent practice. Regarding cultural patrimony, what constitutes the opposition between *public* and *non-public*? Two case studies taken from recent investigations undertaken on both sides of the Atlantic will allow us to examine this opposition.

4.1.
VISITORS TO THE CITY OF ARLES AND A PASSION FOR *OLD STONES*

Statistics concerning tourist activity in Provence indicate a considerable number of people choosing to come go there each year, attracted by the glowing reputation of the architecture and heritage in the best known

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1. The use of the term *non-public* is by default. Any denial of its existence is both brutal and absurd. The *public*'s main reservoir is the *non-public*. It is all those that everyone wishes to conquer. Does the passage from one status to the other constitute an act of good faith? It is interesting to note that for several years professionals in the cultural domain have used euphemisms like *thwarted publics* and *marginalized publics* to suggest that culture is always open to everyone and that it is not a question of blaming anyone.

towns or villages.[2] It seems, therefore, that historical monuments, the heritage of ancient monuments or even archaeology attract not only large numbers of visitors, but also a very wide *public*.

Of course the motivations of those choosing to visit this region of France are varied. The climate and certainty of good weather, the number and quality of beaches where one can swim in safety, the reputation of the food and landscape are every bit as important as the label "City of Art and History," or "World Heritage Site of great value to all humanity" (awarded by UNESCO), which certain cities (Arles, Nîmes) or monuments (the Pont du Gard Aqueduct, the Popes' Palace in Avignon) requested and were awarded.

We undertook several empirical sociological enquiries in order to examine visitors to the cultural heritage of the City of Arles, one of the most popular and renowned cities in the world (Jacobi & Denise, 2007; Jacobi, Ethis, *et al.*, 2001). These investigations enabled us not only to prepare a precise description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the City's visitors, of its principal Roman monuments and of its remarkable museum of ancient archaeology, but also to describe the visitors' visiting practices and motivations.

By investigating with sociological methods that were more rigorous than the classic ways of counting crowds of tourists who visit a city, we noticed that the *public* who visit Provence's principal ancient monuments, for example, are indistinguishable from the *public* regularly identified in various studies on museum and monument visits. Visitors of ancient heritage are not "tourists" in the usual, slightly pejorative sense that this term has come to acquire (Urbain, 2002).

With regards to motivations for visiting the principal Roman monuments of Provence, whether entry is paid or free, the *public* is not made up of a normal crowd of vacationers arriving there by chance. A taste for history and archaeology and, more generally, cultural and educational preoccupations, clearly topped the list of motivations. Three quarters of visitors questioned were regular visitors, or even very regular visitors of heritage facilities. Ancient monuments and excavations attracted them more than museums. The vast majority came from afar (barely 10% of the annual public was from the local or regional area) and culture was an important component of their travel and holiday plans.[3] Foreigners (one out of two) and those from afar, i.e. from Paris or other regions of France (almost a third), were the most numerous and their presence in the monument did not depend on the weather (they visited even when the weather was beautiful).

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2. Rapport du Comité régional du tourisme, 2008.
3. This characteristic was measured by the distance (+/– 150 km) between the site and the place of residence.

Again we noted, unsurprisingly, that the *public* questioned during this enquiry generally had been through higher education (over two thirds, although the nature of their studies did not seem decisive). With regards to profession, just as with the length of study, executives and intellectuals (over a third), along with intermediary professions (half as numerous) topped the list.

This assessment tends to back up the idea that the *public* visiting monuments, including during their vacation, or for reasons linked to tourism, is no different from the *public* that usually attends museums and heritage facilities. This situation explains why the expectations of the questioned visitors tended to be high and why they were so quick to criticize. Their level of satisfaction was generally only "moderate" when they were questioned at the site-exits. Expressions of real dissatisfaction, which, as we know, are rare (it is rather the number of non-responses that dominates, representing just under two-thirds of respondents), took the form of relatively heterogeneous complaints and accusations. What dominated the criticism in Arles was, first, the conflict between the heritage monument itself and the installations for the live shows;[4] next came the lack of interpretation devices, and finally, the dirtiness of sites and poor maintenance.[5]

So who are these two million or so visitors[6]? To learn more about this, we undertook a qualitative study of the tourist public of the City of Arles, simultaneously questioning three categories of visitors in three distinct places: at the exit of the most frequently visited monument (the Roman amphitheatre), at the entrance or exit of the Musée départemental de l'Arles Antique and on the Place de la République, in front of the city hall and the Roman portal of the Saint-Trophime Church. This picturesque square is a street market area and the terminal point of the city's most frequented on-foot itinerary.

This study demonstrates that, on average, visitors to the City of Arles spend half a day there. The most frequent practice of small groups, either families or friends, arriving most often by car, is a walking tour in which cultural and commercial aspects are both mixed and conti-nuous. This urban loop (starting at the parking lot and returning there) is fairly intuitive. People simply go with the flow of other pedestrians, making sure they memorize the spot where they parked their vehicle, as if they were scared of getting lost and not finding their car again. The tour can include, or not, paying visits to the no less than six monuments,

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4. Ancient monuments (and others) are used during the summer as presentation sites for live shows. This forces organizers to install stages, control rooms, foot lamps and seats for spectators in them.
5. Considering the success with which this was met, few recent improvements have been made to these ancient monuments. Compared with other sites, they have very few mediation devices.
6. Statistics published by the Comité départemental du tourisme.

three museums and other cultural sites. All summer long, for instance, several photography exhibitions are organized by *Les Rencontres photographiques d'Arles.*

The shortness of their stay stemmed generally from the fact that, for these visitors, Arles was part of a more comprehensive trip including other sites (Les Baux, Nîmes, the Pont du Gard, etc.) or other activities (a visit to the Camargue, a swim at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, etc.).

> *Arles? There's not much there. We're not going to see any more. What we really hope to see is the Camargue. We're going there tomorrow.* **We'll do** *Nîmes and the Pont du Gard... and after that, we'll do Aix and Marseille. And then, well, had there been more at Arles we would've stayed, or let's say we would have come back tomorrow. We arrived today and planned to* **do a little tour** *and then return tomorrow to really visit the town. But now we're realizing it isn't worth it.* **We did everything** *today, in one fell swoop. We're not coming back tomorrow* (Young couple of walkers from New Zealand).

In other words, among the two million or so tourists welcomed by this little city, only a minority engage in the practice of a cultural visit, in the usual sense of this term.

> *This isn't the first time I've come to Arles, but I've never visited it thoroughly. I know the work done by Actes-Sud on the city and I'm interested in the renovations on the SNCF construction site* [...] **I did** *the main monuments, Saint-Trophime, the Roman Arena... not the museums, really, but I've seen lots of exhibitions relating to Arles, so the sites where they're located... I could trace them on the map, but I wouldn't know exactly what to tell you; I wouldn't know, for instance, how to go back a second time, but I like these little squares, the narrow, winding streets, that's what really speaks to me in Arles* (Lone male, 49, on a business trip).

By contrasting these two types of commentary, we see how culture applies only to part of the tourist population. Most of the people questioned generally did not follow the advice in the tourist guide-books (for example, the stars ranking the major sites) or that of the City Tourist Office, which estimates a minimum stay of three days in order to explore the entire city and its heritage really *well*. The proof is the small number of multiple-entry tickets sold every year (around ten thousand) even though the pass offers a very good deal for visiting six monuments and three museums.

The Roman amphitheatre is the most visited site, receiving an average of 400,000 visitors per year. The most visited museum (an excellent archaeological museum, in a modern building, quite far from the centre

of town,) receives fewer than 100,000 visitors a year on average. Consequently, if we add all those entering at least one museum or monument, we approach one million entrances per year (according to the ticket figures from the municipal heritage department). Taking into account that a minority of this *public* actually enters several sites (and in this case, in three or four different places), what does visiting Arles mean to the vast majority of those passing through this city?

> *Arles? Yes, I already knew it.* **We did it***, uh, a long time ago already, and as we were in the area, we wanted to come back* (Elderly female accompanied by husband, pensioners).

What do all the other people claiming to have "***done***" Arles do? What does it mean to visit a city? That is what this investigation sought to discover. Those content with a stroll through the city did not resemble those paying for entry to a monument, and less still those entering a museum. People visiting monuments and museums were notably different from the rest of the population, as stated above. As for the museum visitors, they were even more different: more cultured and better educated; they were also better informed and planned their visiting activities in advance.

Visitors to monuments and museums, unlike those who simply strolled around the city, were also prepared and armed in advance with documentation. They had a travel guide with them, or printed pages downloaded from the Internet and, more rarely, a flyer from the city's Tourist Office. They alone managed to locate exactly where they were on the town map. It is in the comments from this minority group that proof can be found of a certain conceptualization of the visiting activity (Jacobi, 2005). The visitor chooses what he or she wants to visit and plans the visit by whatever means of locomotion he or she deems appropriate (on foot or by taking the car again to get to the museum which is far from the downtown center).

In contrast to this, intuitive and improvised walking tours ("*Following our noses*," as one young couple put it) seemed like vague, unspecified strolls during which interest for the street market stalls mixed with curiosity of a more cultural nature. They flitted from the facades of specific hotels to shop windows; from a search for souvenirs to small subsistence purchases (drinks, restaurant food); from the colour of the shutters to the menus in a pizzeria.

> *It's true we like the different places. . .nor necessarily the city's most beautiful or interesting places, but we're attracted by an ambiance, an atmosphere* (Elderly female accompanied by husband, pensioners).

A couple also described visiting the city in the following way: "*We did all the streets, just for the heck of it, to try and get a glimpse a bit of everything going on*" (Parisian couple, teachers). These walkers were not particularly attracted by a given type of heritage (in Arles, Ancient, Roman and Baroque monuments are all side by side). Some people preferred the Roman period, others were simply attracted by the facades, the alleyways or a cobblestone staircase. In speaking about it, visitors displayed a lexicon of their own. They did not use either the term *monument* or the vocabulary of architecture; the expression "old stones" seemed to come more naturally to them.

> When you see **old stones** *like that, you go in and look* (Lone male, 49, on a business trip).

By assimilating the entire architectural heritage to a reductive collection of *old stones*, they both neutralized the heritage itself, and radically removed any sense of hierarchy of its qualities. The result was a vague picturesque canvas of the town where everything was the same. To speak of what they saw, they employed simple words saying they liked this "décor," or "old things," or "anything historical."

This group was not, however, homogeneous. It included individuals differing markedly from each other. Some made only a brief foray into the city and even had trouble locating their visit itinerary on a map of the town-center.

> We started down there and did the market. After, we did the Forum square, after that the Roman Arena, and then we came here. And we'll take off again in the direction of the car (Couple, Shopkeepers, Southwest France).

Others mixed up monuments (the ancient theatre and the amphitheatre due to the homophony) whose silhouettes they glimpsed only in passing.

> We did see the Amphitheatre [they mean the Ancient Theatre] through the fence, though, and then we walked through the little alleyways (Couple in their forties, Belgian business executives).

Even more astonishing, a segment of these walkers assigned properties to the city that it does not possess. They described the colours of facades, for instance, while Arles is mostly a grey city. In essence, they reduced the city to a set of old stones seen through a filter of conventional clichés of what "being in Provence" means. What they discovered there were images from television shows or post cards.

I adore heritage. Anything associated with heritage, the old stones, energizes me... not that my husband understands (Retired teacher, Biarritz).

I think the streets are really beautiful, the neighbourhoods are magnificent... you walk around, it's a real pleasure. The streets are tiny. It's wonderful, but it's disappointing to see there's no respect for these old stones! Yesterday that was what really made us sick (Young couple of walkers, New Zealand).

An analysis of the conversational content of tourists who, for instance, did not visit the museum (regardless of whether they entered another monument or not) showed, however, that they knew everything about the heritage and cultural resources on offer. With some visitors, a sort of paradoxical attitude could be detected. They knew of the museum's existence. Their judgments about it were full of praise, but still they did not visit it and had no intention of doing so. The story was the same for many of the City of Arles's own citizens. It was as if visitors to the city felt that either the museum was not for them, or that it did not correspond to the type of attraction that had enticed them to come to Arles in the first place. This was not necessarily because it was considered a difficult place to visit; rather, it was perceived as an "educational" place associated with academic demands that people shied away from on holiday or, more generally, in their leisure hours.

With the conclusion of this first part, it is worth reiterating the main point. Failing to visit a museum is not the result of a lack of information or ignorance, but of a lack of attraction for its function. We shall now turn our attention to the example of individuals entering a fine arts museum, and look at an investigation conducted in Quebec.

4.2.
WHEN MUSEUMS HOPE TO ATTRACT A VAST *PUBLIC* BY ORGANIZING A SUPER-EXHIBITION: THE CASE OF *ETERNAL EGYPT*

The history of *publics* of "high" culture is particular because it is directly linked to an enduring preoccupation of those in charge of culture: how to attract a wider public, much wider than the already converted and already culturally-aware elite, to fine arts museums. This focus on the *non-public*, as opposed to the already-converted *public*, explicitly corresponds to the great plan to democratize culture, a leitmotiv in most cultural policies. This concern pushed major museums not only to

organize temporary exhibitions (creating events), but also to choose spectacular themes for them in order to make them highly attractive (*blockbusters*, we call them, using the analogy of the movies).[7]

The *Eternal Egypt: Masterpieces from the British Museum's Ancient Art Collection* exhibition is a good example.[8] It was shown at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art (MMFA) from January 27 to May 22, 2005. Nearly 220,000 people visited this exhibition, which in 2009 corresponded to the biggest number of visitors to a MMFA exhibition since 2000 (when 330,000 people visited the exhibition *From Renoir to Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie*).

In the exhibition catalogue, the Ford Motor Company (the main sponsor) wrote:

> Egyptian art is unique in its capacity to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds. The whole world is touched by the majesty of the pyramids, the mystery of ancient tombs and the magic of Egyptian decorative art (Russmann, 2004: 5.).

Museum personnel (from the curator to the head of communications) confirmed that this *blockbuster* was targeting a *wide public*. We chose reading week (spring break) of most educational institutions in Quebec as our time period for undertaking two studies; one quantitative, the other qualitative. During this week a much larger number of young people with relatively less schooling and less money (characteristics corresponding to what professionals in the field call a "*wide public*") can go to museums.

To compare the *public* and *non-public* of a given exhibition, we undertook a survey by questionnaire of a sample of 794 people, composed of 401 people who had visited the *Eternal Egypt* exhibition, and 394 sociologically comparable people who had not visited an art museum for the last three years (Luckerhoff *et al.*, 2009). The objective of this investigation was to discover if personal values could also predict attendance at art museums, once they were added to classic variables

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7. The word "blockbuster" is professional jargon and there is no agreed definition of an exhibition of this type. Attendance scores are what transform a temporary exhibition with a popular theme into a blockbuster. It is worth noting that the all-time attendance record for a temporary exhibition in France still belongs to *Tutankhamun and his Times* organized in Paris at the Petit Palais in 1967 over 40 years ago. That exhibition attracted approximately 1,240,000 visitors.
8. One of the biggest travelling exhibitions ever mounted from the collections of the British Museum, *Eternal Egypt: Masterpieces of Ancient Art from the British Museum* was designed to illustrate the evolution and accomplishments of ancient Egyptian art over a period of more than three thousand years. Visitors could admire 144 works of art, including sculptures, reliefs, papyrus, ostraca, jewels and cosmetic and funeral items from the entire history of the Pharaohs from the first dynasty to the Roman occupation in the fourth century A.D. The show was chronological, divided into four eras: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, the New Kingdom and the Late Period. The exhibition's itinerary followed this chronology.

like income, education and cultural capital. The theoretical model involving Schwartz's values (1994), tested in numerous countries, was used as a methodological support in carrying out the investigation.[9]

In summary, predictors for visiting this exhibition were, going from the most important to the least: family income, education level, the value *self-direction*, the value *aesthetics*, the value *spirituality*, the value *benevolence* and the value *stimulation*.[10] This shows that values relating to openness to change positively predicted visits to this kind of exhibition in an art museum, while values linked to tradition or conservatism negatively predicted it. This study shows, therefore, that even a *blockbuster* targeting a *wide public* appeals only to *publics* that conform perfectly to the criteria cited by Bourdieu in the 1960s for art museums in France in particular and in Europe in general (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1969). They live in a different world from that of non-visitors, not merely because of their higher levels of education and income, but because of different personal values.

A quantitative investigation, however, revealed little about the lives of visitors and non-visitors and about their depictions of the museum. This is why we also conducted a qualitative study favouring an exploratory, open approach. As part of the group discussions, we questioned a random sample of regular and dedicated fine arts museum visitors and a random sample of people who had not been inside one of these museums for at least three years. The investigation allowed us to contrast comments made by the *public* of an art exhibition with those made by people not practising this type of visit, as well as with those of museum personnel and members of the Friends of the Museum Association. We asked them about this MMFA exhibition and, beyond this, tried to gather their views on art museum attendance and the accessibility of similar cultural institutions.[11]

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9. The Schwartz Value Survey was tested in numerous countries (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) and was designed to be adapted to different cultural contexts with universality as its goal. Schwartz defined values as desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance and that serve as guiding principles in the lives of individual people or social entities.

10. To learn more about the subject of this quantitative study, we refer the reader to the following article: Luckerhoff, J., Perreault, S., Garon, R., Lapointe, M.-C., & Nguyên-Duy, V. (2009). Visiting art museums: Adding values and constraints to socio-economic status. *Loisir et Société, 31*(1).

11. We organized eight focus groups: one with members of the MMFA's administration, two with people who had not visited an art museum over the last three years, two with people who had visited an art museum over the last year and three with people who were members of the MMFA's Friends of the Museum Association (considered museum members). Group discussions with administrators took over two hours and the others took an hour and a half, on average. The eight group discussions gave rise to just over 350 pages of transcripts.

We were not surprised to learn that people who do not habitually visit art museums do not feel at home in this environment. They regard the institution as a place where people can show off in public. They would prefer the art museum to display works of art in an atmosphere that is dynamic, friendlier and more interactive.

I would make it a little less boring. More interactive, some information on the artist. It should move a little more. Visual presentations, maybe, for the history (Non-visitor, male, 35).

Furthermore, they believe an art museum's mission should be to help people understand more, whereas they find that today the mission of a museum seems to be more presenting works of art to experts.

It isn't welcoming. I haven't gone often, but I went to art galleries when I was younger. You get there and it's really haughty, it's almost like who's going to get the most beautiful or the biggest preview. The true "connoisseur" gets himself noticed and then you come along with a little glass of wine and you speak, but you don't dare speak because you get the impression that whatever you say will be slightly ridiculed. I'd feel less alone, all alone at home, than I would be in the crowd there. It's what I feel, anyway. It's a little clique (Non-visitor, female, 25).

Non-visitors are under the impression that they are the only ones unfamiliar with the works shown. They consider written material unreadable and uninteresting. They find the general atmosphere cold, the opposite of the human warmth for which they are searching. They contrast the visit to an art museum with, for instance, a comedy show, which would be much lighter and would necessitate no preliminary preparation; which would, in their view, be warmer. Not being able to speak out aloud, and being reprimanded by the security guard are recurrent examples in non-visitor discourse:

Just walking into the museum, you feel obliged to whisper. . . (Non-visitor, male, 55).

The marble floors and clothes of the visitors are other examples frequently raised:

Let's say I shut my eyes and try to picture an art museum. What I see are men dressed in suits and ties, and ladies in long skirts, decked with jewels. It's high society. A marble floor, like you see in movies. It's classy. That's the picture you get in your head. I have no desire at all to get into that. You don't feel good in there. They don't speak like us,

with ordinary vocabulary, those experts tossing about their terms. . .
You're embarrassed, you're not in your element. Admitting my
ignorance, forget that! (Non-visitor, female, 40).

