On the structure of dispositions. Transposability of and oppositions between aesthetic dispositions

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ABSTRACT

Cultural sociology has reached conclusions about the properties of dispositions based on analyses of aesthetic principles external to the individual. I challenge this approach, and I reflect on two assumptions regarding the structure of dispositions prevalent in cultural sociology that ensue from this approach: (1) Dispositions are transposable across aesthetic domains (e.g., music, literature, visual arts), and (2) there exists one hegemonic configuration of dispositions which can be derived from the structure of the cultural field. I use data from an audience survey in two art museums in Flanders (Belgium) ($n = 1448$) and analyse aesthetic dispositions towards visual arts and towards music. Applying Relational Class Analysis, I find different dispositional configurations. These configurations are characterised by oppositions between aesthetic principles that do not coincide with the oppositions between aesthetic principles in the cultural field. Moreover, these configurations suggest that dispositions vary to the extent that they are transposable across aesthetic domains.

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'*Studies who write about the ways that culture enters into everyday life necessarily make assumptions about cognitive processes*' (DiMaggio, 1997: 266).

1. Internal and external systems of aesthetic principles

Schemes of perception and appreciation are unequally distributed in society. This has been argued by numerous scholars of culture, most notably Bourdieu (e.g., 1984). In his aesthetic theory, Bourdieu explains the social patterning of cultural practices by arguing that the capacity for symbolic appropriation of cultural products is acquired through processes of socialisation. These schemes of perception and appreciation are historical products. For example, the emergence of the aesthetic disposition—a capacity to appreciate form rather than function of cultural products—is related to the autonomization of the field of cultural production in nineteenth-century Europe. This autonomization is central to the development of a cultural field 'capable of formulating and imposing its own ends against external demands' (Bourdieu, 1987: 202; see also: Lizardo, 2008). So, schemes of perception and appreciation have a twofold existence (Bourdieu, 1987): They exist in internal systems of aesthetic principles (i.e., in the form of dispositions embodied by individuals) and they exist in the external system of aesthetic principles (i.e., in the form of governing aesthetic criteria in the cultural field).

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While Bourdieu's account on the historical genesis of schemes of appreciation is vastly illuminating, it ensues from an approach where conclusions on properties of dispositions are deduced from analyses on aggregate cultural practices (Lahire, 2011). Martin (2000) criticises research that draws conclusions on the interconnectedness of cognitive elements by studying interconnectedness at the aggregate level. He argues that this 'associationist' approach assumes 'a property on the *global* level (i.e. association) [. . .] to be indicative of an *individual-level* psychic phenomenon' (Martin, 2000: 10) and thus challenges research that assumes that the structure of external culture coincides with the structure of culture internalised by individuals. Martin's critique extends to other individual characteristics, but is especially poignant for the study of cognitions, because the notion that external culture is 'copied' or 'reproduced' within the individual has been challenged (e.g., DiMaggio, 1997; Ignatow, 2004, 2009; Lizardo & Strand, 2010). As powerfully argued by Swidler (2001: 16), 'we cannot study culture by studying the publicly available repertoire of expressive symbols if we do not know when and how these are used'. If external culture can take on different representations on the cognitive level, it is plausible that individuals differ systematically in the configuration of their cognitive resources for aesthetic appreciation. Therefore, the structure of aesthetic principles external to the individual may be a very bad indicator for the way these aesthetic principles are cognitively structured and the way they are deployed in contexts by individuals.

In this article, I challenge the approach of drawing conclusions on aesthetic dispositions by analysing aesthetic principles external to the individual. I reflect on two assumptions regarding the structure of dispositions prevalent in cultural sociology that ensue from this approach: (1) The *assumption of transposability* argues that the way individuals appropriate cultural products transcends aesthetic domains and thus that individuals apply the same mode of appropriating culture in each and every aesthetic domain (e.g., music, literature, visual arts). (2) The *assumption of opposition* argues that the oppositions between different dispositional tools to appreciate art coincide with the oppositions between aesthetic principles in the global cultural field and thus, that a paramount dispositional configuration can be defined. I reflect on both assumptions, and offer an exploratory analysis to further clarify these issues.

