

FIGURES OF PURITY: CONSECRATION, EXCLUSION, AND
SEGREGATED INCLUSION IN CULTURAL SETTINGS

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2016

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ABSTRACT

“Figures of Purity: Consecration, Exclusion, and Segregated Inclusion in Cultural Settings”

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Like many sociologists, I am perplexed by the fact that in meritocratic societies, individuals whose abilities or talent does not differ widely nevertheless enjoy considerably different levels of achievement and success. The present dissertation seeks to uncover some of the reasons behind such non-meritocratic inequality.

There are two main approaches one can take to that problem. The first and more classical one consists in observing inequality that matters – inequality in earnings or career prospects for example – and to show that such inequality can be traced back to broad categorical attributes such as class, gender, or race and ethnicity. This is not the approach I follow here. Rather, I strategically select cases that make it possible to uncover the fine-grained processes and mechanisms generative of non-meritocratic inequality.

Among these “pure” cases are art worlds – winner-take-all settings typically marked by high inequality, and where success is often vastly disconnected from merit or intrinsic quality. The first part of this dissertation focuses on one such art world as a laboratory

for studying the social processes underlying the formation of economic value, and therefore the formation of inequality in economic success.

CONSECRATION AS A SOCIAL PROCESS OF VALUATION

My approach to success and inequality rests on the intuition that we can partially explain them by studying social processes of valuation, i.e. processes that shape the value of things or individuals without affecting their underlying differences in ability, merit, performance, or talent. In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I outline and test a theory of one such process, namely consecration.

The first chapter develops a structural definition of consecration that makes possible to study its occurrence, conditions, and consequences in a variety of social settings. The chief features of that definition are identified using a series of empirical instances of consecration. The chapter then shows how that definition can be operationalized with simple network concepts, and suggests a network-based strategy for capturing consecration empirically – in art worlds for example. The chapter finally draws testable implications from that definition, and explores its relationship with the notion of retrospective consecration.

The second chapter uses that notion of consecration to solve an empirical puzzle in the sociology of valuation. Markets for unique and novel goods are often seen as privileged settings for the powerful influence of market intermediaries: when quality is uncertain, or when it lacks definition altogether, intermediaries can play a crucial role in signaling or specifying it, thereby ultimately shaping the prices consumers are willing to pay for products. Products, meanwhile, do not get much more unique or novel than in the market for contemporary art. Yet economic sociologists have repeatedly failed to

observe any influence of art market intermediaries on the value of the artists they distribute.

This puzzling finding, I argue, arises from a misconception of how intermediaries shape the value of artists. We usually think of intermediation as acting through two chief processes of valuation: credentialing, or the signaling of unobservable quality, and qualification, or the establishment of specific quality criteria. Yet I suggest that it also can influence value through consecration, or the structural signaling of the existence of quality differences in a population. Using the market for modern art in early twentieth-century Paris as an empirical backdrop, this chapter shows that intermediation as consecration, not credentialing or qualification, was indeed how art market intermediaries shaped the value of their artists in the heyday of French modern painting.

SOCIAL PROCESSES OF VALUATION AND ELITE CONSOLIDATION IN GILDED AGE AMERICA

The remaining chapter is a logical development of the previous two. It builds on the fine-grained insights they offer – on social processes of valuation, and on the mechanisms of non-meritocratic inequality more generally – to address larger-scale issues of social inequality and social reproduction.

The chapter uses a new database of subscribers to the New York Philharmonic to understand how cultural participation cemented the status – or social value – of elites in Gilded Age America. The database has information on who subscribed to the Philharmonic between 1880 and 1910 – a period of huge upheaval, of threats to the dominance of traditional elites, and ultimately of elite consolidation in the United

States, and in the city of New York in particular. In analyzing these data I seek to understand how culture worked as an elite resource in that era.

The classic account of culture and elite consolidation posits that the formation of an upper class and its continued dominance rest on a mechanism of exclusion. In this view, cultural participation reinforces elites by setting them apart – a process akin to consecration as I delineate it in earlier chapters.

My work on the Philharmonic challenges that classic view. For the distinctiveness associated with elite cultural endeavors to reinforce elite dominance, I argue, these endeavors have to happen against a backdrop of general agreement over their value. In Gilded Age New York, this agreement happened not through exclusion, but through the inclusion of a group of cultural experts into the cultural institutions championed by the social elite. The inclusion of that cultured group served to testify to the quality of the cultural endeavors of the social elite, and provided them with a stamp of cultural legitimacy. In other words, it valued the elite through a process of credentialing.

The second analytical contribution of that final chapter has to do with class consolidation and the reproduction of upper class dominance more generally. While consolidation is often seen as happening through exclusion and closure, I argue that in a context of rapid social differentiation, marked by the emergence of new areas of expertise, maintaining dominance does not necessarily involve barring access to outside groups. It can also mean being flexible enough to include the experts in emerging spheres. To remain atop the social hierarchy, elites may benefit from incorporating external elements that testify to their own continued relevance. Such inclusion is not necessarily full integration – instead, I show that at the Philharmonic it involved a built-in mechanism of protection, namely segregation. Hence cultural experts were included to help reify and support upper class status and social power, but in a segregated fashion to protect the upper class from threats of destabilization.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people and institutions provided indispensable support, advice and feedback during the research and writing of this dissertation.

My greatest debt, both intellectual and personal, is to Peter Bearman, whose encouragements were invaluable throughout my time at Columbia, and whose sure sense of the fecundity of sociological ideas was the lifeline of this project. Among many other things, I owe Peter a taste for a style of sociology that strives to be analytical without being dry, and a deeply relational approach that remains a vivid source of intellectual excitement and (hopefully) findings.

My other major debt is to Shamus Khan, with whom the final chapter of this dissertation is actually coauthored. In the spring of 2012, Shamus took me on board a massive data collection project on subscribers to the New York Philharmonic. Because the project was a partnership with the Philharmonic itself, because this was Shamus, because we struggled and because we ended up writing a piece we like, I enjoyed every step of the way. To Shamus I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude, while also thanking Adam Storer and Fletcher Haulley, whose role as research assistants was instrumental in the completion of this project.

For financial and logistical assistance I am grateful to the Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics and the Department of Sociology at Columbia

University, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and more recently the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics. Working at LSE has given me the freedom to explore with my students some of the ideas that are central to this thesis. It has also pushed me to envision how these ideas may intersect with the kind of bold, large-scale thinking done at that outstanding institution.