The last sentence of this quotation, which evokes a fear of seeming ignorant while visiting an art museum, is more or less subtly implicit in numerous examples concerning other people's dress, the décor and the obligation to show a certain restraint. Repeated mention of this constraint along with the fact that it was always mentioned after a long list of annoying elements indicate that it might rank among the most important.

Non-visitors have the impression that art museums design and organize exhibitions that are not for them. They speak, therefore, of "de-stereotyping" art museums to make them more accessible:

Art museums are for the upper class. All other forms are aimed more
at the masses. This is another culture that we barely know. I don't
think my parents go to an art museum even once a year. I see two
forms of categories, really. They're separate. The general public won't
take the step. They won't be tempted to go there. Unless, for instance,
if the theme at the art museum was humour. But as long as not
everyone is getting access to the information, it couldn't be more
impenetrable. The people targeted will remain artistic individuals.
There's no accessibility for everyone. Of course, they have to enlarge
the established public, but art museums also need to be
"de-stereotyped" (Non-visitor, female, 20).

In contrast, members of the Friends of the Museum Association, who are without question a loyal elite, are hostile to any change. They fear a *levelling downwards*. In their estimation, art museums fulfill their mission, and the democratization of culture and accessibility could perhaps harm them:

You say there's no danger in democratizing the arts? Basically,
you'll slowly lower the value of our artists and masters. No. You have
to watch out here. . . At any rate, if it means levelling downwards,
I'm dead-set against it. If you have to regurgitate it for them
beforehand – a Rembrandt or a Picasso – so they can appreciate it,
I don't know. Democratization that facilitates access I support.
But if it's to make it. . . to trivialize it, no way! There are people who
will never be interested in the arts, even if you try to enlighten them
(Friend of the Museum, male, 50).

Like dedicated visitors, museum officials feel that everyone should have access to museums if they wanted it, and do not really understand why non-visitors are not interested in art museums. For museum professionals, the distinction between high culture and popular culture

is irrelevant and has nothing to do with reality. During the investigation, they did, however, differentiate numerous times in the course of the group discussions between the general public and a specialized *public*.

> It is, in effect, a concern for everyone working in conservation to organize things so that what we show is of interest to the greatest number of people, but we are aware that we can't reach the greatest number with each project. So when I spoke of trying to strike a balance, it's really a balance over time in the diversity of projects, but also a "public" balance, if you will. We consciously try, as we must, to reach the greatest number of people in certain instances, and in other exhibitions we aim for another type of "public." There are not only two "publics": either the little microcosmic "public" or the vast general public. A wide range of "publics" exist. I think that for each project we are sufficiently conscious of the range of different "publics" and the attempt to strike a balance is very, very deliberate in that regard (MMFA employee).

Nevertheless, non-visitors confirmed that if exhibitions included more interactive audiovisual material, if one were permitted to speak while visiting, and if texts could be short and comprehensible, art museums would attract more visitors. Visitors and non-visitors, therefore, had expectations regarding art museums that were almost diametrically opposed. Members of Friends of the Museum and dedicated visitors felt that art museums should educate visitors to enable them to appreciate works considered great, noble or legitimate.

An analysis of non-visitors' comments shows that they were fully aware of the museum offer but that they did not feel concerned by it and were not ashamed to say so:

> I wasn't brought up with it and I don't miss it. I don't feel like a dummy because I don't know [. . .] I don't miss it, at any rate. I didn't know Riopelle and it didn't really bother me (Non-visitor, female, 30).

The people who did not visit this exhibition did, however, know that it existed and tended to lavish praise when speaking of it. When asked why they did not go to it, they did not denigrate the institution, but explained that the museum was simply not for them:

> I have the impression that it's a sort of circular argument. It's like, if you put all kinds of fancy things around, it might interest other people. Only you might spoil the art a little, or lose its real nature or distract people who could really appreciate it. You have to ask yourself what's the most profitable. Do you want to make money or do you want to offer a service for appreciating art? . . .
> (Non-visitor, male, 40).

The judgments only become negative when the respondents are invited to explain why they do not visit museums. This attitude brings to light a paradox: the museum itself does not interest them as such, yet they do not criticize the legitimacy of its present configuration.

> *An art museum is a morbid place! Very, very cold. Really! And the*
> *silence. . . Don't make a sound. What if you want to move, just at that*
> *moment? But, I guess it's normal, it's a museum after all, it's*
> *understandable. But on the other hand. . . Yes, it's very, very morbid.*
> *I don't know if there is any other way to show all that to the younger*
> *visitors, without necessarily disturbing those who are there,*
> *who know all that, and who appreciate it the way it is* (Non-visitor,
> 25 year-old woman).

What should we make of this paradox, and why didn't the *Eternal Egypt* exhibition manage to attract the public it had hoped for? Museum officials are convinced that right today *blockbusters* have become inevitable if their institution is to survive. Exhibitions targeting a wider *public* both please private-sector partners and meet government objectives of cultural democratization.

From the start of the group discussions during the investigation, the museum administrators explained clearly that they wanted to satisfy two distinct publics:

> [. . .] *I think that one concern of conservation is that even if we show*
> *a general-public subject, there is always a desire inside this*
> *general-public subject to go more deeply into the subject for*
> *the clientele that is really more specialized* (MMFA employee).

Even if they want to make art museums more accessible to the general public, the officials make sure, when they plan their exhibitions, that their usual visitors will also be satisfied. By proposing, for instance, to introduce them to lesser-known works:

> *There is also a deliberate choice to select the works of lesser-known*
> *artists for experienced, more regular visitors so that they too can find*
> *what they want in the blockbuster* (MMFA employee).

Is it possible to satisfy both a dedicated *public*, prepared and educated, and a *public* that knows nothing about the subject, even if it means changing or adapting the contents of the offer? This paradox sums up quite well the situation of fine arts museums, which, in many developed countries have thrown themselves into a race for visitors and the conquest of a supposed *non-public*. Now we shall try, by bringing the two case studies together, to shed some light on the implications of the quest for the *non-public*.

4.3.
HOW TO BECOME
A FULL-FLEDGED *PUBLIC*

Is encouraging walks through a city with a rich architectural heritage and attracting non-visitors, exceptionally, to a spectacular super-exhibition enough to demonstrate that one has managed to interest a *non-public* in high culture? The two examples just raised show quite clearly that this is not the case. Designating all participants in the tourist economy as a legitimate *public*, or changing a museum's offer so that it is more attractive, is not sufficient to transform the *non-public* into a *public* of cultural heritage.

First, the cultural offer would risk disqualification. When the cultural officials of a city congratulate themselves for welcoming over two million visitors, they stay well away from separating out those passing through the city on their way to the beach from those coming to watch a bull-fight and those coming solely to explore monuments and museums. Cultural tourism is a specific genre in which, and this is not stressed often enough, culture and heritage are merely an alibi, a sort of window dressing for a variety of often very different motivations. The influx of large numbers of tourists obeys above all the laws of commerce and, more generally, economics.

The City of Arles, with a massive budget deficit and today more or less deprived of industrial production, owes its survival to tourist resources.[12] Henceforth, the discussion about which parameters to use for counting the public can be neither purely economic (duration of holiday, number of nights or meals, amount of expenditures agreed to), nor purely statistical (monument or museum entries, number of tourist documents distributed). Just as the spontaneous discourse about cultural tourist visits – referring to brief forays and superficial discoveries of an assorted bunch of "old stones"— is not sufficient proof of a sophisticated cultural activity. In short, the majority of tourists discern only a very intuitive and vague value of antiquity (in Riegl's sense, 1984) in the monuments scattered throughout the city.

Similarly, due to the very high costs involved in organizing large, original temporary exhibitions, and because of the limited resources from entrance tickets, museums solicit patrons or corporate sponsors to cover part of the expenses. This situation probably accentuates the need either to attain record crowds every time, or, at least, to set highly ambitious attendance objectives.

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12. The last two big industrial employers of the district (Les Salins du Midi at Salin-de-Giraud and the paper mills) are on the point of shutting down their activities.

The increasingly important role played by private financial assistance in the cultural sector seems widespread in all developed countries.[13] A study on participation in art shows by big businesses since the 1980s (Wu, 2002) showed that corporate sponsors of artistic events have switched status from that of relatively anonymous financial partners to promoters on the look-out for popular artistic events.

Should one consider, as certain officials do, a *blockbuster* as the perfect example of a democratized exhibition? According to this view, a spectacular exhibition with a big budget and huge media hype is enough to draw the *non-public*. Other professionals, as we have seen, however, feel that the attraction created for the museum depends neither on the choice of the exhibition's theme, nor on the manner of its presentation, but rather on the way the public is treated within the museum, by adapting contents or by mediation tools:

> *We're not going to achieve a spirit of democratization and accessibility by, pardon me for putting this bluntly, debasing the product. It will be by making our visitors evolve* (MMFA employee).

> *Democratization is rendering accessible. There is no need to specify the object. It's the process that is the essence of democratization. Thus whatever we exhibit, the work on democratization comes before* (MMFA employee).

Finally, two paths are available to museum professionals in their conquest of a new *public*: they can either adapt the offer to suit the interests of a *public* that does not usually participate, or they can increase the forms of mediation(s) to make legitimate forms of culture accessible. All museums hesitate between these two paths, which has provoked a slight divergence in approaches to exhibition design (Ballé & Poulot, 2004). Is it necessary to sacrifice the most esoteric exhibitions in favour of those with more popular themes? McClellan (2003) believes that museums anxious to attract the general public prefer big, successful exhibitions and choose themes that were previously excluded from the annals of art history. In short, he accuses them of selecting more commercial products, which obviously draws vehement criticism from their peers. The risk of disqualification can be found between the lines of any exhibition policy wishing above all to be popular.

And yet, the obligation to produce results (henceforth, we have become obsessed by audience ratings which has led to setting up all sorts of specialized entities devoted to audience analysis) concerns all cultural heritage. Why invest in the promotion of architectural heritage and set up costly museums if they attract only a small minority of

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13. In Quebec, radical cuts to government subsidies and, more simply, the inadequacy of public funds allocated to the cultural milieu have made contributions by business partners indispensable to the survival of many museums.

devotees? Thus begins the obsession to conquer a *wider public*.[14] Be that as it may, how can one be sure that attracting the *non-public* into the streets of Arles, or to *Eternal Egypt* is successful democratization? And how can one check that the simple fact of travelling to a city with a remarkable heritage is enough to transform a tourist into an enthusiastic connoisseur of the history of architectural styles? After visiting one or several super-exhibitions, will neo-visitors show a permanent interest for museums and exhibitions?

Nothing is less certain. Dufresne-Tassé *et al.* (2003) showed that the satisfaction of occasional visitors towards *blockbusters* is not enough to turn them into dedicated exhibition visitors. No more than impromptu visits to small, winding streets enable one to identify even the different periods of a city founded over 2,000 years ago. Bergeron too is somewhat doubtful about whether neo-visitors to a *blockbuster* will return to the museum for a regular exhibition.

> If certain projects of this kind are successful, many exhibitions do not meet expectations [. . .] After the adrenaline rush, there is a slow period in which the public abandons the museum [. . .] In fact, this kind of museum attendance is like the teeth of a saw; in other words you see impressive heights followed by long periods of depression (Bergeron, 2005: 77).

Beyond this admission is an issue that worries many observers of cultural practices: how do we recognize a connoisseur of cultural heritage? By measuring the frequency of his or her practice, or by determining the characteristics of such practice? Does travelling to many cities with historical heritage matter, or rather, is it the ability to analyze faces sculpted on the portal of the only 12th century Roman church that one has visited within the last three years?

In other words, is the distinction between *public* and *non-public* simply a quarrel for specialists? The discussions we held with non-visitors of architectural heritage and museums suggested the opposite. All of the people to whom we spoke who visited the streets of a famous city only very superficially, or who stated that they had not been inside a museum for three years could describe how regular visitors of heritage and museums behaved. Similarly, those who visited the museum of a tourist town or were dedicated exhibition visitors could explain

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14. For the purposes of cultural heritage, the *public at wide public* is the pendant in what is known in media circles as the *general public*. Beyond their evaluative dimension, the two terms advocate a utopian conception of cultural exchange: on the one hand, exhibitions simple enough so as not to offend anyone, and on the other, exhibitions addressed to a huge, anomic group of potential recipients. This idea is the one contradicted most often by sociological analysis of the public participating.

what the *non-public* was. So even though, by definition, members of the *non-public* do not enter museums, they can evocatively describe the characteristics of this institution as well as the foibles of its users.

Both groups of respondents made use of reciprocal evaluative representations. The *public* group easily identified the *non-public* and the *non-public* group was quick to mock the *public*, caricaturing it if need be. Each group knew how to position itself in respect to the other as a member of the *public* or *non-public*. The opposition between visitors and non-visitors has extended to cultural heritage, even to blockbuster exhibitions within art museums. Non-visiting respondents found the museums' mediation inaccessible, while in no way denying its educational qualities. Conversely, the dedicated visitors judged quite severely the mediators' efforts to make the contents of exhibitions more accessible to the wider public.

We perceived a clear line of demarcation separating visitors who used the mediation tools provided to compensate for their lack of knowledge from those who distained them. Likewise, we differentiated individuals who only visit exhibitions designed for specialized publics from those who only visit exhibitions meant for the general public. Or again, for an art exhibition, those interested in lesser-known artists included in an exhibition targeting the general public. And finally, visitors who attend conferences organized alongside the exhibition from those who visit only on days specially organized to encourage accessibility to culture.

Just as the surveyed non-visitors asserted that museums were not for them, the dedicated, converted visitors clearly saw the lacunae in the occasional or temporarily enticed visitors. The two groups were definitely different and the people questioned knew perfectly well to which group they belonged:

> I'd say that in those places there, everyone knows everyone. They're a friend of this guy or that guy. You have to be welcomed in by someone to be part of it. Somebody who doesn't know anyone in it, who has no contacts, who has nothing, will be looked strangely if he just shows up (Non-visitor of the MMFA, male, 25).

A number of studies in social psychology have analyzed these instances of inter-group contact. Throughout these studies, social identity manifested itself on the basis of social comparisons and the search for a positive psychological distinction by individuals (Tajfel, 1974). When we categorize people, we ascribe attributes to them that we believe characterize members of this category: stereotypes, in other words (Bourhis & Gagnon, 2006). According to certain theories of social identity, "us/them" categorization and identification with the ingroup

suffice to create inter-group prejudices and discrimination because the need for a positive social identity pushes people to discriminate in favour of their ingroup (Bourhis & Gagnon, 2006).

One of the consequences of social categorization is that differences between people belonging to separate groups are accentuated and differences between individuals belonging to the same group are minimized (Eiser, 1990; McGarty & Penny, 1988; Tajfel, 1981). The homogenization effect is reinforced in the case of outgroups (groups to which one does not belong). In the comments collected, there was a tendency either to idealize visitors to architectural heritage or art museums, or to denigrate them by alluding to common characteristics of each group. The *non-public* made fun of dedicated visitors, whom they found staid, whereas the *public* of museums found the *non-public* uncultured. The stereotypes used by museum visitors, like those used by the *non-public*, tended to make caricatures of their descriptions.

Under these conditions, what are the chances of achieving the objectives of winning over the *non-public*, as characterized by a museum official in charge of the *public* and education?

> *My job is to see to it that people have a conscious choice, that they grasp this possibility. We all know what baseball is, and then we choose whether or not to go. My job is to see to it that a maximum number of people have a good idea of what they might find at the museum. This doesn't mean that everyone will become a museum visitor. I'm well aware of that. I never go to baseball games* (MMFA employee).

Certain specialized exhibitions, but also various elements within an exhibition, still attract only a limited *public* that is both aware and dedicated. Is the fact that occasional visitors exceptionally enter a museum during a special event and find installations there specifically adapted for them tantamount to developing their loyalty? From this viewpoint, all attempts at designation still depend, just as they did in the heyday of the militants for popular education and culture (Jeanson, 1968), upon the premise that the absence or privation of culture would be an injustice. Consequently, militants and educators keep worrying about this gap and believe they must increase efforts to reduce it. Is it not paradoxical that by advocating popular culture and campaigning for educational development, they perhaps contribute more than many to the very stigmatization of its absence and a perpetuation of the myth of the *non-public*?

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Chapter 5

"NON-PUBLICS" OF LEGITIMISED CULTURAL GOODS. WHO ARE THEY?

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> As for the working classes, perhaps their sole function
> in the system of aesthetic positions is to serve as a foil,
> a negative reference point, in relation to which all aesthetics
> define themselves, by successive negations.
>
> Pierre Bourdieu, 1984: 57

Like many research projects, the one presented here began with apparently simple questions and became more complex as time passed and some answers were obtained. From the daily observations of how events promoted by cultural institutions were attended by nearly the same group of people (the majority of whom were academics or higher education students, some economically privileged persons, a few others who were eager to learn and be "cultivated," but never any low-income people), and because institutional discourses from public cultural institutions in Mexico commonly establish as one of their main objectives the accessibility of the general population to the benefits of artistic production and institutional programs on culture, a question arose: What cultural goods do low- and medium-income people consume?

In 2003, a research project was initiated, titled: "Consumption of cultural goods by low- and medium-income groups in Mexicali" (Ortega, 2004), which aimed to provide descriptive information on the consumption of cultural goods by those specific income groups in the capital city of the state of Baja, California, as a means to support arguments on the effectiveness of the cultural initiatives launched by the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC, the state university) and the Instituto de Cultura de Baja, California (ICBC, State Institute for Culture). These two institutions were funders of the project, but were not involved in establishing its purpose and objectives, as the funds were awarded based on a contest, in which projects were subjected to a double-blind evaluation.

The project studied the general character traits of consumers of cultural goods. The most salient finding was that responses related to the consumption of cultural offerings provided by the UABC, ICBC and other cultural institutions were almost completely absent. For example, in 88.4% of the surveyed households, no one had been to a theatre in the year prior to the survey (either to watch a play, concert or other scenic art performance). Across age groups, adults had the highest percentage of attendance, at 3.4%. Visits to art galleries and exhibits were mentioned in 19.4% of the households, again, mainly among adults. However, when asked about specific places, only 3.2% of individuals in the household had visited the State Art Gallery, while in 95.2% of households, not even one person had attended the UABC Art Gallery or the Literary Cafe, a state-managed space dedicated to literary readings (Ortega & Ortega, 2005). In contrast, 99.1% of households sampled had at least one television, and 39.7% had two televisions. Paradoxically, the percentage of households with three television sets was higher in the lowest economic level (17.5%) than in the highest level (13.9%). In 92.7% of households at least one individual had attended the most popular shopping mall in the city (Ortega & Ortega, 2005).

Being a quantitative study, it did not offer much data to answer such questions as: "Are there any differences in consumption patterns among this apparently homogeneous group?" "How do these people choose cultural goods?" "What elements – contextual, educational, familial – are linked to the preferences observed?" To obtain these answers, a qualitative approach was needed. A second phase of the study was conducted in 2006–2007 to complement and explain the results of the previous study from a social theory perspective.

This paper explains some of the main results of both studies, and some conclusions may be derived about the large part of the city's population who are not familiar with the cultural institutions or what they offer, do not attend the events promoted by them, and, as will be shown, are not even interested in participating.