2. Assumptions on the structure of dispositions

2.1. Transposability of dispositions

At the heart of Bourdieu's aesthetic theory lies the concept of the aesthetic disposition that introduces—in line with Kantian aesthetics—the opposition between form and function of cultural products. In contrast to claiming a universal aesthetic, Bourdieu uncovers social inequalities in the aesthetic experience. Individuals possessing the aesthetic disposition approach art from an 'art-for-art's sake' perspective. They are able to perceive art in a truly aesthetic manner, that is, 'as a signifier which signifies nothing other than itself' (Bourdieu, 1968: 596). According to Bourdieu, this approach is only accessible to individuals who have acquired the aesthetic disposition through processes of socialisation and thus possess other schemes than the ones used for everyday perception. The aesthetic disposition disposes individuals in encounters with cultural objects to note '*distinctive stylistic features* by relating it to the ensemble of the world forming the class to which it belongs' (Bourdieu, 1968: 596). Similarly, 'a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded' (Bourdieu, 1984: 2). This aligns with Zerubavel's concept of thought communities: Different cognitive subcultures within the same society have different styles of mental focusing. This relates to acquiring different intuitive ways to perceive (or *im*perceive) aspects of reality deemed relevant (or irrelevant) by these communities (Zerubavel, 1997).

Dispositions take on a central role in Bourdieu's work. Based on his empirical analyses, Bourdieu argues that cultural practices are coherent (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990). That is, individuals who have a legitimate taste in one aesthetic domain (e.g., literature, music) tend to have legitimate tastes in other aesthetic domains. To explain this theoretically, Bourdieu (1984, 1990) relies on dispositions: Individuals have acquired a way of looking at cultural products, and this cultural competence transcends aesthetic domains, thus manifesting itself in relation to different cultural products. As argued by Lizardo and Skiles (2012: 267), the aesthetic disposition entails—next to the capacity to appreciate form rather than function—the capacity to 'constitute aesthetically objects that are ordinary or even "common"' by applying the 'principles of a "pure" aesthetic in the most everyday choices of everyday life' (Bourdieu, 1984: 40). Here we see how deeply entrenched the assumption of transposability is in Bourdieu's aesthetic theory: The schemes of appreciation—embedded in the aesthetic disposition—are considered to shape encounters with and evaluations of every cultural object.

Bourdieu's thinking on dispositions as generative structures of practical action is deeply influenced by the genetic structuralism of Piaget, 1971; Lizardo, 2004. Piaget argues that individuals acquire knowledge by drawing information from their environment, transforming it and cognitively assimilating it in previously stored information. Once information is cognitively available in the shape of abstract representations, it can be transposed/generalised to other situations than the one in which it was acquired.[1] 'We shall apply the term "action schemata" to whatever, in an action, can thus be transposed, generalized, or differentiated from one situation to another [. . .]' (Piaget, 1971: 7). Piaget subsequently differentiates types of action schemata and argues that 'other action schemata are much less general, and their completion does not involve such

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[1] Bourdieu uses the term 'transposable'; Giddens uses the term 'generalizable' (cf. Sewell, 1992: 17). Because I rely strongly on Bourdieu's work in this article, I consistently use 'transposable' and 'transposability'.

abstract interiorized operations' (Piaget, 1971: 7). Here Piaget explicitly acknowledges variation in transposability of cognitive structures. This variation in transposability is underemphasized in Bourdieu's aesthetic theory (see also: Lahire, 2011: 79–82).

The assumption of transposability has—via the dominance of the Bourdieusian paradigm—trickled into sociological thinking on culture and aesthetics. The dominance of the assumption of transposability can be illustrated by considering the argument for the popularity of the educational system as a study object for cultural sociology. DiMaggio (1991: 144) argues that the role of the educational system in society is 'to inculcate not tastes per se but a capacity for aesthetic appreciation'. This argument rests on the assumption that cultural practices in the school context—such as reading—generate dispositions that can be applied to cultural practices not addressed in the educational system (e.g., Coulangeon, 2008; Daenekindt & Roose, 2015). According to this reasoning, the educational system disposes individuals to appreciate legitimate cultural products that are not present in the educational system. However, as Lahire (2003: 332) rightfully argues, 'Rather than assuming the existence of a socio-cognitive process such as "transferability" (or "transposability"), should we not treat it as a problem to be settled by empirical research [. . .]?'