Many colleagues and friends read early drafts or helped sharpen the arguments in this dissertation through their comments at seminar and conference presentations. I am particularly grateful to Jens Beckert, Ron Breiger, Matt Desmond, Michèle Lamont, Claire Lemerrier, Jesper Sørensen, David Stark, Olav Velthuis, Josh Whitford and Chris Winship for their suggestions on the first two chapters. Claudio Benzecry, Stéphane Dorin, Pierre-Michel Menger, Matt Norton, Mike Savage and William Weber were precious interlocutors to discuss the ideas in chapter 3. Finally, Olivier Godechot and Emmanuel Lazega at Sciences-Po, Ivan Ermakoff and Luc Boltanski at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Henning Hillmann at the University of Mannheim, Dani Lainer-Vos at the University of Southern California, Tom DiPrete and Sy Spilerman at Columbia, and Paul DiMaggio and Iddo Tavory at New York University, all offered opportunities to present parts of this research at seminars they organized at their respective institutions. I would like to thank them, together with the audiences that kindly attended these events.

For archival work behind the analyses in chapter 2, I benefited from the help of Charha Boutchiche, Brigitte Lainé, Agnès Masson, and Vincent Tuchais (Archives de Paris); Wanda De Guébriant (Archives Henri Matisse); Céline Chicha and Frédéric Manfrin (Bibliothèque Nationale de France); Christian Derouet and Anne-Marie Zucchielli (Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne); Jérôme Delatour and Richard Leeman (Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art); Michèle Hornn (Musée de l'Orangerie); Dominique Dupuis-Labbé and Sylvie Fresnault (Musée National Picasso); as well as from

the guidance of the librarian staffs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Morgan Library.

In collecting, digitizing, and transcribing the data for chapter 3, Shamus and I were fortunate to work with the passionate and diligent team of the New York Philharmonic Archives, under the leadership of Barbara Haws. I am grateful in particular to Mitch Brodsky and Gabe Smyth for the work they put in our digitization effort, and for the hours they spent tracking down extra subscriber materials in the orchestra's archives.

On a more personal note, I enjoyed countless conversations about this work with friends Philipp Brandt, Angèle Christin, Martin Giraudeau, Kinga Makovi, Anna Mitschele, Pilar Opazo, Andrei Pesic, Alix Rule, and Matthias Thiemann. I was also blessed throughout the years with the support and enthusiasm of Léonie Hénaut, which I can now see reflected in the smile of our son Gary. To the two of them this work is dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

Like many sociologists, I am perplexed by the fact that in meritocratic societies, individuals whose abilities or talent does not differ widely nevertheless enjoy considerably different levels of achievement and success. The present dissertation seeks to uncover some of the reasons behind such non-meritocratic inequality.

There are two main approaches one can take to that problem. The first and more classical one consists in observing inequality that matters – inequality in earnings or career prospects for example – and to show that such inequality can be traced back to broad categorical attributes such as class, gender, or race and ethnicity. This is not the approach I follow here. Rather, I strategically select cases that make it possible to uncover the fine-grained processes and mechanisms generative of non-meritocratic inequality.

Among these “pure” cases are art worlds – winner-take-all settings typically marked by high inequality, and where success is often vastly disconnected from merit or intrinsic quality. The first part of this dissertation focuses on one such art world as a laboratory for studying the social processes underlying the formation of economic value, and therefore the formation of inequality in economic success.

CONSECRATION AS A SOCIAL PROCESS OF VALUATION

My approach to success and inequality rests on the intuition that we can partially explain them by studying social processes of valuation, i.e. processes that shape the value of things or individuals without affecting their underlying differences in ability, merit, performance, or talent. In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I outline and test a theory of one such process, namely consecration.

The first chapter develops a structural definition of consecration that makes possible to study its occurrence, conditions, and consequences in a variety of social settings. The chief features of that definition are identified using a series of empirical instances of consecration. The chapter then shows how that definition can be operationalized with simple network concepts, and suggests a network-based strategy for capturing consecration empirically – in art worlds for example. The chapter finally draws testable implications from that definition, and explores its relationship with the notion of retrospective consecration.

The second chapter uses that notion of consecration to solve an empirical puzzle in the sociology of valuation. Markets for unique and novel goods are often seen as privileged settings for the powerful influence of market intermediaries: when quality is uncertain, or when it lacks definition altogether, intermediaries can play a crucial role in signaling or specifying it, thereby ultimately shaping the prices consumers are willing to pay for products. Products, meanwhile, do not get much more unique or novel than in the market for contemporary art. Yet economic sociologists have repeatedly failed to observe any influence of art market intermediaries on the value of the artists they distribute.

This puzzling finding, I argue, arises from a misconception of how intermediaries shape the value of artists. We usually think of intermediation as acting through two

chief processes of valuation: credentialing, or the signaling of unobservable quality, and qualification, or the establishment of specific quality criteria. Yet I suggest that it also can influence value through consecration, or the structural signaling of the existence of quality differences in a population. Using the market for modern art in early twentieth-century Paris as an empirical backdrop, this chapter shows that intermediation as consecration, not credentialing or qualification, was indeed how art market intermediaries shaped the value of their artists in the heyday of French modern painting.

GOING MACRO: SOCIAL PROCESSES OF VALUATION AND ELITE CONSOLIDATION IN GILDED AGE AMERICA

The remaining chapter can be read as a logical development of the previous two. It builds on the fine-grained insights they offer – on social processes of valuation, and on the mechanisms of non-meritocratic inequality more generally – to address larger-scale issues of inequality.

This is often a move one waits for endlessly: we delineate all sorts of precise mechanisms on pure cases which make these mechanisms salient (such as art worlds), but which we do not necessarily care about; and then we never take the step of actually checking whether these mechanisms are at work in broader settings – for example when it comes to understanding the value, status, or dominance of whole social groups. The final chapter in this dissertation is an attempt to take that step. At a theoretical level, it keeps approaching inequality and inequality formation from the perspective of a sociology of valuation. Yet empirically it shows how processes of valuation can power larger accounts of social disparity and social reproduction.

The chapter (co-authored with Shamus Khan and Adam Storer) uses a new database of subscribers to the New York Philharmonic to understand how cultural participation cemented the status (or social value) of elites in Gilded Age America. Our database has information on who subscribed to the Philharmonic between 1880 and 1910 – a period of huge upheaval, of threats to the dominance of traditional elites, and ultimately of elite consolidation in the United States, and in the city of New York in particular. In analyzing these data we seek to understand how culture worked as an elite resource in that era.

The classic account of culture and elite consolidation posits that the formation of an upper class and its continued dominance rest on two cultural mechanisms: unification and exclusion. Unification strengthens the upper class by making it coalesce around a set of tastes and activities. Yet these tastes must also be distinct from the tastes of other social groups. In unsettled times in particular, elites both come together around a particular culture and exclude others from it. In this view, which has been applied to the Gilded Age in pioneering work by Paul DiMaggio (1982a, 1982b) cultural participation reinforces elites by setting them apart – a process akin to consecration as I delineate it in earlier chapters.

Our work on the Philharmonic challenges that classic view. For the distinctiveness associated with elite cultural endeavors to reinforce elite dominance, we argue, these endeavors have to happen against a backdrop of general agreement over their value. In Gilded Age New York, this agreement happened not through exclusion, but through the inclusion of a group of cultural experts into the cultural institutions championed by the social elite. The inclusion of that cultured group served to testify to the quality of the cultural endeavors of the social elite, and provided them with a stamp of cultural legitimacy. In other words, it valued the elite through a process of credentialing.