5.1.
METHOD

The study on which this article is based consisted of two stages. The first stage involved a survey among 72% of households in Mexicali, capital of the State of Baja California, in Northwestern Mexico, considered a low and medium-income population, according to a previous study on marginality levels in that same city (Ranfla *et al.*, 2001). This study identified five levels of socio-economic marginality distributed among the different geo-statistical areas in which the city is divided – according to the National Statistics and Geography Institute.

In that study, marginality level 1 is indeed not marginal, as it corresponds to households in exclusive housing areas with access to urban infrastructure and all utilities. Therefore, it was excluded from the survey. The fifth level of marginality, corresponding to households with extreme poverty conditions, was also excluded from the survey because in that group were households with no electricity (indispensable for mass media consumption). As a result, marginality levels 2 to 4 constituted the universe (72% of the city's population) from which a proportionate sample of 439 households was determined, with 95% reliability.

To distribute the sample, the geo-statistical areas were randomly sampled to select the areas to be surveyed, and in each area, another random selection was applied to identify the neighbourhoods to be surveyed. Later, in each neighbourhood, the blocks to be surveyed were again randomly selected, and on each block a systematic number was applied.

Once the survey was completed, the information was processed through data mining, a method oriented towards heuristic analysis that enables the management of a large volume of data and complex information. Specifically, multivariate analysis allows finding multiple relationships among a large number of variables – 71 in this study – as well as the grouping of subjects on the basis of similarities in those relationships. In this case, subjects were grouped according to their consumption of cultural goods, where the marginality level of the household was only one variable among many others. Thus, a typology on consumption of cultural goods was obtained, where variables with a test value of 2.0 or higher were considered characteristics of each type.

The second stage was qualitative, and consisted of semi-structured interviews of case types selected from the typology, as the software used enables the location of households in each class (or type) as well as the 10 most characteristic cases for each class. Thus, two households from each type were selected based on the following criteria: 1) the household

was part of the 10 representative cases and, when not available, 2) the household was in the upper limits of the class because those households in the lowest limits were very similar to the following class.

According to the typology of households presented in a previous study (Ortega, 2006), types were labelled with letters, according to the level of consumption of cultural goods, the characteristics of the household and the communication equipment in it, such as radio, TV set, telephone, computer, etc. (see description below).

Ten interviews were conducted. Four subjects were male; three of the households were of type A, two of type B, two of type C, and two of type D. One of the respondents in type A (Salomon) and one in type D (Jose) were considered negative cases, one due to his religious beliefs and the other because of his age and the fact that he is unemployed. Consequently, another household had to be chosen, although negative cases were methodologically useful for comparison and management of rival factors that could contradict the premises established by the researcher (Denzin, 2000).

Although ten interviews might seem like a small number, the use of case-types resulting from a reliable statistical procedure implies that these households indeed represent the class to which they belong, because they were not constructed by the researcher, as happened with Weber's ideal types (Weber, 1973). These case-types are constructed and, specifically, "extracted" (McKinney, 1966) from empirical data. Although we have to be reminded that a type involves a series of recurring general and distinctive traits that are not attributed to one individual but to the group he/she is a part of (Velasco, 2001: 289).

Interviews were conducted with participants who provided information about themselves as well as their family/household in relation to the use of leisure time, decision-making with respect to cultural goods consumption, family background with regard to entertainment and use of leisure time, consumption visions (Phillips, Olson, & Baumgartner, 1995), in the event that they might win the lottery, and attitudes towards attendance at legitimised cultural places/events.

5.2.
A NEEDED DETOUR: THE CONCEPT OF CONSUMPTION OF CULTURAL GOODS

A central part of the study was the proposal of an alternative concept of "cultural consumption," especially in Latin America, where Garcia Canclini's definition, as exposed in a 1993 book, has permeated the literature over the last 15 years with almost no questioning.

In the book El consumo cultural en México (Cultural consumption in Mexico), Garcia Canclini (1993: 24) starts by defining consumption as "a group of socio-cultural processes that involves appropriation and use of products," thus establishing its cultural character.

Garcia Canclini recognises that appropriation of any good is an act that communicates, integrates, distinguishes, and objectifies desires, as well as is useful in thinking. Then, he asks: "Why separate, then, what happens in connection to certain goods or activities and name it cultural consumption?" (García Canclini, 1993: 33) and proceeds to explain that this is pertinent because of the relative independence gained by certain specific fields, such as artistic and intellectual, since the Renaissance, due mainly to a secularisation of society, but also as a result of radical changes in circulation and consumption. Cultural products appear in specific markets, where their appraisal or consecration is gained through aesthetic merits. Even when cultural products have use and exchange value, symbolic value prevails over them (Garcia Canclini, 1993: 33–34). Therefore, cultural consumption is defined as:

> the group of appropriation and use of products where symbolic value prevails over use and exchange value, or where at least these two are configured in subordination to the symbolic dimension (Garcia Canclini, 1993: 34).

If, by means of mere substitution of terms (as in algebra), we super-impose the definition of consumption on cultural consumption, we would arrive at a tautology because "cultural consumption" would be: "A *cultural* group of socio-*cultural* processes that involves appropriation and use of products."

Additionally, if we take the second concept, where the objects of consumption are those products where symbolic value is predominant, and observe that symbolic value prevails in the consumption of any kind of product, we might say that it is cultural consumption, even when the field where it is produced is not the intellectual or artistic. This presents a problem for delimiting the scope of research. Another

difficulty of Garcia Canclini's conceptualisation is that it implies an underlying premise: that there is a continuum of symbolic value that goes along with the economic and use value, which poses the problem of identifying the point at which symbolic value prevails.

Garcia Canclini also states that cultural consumption includes consumption of products whose "elaboration and consumption require a prolonged training in relatively independent symbolic structures" (Garcia Canclini, 1993:34). This is the equivalence of saying that a person has to know how to "culturally" make and/or consume those products. Therefore, a product which is considered a cultural product would be not only because the symbolic value prevails but also because its consumption implies the use of symbolic structures that allow a person to recognise that symbolic value. Following these ideas, cultural consumption would occur only in those cases where the consumer has accomplished the skilful use of the symbolic structures that enable him/her to identify the product's symbolic value. In Bourdieu's (2002) terms, only those who possess the symbolic capital to recognise the symbolic value of the goods being consumed would be performing cultural consumption. Those individuals would be considered "publics," according to Esquenazi (2002), for whom "public" is an assembly of persons sharing legitimate interpretations of an object.

This conclusion is partly similar – and only in the part referring to fine arts – to Bourdieu's, for whom "the encounter with a work of art [. . .] presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code" (Bourdieu, 1984: 3). Nevertheless, the French author is clear when explaining that precisely because of the legitimacy of that cultural code, a way of consuming works of art is legitimated, even when that consumption method is not necessarily performed by all members in a society.

To move beyond the contradictions, tautologies and confusions that the concept of cultural consumption brings to mind as well as to recognise that all consumption acts are cultural – thus speaking or writing about cultural consumption would be a redundancy – another concept was proposed, based on what Pierre Bourdieu (1993) has identified as a "field of cultural production" and the goods produced in it: cultural goods.

According to Bourdieu (1993), the field of cultural production includes not only "high-brow" products, such as museums, art galleries, and concert halls, but also "low-brow" products, which are mainly the mass media. Thus, goods produced in that field would also be cultural goods.

Consumption, being a socio-cultural process, is executed upon different kinds of products. In our study, the adjective cultural is not labelling the process but the goods. Therefore, an alternative concept was

proposed and used in this study: consumption of cultural goods, which was defined as the socio-cultural processes of acquisition, reception and/or utilisation of goods produced in the field of cultural production.

This concept may not be fully useful for the purpose of the volume *Looking for non-publics*, but it was useful for identifying what cultural goods are being chosen and by whom. Additionally, it was possible to identify among the majority of a city's population those groups that are now called "non-publics." Along with their identification and typification (see below), data were gathered that allows us to answer – to some extent and in a specific city – three of the questions posed in the invitation to collaborate in this volume.

5.3.
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE THAT WE GROUP AND DOWNGRADE THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF "NON-PUBLICS?"

First of all, they are people, both in the sense of being humans and in that they are "the people," the majority, 72% of the city where the presented study on cultural goods consumption was conducted. They are men and women of low and medium income, with diverse levels of education, from the illiterate to higher education undergraduates. They are working people: supermarket employees, restaurant cooks, engineers, fruit pickers, retired seniors, merchants, high-school students, and housewives. They live in families of different types: a senior mother and her son, old couples, a mother with her daughters and a grandson, young couples with kids, or several families sharing a common piece of land. The mean number of members in the household is 4.3 persons.

These people do not form a homogeneous group, although they share some general preferences, tastes and traits. Television is the number one appliance at home, which is on an average of 6.6 hours a day. Adults like Televisa's channel 2, whose programming includes the most popular soap operas, variety shows, newscasts and old Mexican movies; children and adolescents like Televisa's channel 5, with American serials, cartoons and movies. Almost no one in any of the households attended the city's art gallery in the year prior to the survey (only 3.2% of the households), and even though in 51.5% of households their members go out on weekends, most of the time they visit relatives or go to a shopping mall (Ortega & Ortega, 2005).

These findings coincide with a study by Zermeño (2001) – although not specific to low- and medium-income people and focused on TV and computer use – which found that in Colima, 98.2% of households had at least one TV set, and Televisa dominated the preferences of viewers – even of those with cable service.

Within a wider scope, the National Survey on Consumption and Cultural Practices, paid for by the National Council for Arts and Culture (Conaculta), provided data on a national and regional scale (the country's Central, Northern, Western and Southern regions) and considered only three major cities: Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City. Results from that survey show that attendance to libraries, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bookstores, lecture halls, museums, and cultural centres is first strongly related to income as well as to educational level in many cases: people with higher income or schooling show higher percentages of attendance (Conaculta, 2004).

As can be seen, low-and medium-income individuals in Mexicali are not much different from the rest of the country. However, one advantage of the study done in Mexicali is that the data were subjected to multivariate analysis, and thus a typology was obtained, which has not been done elsewhere in Mexico. Marketing agencies conduct plenty of surveys, but their results are not published. From the analysis, four types – or classes – of cultural consumption were identified, strongly related to educational background of the informer and socio-economic level of the household, as well as to ages of the household members, media equipment in the home, and leisure activities.

Sixty households form the first type, with the highest consumption of cultural goods (type A), are characterised as being formed by individuals from four age groups (children, teenagers, adults, and elders) and by having a consumption of varied cultural goods that in some cases include legitimised spaces for high-brow culture.[1] They go to the movies, have cable or satellite TVs, DVD players, PCs, mobile and home phones and cassette players. Some of them read newspapers and magazines, and like to go out every weekend, both to open air spaces (parks or sports fields), as well as to shopping malls. The educational level of the informants was that of a college graduate.

The second type (B) groups 168 households without adolescents (members aged 18 to 59 years and children). These people frequently go out on weekends and although most of their activities take place away from home, they do not choose legitimised cultural places: they usually go to a shopping mall or to visit family. They do not have telephones or cable or satellite TVs, but they watch rented or owned

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1. In this case, attendance to legitimised cultural spaces means that at least one person in the household attended at least one cultural event in the year previous to the survey.

movies, either in DVD or VCR mode. In these households, at least one of its occupants reads magazines or books. The educational level of the informants was that of junior high or high school.

As for the 138 households in the third type (C), their members are typically adults younger than 60 years of age, with some adolescents and no elders. Not one of the members went to any legitimised cultural activity during the previous year. Most residents stay at home during weekends. They do not attend any cultural or open air recreational events and thus consumption of cultural goods takes place in the domestic environment in an interactional context, where watching TV plays a central role. The educational level of the informant was that of junior high, and there is no reading of magazines or books in the household.

The fourth type (D) is that of 73 households with very low consumption of cultural goods (legitimate or otherwise) because the only equipment that most of them have for this activity is the TV. This group is mainly senior couples that stay at home on weekends and depend on their children for economic support. During the previous year, none of the residents went to spaces where cultural, recreational or sports activities take place. Additionally, they did not go to a shopping mall or the local fair. This group is characterised by a low educational level of the respondent (some illiterate), which is related to the fact that members of the household do not read magazines, books or newspapers.

In the analysis, all of the characteristics listed in the four types had a test-value equal or higher than 2, thus making them significant (≤ 0.05) for the construction of the type (Bécue & Valls, 2005).

Equipment in the household – representing economic resources – and educational level of the informer vary in relation to the volume and diversity of cultural goods that are available and consumed, and the families are also different in each type: children are part of those households with higher consumption of cultural goods, and it seems that as the family members get older, their choices are reduced. Therefore, not only economic resources and cultural capital are relevant, but also the family structure is an element that helps in shaping decisions about what cultural goods to consume and when to consume them.

The family is both a social reproduction unit, in which its members learn consumption patterns and choices, and a field of interaction where the agents occupy different positions according to the capital they possess. Thus, relations among its members are power relations. Marketing specialists have long known that the family is a decision-making unit in which its members influence one another (Martínez & Polo, 1999), exert power and negotiate when making decisions on consumption. From the literature on conflict resolution and consumption, Kwan-Choi and Collins (2000) summarised five different strategies used by family members in the decision-making process: experience,

legitimation, coalition, emotion and bargaining. Experience is based on the expertise of some family member, while legitimation relies on the role of the one who is using this strategy; coalition involves two or more members joining efforts to influence the decision outcome; emotion is present in situations where a member uses emotive appeals (such as a child crying or nagging to get what he wants) as a way of persuading others about the choices in consumption; and bargaining involves exchange and trade-off among members (Kwan-Choi & Collins, 1999: 1183–1184). Based on this argument, it is not difficult to assert that families with members in different age groups are more prone to the use of these strategies, even when dealing with cultural goods. Indeed, data show that households in type A – with children – are the only group where going out on weekends to open-air spaces was a significant variable. When there are no children and the family members are older, the outings involve going to a shopping mall (in type B, with teenagers), and disappear completely in types C and D.

Notwithstanding the characteristics of each class, when interviewed and asked what kind of leisure or entertainment activities they would perform if they won the lottery, they all had a common dream: to improve their present situation and help their relatives, to have a better house or pay for the studies of their children. None of them thought about spending money on entertainment or luxuries; none of their first responses was to say that they would like to travel or consume cultural goods. Many thought about saving some of the imagined prize, "just in case," or establishing a small business. All of them had what Bourdieu (1984) identifies as the taste of need:

– Imagine that you won the lottery – around 50 million pesos – and you could spend that money on fun or entertainment, or on anything you would like to have fun, what would you do?

– *Well, I think we would buy another house, we would buy a good car, and well save some for…well my mom says she wants me to finish school* [she means college]*, to finish school, and the rest if we could save it…* (Patricia, type A).

Home improvements, buying another house, and owning a good car are examples of the priorities in consumption, and saving for college recalls the sense of cultural investment mentioned by Bourdieu (1984).

5.4.
ARE THE LAYMEN IGNORANT, NAÏVE OR EXCLUDED?

This would need to be answered with another question: In what sense is the word ignorant used? If it means scholarly education, the people who answered the survey have in 26.2% of the cases a basic education, 22.1% have completed junior high-school, 22.3% of them have completed high school, and 8% attended at least four years of college (Ortega, 2005). Therefore, they are not ignorant of the legitimate categories applied to cultural goods and their consumption. Among them, recognition of those categories is evident. Nevertheless, with that recognition comes also the knowledge that "those things" are not for them, that their reality is not that of legitimate culture. They do not say this with melancholy or resignation, nor with a desire for the unreachable: they accept this with plain realism, bordering on condescension towards the researcher that asked such naïve, ignorant or senseless questions. For example, an ironically laughing interviewee (Clara) said when asked if they liked to go to the theatre or a concert to hear a singer: "No. We watch that on TV."

Jose, another interviewee, is even clearer when emphasising that he does not imagine himself consuming cultural goods (going to the theatre). Additionally, the researcher should know what he likes (the bars) because Jose is an agricultural worker and it is common sense:

- Wouldn't you like to go to the theatre once in a while? Or, if you were given a free ticket, would you go?

- *Well, if they gave it to me, but me buying this and that to go to the State Theatre. . . not really! I never thought about it until now that you mention it.*

[. . .] *Really, truth is, after work we go to the. . . the bars.*

- Which one do you like?

- *Well, We've been to all of them. . . You know! Coming from work at the field. . . and on weekends. . .* (Jose, type C).

Regarding the question "Are they excluded?," in this case the answer, although apparently simple, has two sides. Yes, they are excluded. They suffer from what Sen (2000) considers active and passive exclusion.

To Sen (2000), exclusion is a relational concept that involves deprivation, but deprivation is conditional on the nature of the process that leads to it: sometimes, exclusion can have constitutively relational importance to capabilities deprivation, and in other cases, there can be relational

deprivations that, without being negative by themselves, can lead to negative results. In this case, deprivation is more evident in the types with the lowest consumption of cultural goods, and therefore it is exclusion.

Aside from this distinction, Sen also states the difference between active and passive exclusion, where the first kind is a result of, for example, deliberate policies aiming to exclude some groups, but when "the deprivation comes about through social processes in which there is no deliberate attempt to exclude, the exclusion can be seen as a passive kind" (Sen, 2000: 15).

In the case of low- and medium-income individuals, passive exclusion is a result of their economic deprivation and a low educational level, which leads to a lack of both contact with legitimised cultural goods and the competence needed to "like" them, in a process clearly explained by Bourdieu (1984), and manifests itself as having nearly one choice of cultural goods consumption: open-air television.

Active exclusion, on the other hand, is concomitant to cultural policies from state and public institutions whose offerings are strongly constituted by legitimised products in legitimised and legitimising spaces in urban areas (such as the State Art Gallery, the University Theatre, the State Center for the Arts and others) not attended by these groups. Additionally, the offer is hardly ever presented in areas where low- and medium-income individuals live or are accustomed to going: a mall, a city park, or the neighbourhood park (Ortega & Ortega, 2005).

This is not to say that there is an explicit intention of excluding low- and medium-income individuals, but rather that while being structured according to specific criteria of what "taste" and "culture" is or should be, the institutional offer is applying the categories of distinction, division and separation against the population their discourses claim to attend to, conceiving them as mere receptors, never producers, of "art and culture." Even as the State Development Program says that, with respect to attending to the community, its objective is to "intensify actions and programs that enable access of society in general to cultural goods and services, through programs aimed at children, youngsters, publics in special conditions, and inhabitants of marginal areas" (Executive Power of the State of Baja California, 2008: 71), the offer is presented away from those areas, in buildings of pseudo-monumental architecture (as the State Center for the Arts), known to establish a barrier against common people by provoking a feeling of smallness and by means of promoting admiration of purposes supposedly higher than those of the common man, but at the same time in buildings incapable of promoting communal life (Giedion, 1944).

5.5.
IS IT POSSIBLE TO HIGHLIGHT FORMS OF ACTIVE RESISTANCE THAT WOULD GIVE ANOTHER READING OF THE REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE?

Being structurally constituted, active and passive exclusion suffered by low- and medium-income individuals, does not mean that they are incapable of choosing. Even when recognising their jobs or their economic or educational limitations – as did the most deprived ones especially – as reasons (in Giddens' sense) for their tastes, they showed preferences and dislikes for different cultural goods. As Kirchberg puts it:

> Individuals reflect these institutionalised structures as social conditions affecting their personal lives. They react to this situation by applying their agentic capabilities, trying to shape these structures in ways that make them more "comfortable" and more beneficial in their eyes. They operate in light of the acculturated social norms of peer groups, family or other dominant social pressures, and attempt to change these surrounding structures at least as far as they are able to (Kirchberg, 2007: 122–123).