So, the idea that dispositions are transposable to different aesthetic domains is implicit in sociological thinking on culture and aesthetics, but is it a plausible assumption? Is it not possible that individuals develop an expertise in a specific aesthetic domain? Or that dispositions are developed in relation to a specific cultural practice and that they are 'untransposable' to other practices? The assumption of transposability is at odds with research situated on the intersection of culture and cognition which discusses the way culture shapes judgment and action (e.g., DiMaggio, 1997; Martin, 2010; Vaisey, 2009). As Swidler (1986: 277) argues, 'all people know more culture than they use'. In her interviews, Swidler (2001) finds that respondents frequently switch between different, and often contrasting, parts of their cultural repertoire. In trying to understand how this abundance of cognitive resources motivates action, scholars argue that situational cues are crucial for understanding what aspects of cognitive resources motivate and shape judgment and action (DiMaggio, 1997: 265; Vaisey, 2008: 606). Indeed, in cognitive research, theories on grounded cognition and on situated cognition argue that cognition is grounded in multiple ways, such as in bodily state, in context and in situated action (e.g., Barsalou, 2008; Roth & Jornet, 2013; Semin & Smith, 2013). Similarly, knowledge activation theory stresses that the activation of dispositions depends on cues from the environment (Andersen et al., 2007; Patterson, 2014). For example, Lave (1988) famously demonstrates that individuals exhibit different ways of approaching structurally identical tasks as a function of the context. Dispositions should be considered as relational properties and as *conditional dispositions* (DiMaggio, 1997; Lahire, 2011; Patterson, 2014). This suggests that individuals have multiple sets of cognitive tools, which enable different modes of appropriating and appreciating cultural products.

These different sets of cognitive tools are developed through repetitions of practices, and are thus acquired through experience (Piaget, 1971). As Martin argues, cognitive resources have to be maintained: individuals 'use or lose it' (Martin, 2010: 232). So, culture internalised by individuals that is not 'used' at a certain point will be deployed in other instances. These multiple sets of cognitive resources can be thought of as different lenses through which individuals view cultural objects, and different lenses can be triggered in different aesthetic encounters. This perspective recognises the capacity of individuals to engage with cultural objects in inconsistent ways. Individuals do not appropriate *art*; they *appropriate music*, or they *appropriate visual arts*, or they *appropriate literature*, etc., and these different instances of appropriation may be fundamentally different from one another.

2.2. Oppositions between dispositions

As discussed above, Bourdieu's aesthetic theory explains the inequality regarding access to aesthetic pleasure by differentiating two aesthetic principles. Access to these principles is unequally distributed as the upper segments of society have the dispositional tools—i.e., the aesthetic disposition—for an art-for-art's sake approach. The lower social strata, on the other hand, lack the cognitive resources to appreciate formal aspects of cultural products, and thus stress functional aspects of cultural objects—the so-called taste for necessity. According to this traditional Bourdieusian account, individuals have the dispositional resources to appreciate art in line with the highbrow, modernist aesthetic principle *or* in line with the popular, functional aesthetic principle.

However, recent empirical research on the aesthetic experience consistently finds—next to the formal and functional aesthetic principle—a critical aesthetic principle (e.g., Daenekindt & Roose, 2011, 2014; Hanquinet et al., 2014; Roose, 2008). In different aesthetic domains an aesthetic principle is found where art is appreciated when it challenges social conventions and expresses social critique. This is reminiscent of ideas from Lukács and colleagues from the Frankfurt School who stress critical and emancipatory functions of art (Tanner, 2003). The critical aesthetic principle is associated with postmodernist principles and cannot be understood using the traditional Bourdieusian framework. As argued by Hanquinet et al. (2014), the differentiation between the functional and the formal aesthetic principle in Bourdieu's work is a reflection of the structure of the French cultural field during the sixties and seventies, and thus adheres to the opposition between the classical and the modernist principle that structured that field. Hanquinet et al. (2014; see also: Heinich, 1998) argue that the two aesthetic principles outlined by Bourdieu are therefore insufficient to understand the different ways to appropriate cultural objects in contemporary society.

However, while cultural sociology has opened itself to the possibility of the existence of new aesthetic principles, it sticks to Bourdieu's approach where the structure of the external system of aesthetic principles is considered a good proxy for the

structure of the internal system of aesthetic principles, i.e., the way these aesthetic principles are embodied in the form of dispositions. For example, because the cultural field is considered a site of struggle between two aesthetic principles, i.e., art for art's sake versus bourgeois art (Bourdieu, 1983: 321), the assumption is that individuals have the dispositional resources to appreciate art in line with the formal aesthetic principle *or* in line with the functional aesthetic principle. However, the notion that individuals internalise replications of their cultural environment has been undermined by empirical research (e.g., Ignatow, 2004; see also: Lizardo & Strand, 2010). Instead, as Ignatow (2009) argues, external cultural meaning is converted before it is cognitively stored. This challenges the conviction that individuals' internal system of aesthetic principles coincides with the external system of aesthetic principles.