GOING FURTHER: UPPER CLASS REPRODUCTION IN TIMES OF DIFFERENTIATION AND EMERGING EXPERTISES

The second analytical contribution of that third chapter has to do with class consolidation and the reproduction of upper class dominance more generally. While consolidation is often seen as happening through exclusion and closure, we argue that in a context of rapid social differentiation, marked by the emergence of new areas of expertise, maintaining dominance does not necessarily involve barring access to outside groups. It can also mean being flexible enough to include the experts in emerging spheres. To remain atop the social hierarchy, elites may benefit from incorporating external elements that testify to their own continued relevance. As a consequence, the main skill of elites we need to focus on if we want to explain reproduction is not so much their ability to hand over economic, social, or cultural assets from one generation to the next, and to deprive others from access to these various resources. Rather, it is their ability to remain at the top by including newcomer groups in a way that does not threaten their continued dominance. Such inclusion is not necessarily full integration – instead, we show that at the Philharmonic it involved a built-in mechanism of protection, namely segregation. Hence cultural experts were included to help reify and support upper class status and social power, but in a segregated fashion to protect the upper class from threats or destabilization.

I would like to close this introduction by outlining how my future research will build on the groundwork laid out in this dissertation. This future will seek to observe how, in contexts of social differentiation and faced with emerging forms of expertise, elites manage to maintain their positions of power by coming to terms with newcomer groups. As such this work directly originates in the second contribution of my chapter on elites and culture in the Gilded Age.

I first anticipate to complete a smaller project most closely related to my Philharmonic research. While conducting that research I identified a large amount of sources and available data on the sociability of the New York elite in the Gilded Age. In particular, I uncovered sources on the membership of all major social clubs, and I got access to data on the membership of all major philanthropic organizations active in the city between 1880 and 1910. This project will use these data to focus directly on the structure and evolution of elite sociability in that period. Using network techniques as well as more traditional statistical analysis, it will pay special attention to the social differentiation and specialization of various clubs and organizations over time, and to the dynamics of inclusion of emerging experts into elite organizations.

My second and larger project builds on the same theoretical insight, yet it plans to investigate an entirely new empirical setting. Technological disruptions are likely to propel new social groups toward the top of the social hierarchy, and therefore to challenge the positions of power of established elites. This happened in the Gilded Age in the wake of the second industrial revolution. The tech revolution that has been unfolding in the Silicon Valley for over three decades offers a similar case in point. The social world of Silicon Valley has long been studied with an economic sociological point of view, mostly interested in understanding the social underpinnings of innovation and technological change. More recently it has also been approached from the perspective of a sociology of work and organizations. The project I intend to conduct would take a different look. It would investigate the social implications of the emergence of a tech elite, focusing in particular on its relationship to the traditional American elite. The research would be multifaceted. It would involve both quantitative aspects – such as a revisiting of the interlocking directorates literature oriented toward tracking the founders of tech companies in the nationwide network of boards of directors – as well as more qualitative or historical components – e.g. a study of social clubs in the Bay Area, and of the way they may or may not become places of mixing between established and newcomer elites.

Finally, a word on title: the concept of purity appears most evidently in chapter 3 below, where it is discussed in relation to the purification of the cultural repertoire that occurred at highbrow cultural institutions during the Gilded Age. While I do not use the concept in either of the earlier chapters, it is a motif that has guided me throughout the development and writing of this dissertation. Purity conveys ideas of social exclusion and social closure. When thought about in relational terms, it may refer to one's absence of ties to others whom one does not wish to be associated with in the public eye. As will become clear shortly, this relational take on purity has strong affinities with the idea of consecration as the structural display of the existence of quality divides between individuals – an idea at the core of chapters 1 and 2. As a heuristic tool for the sociological imagination, purity is the thread that connects all the dots in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1

CONSECRATION: A STRUCTURAL VIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1991, *New Yorker* journalist Janet Malcolm started a series of interviews with artist David Salle. Salle was then in his late thirties. In the 1980s he had been among the superstars of the New York art scene – one of the most widely publicized, exhibited, and collected artists of his generation. Yet by the early nineties Salle's star was already fading. In fact, Malcolm's interviews do not so much focus on the artist's work as on his dumbfoundedness in front of an art market he used to be at the center of, and from which he feels increasingly sidelined. Contentwise, and although nothing in it has really changed, his work is increasingly assailed for being insignificant. Dealers begin to turn away from him. And in a rather desperate effort to bring back the glow of his name, he turns to the press for interviews in which he hopes to explain who he is, what he does, and why it is important. In short, Salle has lost it; he realizes it; but he struggles to understand this fall from grace. Rather poignantly, Malcolm concludes: "[Salle] is an artist who believes in the autonomy of art, who sees the universe of art as an alternative to the universe of life [...]. Yet he is also someone who is drawn to the world of popular criticism, to the bazaar where paintings and books and performances

are crudely and carelessly rated, like horses or slaves, and who wants to be one of the Chosen, even as he disdains the choosers; in other words, he is like everybody else" (Malcolm, 2013: 21).

The story of David Salle has obvious sociological appeal, as it poses in a magnified way a series of questions that indeed speak to any of us: what makes our work valuable – and unequally so? What are the forces beyond our actual merit – and control – that distort the rewards we receive from society? How do markets, which generally mediate the reception of our work, influence its worth and success? But Salle's case is also interesting in a second, more specific respect. Salle – and Malcolm after him – intuitively understands that a key process whereby value gets shaped in the world he inhabits involves being recognized as one of the chosen, and contrasted with those that are not chosen. That notion of the chosen, and of a divide between them and others, is at the heart of the process of valuation that forms the main focus of this chapter – namely consecration.

We have many words to talk about the processes that lead to success in cultural universes. We routinely say that an artist or a performer is being recognized or consecrated, or even that her success is fabricated if we believe that she is artificially promoted by her sponsors. In this chapter I argue that it is worth disentangling between the various processes we thereby refer to. This is not only because we may want to improve our understanding of how cultural worlds operate, or because value in these worlds is sometimes perplexing and that we would like to know how it is established. More generally, cultural worlds and markets should also interest us for their extreme character. Like all exceptional cases, they problematize our established classificatory grids and force us to think seriously about new classes of objects that we could not envision as easily in other settings (Ermakoff, 2015). Art worlds, with their incomprehensible prices and puzzling stories of rise and fall, invite us to reflect more

deeply upon the processes that shape the value of things or individuals beyond their intrinsic qualities. These processes I refer to as social processes of valuation.