In the interviews, there were no evident signs of resistance, but rather some practical knowledge about their positions and that of the researcher, as the interview, while an interaction, links two agents with different capitals, both in type and in quantity. Because of this, a researcher presenting herself as part of the university (one of the legitimised and legitimising institutions with greater symbolic power in the state) establishes a situation where the interviewee can feel compelled to be careful of what he/she says, even more so with questions regarding the university. Thus, it is understandable that positive responses, recognition phrases and justifications abound, as happened with Clara:

– What do you prefer to do when at home after work?

– *Oh! To rest for a while* [laughing].

– *I like to undress and rest a while.*

– And, if for example, somebody from the University came and offered you tickets for a theatre play, would you go?

– *Of course!!!* [smiling at the interviewer].

The contradiction is evident in Clara's arguments: while saying that she prefers to rest, she is quick to respond affirmatively when asked about an invitation from the University (where the interviewer works, as she was informed at the beginning of the interview). Besides the flattery, the value given by the interviewees to legitimised cultural goods was expressed via symbolic evaluation strategies (Thompson, 1990) applied to legitimate cultural goods, strategies through which the interviewees manifested their explicit or implicit appraisal of those kind of symbolic forms. Thompson (1990) identified nine different strategies, according to the position an agent occupies in a specific field of interaction: distinction, derision and condescension are typical of individuals in a dominant position; moderation, pretension and devaluation are characteristic of those in intermediate positions; and practicality, respectful resignation and rejection, correspond to individuals in subordinate positions.

According to Thompson (1990), condescension is an evaluation strategy characteristic of those occupying a dominant position in a field, and respectful resignation is assigned to those who occupy subordinate positions but acknowledge the value of that which is inaccessible to them. But in this case condescension was – paradoxically – used by people theoretically considered as agents excluded from the field of cultural production and occupying subordinate positions in the field of consumption of cultural goods, especially those with greater levels of marginality. This was the case with Antonieta and Ines, who have marginality levels of 3 and 4, respectively, and identified as part of types C and D, respectively.

– You know that the University organises shows at the theatre. If you were given tickets for them, would you go?

– *Possibly… possibly…*

– Don't you like theatre?

– *I've never been. I've never been to it because I don't know what it is that… I've heard that they do theatre, but I've never, never been to it. Maybe I would do it, being the first time, to see how it is; just out of curiosity. But, in fact, I've never gone to… like… shows* (Antonieta).

– And if someone gave you tickets for the theatre, would you go? Or you don't like it.

– *Maybe. Maybe… he* [the husband] *likes to go out, to go on trips* (Ines).

Here, both interviewees expressed the possibility of attending the University Theatre. Without rejecting the idea, they also did not manifest any positive evaluation, which was interpreted as condescendence towards the interviewer, the "maybe" and "possibly" being a way of dodging a directly negative answer.

Sometimes, both condescension and respectful resignation were manifested when evaluating the institutional cultural offer, in a clear ambivalence identified in the interviewees as a mixture of pride and humility, of acknowledgment of subordination and efforts to deny it, as happened with Clara, in which her response is a recognition of an almost unreachable possibility, followed by a negative answer.

– Do you like to go to concerts or somewhere to listen to music?

– *I would like, but no... no* [lowering the voice].

– Did you attend concerts when you were young?

– *No* (Clara type C).

Furthermore, the use of condescendence may be interpreted as a resource to transpose the positions occupied by interviewer and interviewee, putting the second one in a subordinate position, thus exercising some power over the interviewer because as Giddens (1998) has said, power, in social systems with some time and space continuity, presupposes regularized relations of autonomy and dependency relations. However, all forms of dependency offer certain resources through which subordinates can influence activities of their superiors.

– Do you usually take your girls to the Children's Museum or to the theatre?

– *Well, to those places not too much because they have a lot of activities at school, and they often take them out* [bragging]... *That is, they have their activities where they have that aspect, and so they do not go out besides that.*

– Do you go to the theatre if there is something you like?

– *Mmmm, usually we just go to the movies* (Nicolas, type B).

For Nicolas, the use of "those places" and "that aspect" represent the purpose of keeping legitimate culture at a distance (devaluation), while bragging that his daughters have that covered (pretension), but at the same time admitting that they go to the movies as a way of not explicitly rejecting the theatre.

It was among interviewees with better socioeconomic status – those corresponding to more diversified consumption types – where strategies of symbolic valuation like devaluation and pretension (Thompson,

1990) were observed, as was the case with Nicolas (above), and with Eugenia (below), who emphasised that she likes "good" music (assuming that the interviewer and interviewee know what "good" music is). In these cases, the conflict brought about by the researcher was weaker than in the cases from types C and D.

– Do you like theatre?

– *Oh, yes!* [condescending], *and good music too!*

– Good music? What do you like to listen to?

– *Depending on the context. . . if you are in a party with mariachi, O.K. mariachi, but a good one! If you are in another place, well, other music. . .* (Eugenia, type A)

Only in two of the interviews – those of the negative cases – open refusal to institutional offers was expressed. In the first negative case (Salomon), religion exerts a powerful influence, the interviewee being a Jehovah's Witness. In the second case, the interviewee is explicit when letting the interviewer know that legitimate cultural goods are not compatible to his taste, which is the same taste as the group he joins in his leisure time: his job companions, agricultural field workers, which he calls la raza, in a clear separation from the others, those who like legitimate cultural goods.

– Do you like going to the movies?

– *Well, I'll tell you, right now, movies not anymore, no. . . I hardly go because of the videos and all that. . .*

– Have you ever been to the theatre?

– *Once I went to the State Theatre, they took me. . . But they took me because I was at the juvenile detention centre.*

– And did you go see a play?

– *Yea. . . it was by an old man from New York, but I. . . no* [index moving as sign of denial and facial gesture of dislike].

[. . .]

– Why? Hasn't it occurred to you? [to go to the theatre]

– *No, I don't know. Really! I'd rather go to the saloons, as I tell you. But going to the State Theatre. . . not even to the State Auditorium if the Naranjeros* [a baseball team] *are coming to play against Aguilas. . . not even to that* (Jose, type D).

The practicality of video versus cinema is clear, as is the dislike for theatre in the case of Jose, whose gestures were the manifestation of rejection. According to the National Survey on Cultural Practices and Consumption, lack of time and lack of interest are the two main reasons given by people who do not attend theatres in Mexico (Conaculta, 2004: 59).

Results from the survey show that in more than 95% of the households none of their members had attended an art gallery, in 84% of the cases no one had visited the University Museum, in 87.4% of the households not one person had had contact with the local House of Culture, and in 88.7% and 78.5% of the cases there had been no visits to the University or State Theatres, respectively. The Children's Museum was the most popular space, where in 52.5% of households someone had visited it, mostly children (19.5%) and adults (10.5%), which is understandable given some schools have a yearly visit as part of the curriculum (Ortega & Ortega, 2005).

Along with the above, when asked what members of the family do in their leisure time, not one of the interviewees mentioned activities related to consumption of legitimised cultural goods, which shows that there are no referents[2] that allow for an expression to be uttered. That is, not talking about something indicates that this "something" is not part of the everyday life of the interviewees; or as Berger and Luckmann (1966) say, everyday reality provides a basic threshold of meaning for the individual, and is the basis for the language that objectifies the experiences: "The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 21).

Therefore, the reluctance to participate in legitimised cultural events, or the refusal in some cases, appears to originate in the lack of access, the referential distance, and in the consequent distaste for legitimised cultural goods because for those for whom legitimised culture has not been a part of their lives, it is not necessary because it is not a part of their world, it has never been a sense-giving element for them.

It is possible, then, to observe how two worlds coexist and hardly ever come into contact. On one hand, the legitimised culture and its publics, consumers of cultural goods recognised and valued according to categories of the sub-field of restricted cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). On the other hand, the world of those not worried if such categories are applied to them, or if they are judged by them because they

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2. Semiotically, a referent is the object or "state of the world" [a concept] that is designated by an expression (Eco, 1995), which implies at least the knowledge of the existence of that object or concept.

know, with their everyday experience and the reality they live, that cultural goods valued by such categories are not theirs, they do not need them, nor do they aspire to them.

5.6.
"NON-PUBLICS" ARE REFLEXIVE AGENTS

As Volker Kirchberg (2007) has shown, consumption of legitimised cultural goods – visits to art institutions in his case – cannot be explained either by structural conditions or by individual choice alone. Instead, he proposes a combination of both perspectives, in an agency-structure model that allows for identification of social norms – such as Bourdieu's categories of perception – as well as strategies applied when making choices regarding what to consume or not to consume (in the present work, mostly the second case).

Structuralisation is manifested when dealing with cultural exclusion, as is the case with the medium- and low-income population, where the typology shows that there are different levels of marginality, not only socio-economical, but cultural as well (and strongly related to the other), where resources of the different types are also asymmetrically distributed. These structural factors have established and reinforced – via reproduction – the importance of legitimised culture and of its "correct" categories of perception, the rules.

Thus, it could be said that low- and medium-income groups, while "non-publics," are socially excluded from the opportunities of becoming publics, as the structured social space imposes on them a series of inequalities – economic and educational inequalities being the two most salient – which in turn give way to a lack of resources and capabilities to access and decode legitimised symbolic forms in the "proper" and accepted way. However, this affirmation would deny the agency of social actors the capability of doing things they want to do, of exercising some kind of power and actively changing the course of events by causal intervention (Giddens, 1998). With respect to consumption of cultural goods, interviewees were capable of using the resources at hand to apply other categories they find useful in their evaluation of symbolic forms, and henceforth, presented themselves as capable of choosing what suits them best, according to their perceived needs and expectations, to their sense of pleasure, their likeness for entertainment and their pursuit of well-being. They showed clear preferences and manifested distastes as well as desires regarding cultural goods, legitimised or not.

Even more, when asked about parental ways of using leisure time when interviewees were young or still single, some responses showed a deliberate and reasoned effort to make things different from what they had experienced, to evaluate their past situations.

– When you were dating, did you go out?

– *We went to the movies, to have lunch…We didn't go to parties much because my parents didn't give permission to stay out late. A long, long time ago, that was the way things were. And now, even when you want to, children won't agree to that…All the time I told my daughters…when they were in junior high they said "Mom, there is gonna be a party here or there," and up we went, I took them. And they obeyed…And in high school, the same!…*

– Who gave permission: you or your husband?

– *It was me. I was at home. It was me* (Clara).

– What did you do when you were a child, when you came to Mexicali? How did you spend your leisure time back then?

– *Nooo. Back then I had to work.*

– Did you help your parents?

– *Not my parents; just my mom…*

– How do you feel your life is now: better than when you were single or not? Did it improve?

– *Yes, it improved.*

– And regarding entertainment, was it better then or is it better now?

– *Now* [laugh].

– Why?

– *Now I don't have to work. If I want to do something I do it; if I don't want, then I don't* (Ines).

– How did you amuse yourself?

– *When I was single…I was a girl whose parents were very strict, I had no friends* [mimics a tight rope]. *"Don't look over there, don't look here…" I married at 17. Not too young, but I was 17 years old.*

– How did you manage to date?

– *Well, you see…with a lot of messages on pieces of paper. If I got into a store to look, he came through the other door, but my brothers came through another door* [to check on her]…

- What did you like to do [once married and with children]?

- *When my kids were young he* [her husband] *took them to the mountains; we went out on a picnic and spent two or three days there. In the middle of the year we went out sometimes for a month* (Flor, type D).

If agency is to Giddens (1998) a characteristic of humans, so is reflexivity, the capacity to turn back upon and to monitor their own actions, for which the interview is an optimal technique because whilst being a suspension of the interviewees' day-to-day activities, when asked about their consumption of cultural goods, the discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1998) was manifested in their responses, as a result of their reviewing their past consumption of cultural goods and thus coming upon the rationalisation of those actions.

According to the aforementioned author, the study of practical consciousness should be part of a research work. In this case, before asking about decisions on cultural goods consumption, some questions about the use of leisure time were made right at the beginning of the interview, to have access to what is routinely done by the interviewees and as a means of approaching the practical consciousness, albeit tangentially, because this operates only in part through discourse, but also by considering that between practical and discursive consciousness there is no separation, only differences between what can be said and what is generally done (Giddens, 1998). The responses showed that what is done is clearly not attending legitimised cultural activities. What was said is a mixture of reasons why: not having time, not knowing about "those things," not even thinking about art, and, at most, being curious and condescending about accepting a free entrance to a "high-brow" event.

FINAL NOTE

According to Esquenazi (2002), the term "non-publics" implies that acquiring or using a cultural good does not mean that a public exists; not even the reception and decoding constitute a public. "Publics" would be only those groups of individuals who decode a message according to the legitimate interpretations, those imposed and accepted by the agents in the dominant pole of a given field, in this case, the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). Thus, in the terms of Hall (1980), publics would be only those who decode legitimate cultural goods according to the hegemonic code and not by negotiated or opposed decoding.

Nevertheless, saying that those social groups are "non-publics" because they do not consume legitimised cultural goods is not recognizing that in fact they are publics of other types of cultural goods, although

not appraised or valued. On the one hand, if being public is being capable of decoding mass media products according to an hegemonic code, and if we consider that according to legitimised categories of perception – hegemonic code – those products are mere entertainment, then low- and medium-income groups are in fact publics of mass media because their consumption of TV is a way of relaxing from the stress of a working day. On the other hand, to consider the lack of access to legitimised cultural offerings as merely exclusion and nothing else is to not take in account that criteria, through which some cultural goods are more valuable than others, are established from a social field – that of cultural production – and by specific groups occupying privileged positions in such field, the dynamics of which makes that valuation categories and judgment upon its products appear as natural.

Finally, saying that some social groups are "non-publics" because they do not consume legitimate cultural goods poses the need for researchers and academics dedicated to social studies to follow Bourdieu's (1984) recommendation of exercising necessary reflexivity upon our own practice, and to apply in our job the questioning not only of the categories we use to describe reality and the positions hidden behind those categories, but also:

> The question itself has to be questioned – in other words, the relation to culture which it tacitly privileges – in order to establish whether a change in the content and form of the question would not be sufficient to transform the relationships observed. There is no way out of the game of culture, and one's only chance of objectifying the true nature of the game is to objectify as fully as possible the very operations which one is obliged to use in order to achieve that objectification (Bourdieu, 1984: 12).

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Chapter 6

WHEN THE AUDIENCE OF ART MOVIE THEATRES IS NOT THE AUDIENCE OF ART FILMS

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> Every form of society has been based [. . .] on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence.
>
> *Marx & Engels, 1998: 49*

The cinema is one of the best cultural objects for examining the concept of *non-public* – as conceived by French philosopher Francis Jeanson – because it probes the border between the field of entertainment and the field of artistic experience. Also, the cinema seems to be one of the best cultural objects for examining this concept because it is so popular in modern Western society and because it refers ambiguously to two things: it is both a place and an artistic work. Thus, we never really know to what the concept of *non-public* is referring. Is it an audience absent from cultural places, or a group of people that has never encountered certain works of art? In analyzing this ambiguity, we will not

focus on private film practices, although they no doubt raise many questions.[1] Our focus here is on the study of cinematographic practices in movie theatres.[2]

The notion of *non-public* appeared in France in the spring of 1968, during the political and ideological protests of May '68. This period is credited with giving rise to a particular observation: certain people do not have access to culture. But the minute this notion was raised, it over-defined its subject by dramatizing it. The cultural agents of the period wondered how an entire section of the population could lack access to cultural places and objects. And so, the concept of *non-public* immediately introduced a reductive split between a group of people cut off from "the cultural phenomenon" (Jeanson, 1973: 119–120) and real or potential audiences. This categorization allowed inequalities in the possibility for accessing culture to be identified. And yet it offered little nuance. The concept is deeply holistic, and failed to take into account individual characteristics that required more caution, as emphasized by two books of proceedings published in 2004 following a conference on this concept (Ancel & Pessin, 2004).

This late-sixties approach is part of the rise of a "theoretical phenomenon" formulated and identified by Pierre Bourdieu in *The Love of Art*.[3] In this book, the sociologist demonstrates that access (or non-access) to culture is symbolic and not material (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1990). In other words, social determinism influences cultural practices, an idea confirmed by The Survey on French Cultural Practices carried out during the same period (Secrétariat d'État à la Culture, 1974). The brilliance of this approach has met with little opposition because so much statistical data, still being collected, supports this theory. And yet, Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* has its limitations. The ties between individuals and culture are knotted in a more complex fashion, largely surpassing their social affiliation (belonging to the upper socio-professional category or to the lower socio-professional category) or their geographical affiliation (living in a city or in the country). German sociologist and journalist Siegfried Kracauer had already emphasized this point in the 1920s in a study on the emerging middle class composed of "salaried masses" (Kracauer, 1998). Not entirely belonging to the upper socio-professional category or to the lower socio-professional category, these "salaried masses" were numerically dominant in society and formed the vast majority of the audience in movie theatres.

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1. "Private film practices" here mean cinematographic practices exercised in front of one's television or computer screen, as well as the cinematographic practices involving digital players and other portable readers.
2. In this paper, we specifically chose to use the word "audience" as it commonly used. We are aware that we lose the balance "public/non-public" as its sounds in French, but we prefer to focus on the readability of our proposal.
3. We are stressing, in quotation marks, this "theoretical phenomenon" that we offer here in contrast to Francis Jeanson's term "cultural phenomenon."

How, therefore, do we examine the concept of *non-public*? To what does it refer? Does it designate people who do not visit certain cultural places, or people who do not encounter certain cultural objects? Processing these questions should shed light on the ambiguities inherent in this notion of *non-public* notably because it deals with *non-reception* and *deviant reception* (from the spectator's point of view, we could say *non-practice* and *deviant practice*). These ambivalences, which lie at the very heart of the concept of the *non-public*, raise questions about its relevance and its usage.

This article will investigate the relation between the concept of audience and the concept of *non-public* using the results of two studies carried out with spectators attending Art movie houses in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) region in south-eastern France. These movie houses are dedicated to presenting Art films to which the national film authorities designate cultural value with an Art label. As such, Art movie theatres are officially designated and recognized as important cultural agents in the French cultural landscape. But these Art movie theatres also screen commercial films, with no Art label, which attract large numbers of spectators.[4] Thus, the existence of this national standard of value raises a question: is there not an audience of Art movie theatres that is also a *non-public* of Art films?

To answer this question, we propose first to test the notion of *non-public* against the place of film practice, and ask whether it would be a better idea to investigate the dichotomy between the notions of place and non-place. As a second part of the analysis, in symmetrical fashion, we inquire if we should not focus our attention on the division between Art films and commercial films – or from a conceptual point of view, between art and non-art – in examining the notion of *non-public*. Finally, in the third and last part of this analysis, we review the debate around the notion of audience itself, its conceptual significance and its use. Is not the *non-public* simply part of the audience the instant this term of "audience" is made plural?

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4. A movie theatre is labeled and receives assistance when it shows films with an Art label. The rate of programming of Art films required to obtain the label depends mainly on the number of screening rooms, the quality of films, and the geographical location of the movie theatre. For this study, films without an Art label and screened in these theatres are designated "commercial films." The reader should not attach any value judgment to this term, the only aim of which is to facilitate the paper's readability and clarity.

6.1.
THE *NON-PUBLIC* PUT TO THE TEST
BY THE CONCEPT OF NON-PLACE

6.1.1.
THE COMMITMENT TO ART MOVIE THEATRES

In cinema practice, the cinema-going is more important than watching the film. This is because cinema is above all a social experience (Bourgatte, 2008). This assertion, valid when the Lumière brothers screened their movies in 1895, is even more valid today with the new ways in watching movies (Internet, VoD, pocket desktops). Cinema-going allows audience exposure of taste. Above all, it allows viewers to talk about films rapidly, as movie houses have the exclusivity of newly released films.