Individuals can systematically differ in the way they internalise externally available aesthetic principles. For example, consider the critical aesthetic principle, and the different ways it can align with the bipolar dispositional structure proposed by Bourdieu. On the one hand, valuing social critique in art aligns with the *Bildungsideal*: Art should be serious, should cultivate the mind and result in critical contemplation (Schulze, 1995). So, it is plausible that the critical aesthetic is dominant among individuals in the upper social strata, and thus 'stored' along with the formal approach to art. On the other hand, art that criticises society breaks with the highbrow, modernist principle of detachment and autonomy of art. This argument suggests that the critical aesthetic is an expression of the functional aesthetic and situates it in the lower social strata. So the critical aesthetic can dovetail differentially with the traditional Bourdieusian structure: It can align with the formal aesthetic—where it is embedded in the *Bildungsideal*—or it can align with the functional aesthetic—where critique is considered a utilitarian function of art. Variation in the way individuals combine and structure externally available aesthetic principles can thus be expected.

In line with Heinich (1998) and Hanquinet et al. (2014), I argue that the aesthetic principles Bourdieu differentiates are insufficient to understand contemporary aesthetic judgments. However, rather than assuming a new hegemonic configuration with three aesthetic principles, I argue that oppositions between aesthetic principles available in external systems are not a reliable means to understanding the structure of the cognitive resources individuals unconsciously rely upon to shape aesthetic judgments. As Goldberg (2011) states, not all individuals organise their thinking in similar ways. Goldberg introduces an analytical approach that 'differentiates between groups who share an understanding of the structures of mutual relevance and opposition that define a particular domain' (Goldberg, 2011: 1398). Applying this analytical approach allows the uncovering of different dispositional configurations. Hanquinet et al. (2014) study the structure of the cultural field by applying Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which is ideal for revealing relationality. However, by applying MCA, they also impose the implicit assumption on the data that individuals' cognitions are structured according to one singular structure (cf. Baldassarri & Goldberg, 2014; Goldberg, 2011). I apply Relational Class Analysis (RCA; Goldberg, 2011), which allows the analysis to uncover different dispositional configurations, thus moving away from the rigid thinking on cognitive resources that mark much of the sociological thinking on dispositions and on the aesthetic experience.

2.3. Empirical strategy

In this contribution, I confront both assumptions with survey data to further clarify the issue. My empirical strategy consists of two parts. First, I measure the aesthetic principles individuals rely upon to form aesthetic judgments. For this, I draw from recent empirical research that measures aesthetic dispositions by means of survey items on evaluative schemes that refer to the propensity to perceive and appreciate cultural products in a certain way.[2] Roose (2008) applies this approach to classical music listeners. For example, in the functional approach to classical music, he considers an escapist disposition, associated with the idea that music allows individuals to escape reality and to make them forget day-to-day worries. The formal disposition, on the other hand, disposes listeners for aesthetic pleasure derived from 'experiments with the tonal system, such as atonality and seriality' or 'the use of complex rhythmic patterns' (Roose, 2008: 239). This approach of differentiating aesthetic dispositions allows empirical measurement and has been applied in a variety of aesthetic domains. Moreover, this way of measuring dispositions is in line with research on (methods for modelling) cognitive structures (e.g., DiMaggio, 1997; Vaisey, 2009). Vaisey (2009) argues that forced choice survey items are ideally suited to measure unconscious dispositions. Because respondents use as little cognitive effort as possible when filling in a questionnaire, they predominantly rely on pre-reflexive dispositions. Filling in carefully constructed questionnaires simulates more of the routine day-to-day choices people make and thus taps into more of the fast, automatic and largely unconscious component of human cognition, compared to the slow, deliberate and largely conscious component. In this sense, survey questions allow us to get at motivational dispositional structures that are consciously less accessible and which guide judgment and action (Vaisey, 2009).

I inquired of art museum visitors about their aesthetic experience. This specialised audience is ideal for measuring aesthetic dispositions towards visual arts, as these individuals are less likely—compared to respondents in population surveys—to have to think reflexively about the presented items. Moreover, the audience from art museums contains considerable heterogeneity in approaching and appropriating art (e.g., Hanquinet, 2013a). The second aesthetic domain I consider is music. Music is an obvious choice, as everybody is familiar with music (cf. Bourdieu, 1984: 18–19), and choosing

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[2] For a qualitative measurement strategy, for example see Friedman (2014) and Jarness (2015).

this domain next to visual art minimises conscious reflection on the items.