Processes of valuation have received a lot of attention in recent sociological theory. They enable us to think about non-meritocratic inequality – that is, inequality in success and worth that does not arise from underlying differences in merit, ability, or talent – using the insights of a growing sociology of valuation and evaluation (Lamont, 2012). Thus, Ezra Zuckerman famously built on the insights of cultural anthropology to show how categorization, as a process involving the positioning of an individual or object into a well-established classification, can lead to its greater or smaller value, irrespective of its underlying quality (Zuckerman, 1999, 2004). Likewise, Lamont and colleagues suggest that cultural processes of identification and evaluation can account for the differential assignment of value to various individuals or various groups, even though the qualities of these individuals or groups do not differ sharply (Lamont, 2010; Lamont et al., 2014).

Because social processes of valuation are generally conceived of as abstract processes, they are meant to be observed in a variety of contexts, in turn helping us to identify regularities in the way non-meritocratic inequality emerges across diverse settings. A basic condition for this to happen, however, is that these processes are delineated precisely enough – in other words that we arrive at a simple formulation of each and at a clear sense of how they compare with one another.

This clarity and this generalizability are only partially achieved in current work on consecration. Problems arise for example in Michèle Lamont's elaboration of the notion, which uses consecration interchangeably with legitimation, and ties it closely to specific empirical cases chosen in worlds of cultural production (Lamont, 2012; see also Beljean et al., 2015). Consecration, in this account, seems coterminous with legitimation when it happens in cultural settings. A similar ambiguity undergirds the work of Allen and Parsons (2006) and Allen and Lincoln (2004), who study the determinants of cultural

consecration in respectively baseball and film and probably go the farthest in advancing a clear definition of the notion. Consecration, they argue, is “a distinct form of valorization inasmuch as it imposes discrete [rather than continuous] distinctions between those cultural producers and products that deserve admiration and respect and those that do not” (Allen and Lincoln, 2004: 873). “These distinctions owe much of their legitimacy to the cultural authority, the rigorous procedures, and the relative selectivity of exercised by the groups and organizations that confer them. Ultimately, however, the legitimacy of these distinctions rests on the extent to which they appear to be based on objective differences between the individuals and objects” (Allen and Parsons, 2006: 809). Overall, consecration in this definition appears as another way of describing the quality judgment of an authoritative third party – although a specific, discrete form of quality judgment, as it happens in specific, often cultural settings. Again, we lose sight both of the process’s theoretical specificity and of its empirical generality.

In this chapter I develop a purely structural interpretation of consecration that accounts for its conceptual specificity and makes it identifiable in a variety of social settings. I make two claims to ground that interpretation. The first is that consecration does not come with the revelation of fresh information – or only with the revelation of very little fresh information – regarding the quality of individuals that get consecrated. There are in fact two aspects to that claim: consecration does not shape the value of things or individuals through the addition of information about their individual properties; nor does it shape it by supplying of a frame of reference for understanding these properties as qualities.

The second claim is the positive side of the same coin. It argues that consecration is a structural phenomenon that acts on the value of things or individuals by configuring the shape of associations (and lack of associations) between them in specific settings. In doing so, consecration makes the statement that it is possible to distinguish between

individuals and things that are good and others that are not. It is by asserting the existence of this divide, not by revealing information about the people on the right side of it, that consecration enhances the value of those who get consecrated.

To make these claims, I first turn to empirical examples that we can non-controversially refer to as instances of consecration. I stress the commonalities across these examples that make them point to a specific characterization of consecration, and I relate these examples with theoretical work, particularly by Pierre Bourdieu on rites of institution – work he conducted in the more structural vein he adopted early on in his career. Building on this work I arrive at a precise, abstract and transposable definition of consecration, and I propose a strategy for detecting consecration empirically. Finally, I indicate how this strategy could be used to explore an empirical puzzle in the sociology of valuation – namely the fact that students of art markets have repeatedly failed to observe any influence of art market intermediaries on the value of the artists they sponsor. I suggest that this surprising finding arises from the fact that scholars have generally thought about the problem in terms of individual information disclosure, thereby missing the consecration work of intermediaries as I define it – and as David Salle was thinking about it. Chapter 2 below provides the empirical demonstration of the fruitfulness of this approach. Meanwhile, the present chapter closes by drawing further implications from its definition of consecration, and by exploring its relationship to the notion that consecration is a retrospective phenomenon.

CONSECRATION'S DEFINING FEATURES: EMPIRICAL EXAMPLES

I start with a striking case which illustrates how consecration relates to the sacred even though no actual religion is involved, and which gives relief to several of its defining features. On May 21, 1981, shortly after his election as president of the French Republic, François Mitterrand walked up rue Soufflot in Paris amid a crowd of cheering

supporters. His destination was the Pantheon, a former church where the remains of the nation's great have been regularly transferred since the Revolution. In the ceremony's choreography, however, the crowd had to stop short of the Pantheon, while Mitterrand alone joined the empty building to meditate on the tombs of France's past heroes – “a solitary man entering the abode of the great”, as historian Mona Ozouf eloquently puts it (Ozouf, 1998: 325).

It can be debated whether the ceremony was a political mistake: it set up expectations for Mitterrand's action as president that proved difficult to live up to. As an exercise in symbol manipulation, however, the sequence was a tour de force. For the figure of Mitterrand it was a pivotal moment of secular anointment – literally a moment of consecration, which formed a symbolic counterpart to the election itself. That effect, it should be noted, was not achieved through the display of previously unknown qualities of the president. Mitterrand's brief, solitary presence in the abode of the great was evidently staged by his public relations staff, and not the outcome of a vetting process that would have found him worthy of such an honor. It would therefore have been foolish to take the whole scene as demonstrating anything about the president's true value. Instead, the power of the ceremony rested entirely on the representation of dissociations and associations between individuals, dead or alive. As he walked alone to the Pantheon, Mitterrand was severed from the mass of his supporters. Entering the empty crypt effectively removed him from their contact. The organizers understood the need to convey this sense of dissociation so well that they required assistants who guided the president inside the building to remain hidden behind pillars, so that they would not appear on television captures of his solitary journey. At the same time, the nation's great, who were long dead and about which no fresh information was revealed either, were associated with Mitterrand as the one chosen by the French people – an individual detached from the rest of the nation by the virtue of suffrage. They, too, enjoyed a boost of consecration in the process.

The purpose of staging associations and dissociations between various individuals was inscribed in the very architecture of the Pantheon immediately after it was designated by the French revolutionaries in 1791 as a new place for the celebration of France's great figures. The building that was to turn into a machine to consecrate was redesigned to work by grouping the great and insulating them from the rest of society, thereby reinforcing the notion of their specialness. Here is how Ozouf describes the architectural transformations that were implemented at the time:

“The idea of setting aside a special place for the commemoration of the great [...] became a reality following the death, on April 2, 1791, of the Revolution's first great man: in order to celebrate the memory of Mirabeau, the Constituent Assembly settled on a place (the church of Sainte-Geneviève) and an architect (Quatremère de Quincy), whose mission it was to transform a church [...] into a 'visible Elyseum' of the great. Quatremère had a very vivid notion of the ideal repository for the collective memory: not an archive of great deeds but the site of their production” (Ozouf, 1998: 334).