More than regular movie theatres, Art movie theatres show this effect, because they screen a much wider range of films, which allows researchers to identify different groups of viewers. This is the reason we focused on this type of movie theatre. Appearing for the first time in the 1920s, the first French Art movie theatres were dedicated to screening avant-garde films. From 1955 on, they began receiving support for screening Art and Experimental films. But the movement's orthodox nature is soon replaced by a desire and a necessity to become competitive. So, many Art movie theatres began to split their programming between Art films and commercial films, firstly, to continue their work of discovering movies and to benefit from the Art label, and secondly, to qualify for the relevant subsidies.

Today, France has over a thousand Art movie theatres. While they can be identified by their cultural activities, they still play the role of a local movie theatre, allowing captive audiences (young people and seniors) access to movies. They also respond to people's expectations during large, sometimes long-awaited and (over-)mediatized film releases, (American comedies or Walt Disney movies). Screening these commercial films ensures them a good financial return because they attract huge numbers of people. However, they continue to ensure an exploration of Art films, often quite discreetly. This assessment contradicts, to some extent, the simplistic representation in which two kinds of cinema houses exist: one devoted to artistic films, the other to mainstream movies.

During the survey taken in the PACA region ($n = 984$), spectators are asked to name the film they had watched immediately prior to taking the survey. The answers allowed us to identify two groups of viewers: one group attending Art movie theatres to watch Art films, the other attending Art movie theatres to watch commercial films. A first difference can be observed in the rates of attendance in the studied movie theatres (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Rates of attendance at Art movie theatres by audience of Art films and by audience of commercial films

	1 X/YR	2–3 X/YR	1X EVERY 2–3 MTHS	AT LEAST 1X/MTH	SEVERAL X/MTH	AT LEAST 1X/WK	SEVERAL X/WK	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	0.8%	3.9%	10.4%	21.4%	33.8%	19.1%	10.6%	100%
Audience of commercial films	0.8%	7.1%	23.5%	21.3%	31.1%	9.3%	6.8%	100%
Total	0.8%	5.3%	16.0%	21.4%	32.7%	14.9%	9.0%	100%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 ($n = 984$).

Viewers who preferred Art films went to the movies more often than viewers of commercial films. The study also shows that viewers of Art films are statistically older, as if adapting to Art films is progressive. This is, no doubt, linked to the complexity of the films' plots, at both the narrative and visual levels, which require learning and repeated encounters before they can be appreciated (this is probably easier for retired people who have attended movie theatres for years and who have more free time) (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Rate of attendance (by age category) at Art movie theatres by audience of Art films and by audience of commercial films

	–15YRS	15–17YRS	18–24YRS	25–34YRS	35–49YRS	50–64YRS	65YRS+	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	0.4%	1.8%	3.3%	5.5%	25.9%	43.3%	19.8%	100%
Audience of commercial films	2.3%	3.2%	11.6%	11.0%	30.9%	25.4%	15.6%	100%
Total	1.1%	2.4%	6.9%	7.9%	28.1%	35.6%	18.0%	100%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 ($n = 984$).

Looking at Table 6.2, we can see a statistical reversal at work between the two types of audiences in the 35–49-age category, a turning point corresponding to the target audience of Art movie houses. The 50-and-overs are over-represented among those who prefer Art films. The audience of commercial films is, in turn, composed primarily of less elderly viewers, supporting the hypothesis of a progressive adaptation to Art films. This tendency is confirmed by a result obtained in another

study carried out in 2006 on high school students participating in a visual education program ($n = 250$).[5] For these young people, the attendance of movie theatres is more of an event, associated with the desire to watch that year's big movie releases. The film adaptation of the popular novel *Twilight*, a new production from Pixar studios or the last episode of the *Harry Potter* saga are relevant examples.

Table 6.3.   Attendance rates in movie theatres by high school students

	ATTENDANCE RATES		ATTENDANCE RATES
None	10.4%		
Only once	14.0%		
2 or 3x	29.2%	Occasionals	66.8%
1x every 2–3 months	23.6%		
At least 1x per month	10.8%	Regulars	18%
Several times per month	7.2%		
At least 1x per week	3.2%	Dedicated	4.8%
Several times per week	1.6%		
Total	100.0%		100.0%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Study on high school students participating in a visual education program, 2006 ($n = 250$).

Note that rates of attendance in movie theatres by high school students are moderate. Two thirds of them (66.8%) stated that they attend between one and six times per year, which roughly corresponds to the French attendance average of around three film outings a year per person (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 2009). But their rate of home film consumption is higher (nearly two thirds said that they saw two or three films, sometimes more, per week), permitting them to shape their knowledge of film through television, VHSs, DVDs and all other digital formats (VoD, streaming). Modalities for encountering films are diverse: purchases, recordings, or downloadings.

And yet, these young people, like all audiences of commercial films, show a real commitment to the Art movie theatres where they are surveyed, even if their rate of attendance at these movie houses is weak. The study carried out in Art movie theatres in the PACA region ($n = 984$) confirmed this: 75.3% of people surveyed stated that they came exclusively or mainly to these specific movie theatres.

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5. "Lycéens et apprentis au cinema" ["high school students at the movies"] is a visual education program started by French government and film authorities. The main objective of this program is to watch films in their privileged place of screening: the movie theatre, during school time. Screenings are accompanied by debates and followed up with work in class.

6.1.2.
THE TANGIBLE PART AND THE SYMBOLIC PART OF ART MOVIE THEATRES

Certain differences between the two groups of viewers are noted. But consistencies are also seen when spectators are asked to express their level of satisfaction with the Art movie theatre where they are surveyed. Using a series of nine criteria (programming, the program, cost, reception, schedule organization and screenings, projection quality, comfort of the rooms, accessibility of the movie theatre, and, finally, its commitment to activist activity), we noted that the average level of satisfaction expressed for each one of them is 93%.

These data indicate two things. First, there is no actual *non-public* of Art movie theatres. Anyone can go to this type of movie house when he or she wishes to watch a film, be it an Art film or a commercial one. Even so, it is still possible to designate as a *non-public*, viewers attending this type of theatre who do not watch Art films. Nevertheless, all of the people surveyed expressed a real loyalty to these movie theatres. That is our second result. Despite their attraction to different categories of films, both viewer groups that we identified maintain a close relationship with their movie theatres.

Thus, it seemed interesting to shift our inquiry onto the concept of place – and by extension, to non-place – upon which the relevance of the concept of *non-public* depends. Michel de Certeau defines place as a space *to come to* in which "elements are distributed in relations of coexistence" (Certeau, 2002: 117). When these elements become significant for people and begin forming relations between themselves, then we think in terms of space. "In relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken [. . .]. In short, *space is a practiced place*" (*ibid.*: 117). This results in a potential representation of non-place in which elements are distributed, but for which practitioners are not always capable of creating relations of coexistence. Because a place is, on the one hand, a space *to come to*, made up of elements both tangible and symbolic, and because, on the other hand, it is these tangible elements that permit, at the most basic level, the construction of practitioner status, then it is possible to say that the practitioner's ability to understand the symbolic part of a place allows us to think of a place as a non-place. When the practitioner fails to appropriate the symbolic part offered by the institution, then the term non-place comes into play (Auge, 1995: 75–115).

To return to the subject of this article, Art movie theatres play both a tangible role in screening movies and a symbolic role of supporting these films (artistic support that even extends, in some cases, to political and social causes). By paying for a ticket and entering an Art movie theatre, viewers call upon the tangible part of the movie theatre.

In some cases, however, they might only have a practical relationship with the movie theatre. They attend films and ignore the specific place it occupies in the social space. In fact, these movie theatres provide symbolic discourse about films (and society) in screening and supporting Art films. This discourse is manifested by the simple act of programming films with an Art label, which in itself is a symbolic subject. However, these movie theatres also set up communication strategies (publication of a program, organization of cultural activities, talks). A lack of attention for or interest in this symbolic part led us to conclude that some viewers *practice* these movie theatres, these places of supermodernity, as non-places (*ibid.*). In short, they do not commit to these culturally and socially committed places.

Thus, every place can be a possible non-place: a university where students take courses without caring about the intellectual stance of professors, television programmes during which viewers do not grasp the ideological intentions of a journalist, or a movie theatre where audiences go without thinking about the symbolic significance of the programming. But what about the subject matter itself? What about the object at the heart of the existence of these movie theatres? In the second part of this article we will examine the relationships between audiences and films independent of their relationships with the movie theatres as places.

6.2.
THE *NON-PUBLIC* PUT TO THE TEST BY THE CONCEPT OF NON-ART

6.2.1.
THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC CULTURE OF AUDIENCES IN ART MOVIE THEATRES

In France, all films screened in movie theatres are examined by a committee of experts made up of people from the world of art and culture. After watching the films, this commission grants or not the Art label. This exercise is aimed at judging cinematographic quality, organizing the production field into two groups (those labelled and those not) and providing financial support to movie theatres devoted to Art films that attract few viewers. According to film authorities, this also permits supporting movies that help develop film creation and experimentation.

We wondered about the relevance of the labelling criteria used by these experts because they tend to be vague. Art films qualities are judged depending on their geographical origin or on some putative artistic gesture that allows for recognition of a particular director.

A film from a country that exports few movies cannot guarantee its quality. However, this geographic criterion becomes acceptable in the sense that films from little known countries encourage the exploration of other cultures. So, the issue seems really to be the creativity of a director who introduces aesthetic and discursive changes within the field of film production. Indeed, no rules exist for identifying innovation, experimentation or the treatment of social issues in movies. The Art labelling exercise depends largely on the sensitivity and subjectivity of the labelling experts. Nevertheless, consensus, albeit loose, does exist over quality or the absence of quality in a film production, and thus over the skill or lack thereof of a director who might then be considered as an artist.

Thus, an institutional cinematographic value exists independently of the audience's reaction to the film. Are we to conclude, however, that films with no Art label and that attract a bigger audience have no value? While Art films play a cultural or educational role for audiences who watch films as objects of knowledge and learning, commercial films attract audiences looking for distraction. This latter group likes the entertainment value of film (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4.   Opinions about films by the audience of Art films
and the audience of commercial films

	FILMS ARE GOOD DISTRACTION	FILMS ARE GOOD WAY TO LEARN	FILMS ARE GOOD ENTERTAINMENT	FILMS ARE A PASSION	OTHER	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	22.0%	38.0%	17.4%	17.9%	4.7%	100%
Audience of commercial films	35.6%	28.5%	19.9%	10.4%	5.5%	100%
Total	28.1%	33.8%	18.5%	14.6%	5.1%	100%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Enquête Publics en PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

This raises the issue of programming, which is at the heart of the triangular relationship linking the viewer to the film he or she comes to see in a particular place (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5.   Level of satisfaction with programming at Art movie
            theatres by the audience of Art films and the audience
            of commercial films

	VERY SATISFIED WITH PROGRAMMING	QUITE SATISFIED WITH PROGRAMMING	QUITE UNSATISFIED WITH PROGRAMMING	NOT SATISFIED AT ALL WITH PROGRAMMING	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	51.7%	46.7%	1.5%	0%	100%
Audience of commercial films	38.5%	59.2%	2.3%	0%	100%
Total	46.0%	52.2%	1.8%	0%	100%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (n = 984).

It makes sense that the audience of Art films is very satisfied with programming in movie theatres where they were surveyed, because these houses offer a wide choice, meeting most of their expectations. The audience of commercial films held a more tempered opinion, reflecting its weaker integration. To understand these variations better, we focused our attention on two indicators. The first is the place and role attributed by these audiences to the concept of director, closely correlated with the concept of Art, as we saw earlier. The second is the attention given to the projection of films in their subtitled version. The first of these two indicators was chosen for its ability to examine the artistic value of a film. The second was chosen for its ability to explore how Art film authorities and Art film houses function.

A specific question is asked in our inquiry. Spectators are urged to imagine that they had to request a famous director to shoot a film about their best friend. The results obtained are relevant, in terms of the difference between the audience of Art films and the audience of commercial ones (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.6. Most appropriate director to shoot a film about the life of the best friend of each spectator surveyed

	WOODY ALLEN	LUC BESSON	PEDRO ALMODOVAR	JEAN-LUC GODARD	STEVEN SPIELBERG	WONG KAR-WAI	YOURSELF	OTHER	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	21.4%	4.7%	31.0%	6.1%	5.7%	9.3%	9.6%	12.3%	100%
Audience of commercial films	18.9%	14.2%	25.1%	5.9%	13.3%	3.4%	12.7%	6.5%	100%
Total	20.3%	8.9%	28.4%	6.0%	9.0%	6.7%	11.0%	9.7%	100%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

The audience of cultural films named renowned directors of Art films like Pedro Almodovar and Wong Kar-wai. They also came up with widely varied answers. In fact, they are twice as likely as the audience of commercial films (12.3% compared to 6.5%) to name a specific director. The audience of commercial films showed a greater commitment to popular directors like Steven Spielberg or the French director Luc Besson, often dismissed in the field of Art cinema.[6]

Screening films in the original subtitled version, which is a characteristic of Art movie theatres, also allows us to see more clearly the relationship viewers have with films (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7. Opinion on screening films in the original subtitled version in Art movie theatres expressed by the audience of Art films and by the audience of commercial films

	100% IN FAVOUR OF SUBTITLED SCREENING	INDIFFERENT TO SUBTITLED SCREENING	WATCHES SUBTITLED FILMS BUT PREFERS WATCHING FILMS IN FRENCH	ONLY WATCHES FILMS IN FRENCH	TOTAL
Audience of Art films	69.2%	10.5%	14.1%	6.1%	100.0%
Audience of commercial films	39.1%	13.3%	21.5%	26.1%	100.0%
Total	56.1%	11.8%	17.3%	14.8%	100.0%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

Opposition to the original subtitled version, quite common in the youngest portion of the audience, is very common in the audience of commercial films. They are two times less likely than the Art-film audience to express interest in the original subtitled version. And even if a part of these viewers go to see, slightly unwillingly, subtitled screenings, over a quarter of these respondents specifically states that it attends only French-version movies.

6.2.2.
THE COHABITATION BETWEEN ART FILMS AND COMMERCIAL FILMS IN ART MOVIE THEATRES

The replies given to the choice of a director and the importance accorded to screening films in subtitled version demonstrated the existence of two distinct groups of spectators with distinct relationships to films. On the one hand, we found spectators attached to the programming of Art films and their referential universe, and on the other, spectators focusing on commercial films. As this second group of spectators showed no interest

6. The balance of responses in the case of Woody Allen and Jean-Luc Godard demonstrate the ambiguous status of these directors. Their names are extremely well known, and, at the same time, are associated specifically with Art films. This explains why the less-informed of the two audiences seems to remember them.

in cultural films, it could be considered a *non-public*. However, this group of viewers definitely attends movie houses and watches films – *bona fide* cultural objects.

Thus, the concept of *non-public* has something to do with a split in the field of film productions and the institutional legitimization of one part of it (Art films) to the detriment of other films qualified as commercial. This coupling of, on the one hand, "audience and legitimate films" and, on the other, "non-public and illegitimate films" enabled us to move beyond the concept of *non-public* as a simple *absent audience* to see an audience that, above all else, avoided movies coming from the so-called (or recognized) legitimate culture, and that could be considered as cinematographic art. In short, the concept of the *non-public* refers to that part of the audience that is not *expected*, *idealized* or *imagined* by authorities, cultural agents or film industry professionals.

By exploring the concept of art in this way, and by extension, the notion of non-art, we broached the relevance of the notion of *non-public*. The artistic work is understood here as a work recognized by film authorities as having value. Art films can therefore be considered as works of art. But non-art does not necessarily refer to productions lacking in value. The notion refers to the group of works to which authorities do not give the Art label. In short, non-art is a cultural product that is not defined as artistic work by authorities, but which could perfectly well be so from the spectator's point of view.

According to common definitions, non-art refers to everything that cannot be classified and that runs against the existing order. It is the *aesthetic shock* leading to astonishment, the chaos that sparks imagination, the scandal that divides the audiences. The non-artistic work is, in short, an unconventional work that time alone can lift to the status of a work of art (Muller, 1970; Vallier, 1986). Our contribution challenges this current definition according to which non-art is composed by artistic works opposed to an "already constituted art" (Heinich, 1998). In the field of movie production, non-art will be understood as what the authorities, critics and part of the audience in fact do not recognize as cinematographic art. It involves movies that rely on classic film-script formulas, that have ambitiously mercantile goals, that work with elements recognizable to spectators, like a clearly defined genre (comedy, drama, Western), the presence of a star in the film, or may be a film adaptation of a best-seller.

Note that the notions of audience, *non-public*, art and non-art are intimately linked. So, we can say that the notion of audience itself stigmatizes tensions around the notion of *non-public*. Indeed, the audiences of Art movie theatres (that is the audience of Art films and the audience of commercial films) together allow this notion of non-art to be introduced into the debate over the notion of *non-public*. Consequently, in the third and last part of this article, we will examine the meaning of the notion of audience and its eventual dismissal.

6.3.
THE *NON-PUBLIC* PUT TO THE TEST BY THE NOTION OF AUDIENCE

6.3.1.
THE AUDIENCE, THE FILMS AND THE MOVIE THEATRES

Audience designates a group of people temporarily gathering in a given place in the presence of a given object. The use of the plural in *audiences* permits the introduction of specific features and allows us to imagine heterogeneous groups of spectators. The shift from singular to plural is one of the main contributions of social science research in the last few years. The first studies of Art films spectators promoted an image of a homogeneous audience made up of educated people, from upper-level socio-professional categories, or big film consumers. Recently film authorities have decided to act on an important fact: Art movie theatres include both Art films and commercial films in their programs (CNC, 2006). Thus, nuances have been introduced into our studies to take account of the correlation between films and movie theatres.

The two groups of spectators we identified revealed that while distinct judgements about films existed, no differences could be seen in the commitment to movie theatres, which function as places of gathering. And yet, examining the notion of audience requires a concomitant examination of the relationship to film and the relationship to place. This is accomplished by turning our attention to programming, which identifies both a group of specific films and the theatre's act of *making a program*. We tested it against a series of variables, two of which – closely linked, as it later turned out – enabled us to establish the idea that people learn to like Art films progressively after having been long-time fans of commercial films. These two variables are the age and the attendance rate (see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8.   Satisfaction level with programming as a function of age

	15–17YRS	18–24YRS	25–34YRS	35–49YRS	50–64YRS	65YRS+	TOTAL
Very satisfied	29.2%	32.8%	36.6%	50.8%	47.6%	45.8%	45.8%
Quite satisfied	70.8%	65.5%	59.2%	46.9%	51.5%	50.6%	52.0%
Quite unsatisfied	0%	1.7%	4.2%	2.4%	0.9%	3.6%	2.1%
Not satisfied at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

After eliminating the under-15 age category because its participation in the study is minimal, we noted that satisfaction rates grew as age progressed. It is moderate in the youngest viewers and stabilized in adulthood in 35–49 year olds. Such satisfaction-age results are in correlation with the satisfaction-attendance rates in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9.   Satisfaction level with programming as a function of attendance rate

	1 X/YR	2–3 X/YR	1X EVERY 2–3 MTHS	AT LEAST 1X/MTH	SEVERAL X/MTH	AT LEAST 1X/WK	SEVERAL X/WK	TOTAL
Very satisfied	14.3%	34.0%	38.7%	36.7%	48.2%	52.5%	64.1%	45.4%
Quite satisfied	85.7%	64.0%	59.3%	59.5%	50.3%	45.3%	35.9%	52.6%
Quite unsatisfied	0%	2.0%	2.0%	3.8%	1.5%	2.2%	0%	2.0%
Not satisfied at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

These figures show us that the more frequently people go to a given movie theatre, the more their attachment to films programmed there grows. Unless, perhaps, a growing interest in films causes the increased attendance? Although we cannot answer this question definitively, the results showed a real correlation between affection for a given movie theatre and affection for Art films. To proceed with this secondary line of thought, we explored the issue of loyalty, which raised the issue of the relationship that spectators have with films and movie theatres. Once again, we noted that loyalty increased with age and intensity of attendance, even though spectators in Art movie theatres are, on the whole, loyal to *their* movie theatres.