Secondly, I analyse the way these aesthetic dispositions are cognitively structured. For this purpose, I apply Relational Class Analysis (RCA; Goldberg, 2011). RCA partitions respondents from the data into different clusters such that the members of each cluster have similar patterns of *association* between variables. By applying RCA, I do not cluster individuals with similar aesthetic dispositions. Rather, I cluster individuals whose dispositional configurations are similar. This is illustrated in Fig. 1. Individuals A and B (left-hand panel) approach art in different ways, but the way their aesthetic dispositions are structured is similar. For both individuals A and B, the critical disposition aligns with the functional disposition and opposes the formal disposition. This contrasts with the dispositional structures of individuals C and D (right-hand panel), where the critical disposition aligns with the formal disposition and opposes the functional disposition. These relationships between the dispositions need to be analysed to address the assumptions outlined above. Unlike other methods such as Multiple Correspondence Analysis, RCA does not make any a priori assumptions on the structure between the included variables, nor does it impose a single structure on the data (Goldberg, 2011). So, by applying RCA, I am able to analyse whether different dispositional configurations are present in the data.

This analytical approach allows me to offer an exploratory analysis of the two assumptions outlined above. (1) The assumption of transposability is addressed by analysing whether individuals' way of appropriating cultural objects transcends aesthetic domains, or whether individuals apply a different dispositional approach depending on the aesthetic domain. (2) To address the assumption of opposition, I analyse whether there is one hegemonic dispositional configuration that can be found among all individuals, or whether different dispositional configurations are present in the data.

3. Data and measures

3.1. Data

I used data from a large-scale audience survey in Ghent (Flanders, Belgium). These data were collected in two art museums, i.e., the Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art (S.M.A.K.) and the Museum of Fine Arts (MSK) between 13 March and 13 April 2012. Using time sampling, this period was divided into 84 different blocks of 2.5 h. Subsequently, 40 periods were randomly selected. In each museum, questionnaires were handed to visitors during the selected blocks. During weekdays, every visitor was contacted; during weekends, every second visitor was systematically selected when s/he entered the museum (cf. Roose, 2007). Individuals younger than sixteen were not eligible, nor were individuals who did not speak Dutch and individuals visiting the museum in organised groups. Self-assessed questionnaires were used and a realised sample of 1448 with a response rate of 61.0% was obtained.

3.2. Aesthetic dispositions

To measure aesthetic dispositions, I used items assessing abstract evaluation criteria towards visual arts and items assessing abstract evaluation criteria towards music (e.g., Daenekindt & Roose, 2013; Hanquinet et al., 2014; Roose, 2008). Table 1 presents the items used. The items for the critical disposition pertain to the idea that art should be critical of society. The functional disposition is measured using items in which art is valued from a utilitarian perspective and which is associated with the taste for necessity Bourdieu observed among the working classes: Art is appreciated when it allows the individual to escape reality and forget day-to-day worries. The third set of items captures the formal disposition, which prioritises—in line with Bourdieu's aesthetic disposition—form over function and which focuses on formal aspects of art. This formal disposition aligns with the modernist aesthetic which stresses stylistic features and which challenges the classical aesthetic favouring beauty and craftsmanship in artworks. All items presented in Table 1 are included in the RCA.

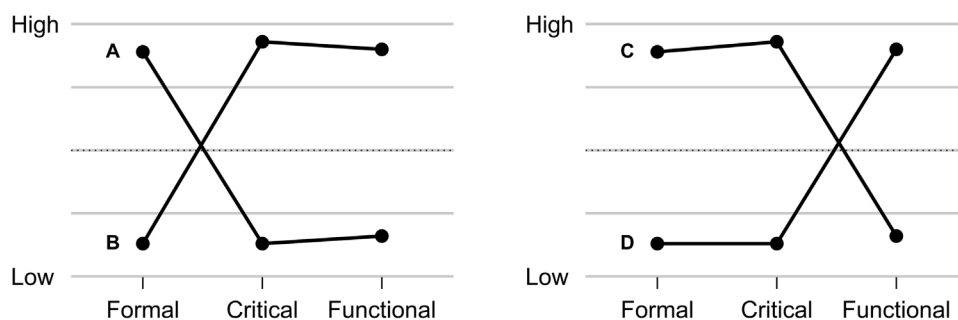**Fig. 1.** Illustration of dispositional configurations.

Table 1
Items used to measure the aesthetic dispositions.