Quatremère thus used the language of light to instill the idea of an essential difference between the chosen and the rest:

“Could one imagine the great men of France in the lighting afforded by Sainte-Geneviève's thirty-nine windows, Soufflot's reactionary homage to the cathedrals? The existing sidelighting was inadequate, almost domestic in character, and it was imperative that the Pantheon not resemble a building that ordinary men could inhabit – on that score, success was total. The existing light was also variable, and meditation upon immortality required constancy. By this time the lesson of Boullée had become commonplace, namely, that indirect lighting was essential in order to achieve an effect of the sublime. The steadiness and mystery of the lighting achieved by walling up the existing windows and

equipping the cupola with skylights of frosted glass are today the principal sign of Quatremère's influence on the Pantheon's design" (Ozouf, 1998: 336-337).

The Pantheon's building makes a spectacle of setting France's great aside. Its consecrating power rests precisely on this ability to display a clear-cut divide between the chosen and the rest – and not only on the careful selection of the chosen themselves. That asserting this divide lies at the core of the building's efficacy is further illustrated in the themes of exclusion, pollution, neighboring and purge that resurface throughout its history. On November 25, 1793, revolutionaries thus staged the expulsion from the Pantheon of Mirabeau, whose reputation by that time had become tarnished, at the very minute when the remains of Marat were transferred into the building. There would be no mixing allowed between the worthy and the non-worthy, no pollution of the purity of the former by the neighboring presence of the latter, lest the whole enterprise should fall apart.¹ That concern with the devastating consequences of pollution was perhaps expressed most clearly in an anonymous text composed when Rousseau's ashes were translated to the Pantheon: "If a mortal not deemed worthy by public opinion were placed among the demigods [...] all would be lost. A backward step in morality is a loss that cannot be made good" (cited in Ozouf, 1998: 341).

Because today's Pantheon is populated in large part by writers and scientists, and because it stands in the vicinity of the highly selective Ecole Normale Supérieure on nearby rue d'Ulm, French writer André Billy famously (and wittily) referred to it as "the Ecole Normale of the dead." The Pantheon resembles the Ecole Normale in yet another respect, however: the prestige they both bestow rests in part on the sharpness and tightness of the line they introduce between the ones they induct and the ones they do

¹ The themes of neighboring and pollution reemerge well beyond the revolutionary era: "In 1908, the heirs of Marshal Jean Lannes were so outraged by the Pantheonization of Zola that they asked that their forebear's remains be transferred to the cemetery of Montmartre, well away from the writer's repugnant presence" (Ozouf, 1998: 343).

not. It is proverbial that no obvious difference exists between the last student the school accepts every year and the first one it fails. Yet the divide remains firmly in place, and it continues to deliver its magic. The commonplace mention of its arbitrariness is generally uttered as an act of wonderment at its ability to nonetheless produce its status-imparting effects – while in truth these effects arise from the immutability of the line.

Ultimately, how the Pantheon and the Ecole Normale consecrate the individuals they choose illuminates anew Robert Merton's classic example of the "forty-first chair" at the French Academy. "The French Academy, Merton observes, decided early that only a cohort of forty could qualify as members and thus emerge as immortals." This fixed number necessarily resulted in "the exclusion through the centuries of many talented individuals" from the institution. In fact, "what holds for the French Academy holds in varying degrees for every other institution designed to identify and reward talent. In all of them there are occupants of the forty-first chair, men outside the Academy having at least the same order of talent as those inside it." Merton rightly acknowledges that "the phenomenon of the forty-first chair is an artifact of having a fixed number of places available at the summit of recognition" (Merton, 1968: 56-57). Yet because he is concerned with the effects of the forty-first chair phenomenon on the careers of individuals, he does not draw the full implications of his example for understanding how institutions such as the French Academy grant a form of prestige that goes beyond recognition and instead borders on "immortality".

By sticking to the rule of fixed numbers, the Academy essentially commits to being an imprecise judge of quality. Were it to seriously try and sanction accomplishments when they surpass a given mark, its membership would fluctuate over time: it would grow in periods of greater creativity, and shrink in times of fewer achievements. The Academy, however, is prepared to do away with its accuracy of judgment, and to trade it off for the opportunity to keep its membership fixed. This is because the status it confers does

not so much arise from its perceived ability to gauge quality – upon their induction, members of the Academy are usually old and no real doubt subsists about their merit – but from its staging of a crisp, unblurred boundary between the immortals and others.

CONSECRATION: THEORETICAL FORMULATION

There are two main commonalities to the empirical examples of consecration I have introduced above. First, the status increase individuals enjoy when they get consecrated is not primarily related to the disclosure of new information regarding their quality or talent. While consecrating institutions certainly detain authority in the fields they consecrate in – in other words, while they detain the legitimacy to adjudicate on the merits of individuals – the value they confer when they consecrate does not come from the verdicts they return. The Academy makes a point of being a poor assessor of quality, and elections to the Academy happen at such a late stage in individuals' careers that they can hardly be seen to signal previously unrecognized merits. In fact, research on the determinants of consecration shows that it is strongly predicted by prior levels of recognition (Allen and Lincoln, 2004; Allen and Parsons, 2006; Schmutz, 2005; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010). Things are even clearer at the Pantheon: early on, "the Convention decreed that the honors of the Pantheon could not be bestowed on a candidate until at least ten years after his death, for 'the life of a citizen must be fully illuminated before honoring his memory'" (Ozouf, 1998: 340). If citizens' lives had to be fully illuminated *before* they could be inducted, the induction could not have worked by revealing anything about them that was not previously known.²

² Along similar lines, Harriet Zuckerman observes that "major [scientific] awards may once have 'codified schools of thought and legitimated scientific paradigms' but the practice of conferring awards on scientists whose contributions have already passed muster means that many prizes no longer have this result since the work they honor has long since been accepted" (Zuckerman, 1992: 228).

There is an interesting implication to that first, negative characterization. If consecration does not work by displaying information about those who get consecrated, then it makes little difference what the authority of these institutions truly is on the matters they pretend to adjudicate upon. Mitterrand's passage through the Pantheon was decided by his own staff – hardly an authority in the case – yet Mitterrand did enjoy some status benefits from his brief induction. This may also have been why David Salle wanted to be among the chosen even though he disdained the choosers: what counts when it comes to consecration is not the recognition one receives from an authoritative body, but one's mere ascription to the ranks of the elected.

The second commonality between the examples above is as follows: the Pantheon, the Academy, the Ecole Normale, all make a spectacle of the boundary they draw between the chosen and the rest. At the core of their efficacy is their ability to uphold the line between these two populations and to publicly display its sharpness. There is therefore something essentially structural – in the old, anthropological sense of the word – to the way consecrating institutions operate, and to what they do to populations of individuals. Consecration acts on value, not by telling who is great from who is not, but by asserting the existence of an indisputable difference between the two. In that respect Allen and Parsons are right that “consecration asserts that only certain objects are ‘great’, and by implication, that all others are not” (Allen and Parsons, 2006: 808). They fail to emphasize, however, that consecration's special efficacy arises from the signaling of the divide, not from quality judgments made about those who get consecrated.