Table 6.10. Loyalty to movie theatre as a function of age

AGE ATTENDANCE	UNDER 24YRS	25–64YRS	65YRS+	TOTAL
Exclusively	8.6%	16.3%	21.6%	16.6%
Mainly	53.1%	57.4%	56.1%	56.8%
Occasionally	38.3%	26.2%	22.2%	26.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

Exclusivity (or the act of always attending the same theatre) is a phenomenon that grows with age. A joint study on the "degree of loyalty to the movie theatre where the survey is carried out" and on the "number of annual outings to this theatre" confirmed this attachment.[7]

Table 6.11. Relating loyalty level for a movie theatre study
participant to overall attendance level in movie theatres

TOTAL GROUP OF RESPONDENTS		GROUP OF VIEWERS ATTENDING MOVIES LESS THAN 12X/YR		GROUP OF VIEWERS ATTENDING MOVIES AT LEAST 1X/MTH		GROUP OF VIEWERS ATTENDING MOVIES AT LEAST 1X/WK		...DECLARING THEY ATTEND A MOVIE HOUSE STUDY PARTICIPANT
16,8%	} 72,9%	14,2%	} 59,0%	17,3%	} 76,8%	17,9%	} 76,2%	Exclusively
56,1%		44,8%		59,5%		58,3%		Mainly
27,2%	27,2%	41,0%		23,2%		23,8%		Occasionally

Source: Michaël Bourgatte – Audiences in PACA, 2007 (*n* = 984).

Of those surveyed, 72.9% declared that they attended exclusively or mainly that particular movie theatre. Spectators who attended only occasionally had a weak overall cinema attendance rate: 41% of them said they went to the movies fewer than 12 times a year. Those who confirmed having a strong movie attendance rate defined themselves as regulars or completely loyal to the movie theatre in which the study is carried out. On average, 76.5% of them attended this particular movie theatre over others.[8] Spectators of Art films in the PACA region can then be qualified as loyal, which means that attendance rates registered in movie theatres where the study was carried out are based on a small number of viewers practising intensely these theatres. A number of questions can thus be raised concerning the efficiency of data-collection methods in the social sciences, and concerning the relevance of the notion of audience.

Carrying out a self-administered survey study on people's relations to movie theatres raises two types of questions, the first relating to methodology and the second to using the notion of audience to designate the population surveyed. To the question of what constitutes a *representative* sample, we answered, a *spontaneous* sample. That is, one

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7. We divided our sample into three sub-groups. One group contained viewers who declared that they went to the movies less than 12 times a year, representing 21.4% of the total sample (*n* = 984). Another group contained viewers who declared that they went to the movies at least once a month, representing 55.3% of the sample. And finally, a group of viewers declared that they went to the movies at least once a week, representing 23.3% of the sample.

8. This average is calculated using the total group of individuals who declared that they went to the movies 12 times a year or more and "exclusively" or "principally" attended the movie theatre in which the study is carried out [76.8% + 76.2%/2]."

composed of people willing to participate in the study.[9] Because engaging in this type of exercise requires the respondent to invest considerable time, and only those who are the most committed agree to do it.[10] People who fill out surveys are therefore all willing and loyal to the place. At least, they see themselves as having a privileged relationship with the movie theatre in which they completed the survey. Thus, this sample is not entirely representative, as a substantial segment of the audience avoids this data-collecting exercise out of ignorance, denial or choice.

6.3.2.
FROM THE NOTION OF *AUDIENCE* TO ONE OF *VIEWING COMMUNITY*

We could consider then that this study is not so much about an audience as about a viewing community. In fact, all of the people participating in this study used the same strategy, in which going to the movies, like participating in the survey, involved a performative gesture because of a desire to *communicate something about oneself among others* (Eco, 1989). The concept of community is useful here because of the recurrent presence of two invariants in both definitions offered for this term: the presence of common traits or interests among members of the community and their congregation in a given place (this congregation being permanent or episodic). In other words, the community is a symbolic space for collaboration (Tonnies, 2002).

For all of these reasons, it seems appropriate to speak of "viewing community" (Bourgatte, 2008) in designating the group of people surveyed in this study. However, it is unrealistic to imagine that a community must be completely uniform, without a hint of tension. It is more a congregation in which continual adjustments are made, whether episodic or permanent. Therefore, a viewing community depends on a coexistence of individual histories, experiences and ambitions. It is influenced by structures and conflicts, the principal one in this study being the interest in Art films of one part of the community, while the other part rejects them, preferring commercial films.

The study carried out in our French Art movie theatres updated the notion of community to one made up of viewers with leaders and followers status. The first group, who are older and frequently attend movie theatres, master the criteria of films with Art labels and engage in a coherent relationship with their movie theatre (especially when

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9. See Guy, J.-M. (2000). *La culture cinématographique des Français.* Paris: La Documentation française. The back cover stipulates that they tried to estimate "the size and structure of the capital of film references [. . .] by means of a survey study carried out on a sample that is, *a priori*, representative." This "*a priori*" (stressed with italics in the text) is revelatory of the doubts that could be raised regarding the representational nature of the sample in the overall structure of the publics of film.
10. With 40 questions and 69 facts to supply, the survey required several minutes to fill out, any way you looked at it.

taking social or political stances). The second, younger and attending movie theatres less often, are working more on assembling their viewer career. They want to understand Art films, either to join the first group or to place themselves outside its field.

A viewing community is a social form – otherwise understood as a configuration encouraging the setting up of a network of interrelations – resulting from the arrangement of linked desires of viewers' socialization and distinction. Its existence depends upon the balance its members manage to establish between themselves. This balance is characterized by the play of adjustments that helps a community come into being and evolve. As Norbert Elias said, the question of understanding how and for what reasons human beings form connections amongst themselves and form particular dynamic groups is one of the most important issues, if not the most important issue, in the social sciences (Elias, 1983).

Understanding interaction and adjustments is fundamental to understanding what a viewing community is, as opposed to tribal or social interdependencies involving groups of people relying on each other for survival (barter or the capitalist system comes to mind). There is no interpersonal need, *per se*, in a viewing community. It is more of a temporary consensual gathering. From a methodological point of view, this positioning encourages reconciliation between holistic and individualistic approaches. It shows the considerable malleability of the concept of community, within which interactions may be more or less long and more or less numerous, but still retain links to the gathering's context and object, which is not always true with the notion of audience(s).

CONCLUSION

The concept of the *non-public*, created in opposition to the concept of audience (or *public* as it is in French), designates at times a homogeneous group of absent or non-expected people, at other times a heterogeneous group of individuals not forming a meaningful entity. The example of movie attendance permits a debate on this subject, this practice being particularly widespread in the population (in 2000, a study on the cinematographic culture of French people showed that 97% of French citizens have been in a movie theatre at least once in their lives) (Guy, 2000: 40). Therefore it is hard to envisage the existence of an absent audience, even though in studies carried out on Art films, this *non-public* has been described, as recently as 2006 in a national inquiry, as lacking cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital (CNC, 2006).

Of course this approach is reductive, and precisely for this reason, we decided not to pursue it. Indeed, the Art films audience is much more heterogeneous than it first appears, as is the entire film audience. With an ever-growing rate of occasional viewers (this is the point that

the most recent report, published in 2008, dwells on, revealing how forcefully this media is penetrating society) (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 2009: 53), it seems difficult to pinpoint a *non-public* for film. In fact, all movie theatres in France, including Art movie theatres, are characterized by the composite character of their audiences.

We can therefore ask whether, in the case of Art films, the *non-public* is not more of an non-expected audience, or rather an non-imagined one, since it does not correspond to the image of the Art film audience currently circulating in the world of film scholars. This manner of thinking about the concept of *non-public* led us to discuss non-place and non-art as they pertain to the Art film field, which itself carries a heavy connotative weight in that it conveys an image of film places and productions of real value, or at least which have been institutionally validated. As an analogy to this image of cultural places dedicated to the projection of masterpieces of the seventh art, it seemed useful to ask, first, whether Art movie theatres could also be identified as non-places, and second, whether all or some of the films screened in these movie theatres could be designated as non-art. We answered yes to both these questions.

First of all, it is possible to speak of non-places, provided one recognizes that a place and a non-place are not separate entities but rather interchangeable notions designating the same space, depending on whether it is used for practices which respect the symbolic conditions decreed by this place, or whether it is used for practices without any grasp of its "relational, historical and identity" aspects (Augé, 1995: 77). Art movie theatres are, therefore, both places and non-places depending on the relationship that viewers have with their symbolic side. Next, it is possible to speak of non-art, as long as no value judgement is made of the contents of the productions under study, and as long as film authorities are allowed to speak. Non-art is everything these authorities putatively reject because it lacks creativity (even though the notion of classicism in film is variable over time, which leads to regular re-evaluations of the status of a number of productions).

Although Art films provoke disagreement, they also have a rallying power. In fact, the way viewers as a whole group perceive Art films gives them their very existence. This perception is shaped by what they consider as valuable or not, but also by the viewpoint they have of the discourses circulating in the social space. Thus, using the term "viewing community" to designate Art film audiences allows reintegration of all the spectators into communicable frameworks, taking into account that any social group will always feature those who lead and those who follow, those who are informed and those who are excluded, those who are Established and those who are Outsiders (Elias, 1983). Even if it seems difficult to see how the notion of *non-public* actually works in the field of reception studies, we can at least question its relevance, debating three related fields of investigation: place of practice, the artistic or cultural object practised, and the notion of the audience, without which the *non-public* quite obviously cannot exist.

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Chapter 7

FROM A *NON-PUBLIC* OF MUSEUMS TO *PUBLICS* OF FREE ADMISSION

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Even recently evaluations of the ramifications of free admission to French museums and monuments seemed to be governed by no discernible rules: unpredictable sampling, different targeting, heterogeneous methods, non-secant analysis axes. Moreover, a confidentiality clause affecting most of the studies sets limits on data sharing. Even though differing opinions continued to gather momentum, the debate between supporters and opponents of free admission usually took an ideological turn. The most commonly held notion was that free-admission measures raised little more than the interest of the habitual *public*, either eliciting immoderate usage (*bargain effect*) or a quick diversion (*honeymoon effect*). As for its influence on the process of democratizing audiences, it was suggested that this was non-existent or, at best, negligible. It was as if a *non-public of free admission* existed, in the sense that free access was unable to mobilize the *non-public of museums*.

This three-part study will cast doubt on these two assertions. First, museum attendance for the last half century will be analyzed. Next, the complex nature of visitor identity will be investigated. And last, an experiment in completely free admission to 14 national French museums and monuments in the first half-year of 2008 will be evaluated. The study is placed within a sociology of the individual which renders visible a relationship to culture, freed from its traditional rigidities.

7.1.
CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS: TO WHAT EXTENT CAN WE STILL USE THE TERM *NON-PUBLIC* OF MUSEUMS?

Two indicators prompted me to question received wisdom on the concept of the *non-public* of museums. The first is the very large increase in the volume of visits to museums and exhibitions over a half-century. The second is the complex nature of visitor identity.

7.1.1.
THE EVOLUTION OF ATTENDANCE FLOW

Over a half-century, museum attendance in France has experienced considerable growth, explained in large part by a transformation of the museum offer in both abundance and variety. The museum landscape of the 1960s, if not arid then at least shapeless, was the major reason for the lack of interest of a vast majority of French visitors, contrasting with their spectacular mobilization during rare temporary exhibitions. First analyzer: national museums under the jurisdiction of the Ministère de la Culture.[1] The Ministry's Service des études et de la recherche estimated total attendance at these approximately 30 establishments at 5 million visits in 1960, 6 million in 1965, and nearly 7 million in 1970, when figures of paid entrances and of the estimated volume of free entrances[2] were taken into account. Only one event really stands out in the 1960s: The Tutankhamen exhibition (Paris, Petit Palais, February 16 to September 4, 1967) occasioning 1,241,000 paying visits.[3]

In the course of the following decade, the development of a policy of temporary exhibitions, but also an initial grooming of museums, their opening to other themes and collections, the inauguration of several large-scale constructions and, above all, the opening of the Georges-Pompidou

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1. In France until 2002, museums were divided into four main categories: national museums directly under the jurisdiction of the Direction des Musées de France; museums belonging to the government, some of which depended on other departments of the Ministère de la Culture, or on other ministries; museums under the control of territorial communities (including the 15 museums in Paris) divided into two groups: classified museums and monitored museums, further subdivided into first- and second-category museums; and finally, private museums, with either the status of a foundation, whether administered or not in conjunction with local communities, or with the status of a partnership, with either for-profit or non-profit activity (Sallois, 1995). After the enactment of the *Loi Musées* 2002, the main distinction has been between institutions labelled *Musées de France* (which encompass national museums) and other institutions (Poulot, 2009).
2. The Réunion des Musées nationaux (RMN), created in 1895 and transformed into a public industrial and commercial institution in 1990, collects attendance figures for attendance at institutions and events for which it manages ticket sales. The Ministère de la Culture's Service des études et recherche (SER) was created in 1963 and placed under the direction of Augustin Girard. In 1986, the SER became the Département des études et de la prospective (DEP), and in 2004, the Département des études, de la prospective et des statistiques (DEPS).
3. "Malraux opens Tutankhamen," 8 P.M. television news, ORTF, 02/16/1967, 12:04:01 AM, <http://www.ina.fr/archivespourtous>.

Centre all encouraged attendance to start flowing. Thus 9 million visits were recorded in 1975, and the 10.5-million mark was reached in 1978. And yet, from 1972 on, Augustin Girard noted a slowdown at the Louvre and at Versailles (these two representing, up until then, 2/3 of all attendance figures) and stated that "perhaps saturation had been reached."[4] And even though the number of temporary exhibitions organized by the RMN (Réunion des Musées nationaux) in the national museums or in the Grand Palais hovered around 20 per year, he also said "that one or two years of famine were followed by one or two years of feasting." The opening of the Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou in February of 1977 pushed attendance in national museums to a new level. Between 1978 and 1980, the number of annual admissions in the new institution approached 7 million (including the Bibliothèque publique d'information), with 1.5 million for the museum's permanent collections, and between 450,000 and 800,000 for its temporary exhibitions.

It was due to this revival of interest that the intensive program for renovation and building would be funded, initiated by the Program Law enacted in 1978,[5] and a vast process of museum construction began as of 1981.[6] Their combined benefits were seen by mid-decade: attendance at 33 national museums under the jurisdiction of the Ministère de la Culture reached the 10-million admissions mark (paying and free) in 1984, and the 11-million admissions mark the following year. The 13.5-million mark was reached in 1988 and 15 million was within reach in 1990. In all, attendance at national museums rose by 60% in a single decade.

4. While data are less clear for classified and monitored museums, the same progression seems to hold for the entire group: 547,100 admissions in 1974, 720,800 in 1976, 845,500 in 1977, 792,400 in 1978. This is the same for museums under the jurisdiction of the City of Paris: 494,000 admissions in 1970, 622,000 in 1975 and 672,000 in 1978.
5. The Program Law 1978–1982 on museums (adopted 07/11/1978) contained an increase in facility credits (20%) for museums, enabling them to modernize and build (Poirier, 2000).
6. The "wave of museums" is inseparable from Jack Lang's arrival as Minister of Culture in 1981, and the inauguration of a program of Large-Scale Public Works. Between 1982 and 1990, 282 projects were initiated: 82 were completed, 97 are still in progress, and 103 are in the planning stages. This program involves all museum categories (museums of fine arts, of history and society, and science centres), and develops FRACs (Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain) and contemporary art centres (Poirier, 2000).
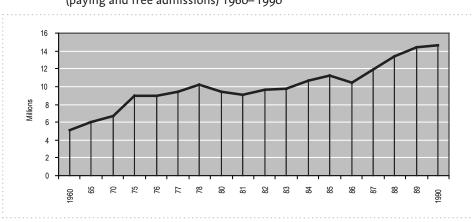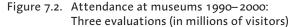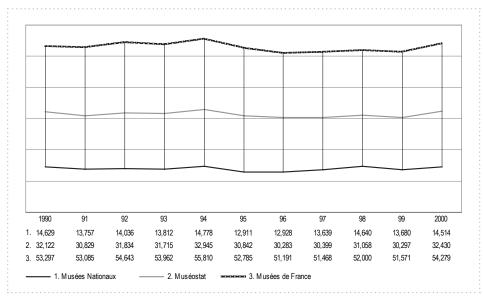
Figure 7.1. Attendance at national museums
(paying and free admissions) 1960–1990

Statistical Sources: SER, and DEP (Ministère de la Culture).

Figure 7.2. Attendance at museums 1990–2000:
Three evaluations (in millions of visitors)

	1990	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000
1.	14,629	13,757	14,036	13,812	14,778	12,911	12,928	13,639	14,640	13,680	14,514
2.	32,122	30,829	31,834	31,715	32,945	30,842	30,283	30,399	31,058	30,297	32,430
3.	53,297	53,085	54,643	53,962	55,810	52,785	51,191	51,468	52,000	51,571	54,279

——— 1. Musées Nationaux   ——— 2. Muséostat   ▬▬▬ 3. Musées de France

Statistical Sources: Muséostat, Direction des Musées de France (Ministère de la Culture).

We might consider the 1980s as the equivalent of a museum craze but, in fact, the habit of visiting museums had taken hold and it stayed. The last decade of the century was one of stable attendance volume. In 1993 the Muséostat system was instituted within the Direction des Musées de France which standardized accounting for paying and free visits, supplied regular admissions numbers for a group of 275 test-museums (including national museums), and which, along with other sources,

enabled measurement of the elasticity of the total volume of attendance of approximately 1,300 French museums.[7] In the 1990s, the attendance zenith was reached in 1994 (coinciding with the inauguration of the Richelieu wing at the Louvre), and its nadir in 1995–1996 (following a wave of bomb-attacks in Paris). But in the first half of 1997, a reverse trend occurred again, so that, by the year 2000, audiences were almost identical to ten years prior: 14.5 million for national museums; 32.4 million for the group of 275 Muséostat reference institutions; 54.3 million from a wider set that would soon make up the category "Museums de France."
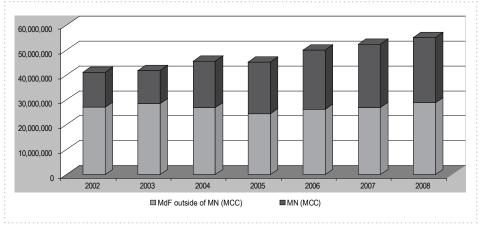
Figure 7.3.   2002– 2008 Attendance of Museums de France

Legend: MdF: Musées de France. MN(CC): National museums under the Ministère de la Culture.
Statistical Sources: Muséostat, Direction des Musées de France (Ministère de la Culture).