Aesthetic disposition	Aesthetic domain	Item	Label
Critical (Cr)	Visual arts (V)	Visual art should be involved in societal debates	VCr1
		Visual art should be critical of society	VCr2
		Visual art should challenge social values	VCr3
	Music (M)	Music should raise issues of injustice	MCr1
		Music should contain a political message	MCr2
		Music should take a moral stance	MCr3
Functional (Fn)	Visual arts (V)	Visual art should make you forget day-to-day worries	VFn1
		Visual art should make you relax	VFn2
	Music (M)	Music should make you forget day-to-day worries	MFn1
		Music should make you relax	MFn2
Formal (Fr)	Visual arts (V)	One line or colour can suffice to create visual art	VFr1
		Visual art doesn't have to be beautiful	VFr2
	Music (M)	Music should be original in form and style	MFr1
		Music should be innovative	MFr2

Items are on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'.

4. Analysis

RCA was performed using the RCA package in R (Goldberg & Stein, 2016) and yielded three clusters representing 43%, 28% and 29% of the data. In line with previous studies using RCA (e.g., Baldassarri & Goldberg, 2014; Goldberg, 2011), I examined the bivariate correlations between the included items of each cluster to interpret the different dispositional configurations. For each cluster I created a correlation matrix of the included items. Next, I visualised these correlation matrices as networks. Nodes correspond to the items, and the edges between them represent the correlations. Solid edges represent positive correlations; dashed edges represent negative correlations. Additionally, the width and shade of the edges is proportional to the strength. The visualisations are obtained using the qgraph package in R, and by applying the Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm (Epskamp et al., 2012). Fig. 2 presents the visualisations of the dispositional configurations characteristic for each cluster.

4.1. Transposability of dispositions

All three dispositional structures are characterised by strong transposability of the functional and the critical dispositions. This is indicated by the strong across-domain positive correlations between items assessing the same aesthetic principle. For example, in each dispositional configuration, the correlations between items assessing a functional approach towards visuals arts have a strong positive relationship with the items assessing a functional approach towards music. Individuals deploy the functional disposition in a highly transposable manner: Individuals who consider functional motives important in shaping their judgment of visual art also consider these motives important for their judgment of music. Similarly, individuals whose aesthetic experience towards visual art is not characterised by functional motives also lack this functional approach towards music. Like the functional disposition, the critical disposition is highly transposable across aesthetic domains in each dispositional configuration.
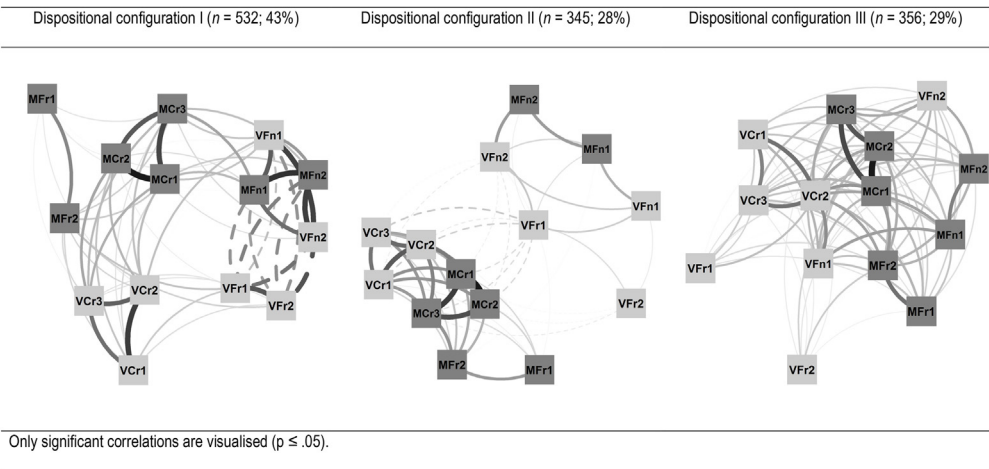

Dispositional configuration I (n = 532; 43%)   Dispositional configuration II (n = 345; 28%)   Dispositional configuration III (n = 356; 29%)

Only significant correlations are visualised (p ≤ .05).

Fig. 2. Three internal systems of aesthetic principles.

The results indicate that the formal disposition is less transposable than the functional and the critical dispositions. In the third cluster, one item measuring the formal approach towards visual art correlates positively with the items measuring a formal approach towards music. The belief that visual art does not have to be beautiful correlates positively with the idea that music should be innovative. In the two other clusters, the items for the formal disposition clearly do not correlate across aesthetic domains (which they should according to the assumption of transposability). This means that whether or not individuals appreciate formal aspects in one aesthetic domain is independent from whether these individuals appreciate formal aspects in another aesthetic domain.