In a sometimes overlooked part of his work, Pierre Bourdieu adopts a similarly structural approach to account for the power of rites of passage and institution (Bourdieu, 1991). Rites of institution act by consecrating. Yet Bourdieu's main claim is that they do not so much consecrate those who pass through them, but rather the difference between two sets of individuals: those who have passed and those who have not. “By solemnly

marking the passage over a line which establishes a fundamental division in the social order, rites draw the attention of the observer to the passage (whence the expression 'rites of passage'), whereas the important thing is the line" – for example the line between the uncircumcised child and the circumcised child, or rather between "the whole set of uncircumcised children and the set of circumcised adults. [...] The most important effect of the rite is the one which attracts the least attention: the rite *consecrates* the difference, institutes it, while at the same time constituting man as man" (Bourdieu, 1991: 118, emphasis in the original). Consecration, in other words, produces its effects by instituting a difference, i.e. by quietly inserting it in the social fabric and thereby "making it known and recognized" (Bourdieu, 1991: 119).

This second, positive characterization also comes with an important implication. If consecration is chiefly the assertion of a structural divide, it follows that it should not only affect the ones who cross the divide at a certain point in time, but also all the other individuals standing on the same side of the divide. This is what happened in 1981, when the "great men" of the Pantheon received an increment of prestige from Mitterrand's carefully orchestrated visit.

So what do we mean when we say that someone or something is consecrated? What do we mean for example when we say that the selection of an author to a literary prize, or the selection of an athlete to a hall of fame, is a form of consecration? Here it is useful to think of this selection as a dual process. On the one hand, being selected to a prize, or being inducted to a hall of fame, is a form of credentialing. A panel of authoritative experts testifies to the quality of an author or athlete by selecting them. But there would be no consecration if that same panel would actually acknowledge the talent of every author, or every athlete, in the field. We would then be reassured as to everyone's quality, yet no one would be consecrated in the stronger sense we give to that word. This is because selection does not only alter our view of individuals by touching them or not, and by imparting upon the ones it touches the authority of the

chooser. It also influences how we see them by signaling that the whole set of individuals is a dichotomous one, or in other words that there exist two distinct and hierarchically ordered regions in the population. The divide between these regions is not unlike Durkheim's classic vision of the separation between the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, 1965). This is why I propose to refer to this second aspect of selection, and to it only, as consecration.

Consecration, in other words, is the status increase that chosen individuals derive from the fact that selection by an institution signals the existence of a clear-cut divide between the chosen and the rest. The divide at stake is not drawn by those enjoying the status increase, but by a third party endowed with selection powers. In particular, consecration often happens through inductions into institutions such as halls of fame or academies. The status accruing to individuals as a result of consecration proper does not come from the recognition of their quality. Instead it arises from the affirmation or reaffirmation, through the institution's actions, of the existence of a clear difference between them and others.

This definition is finally best understood in the context of a two-mode network. Consecration rests on selection by a third party, and can be regarded as an act of affiliation in a bipartite network: when an author is selected to the Nobel Prize for example, a tie forms between the author and the prize. Against this backdrop, consecration happens when affiliation ties in the two-mode network define two disconnected groups of individuals in the one-mode, individual-to-individual network projection of the initial network. This is illustrated in figure 1.1, where institution A selects four individuals and separates them from the two it does not select (upper panel), generating two disjoint sub-networks in the individual-to-individual projection (lower panel) where ties stand for whether two individuals have been commonly selected (or commonly not selected) by A.

The generality of the above definition is best envisioned if we transpose it in the language of a two-mode network.

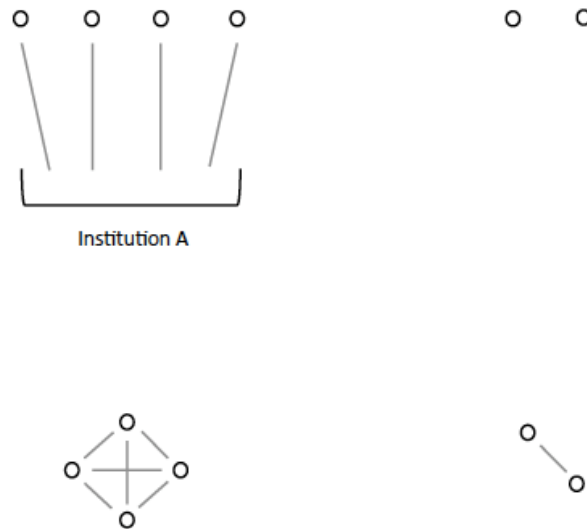


Figure 1.1. A two-mode network approach to consecration.

MEASURING CONSECRATION IN CULTURAL SETTINGS

A Network Strategy for Capturing Consecration Empirically

It may be difficult to disentangle the impact of credentialing from that of consecration proper when one focuses on selection by a single institution. All Nobel Prize laureates receive a stamp of approval from the Nobel Committee, and by the same token all of

them get separated from those who did not receive the Prize, so that in that case the effects of credentialing and consecration are empirically confounded.

Things change, however, when several institutions perform operations of selection in the same social setting. This is the reason why cultural worlds are good at evincing consecration: they are full of awards, prizes, halls of fame and academies whose function it is to select cultural producers over one another (English, 2005).³ Because more than one institution can now pick or induct people, the situation may look more like the one in figure 1.2, where institution A selects individuals and therefore both credentials and consecrates them by setting them apart from the ones it does not select; yet a second institution, B, also selects individuals, but selects some that A had chosen *together with others* A had decided not to choose. To the observer, this blurs the divide A was introducing between the ones it had selected and the ones it had not (bottom panel of figure 1.2): those it had picked are no longer clearly dissociated from those it had not, because some of them are now represented together by institution B. In other words, the ability of A to signal the existence of an essential difference between the ones it had chosen and the ones it had not – that is, its ability to consecrate its picks – is diminished. In particular it is lower than that of another institution, say C, whose credentialing power would be the same as A's, but whose individuals would not be represented by another institution together with individuals that C did not choose.

Thus, two institutions with similar credentialing power can have different consecration power, and two individuals associated with respectively one and the other of these institutions will be consecrated more and less, though equally credentialed. The difference in valuation accruing to them from their respective selections can then be interpreted as the effect of consecration. In other words, a network formulation of the

³ On the pervasiveness of honors, prizes and awards in everyday life more generally, see Goode (1978) and Best (2011).

definition of consecration I introduced earlier offers a strategy for capturing it empirically.