Crossing the threshold into the new century refuted the saturation thesis as visit numbers began to increase again. Two main reasons for this can be identified: spectacular architectural and museographic campaigns (for example, The Musée du Quai Branly) and a policy of *publics* henceforth covered by the Museums Law of January 2002. Added to this were permanent or temporary free-admission measures in certain institutions or during certain events, introducing a new philosophy of action. Thus, despite a short period of decline following the attacks of September 11, 2001,[8] new attendance thresholds were crossed

7. Even so, this only takes into consideration public museums run by the government or territorial communities. It sheds no light on several thousand private or partnership establishments whose collections are neither "classified" nor "monitored." In 2000, the total number of museums and exhibition sites in France was in the order of 10,000 (Morley & Le Vavasseur, 2001).
8. According to Bouquillard (*Tendances*, September 2002), the decline in attendance following the attacks was around 7% compared to the previous year and involved mostly institutions popular with foreign tourists and relatively few of those located outside the Île-de-France Paris region, which benefit from local attendance.

by the new group of Musées de France.[9] Attendance grew regularly, even if growth was steadier in Île-de-France than in other regions, such that between 2002 and 2008, the overall increase was 34%. Taken on its own, from 1999 to 2008, the group of national museums under the jurisdiction of the Ministère de la Culture witnessed an 86% increase in admissions numbers.

Thus the first indicator of a progressive reduction of the size of museum *non-publics* is visit volume. The second indicator is the visitor himself, or at least those who declare themselves as visitors.

7.2.
DECLARING PRACTICE

Recalling that initially the national survey *Pratiques culturelles des Français* was designed as a prediction instrument, Donnat (2003) lamented that, over the years, and especially after the 1989 issue, it became not only an instrument for evaluating policy, but also the central motif in an ideological discourse. Remaining still today an obligatory reference for researchers, it nevertheless provides substance for critics both as a protocol and in its interpretations. Which cultural sociologist has not felt a sense of "always the same," of "déjà vu" while reading the study's successive publications (Passeron, 2003), as well as a sense of disconnection with the observed, ground-level realities? Investigating museum attendance four times over a span of 30 years (1973, 1981, 1988, 1997), the study certainly registered an increase in annual rates of museum visit practices (of between 27 and 33%). But this rate of declared practices contrasts radically with the large growth in actual recorded attendance rates: increases of six points in declared museum outings corresponds to an increase of only 3 million practitioners over 20 years. It is difficult to imagine that the 51.7 million visits reported in 1997 were made essentially by foreign tourists, while their contribution was estimated at merely a third of all entrances (Bouquillard & Leroy, 2000). And what to make of the rate of 30% of annual practitioners in the 2008 issue, when a Credoc (Centre de recherche pour l'étude et l'observation des conditions de vie) study from practically the same time period fixes it at 33%?[10] Admittedly, Donnat (2009) does not attribute any particular significance to this figure excepting stability,

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9. The annual number of museums bearing the Musées de France label: in 2002–2003: 1,170; in 2004: 1188; in 2005: 1,196; in 2006: 1,203; in 2007: 1,207; in 2008: 1,211; in 2009: 1,213. Between labelled museums, museums with labels removed, and museums that were closed to the public for repairs, the number of museums serving as a sample for attendance records from 2002 on is lower than the number *Muséostat* used for its accounts. Even so, the trends are identical.

10. This was a national study carried out in 2005 at the request of the Direction des Musées de France (Alibert, Bigot & Hatchuel, 2006). Not only does no specific event justify the three-point reduction in attendance over two years, but the increasing flow of visits, as indicated above, was constant.

estimating that a difference of 3% falls within the limits of a statistical study's classic confidence interval, just as it could be put down to demographic changes in the French population.[11] These data, which were also interpreted as cumulative rates of attendance instead of annual rates of practice, continued to fuel the idea of a museum *non-public* comprising two thirds of the French population.

By carrying out this secondary analysis of data from the 1997 and 2008 issues of *Pratiques culturelles des Français*, and by completing this quantitative approach with a qualitative approach in the form of a visitors' life history, other perspectives emerge which temper a number of assumptions about museum *publics* and *non-publics*, in terms of both volume and composition (Eidelman & Céroux, 2010; Eidelman, Cordier, & Letrait, 2003).

Actually, the logic of the *Pratiques culturelles des Français* protocol leads to a certain number of heuristic biases. First, it assumes that museum representations coincide perfectly with the naming of practices. Concretely, the category "museum" in the survey becomes obscure: totally in the first two issues of the survey, partially in the last three, in which it is explained only to those who declared that they had made at least one visit over the preceding year and who were then presented with a list of types of museums so they could specify where they had gone. Thus, paradoxically, the result was that the material covered by the question was elucidated only for so-called "practitioners" and not for those considered "non-practitioners."[12] Next, it arbitrarily separated the spheres of museums and cultural heritage, at times overestimating, at times underestimating a series of oppositions, the most noteworthy of which were permanent/temporary, musealia/naturalia, original/artefact, presence of collections/absence of collections, museums of display/museums or centres of interpretation, conservation/promotion, art world/other worlds etc. After several statistical crossings done to narrow the range of museum types visited, other greater patterns appeared. Thus, in 1997, 42% of French citizens aged 15 or over had visited an "exhibition" site during the previous year (five types of outing: Futuroscope or Cité des sciences de La Villette, a temporary painting or sculpture exhibition, a photo exhibition, an art gallery, a museum) or a "heritage site" (three types of outing: an historical monument, an archeological site, a son et lumière show). In 2008, this proportion had risen to 52%.

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11. According to INSEE data, the French population numbered 60.1 million in 1999 and 64.3 million in 2008.
12. This can be seen particularly in the way the questions were formulated and in their ordering. For instance, take the key questions regarding museum attendance. In the first two issues (1973, 1981), the respondent was generally questioned in the following manner: "Over the last few years, have you visited a museum? Has this occurred within the last year?" In the two subsequent issues (1989 and 1997), the question became, "Have you visited a museum at least once in your life? Has this occurred within the last 12 months? If so, have you visited a museum of [followed by a list of eight types of museums]?" In the 2008 issue, the wording of the questions was practically identical.

Another way to identify the reasons for a difference between the statements of practice recorded in the national study, *Pratiques culturelles des Français*, and the actual practice observed *in situ* is to use a comprehensive study and its resources. In this instance, the approach is biographical and includes experiences of all types of cultural visits made during different periods of people's lives, within and outside of their family of origin, in school or in an employment context, during daily life or on holiday, alone or in the company of others, etc., so as to narrow down the place and meaning given to visits to museums and to other cultural exhibition places at different ages in life. It thus becomes possible to identify the events and factors from which people construct and then experience their *visitor identity*. Thirty or so narratives of *visitor experience* revealed a large discrepancy between immediate recall of visits and material covered progressively during the interview: an almost systematic, forceful underestimation of both the number and variety of practices became apparent. Difficulties in recall, reassignment on the basis of other idea associations, instability of ideas and frames of reference from one person to the next, and within the same person were seen. A process of recreating categories of classification for visiting sites and a reassessment of the meaning given to the experience of the visit was widely observed. Particularly clear in those least accustomed to visiting cultural facilities, this process was one of erasing self-censure. The further the interview progressed and a measure of trust was established, the less subjects felt like they were "in a culture exam" and the less they tried to avoid losing face with "cultural bluffing" or sought to put themselves down (Lahire, 2004; Mauger, Poliak, & Pudal, 1999). They tended to break the cycle of a discourse people allow themselves to indulge in to greater or lesser degrees about practices deemed more or less attractive, and judged worthy enough to declare, depending on the social image that subjects held of themselves. Thus underestimation of museum visits can be explained as much by its poor ranking on the scale of tastes as by the fear that the circumstances and methods of the visit will be considered inadequate. Once again, however, reconstruction of itineraries since childhood and evidence of specific temporal re-arrangement put into perspective the thesis of mechanical social reproduction of events. By focusing on the individual whose statutory identities change over the cycles of his life, it is possible to examine the trajectories, or, more specifically, the systems involved in constructing a visitor identity. Different profiles emerge of what might be called "visitor careers," some of which proceed in an unchanging curve (with sequences leading to success or, on the contrary, to failure) and others in discontinuous curve (with declines, renewed attempts, abandonments).

All in all, whether their focus is the evolution of attendance volume in these institutions, examples of visiting practices in people's lives, or visitor careers, sociologists can only deconstruct the spectral image of an imaginary visitor constrained from the outset by the variables of analysis in critical sociology. By the same token, sociologists must renounce the idea of a non-visitor associated with "a fundamentally socio-graphic conception implicitly positing that cultural divides are necessarily organized according to a prior social division" (Chartier, 1996).

7.3.
IS THERE A *NON-PUBLIC* OF FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION?

Ought we to see in the promise of the French presidential candidate in 2007 to make all French museums free,[13] a final response to the anticipated failure of any cultural democratization policy embodied by the irreducible "non-visitor"? This proposition revives the debate which began when free admission to national museums was stopped in 1922. Today, in addition to those working in politics or in the cultural domain, it also mobilizes academics. Each one is firing away on all cylinders, arguing for or against a measure whose application seems inevitable after an election win. One might wonder whether experiments in free admission in a sample of national museums and monuments in the first half of 2008 were in fact a dilatory measure meant to calm the debate that exists even within government ranks.[14] This paper will analyze this crucial experiment in order to test the validity of a philosophy of action. Before proceeding, let us first put the experiment back into its context of production.

7.3.1.
EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF FREE ADMISSION ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

The principle of totally free admission appeared in a context in which complete exemption from admission fees was an exception (certain days only) and targeted (certain categories of the public only) and constituted only a small component of an increasingly complex ticketing policy (Rouet, 2002). The economic turning point for museums in France occurred at the end of the 1980s after triumphing overseas (Tobelem,

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13. "We have to answer the expectations of our fellow citizens [. . .] by targeted exemptions aimed at attracting publics estranged from cultural practices, like free admission to museums, for example," Nicholas Sarkozy, speech on April 4, 2007, to culture stakeholders.
14. See François Fillon's General Policy Statement, July 3, 2007. Minister of Culture Christine Albanel is not personally in favour of the principle of totally free admission and suggests it should be limited to 18–25-year-olds. See the interview by Vincent Josse with C. Albanel, France Inter, May 29, 2007.

2005). It was based on the idea that to achieve administrative autonomy, museums had to increase their share of self-financing, notably through ticket sales (Mairesse, 2010). The idea is often at the base of marketing strategies that assume that the higher the ticket price, the higher the quality of goods (artworks?) and services (reception and comfort during the visit) will be in the eyes of visitors (Gombault *et al.*, 2006). To a certain extent, consenting to pay is the key indicator of satisfaction.

In the first years of the 21st century, the thesis of an *economy of uniqueness* regarding culture (Karpik, 2007) opened a breach in this seemingly water-tight system. It agreed more with what a number of studies and research investigations on the *public* were demonstrating: visitors interpret visits they make as social experiences with highly symbolic content; they interact with the museum offerings and are attentive to the resulting cultural intake (Eidelman & Roustan, 2008). At the Louvre, the qualitative evaluation of a year of free admission on the first Sunday of each month had already gone in this direction (Gottesdiener & Godrèche, 1996). Considered conclusive in other ways (we will return to this point later), the formula was applied to the entire set of national museums under the jurisdiction of the Ministère de la Culture as of January 1, 2000.[15] In the wake of this, the newly elected mayor of Paris introduced permanent free admission for permanent collections of museums under the City's jurisdiction[16] and a dozen municipalities around the country gradually followed the same path.[17]

The success of national museums instituting free Sunday admission was immediate and, in terms of volume, remains uncontested. And yet, the structure of these *publics* has been interpreted in different ways. Such was the case at the Louvre. Examining the first five years of free admission, Fourteau (2001 and 2002) emphasizes that during free Sundays, members of working-class categories are three times more numerous and twice as likely to be first-time visitors in comparison with ordinary Sundays. For her part, A. Krebs (2008) admittedly notes the persistence of a difference in attendance of around 60% between free Sundays and paying Sundays during the 2004–2007 period, but

15. D. Samsoen also reminds us that free admission on Sundays was cancelled in 1935 and replaced by a reduced ticket price, except at the Louvre and the Musée du Luxembourg, which maintained it. In 1990, the Louvre also dropped it and, in 1995 the Centre G. Pompidou did as well. As for free admission on Wednesdays, this policy ended in 1984. Increasingly complex fee schedules have replaced it, offering exemptions or fee reductions to certain categories of the public during certain time slots.

16. Incidentally, it noteworthy that the only factors relating to the impact of free admission on attendance at museums in the City of Paris published were those relating to increases in attendance flow (in July 2008, for instance, the City of Paris's website celebrated "six successful years" of free admission to municipal museums with an increase in attendance of 139%, going from 537,000 admissions in 2001 to 1,300,000 in 2007). By contrast, results of the study concerning the structure of the public, awarded to the Farman & Partners firm, were never published. An article written by Sioufi and Jeanteur entitled *"Augmenter la fréquentation des musées sans les brade*r" (Increasing Attendance at Museums without Selling them Off), which you can download on the firm's website, is singularly silent regarding these results.

17. Free admission to Paris museums was instituted by Bertrand Delanoe in 2001. Other cities with free museums include Bordeaux, Dijon, Caen, Grenoble and Nice.

she also points out that the *bargain effect* henceforth affects all categories of visitors. Finally, using a study carried out on free-Sunday visitors in national museums and on another study on a sample of the French population, Rouet and Octobre (2002) tried to reconcile the two viewpoints. On the socio-demographic level, "free admission concomitantly brings about an expansion of the public and real diversification, but to a limited extent" which cannot be substituted for wide-ranging "structural development."

In any event, when the 2008 experiment was set up in France, it was the museums across the Channel that were attracting all the attention and promising predictive value. However, to say the very least, what was happening there was far from being unambiguous.

7.3.2.
TOTALLY FREE ADMISSION: GREAT BRITAIN'S CONTROVERSIAL EXAMPLE

Free admission in British national museums was introduced in 1999 for children and in 2000 for those 60 or over. In December of 2001, it was finally granted to all visitors. The first year, increases to the number of visits were in the order of 70%. A national study was carried out by the Ipsos Mori firm from August 8 to 13, 2002 on 2,095 people aged 16 or over: 45% of them declared they had visited a museum within the past year. That was 7% more than in January 2002 and 10% more than in January of 2001. It seemed that this significant rise in rates of declared practices could only be explained by the free admission measure. Increases were seen in all social categories, but to different degrees, and the study's authors stressed the persistence of differences between each category. (Martin, 2003).

Various French researchers used these results to condemn future experimentation in France before it even began (Benhamou, 2008). All have been much more circumspect, however, regarding the results of a second study. In 2004, when museum attendance was still very high, the British Department for Culture, Media and Sport launched an annual study, *Taking Part*, to evaluate cultural policy using a range of performance indicators. For museums, the indicators included democratizing visiting practice (regarding lower-income visitors), cultural diversity (visitors from ethnic minorities) and accessibility (visitors suffering from a handicap).[18] The objective to increase the rate of practice of each target category by 2% was reached in three years (from 2005 to 2008) for

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18. Modalities of ethnic origin were: "White," "Mixed-blood," "Asian," "Black," "Other"; of religion: "no religion," "Christian," "Buddhist," "Hindu," "Muslim," "Sikh," "Other"; of handicap: "mild handicap or mental disability," "severe handicap or mental disability." See, for example: DCMS, *Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, Final Assessment of Programme* on PSA3, December 11, 2008. (available at <http://www.culture.gov.uk>); S. Barauskas, *Attendance of Museums and Galleries in 2006–2007*, London, Museums Libraries Archives Council, 2008 (available at <http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/>).

ethnic minorities (with a rate of visit practice rising from 35.5 to 39.3%) and for people belonging to the lowest-income category (with a rate of visiting practice rising from 28.3 to 30.6%), while the average rate for the total population only varied 1.3% (from 42.3 to 43.6%).[19] The debate appears to have come to an end when 17 directors of big museums defended the principle of free admission in the name of cultural democratization in a petition published in the Guardian newspaper.[20]

7.3.3.
INSTITUTING THE FRENCH EXPERIMENT[21]

The mission statement from the French Minister of Culture is perfectly clear:

> [. . .] Free admission to national museums is one of the commitments of the presidential project. If it is possible and has succeeded elsewhere, there is no reason why it should not succeed in France. As this is, however, the object of some debate in the cultural world, you will initially try out free admission in a sample of institutions [. . .] The objective will be to measure all of the consequences and determine the conditions of success required for its wider application [. . .][22]

On January 1, 2008, access to the permanent collections of 14 national museums and monuments was offered free-of-charge to all visitors for a period of six months. During this same period, four Parisian museums experimented with free access by category: young people between the ages of 18 and 25 were granted free admission from 6 to 9 p.m. once a week.[23]

With regards to the main experiment, the choice was among institutions with subjects including History, Science and Technology, Popular Art and Traditions, Eastern Civilizations and *Fine Arts*. Geographical location was also taken into account: six museums from the Île-de-France Paris area (three of them inside Paris itself), four museums and four monuments in the provinces. Finally, the institutions were under different jurisdictions: the Ministère de la Culture, the Ministère de la Défense, the Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, or the Centre des monuments nationaux.

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19. For the handicapped, the objective was not reached. The rate of practice rose only from 32.1 to 33.2%.
20. Fund Museums to Keep Them Free, *The Guardian*, June 21, 2007.
21. For an account of how it was set up, see A. Ochoa, *La gratuité dans les musées et monuments nationaux*, Master's II thesis in Museum Studies, École du Louvre, September 2009.
22. Nicolas Sarkozy & François Fillon, August 1st, 2007, <www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2008/04/28/lettre-de-mission-adresse-a-christine-albanel_1039487_823448.html>.
23. These four Parisian museums were the Louvre, the Centre G.-Pompidou, the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée du Quai Branly. I will not give the details of this second experiment, whose results partially coincided with results of the study on the entire population. The reader is invited to refer to Bruno Maresca (2008).

Entrusted to the "Public et Culture" bureau, the evaluation protocol was conceived as a permanent observatory for free-admission *publics*. On the one hand, it recorded the number of daily visits and on the other hand, it carried out a survey of a representative sample of visitors ($n = 6548$) using a questionnaire administered in person at the end of the visit. Analysis of the results was done by the Centre de recherche sur les liens sociaux (Université Paris Descartes and CNRS), which designed a series of impact indicators, some self-defined because the reference data turned out to be unreliable.

7.4.
WHERE THE *NON-PUBLIC* DEMATERIALIZES[24]

The first part of this article revealed that the experiment was carried out in a context of overall attendance to French museums that was generally favourable. Throughout the six months of free admission, the 14 test institutions showed 2008 attendance figures clearly increasing in comparison to those of 2007. Thus from January to June, they received, on average, 56% more visits than for the same period the previous year, or an additional number of 350,000 visits. The increase affected all the sites, but its size varied according to usual attendance estimates, with smaller institutions showing the biggest gains, as a general rule. Therefore, those who usually recorded fewer than 20,000 visits per half-year, showed an increase of 90 to 140%. Those with 20,000 to 80,000 visits, recorded an increase between 40 and 90%. And those with over 100,000 visits, showed an increase between 20 and 40%.

To what extent does this rate of increase indicate a positive reaction in the *public*? Actually, 47% of visitors declared that free admission counted in their decision to visit a museum or monument. They were classified as *mobilized visitors*. The remaining visitors comprised two groups: those for whom free access did not constitute a motive to visit (17%) and those who had not been informed (36%). In other words, three quarters of the informed visitors group were won over by free admission.