4.2. Oppositions between dispositions

The first dispositional configuration contains the traditional Bourdieusian opposition between form and function. This is indicated by the negative correlations between the items measuring the functional approach and the items measuring the formal approach towards visual art. When individuals in this cluster form an aesthetic judgment of visual art, they either rely on functional *or* on formal considerations. The critical disposition does not create oppositions with the two other dispositions (positive correlations with both the functional and the formal items). This is in line with the idea presented in the theory that the critical disposition does not necessarily create oppositions with the formal and functional disposition.

In the second cluster, there is a modest opposition visible between the formal approach towards visual arts and the critical disposition. This is indicated by the small, but negative, correlations between these two sets of items. In this cluster, the critical disposition is likely considered a functional approach towards art (thus, breaking with the art-for-art's sake approach), as it opposes the formal approach toward visual art. An alternative interpretation, however, is that individuals in this cluster who appreciate art for its critical role lack the cultural competence to appreciate art for its formal properties.

The third cluster is characterised by the lack of any opposition between aesthetic principles, as this dispositional configuration exclusively consists of positive correlations between the items. Individuals in this cluster have developed a flexible way of appreciating culture, and do not perceive oppositions between the formal, the functional and the critical approaches. The existence of three dispositional configurations, each characterized by different oppositions, demonstrates that there is not one hegemonic dispositional configuration among the audience of art museums.

5. Conclusion

Based on analyses of aggregate cultural practices, cultural sociology has accepted assumptions on properties of dispositions. In this article, I reflected on two assumptions that ensued from this approach and that are prevalent in studies on culture. Subsequently, I confronted both assumptions with an empirical analysis on the aesthetic experience of visitors of art museums. I found that—even in this fairly homogeneous population in terms of socio-demographic variables— individuals differ considerably in the way they structure aesthetic dispositions. Two conclusions can be drawn from this: (1) dispositions vary in their level of transposability and (2) individuals differ in the oppositions they perceive between aesthetic principles.

(1) The results indicate that both the critical and the functional dispositions are highly transposable across aesthetic domains. Individuals apply the critical and the functional approaches towards art in different aesthetic domains. The formal disposition, on the other hand, appears to be less transposable (among one cluster of the visitors, the formal disposition is slightly transposable). This is surprising as the disposition to appreciate form rather than function also includes the capacity to approach ordinary objects aesthetically (Bourdieu, 1984; Lizardo & Skiles, 2012: 267). My analysis does not support this suggestion that the formal disposition is highly transposable. The formal disposition and the capacity to note and appreciate stylistic features may be a capacity that requires a high level of domain-specific expertise. Consider an individual who has been trained intensively in the musical field. S/he effortlessly notices stylistic features of musical pieces that go unnoticed by a layperson. However, in other aesthetic domains, s/he may lack the competence to perceive and appreciate subtle stylistic features and may, out of necessity, need to revert to a more functional approach towards art. My analysis suggests that cultural sociology—in line with Bourdieu's aesthetic theory— unjustly underemphasises variation in transposability. Not only do dispositions vary in transposability (cf. Piaget, 1971), but transposability of dispositions also varies between individuals. Further research is necessary to understand why certain dispositions are more transposable than others. Additionally, if individuals vary in the extent to which they transpose dispositions between domains, research is needed to understand how and why this sense of correspondence between different domains is distributed unequally.

(2) I find that individuals differ in the oppositions they perceive and internalise between aesthetic principles. Previous research assumed that the oppositions between aesthetic principles in the cultural field were reproduced in the structure of individuals cognitions. My findings refute this assumption as I find different dispositional configurations, each of them characterised by different oppositions between aesthetic principles. One of these dispositional configurations resembles Bourdieu's suggestions, i.e., this segment of the museum audience (43%) is disposed to appreciate visual art in line with the highbrow, modernist aesthetic principle *or* in line with the popular, functional aesthetic principle. This opposition between form and function does not characterise the other two dispositional configurations. This challenges Bourdieu's holistic approach, which uncovers dominant oppositions in the general

cultural field, and assumes that these oppositions constitute a hegemonic dispositional configuration. The finding that individuals systematically vary in oppositions between aesthetic principles has not been demonstrated by previous research. It does, however, resonate with studies on other cognitive schemes. For example, Ignatow (2009) studies internet support groups for compulsive overeating. He finds systematic differences in the structure between elements of abstract and embodied language. My findings show that the idea that different groups have different structures of opposition can be extended to aesthetic principles.