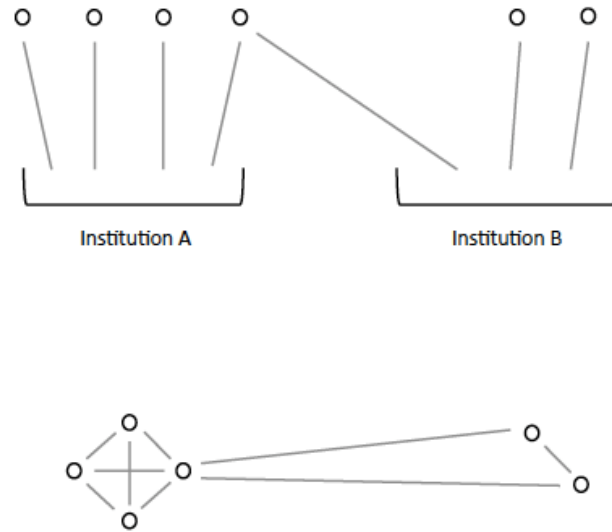


Figure 1.2. Multiple affiliations blur the consecration divide in the one-mode projection of a bipartite network.

An Empirical Trial

Ultimately the merit of that definition should be measured at its ability to explain previously unresolved puzzles in the study of valuation. This can be done in cultural settings. Such settings have typically served to probe the determinants of consecration in cases that are clear examples of it (Allen and Lincoln, 2004; Allen and Parsons, 2006; Schmutz, 2005; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010). But we can also use them to observe consecration at work.

A puzzle, precisely, awaits the sociologist venturing into the study of art markets. Markets for unique and novel goods are usually seen as privileged settings for the powerful influence of market intermediaries: when quality is uncertain, or when it lacks definition altogether, intermediaries can play a crucial role in signaling or specifying it, thereby ultimately shaping the prices consumers are willing to pay for products. Products, meanwhile, do not get much more unique or novel than in the market for contemporary art. Yet as it happens economic sociologists have repeatedly failed to observe any influence of art market intermediaries on the value of the artists they distribute. The reputation of art dealers, for example, does not seem to bear any noticeable impact on the prices of their artists (Beckert and Rössel, 2013). Nor do their promotional campaigns, their experience in business, or their commitment to more highbrow forms of artistic production (Rengers and Velthuis, 2002).

We thus face a paradox. For one, these empirical findings challenge our scholarly understanding of the role of intermediaries in uncertain markets. But they also contradict the very vision insiders have of the world they inhabit: in the contemporary art market, dealers, critics, and artists themselves all regard commercial galleries as the makers or breakers of artistic careers.

The next chapter will come back to that paradox in greater detail. Yet it should be noted already that the definition of consecration I have outlined here highlights a potential reason for that paradox, and points to a way of solving it that could also serve to try the value of that definition. If students of art markets have failed to identify any influence of intermediaries on the worth of artists, it may be because they have looked at the wrong processes of valuation. In fact, I will show below that their various approaches essentially conceive of intermediaries as shaping the value of art and artists through the revelation of information about their individual quality. They do not have any theoretical room for consecration as I have defined it in this chapter. That they

failed to observe the effects they anticipated should force us to think outside the existing conceptual toolbox, and to imagine novel ways in which intermediaries construct value in cultural markets.

What would it mean to say that art market intermediaries consecrate their artists? The network strategy I have introduced earlier makes this easy to envision. In the art market artists are often represented by multiple dealers, and each of these representations can be regarded as an act of selection that both credentials artists with the reputation of the dealer and consecrates them by setting them apart from other artists. In that context, a reputable gallery A, by sharing artists with other galleries who simultaneously represent artists A does not represent, blurs the divide between the artists it has chosen and the ones it has not. In other words, it jeopardizes its power to consecrate the artists it has chosen. This is not the case, however, when the sharing happens with galleries that also represent artists A itself already represents. By working out the position of each gallery in a network of cross-representations, it thus becomes possible to identify galleries that consecrate more or less, and to test whether this correlates with the value of their artists. It will be the task of the next chapter to carry out this test empirically. At this stage, we have merely delineated the contours of a real-world trial for our structural definition of consecration.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has uncovered a definition of consecration that sets it apart from other social processes of valuation. It has outlined a strategy for measuring consecration thus defined, and it has shown how this strategy could be used to solve a puzzle in the sociology of valuation.

This definition and the network operationalization I have proposed have several empirical implications, some of which will guide the testing of that definition in the following chapter of the present dissertation. In particular, if consecration happens when a selective institution signals the existence of a clear divide between the individuals it chooses and the ones it does not, then it should not only affect the individuals that cross that divide at a certain point in time. The tightness of the divide should also shape the value of all the individuals standing on the right side of it. Thus, the value of individuals who have long been among the chosen should decrease, were the divide to become more porous through subsequent induction decisions by the selective institution.

A second implication follows from the dual nature of the affiliation network we can use to envision consecration and capture it empirically (Breiger, 1974). A two-mode network between individuals and institutions selecting them can be projected as a one-mode, individual-to-individual network, where disconnections between groups of individuals measure the divides institutions introduce between them. Symmetrically, however, the same network can be projected as an institution-to-institution network, where disconnections capture the divides individuals introduce between institutions. Because empirically the selection power is more likely to be with the institutions, we tend to think of consecration as granted by institutions to individuals. Yet a short detour through network formalism makes it possible to imagine how individuals could likewise consecrate institutions.

Eventually the value of the definition I have proposed should be told from its usefulness in solving empirical problems. In the meantime, a weaker form of validation comes from the fact that it illuminates why we tend to talk of consecration in certain cases and not in others. Thus, we are inclined to talk of consecration to describe acts of valuation in settings such as literature or the arts, where not only the quality of things or individuals is uncertain, but where the very fact that there is such a thing as quality is unclear. This

makes sense if we consider that consecration works by signaling that a tangible divide exists between various levels of quality, and as a result that it is possible to tell the good from the bad.

This definition likewise clarifies the relationship of consecration with time. In its light it becomes clear why we often refer to consecration when selection by an institution happens retrospectively. Consecration appears in starker light when it happens late in the game, because all the information about the individuals that get consecrated has already been revealed, so that there is only consecration – and no credentialing – to observe. Hence, if the definition I have given is true, retrospective consecration is just a synonym for pure consecration.

CHAPTER 2

INTERMEDIATION, CONSECRATION, AND THE FORMATION OF ECONOMIC VALUE IN THE MARKET FOR MODERN ART

INTRODUCTION

Consecration, the operation whereby certain objects or persons are identified as worthy of admiration over other ones, typically through their selection to a prestigious prize or a hall of fame, is a unique social phenomenon with dramatic consequences. It propels individuals in the public eye, making them worthy of a veneration and esteem that sometimes seem to go beyond the ones we attach to mere humans. In many realms of social life, consecration is the utmost reward for participants, one that places them permanently and unquestionably among the great in their field. Consecration in effect appears as the ultimate process of valuation, and sociology would be lacking if it did not incorporate an understanding of its nature. Many case studies in social science have studied the determinants of consecration in empirical cases that are clear instances of it. A general model of what consecration is, however, remains to be empirically validated.