Depending on the establishment, the portion of mobilized visitors varied between 30 and 60%. In eight of the 14 establishments, the level of visitor mobilization was higher in the first three months of experimentation than in the second. On average, mobilization was more evident in institutions located outside the capital, in museums rather

24. This section of the article, revisits certain results of the study by J.Eidelman and B. Céroux, with collaboration from A. Ochoa, *Sociologie de l'expérimentation de la gratuité dans les musées et monuments nationaux*, CERLIS/DMF, October 2008. A previous article was based on this report (Eidelman & Céroux, 2009).

than in monuments, and on sites belonging to the Ministère de la Défense rather than those under another jurisdiction. Visitors to institutions located in the Île-de-France Paris area were more aware of the experiment than visitors to institutions located in other regions (42% were uninformed as opposed to 31% in Île-de-France).
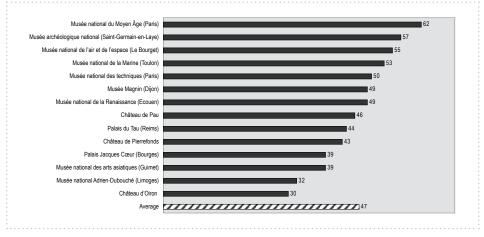
Table 7.1.   Attendance compared per institution

	ATTENDANCE 1ST HALF 2007	ATTENDANCE 1ST HALF 2008	NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL ENTRIES	RATES OF INCREASE 2007–2008
Musée National de la Marine (Toulon)*	13,551	35,824	22,273	138%
Le Palais de Jacques Cœur (Bourges)	14,049	32,755	18,706	133%
Château d'Oiron	5,660	10,625	4,965	88%
Musée National de la Renaissance (Ecouen)	29,214	54,264	25,050	86%
Château de Pierrefonds	50,104	89,818	39,714	79%
Musée des arts et métiers	76,796	133,367	56,571	74%
Palais du Tau (Reims)	23,820	40,417	16,597	70%
MAN (Saint-Germain-en-Laye)	45,592	67,728	22,136	49%
Musée national de l'air et de l'espace (Le Bourget)	100,287	143,673	42,386	43%
Musée national du Moyen Âge (Paris)	152,957	215,469	62,512	41%
Château de Pau	38,595	53,354	14,759	38%
Musée Magnin (Dijon)	7,269	9,185	1,916	26%
Musée Guimet (Paris)	107,385	128,534	21,149	20%
Total	673,527	1,030,358	356,831	53%

* As the the Musée National de la Marine (Toulon) was closed in January of 2007, its rate of increase was calculated solely on attendance from February to June, 2008.

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS)/DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

Figure 7.4. Rate of Visitors mobilized per institution

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS), DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

7.4.1.
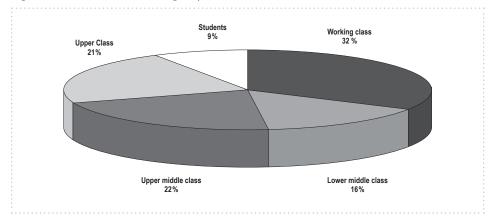## INDICATORS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF FREE ADMISSION

A second major result emerged from the fact that the *public* in the experiment was substantially different from what the beneficiaries of free admission are commonly thought to be, whether researchers are looking at social group, the nature of ties to culture or museum and cultural familiarity capital. This paper will show that, in general, free admission has found its *public* of choice.

One out of three visitors belongs to the working class

In a number of studies on cultural practices, social background is understood as a composite using a list of variables processed independently from each other. In France, the accepted approach is usually socio-professional, even though an approach using income or education level is gaining ground (Pierru & Spire, 2008). In Great Britain's *Taking Part* study, for example, other indicators were used. In the 2008 French free-admission study a synthesizing indicator was used to process data: the *social group*, made up of a range of data including professional situation, profession currently exercised or exercised in the past, certification level, age, and, to some extent, household income level. Four social groups (working class, lower middle and upper middle class[25], upper class) were delineated to which a group "in process" (students) was added.

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25. This distinction rests on two criteria: a certification level below Baccalaureat+3 and a monthly household income of under 2,500 euros (when that information was available). For a discussion about the middle class, see R. Bigot (2007).

Figure 7.5. Indicator 1: social group

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS), DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

Overall, the "middle class" is the best represented group among visitors (38%, with 16% in the "lower" level and 22% in the "upper" level), followed by the "working class" (32%), and then the "upper" class (21%). Students made up 9% of the public. In other words, those who, in terms of income and education level, appear most often in research studies as the ones who visit cultural institutions the least, often make up 48% of the free-admission public.

The distribution of different social groups according to place of residence (intra-muros Paris, the Île-de-France Paris region, other regions) reflects socio-demographic differences across the country[26]: members of the upper class and students are more frequent among Parisians (respectively 31% and 12%), members of the middle class are very present in the departments surrounding the capital (40%), and members of the working class predominate in other regions (38%). Disparities between each institution suggest that the visitor recruitment pool is not identical. The Musée de la Marine in Toulon, the Musée Adrien-Dubouché in Limoges and the Musée de l'air et de l'espace in Le Bourget, as well as the Château de Pau, the Château de Pierrefonds and the Château d'Oiron welcomed working-class visitors (between 40 and 55%) more often than other institutions. For their part, the Musée Jacques-Coeur in Bourges, the Musée Magnin in Dijon and the Musée des arts et métiers in Paris welcomed more middle-class visitors (42 to 45%). At the Musée Guimet in Paris, the Musée de l'archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye and the Musée de la Renaissance in Écouen, visitors belonged to the upper class more often than elsewhere (from

26. See, for instance, distribution of the working population by socio-professional category on the INSEE site: <htto://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/resultats/default.asp?page=donnees.htm>.

25 to 28%). Students made up a large part of the *public* at the Musée du Moyen Âge, the Musée des arts et métiers, and at the Musée Guimet in Paris as well as at the Palais du Tau in Reims (10 to 13%).

Only a quarter of visitors have strong or very strong links with culture and museums

Has free admission led large numbers of visitors unaccustomed to museums to cross museum thresholds? The indicator used to answer this type of question is usually one-dimensional. It is the portion of visitors who visited or did not visit a museum or a monument within the preceding 12 months. A second synthesizing indicator was designed: *familiarity-with-museums capital*, which integrates a series of practices and types of relations with museums.[27] The free-admissions public is thus distributed along the familiarity scale at four levels: visitors with weak familiarity (21%), visitors with average familiarity (48%), visitors with strong familiarity (24%) and visitors with very strong familiarity (7%). Significant disparities emerged: people living in the Île-de-France Paris region have a high or very high museum familiarity capital slightly more often than visitors residing in other regions (36% vs. 29%), who, in contrast, are often not very familiar with museums (28% vs. 14%).
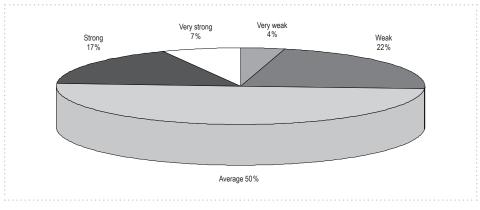
Can these visitors be considered, more generally, as practitioners of culture? The third synthesizing indicator – the nature of the link to culture – is based on the integration of a multiplicity of cultural practices.[28] It turns out that one out of five visitors has a "very weak" or "weak" link with culture. One out of two has an "average" link to culture and one out of four cultivates a "strong" or "very strong" link. Once again, geographic disparities emerged. People living in the provinces generally have weaker links with culture than people living in Île-de-France (respectively 34% and 21%).
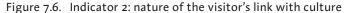
Institutions located outside the capital welcome more visitors whose cultural practices are less frequent or less diversified, whereas, in the three Parisian museums, regular practitioners of culture and heritage are proportionately more numerous. Because most studies on free admission have been carried out in Parisian museums, the similarity of

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27. These include previous visits to the institution under study; habitual attendance periods at museum/monument; virtual visits using websites; possession of a membership card or a free pass; membership in a Friends of the Museum group; a professional activity relating to art and culture. One point was granted for each item, excepting periods of attendance (one point for visits only taken during vacation, two for visits also taken outside the vacation period). The scale was determined on the distribution of individuals around an "average" score (2.10): visitors whose score fell below this average had a "weak" museum familiarity capital; those with a score of 3 had a "strong" familiarity capital; and those with a higher score had a "very strong" familiarity capital.

28. The "link to culture" scale went from 0 (no cultural practice) to 10 (all possible practices). On average, visitors declared 5.25 different cultural practices: visitors with 5 or 6 practices had an "average" link. Visitors declaring less than 3 different cultural practices had a "very weak" link, those with three or four practices had a "weak" link, those with 7 different cultural practices had a "strong" link to culture and those declaring 8 to 10 practices had a "very strong" link to culture.

their findings no doubt helped spread the notion that free admission attracts primarily visitors already familiar with museums. The location of institutions visited is not, however, the only criterion of variation. In certain museums of history or technology, one out of three visitors, or even one out of two, maintains strong links with "high" culture[29] and with museums. This is so for the *public* of the Château de Pau, the Château de Pierrefonds, for the Musée de la Marine in Toulon, and for the Musée de l'air et de l'espace in Le Bourget, which are also the institutions most frequently attended by working-class visitors. The supposed failure of free admission has often been attributed to a lack of interest in museums and exhibitions specializing in painting and sculpture. Beyond the weakness of the data underlying these assertions, they reduce the world of museums to those with art collections, ignoring the fact that museums are currently as diverse as their *publics*. On the one hand, the conception of culture is limited to the realms of ideas and art and remains elitist and restricted; on the other hand we can see the materiality of culture (in the anthropological sense) in the pluralistic world of museums (Eidelman, 2005).

Figure 7.6. Indicator 2: nature of the visitor's link with culture

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS), DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

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29. For inspiring reading on the relationship between individuals and culture, see Fleury, 2006.
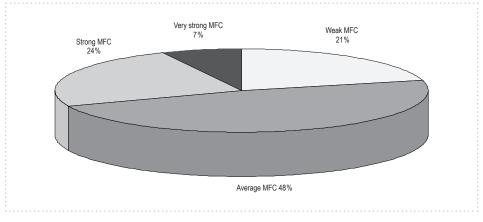
Figure 7.7.   Indicator 3: Museum familiarity capital

Very strong MFC 7%

Weak MFC 21%

Strong MFC 24%

Average MFC 48%

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS), DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

Students and the working class are those most often mobilized by free admission

At this stage of the analysis, the *public* of institutions experimenting free entrance presents a picture that resembles the French population in general more than the pictures usually shown in national enquiries into cultural practices. Are we witnessing the "democratizing" effect of free admission here? To answer this, we will look at the rate of *mobilization by free admission* for each social group, each type of link to culture, each level of familiarity with museums and monuments.
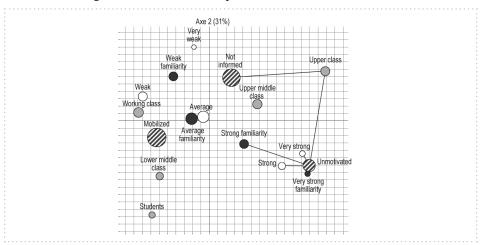
Figure 7.8.   Mobilization by free admission: social and cultural indicators

Sources: Cerlis (Paris Descartes/CNRS), DEPS (Ministère de la Culture).

First, an over-mobilization of students (53%) and working class visitors (51%) is observable, contrasting with the low interest from the upper class (no motivation: 20%; lack of information: 41%). The middle class contains a lower stratum whose rate of mobilization is identical to that of the working class, and an upper stratum containing a high incidence of visitors unmotivated by free admission. This trend is maintained regardless of place of residence. The disparity between mobilization of working class visitors and that of upper-class visitors is 14% for people from the Île-de-France Paris region and 11% for visitors residing in another region. The more numerous and varied one's cultural practices are, the more one's interest in free admission decreases. In contrast, the weaker the link with culture and the lower the museum familiarity, the more mobilization increases. And although a very weak link with culture is often synonymous with a lack of information about free admission, once the information is received the visitors with the weakest museum familiarity capital are the most mobilized. What occurs overall also occurs within each institution. The working class appears to be "over-mobilized" in 13 of the 14 institutions, and students in 10. By contrast, in almost every institution, upper-class visitors are the least motivated by free admission. Equally, visitors whose link with culture or intensity of museum practice is weak tend to be more mobilized (in 11 of the 14 institutions), whereas the most culturally active visitors declare that they are the least mobilized (in 12 institutions).

7.4.2.
FROM EXPERIMENT TO SCREENPLAY: FREE ADMISSION IN CREATING MUSEUM FAMILIARITY

An opinion poll was administered to the experiment's respondents at the end of the survey. Its results revealed a definite plebiscite: 83% of visitors thought that free admission was a good thing for all categories of the *public*, 9% that it should be restricted to certain categories and only 8% were totally opposed to it. While there was near unanimity on the principle of non-categorized free admission, opinions were divided on the application of free-admission. Should it be permanent, regular or occasional? Four out of ten visitors wanted permanent free admission, as many again voted for regular free admission (at least once a month) and half of that number thought occasional free admission (several times a year) was sufficient. With regards to the hypothesis of general free admission to museums and monuments, respondents split into two groups. The minority (30%) would not change their museum-visiting habits, while the majority (70%) would change theirs. Within this latter group, for four out of ten visitors, the change would consist of attending already known sites more regularly, and six out of ten would undertake to discover hitherto unknown sites. The hypothesis of free admission to
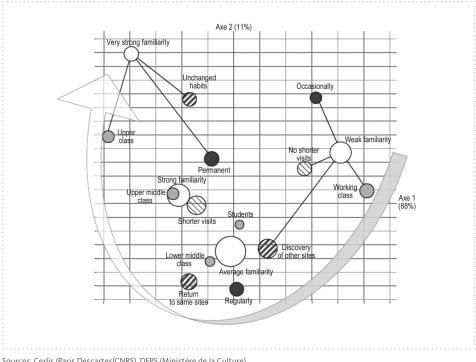
a particular site was regarded by the vast majority as a factor of loyalty (80%) and user-friendliness (73%). Regarding visiting conditions, two thirds of respondents pictured a shorter visit, a quarter a more relaxed one, only a tenth worried about the inconvenience of crowds. Four visitors out of ten thought free admission would allow for savings, which they would use to practise other activities.

These results sometimes support and sometimes oppose certain studies based essentially on representations. Regarding the most recent one carried out by Gombault (2006), they show that negative representations of visit conditions disappear almost completely during a free-admission experiment, and that free admission is widely approved of. Nevertheless, they contradict Crédoc's (2006) findings that "the main people interested in free admission are the regulars themselves" and that it would not necessarily attract a new *public* even if, the findings admit, "56% of people who had not visited a museum this year would do so if museums were free on certain days."

Members of the upper and upper middle classes, whom we noted were the least mobilized, most often declared that they believed free admission should be restricted to certain categories, and did not believe that it would fundamentally change their visiting habits. And yet, in spite of these reserves, they argued more than others for permanent free admission, which would allow them repeated visits of short duration. Regarding students, members of the lower middle class and those of the working class, they all defended the principle of free admission for everyone, seeing economic benefits in it, the chance to come with their family or their friends and to discover new sites, while taking their time. Mostly, they envisage regular or occasional free admission. Thus, behind the opinions and projections, we can detect not merely the habits of social groups, but also the impact of an experiment in free admission that turned the hypothesis into a reality. Seen from this aspect, visitors show considerable practicality and that they are capable of managing the flow of their social interactions (Giddens, 1990).

A second level of analysis contradicted the Crédoc's thesis of a "relative inertia of behaviours relating to museums." This level examined the process of transformation of practices and trajectories in visitor careers. It is, in fact, possible to establish a correlation between the successive steps in creating and introducing a taste for the practice of visiting museums and monuments, and the desire for an occasional, regular or permanent free-admission system.

Thus, thanks to free admission, those who have little or no familiarity with museums intend to explore sites hitherto unknown to them. By increasing the number of "occasional" visits, they establish a greater level of familiarity in which they learn to"tame" the museum just as the museum slowly "tame" them. The rhythm of their visits becomes more

"regular." They begin to make choices, to list their preferences, to return to sites they know but that they visit again differently. As they become increasingly more at ease in the museum world, the relationship changes to one of "permanence." They have more control over their visits and their duration. At the end of these successive stages, familiarity becomes strong and habits become well entrenched. Thus, a virtuous cycle of creating museum familiarity through free admission is established.

Figure 7.9. Free admission and visitors careers

Axe 2 (11%)

Very strong familiarity

Unchanged habits

Occasionally

Upper class

Weak familiarity

No shorter visits

Permanent

Strong familiarity

Upper middle class

Working class

Axe 1 (88%)

Shorter visits

Students

Lower middle class

Discovery of other sites

Average familiarity

Return to same sites

Regularly

CONCLUSION

The issue of free admission and the interpretations of its social impact illustrate the conditions under which studies on the *publics* of museums, exhibitions and monuments have been received. On the one hand, we see a catch-and-hold system between the producers of data and those who sponsor the study. On the other, there are oppositions within this same group of data-producers that could stem from closed disciplinary approaches or incommensurable paradigms. The mythic figure of the *non-public* is one example.

The 2008 study on the experiment of free admission to the permanent collections of French national museums and monuments presented to us an existing *public* in an actual situation, and does not refer to some potential *public* who might give opinions about hypothetical situations. The actual practice of a visit within the context of free admission contradicts somewhat certain results from other studies on representations. Overall, those people habitually "less likely to visit" turned out to be the most mobilized, while those habitually "more likely to visit" turned out to be less motivated. Moreover, the mobilized *public* attending these institutions more closely resembled the country's population as a whole rather than the *public of culture* as it is often represented. This *public* had, for the most part, a higher number from the working class, with a developing museum familiarity, and was generally local. Regarding these three aspects, we can speak of the democratizing effect of free admission. And yet, those least familiar with museums wanted only regular or occasional free admission, while those more familiar with museums opted more often for permanent free admission. Contradiction or pragmatism? The modelling allowed us to establish successive stages in a visitor's career. What seems clear is that, whether they were informed or not of the free admission, the *public* of first-time visitors to sites experimenting with free admission confirmed the validity of analyses of *publics* that have been carried out *in situ* in museums for several years: the basis of renewing the *public* is its diversification, in other words, a form of cultural democratization in progress. The category of "mobilized first-time visitors" offers a social and cultural configuration which confirms this underlying trend and shows how free access to works of art can speed up the process.

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IN THE SAME COLLECTION

L'école d'antan (1860-1960)
Découvrir et se souvenir de l'école du Québec
Robert Cadotte et Anik Meunier
2011, 212 p.

"Non-public" was used for the first time in May, 1968, by those working profession-ally in the cultural domain in France. At the time, they were gathered in Villeurbanne at the head office of the TNP (French National Popular Theatres), and they used this notion in a very militant way to describe all those who were excluded from culture, and whom they considered to have a fundamental right to all cultural offers.

In this book, nine researchers from France, Quebec and Mexico tackle these questions through both qualitative and quantitative contributions dealing with various cultural sectors in which the question of non-publics remains unanswered. In fact, the non-public is not so much a group of non-participants but individuals blatantly incapable of appreciating a culture that is unfamiliar, even foreign. For over a century, the popular education movement, in its initial project to bring public and culture closer together, has emphasized this cultural gap, which even today, justifies the necessity for cultural mediation policies. The near-militant voluntarism of the active players in cultural mediation engenders certain expectations: after a large investment in cultural creation is it not justifiable to aspire to reach the largest possible audience?

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