Deviating from the conviction of one hegemonic dispositional structure may be crucial for improving our understanding of the dispositional foundation of patterns of cultural consumption, such as omnivorousness. As Lizardo and Skiles (2012) maintain, not much research has gone into the underlying mechanisms that generate omnivorousness. Lizardo and Skiles propose that omnivorousness is the contemporary expression of the formal disposition. According to their argument, attention to form allows individuals to ignore/supress aspects of art they do not like and to appreciate the cultural product in spite of those characteristics. Alternatively, it is possible that omnivorousness ensues from dispositional configurations that cultural sociology assumed did not exist. For example, the third dispositional configuration does not contain oppositions between different aesthetic criteria. It may be that such a dispositional toolset allows flexible deployment of dispositions yielding omnivorous patterns of cultural consumption. Similarly, deviating from the assumption of transposability may prove to be valuable for understanding 'inconsistent' patterns of cultural consumption. If dispositions are less transposable than conventionally assumed, then it is not surprising that individuals can combine a legitimate taste in one aesthetic domain with illegitimate tastes in other aesthetic domains. More generally, acknowledging systematic variation in the configuration of dispositions may help cultural sociology to improve its understanding of the association between dispositions, preferences and practices.

An obvious follow-up question is 'how are these different dispositional configurations socially structured?'. Conventional analyses that differentiate clusters usually investigate the socio-demographic profiles of the found clusters. Such analyses (not shown) clearly show that the dispositional configurations are not systematically linked to educational level, income, gender, age, etc. However, such analyses are—as argued by Goldberg (2011)—counterproductive, as individuals sharing a *dispositional configuration* may have different *dispositions*. For example, some individuals from the third cluster may score high on all items. At the same time, other individuals from this cluster may score low on all items. So, different ways of cognitively structuring dispositions are not related to the usual social structural forces (e.g., education, income, gender, age, etc.) and may be related to more subtle aspects of socialisation (Turner, 2012; Wuthnow, 2007). To understand why dispositions from different social groups are structured differently, we should look beyond the traditional social structural forces. Empirical research is lacking in this field. Zerubavel (1997) suggested structures such as churches, professions, political movements, etc. I analysed the audience of art museums and—while this is the optimal audience to measure aesthetic dispositions—this relatively homogenous group in terms of socio-demographic characteristics makes it hard to address the more subtle social divisions in society Zerubavel hinted at. This is, of course, fertile ground for future research. As Zerubavel (1997: 12) stated, 'identifying the various cognitive subcultures that exist within a given society is one of the most important tasks in cognitive sociology'. Studying the way publicly available cultural schemes are differentially encultured will result in a better understanding of the social patterning of cultural consumption, and increase our understanding of the way culture shapes judgment and action.

Aesthetic principles that are publicly available constitute the elements of individuals' cognitive resources for aesthetic appreciation. However, rather than mimicking the structure of these elements, individuals systematically re-appropriate and reconfigure these elements in a particular dispositional configuration. Eliasoph and Lichterman provide insight into how social groups enculture differently, as habitual and unspoken group styles filter the publicly available culture (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003: 784). These group styles are situated on a more local level—crosscutting structures such as occupational or educational inequalities—and are embedded in interactional patterns. This is reminiscent of Becker's ideas on art worlds (Becker, 1982). While Becker's concept 'art world' and Bourdieu's concept 'cultural field' are often used interchangeably, Becker explicitly distances his concept from cultural fields: Fields are structured by external factors (such as the global structure and forms of capital), whereas art worlds refer to local forms of collaborative action (Becker & Pessin, 2006). Individuals participate in art worlds and are guided by implicit conventions and beliefs that emerge in, and are thus specific to, art worlds (see also: Hanquinet, 2013b; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). While these local processes are situated in the general cultural field, the logic of specific art worlds cannot be reduced to the logic of the general cultural field. These more subtle forms of structuration are absent in Bourdieu's holistic approach, which reduces structures of different aesthetic domains to an overall systemic and hegemonic pattern characteristic for macro-level struggles (Hall, 1992; Mohr, 2013).

Current cultural sociology draws heavily—and rightly so—from Bourdieu's theory which is, due to the strong reliance on cognitive processes, in se a cognitive theory. However, the Bourdieusian account draws conclusions on aesthetic dispositions by analysing aesthetic principles external to the individual. I challenged this approach, and my analysis demonstrates that individuals differ in the mental representations of publicly available culture they acquire and internalise. This suggests that these different ways of internalising external culture cannot be understood by means of Bourdieu's holistic approach, and that we need to pay attention to more localised processes on enculturation.

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