The previous chapter introduced a theory of consecration that makes possible to study its occurrence, conditions, and consequences in a variety of social settings. Focusing on

the seemingly elusive role of market intermediaries in shaping the prices of artists in the heyday of French modern painting, this chapter uses that theory to solve an empirical puzzle in the sociology of valuation. Specifically, I show that only a definition of consecration as the structural display of the existence of quality differences in a population can explain how the likes of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso were made valuable in Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century. I further illustrate how a network-based strategy can be applied to capture consecration in the market for modern art, and I use that strategy to understand the economic fortunes of artists in that market. The analysis here rests on an original and comprehensive database of all affiliations between the artists and galleries active in Paris in the late 1920s. More generally, the chapter enables us to see how consecration departs from other major social processes of valuation, and why we tend to talk of consecration in certain empirical cases and not in others.

THE MARKET FOR MODERN ART AND THE PARADOX OF ARTISTS' VALUATION

Up until the Great Depression, Paris was by many accounts the world's most prominent center of artistic creativity. In quick succession it produced some of the most important breakthroughs in modern art history, from impressionism to fauvism, cubism and surrealism. Just as significant, however, Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was also the core of the worldwide market for the work of living artists. Like no other city, it attracted a dense crowd of talents. And perhaps nowhere else were the careers of these artists as systematically processed by a rapidly growing population of commercial galleries (e.g. Ring, 1931; Gee, 1981). Figure 2.1 thus displays the number of modern art dealers active in Paris between the 1870s and 1930, evidencing an impressive rise in the first decades of the twentieth century.

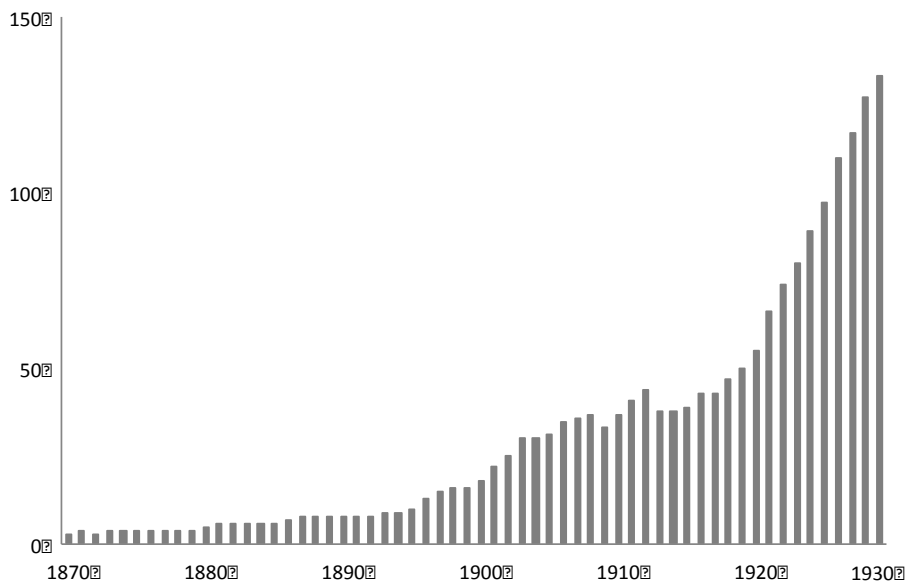


Figure 2.1. Number of commercial galleries active in Paris, 1870-1930.

Source: author's database.

Historians and sociologists have traditionally viewed the growth of the market as a support system for artists in that era as the driving force explaining the economic success of at least some of them. This is Harrison and Cynthia White's classic account of the rise of the "dealer-critic system" not only as an emancipating force for the creativity of artists, but also as an economic system in which certain dealers were able to make their artists valuable (White and White, 1965; see also Gee, 1981).

There is, however, a paradox with that story, and that paradox has to do with artists' economic valuation. In the early decades of the twentieth century, everyone in Paris regarded the market as the main terrain where the careers of artists were being built. On the one hand, the period was one of high distrust in the ability of academic

institutions to successfully sanction the quality of contemporary artists. The growingly dysfunctional academic system and its yearly Salon, slowly glutted with an oversupply of young talents, had ceased to play this role over the second half of the nineteenth century (White and White, 1965; Mainardi, 1993; Jensen, 1994). Other, independent salons mostly served to launch the careers of new artists (Gee, 1981). And with few exceptions, museums were not given much credit when it came to selecting and rewarding talented modern artists (see the opinions collected in Charensol, 1996 [1925]). In that context, an active set of dealers gradually took over the role of public institutions as brokers between artists and collectors, and as trusted authorities when it came to identifying artistic quality. And in fact, by the 1920s collectors, critics, and artists themselves all viewed commercial galleries as the unchallenged arbiters of artists' success (Green, 1987; Mainardi, 1993: 129). There are countless examples of that observation, but it was perhaps best articulated by art critic Georges Turpin in a 1929 book, *La Stratégie artistique*:

“Back in the days, an artist could make a living off his art working independently and finding collectors to whom he could sell directly. But these times are long gone. Today an artist's career rests entirely on his dealers. Dealers make the renown and value of artists. They can make collectors see gold where there is only the most common metal. Dealers have become kingmakers” (Turpin, 1929: 50-51, my translation).

The art market Turpin describes here is essentially the one we still live in today. More generally, though, the notion that markets intermediaries can be key in shaping the value of the things they broker for is not just the view of a 1920s critic. It is also textbook economic sociology: when quality is uncertain or when it lacks definition altogether, as is usually the case with new art, market intermediaries can play a crucial role in signaling or specifying it, thereby ultimately shaping the prices consumers are willing to pay for products (e.g. Karpik, 2010).

This view stands in contrast, however, to the fact that empirical studies have repeatedly failed to observe any influence of intermediaries on the value of the artists they distribute. Here we can take as an example the influential book Olav Velthuis devotes to the contemporary art market in New York and Amsterdam (Velthuis, 2005). In that book Velthuis examines the role of commercial galleries in constructing the economic value of art and artists. Yet he finds that once the characteristics of these artists – such as their age or their critical recognition – are accounted for, neither the reputation of dealers, nor their promotional efforts, nor their experience in business carry much weight for the prices of their artists. Without a satisfying explanation for that puzzling finding, Velthuis reluctantly concludes that dealers are not among the determinants of artists' prices: “the many insignificant effects of gallery characteristics [on art prices] suggest that galleries are not able to add economic value themselves” (Velthuis, 2005: 110; see also Rengers and Velthuis, 2002). Although their empirical setting differed slightly from Velthuis's, Jens Beckert and Jörg Rössel similarly sought to measure the influence of the characteristics of galleries – particularly of their reputation – on the prices of their artists. But they too were unable to detect any such influence. If anything, they note, gallery reputation has a small, *negative* impact on artists' prices, whether measured in galleries or at auctions (Beckert and Rössel, 2013: 189; that finding is elaborated upon in Schönfeld and Reinstaller, 2007).

How do market intermediaries create value for the things they broker for? And why would that not be the case in the market for new art?

The first question, on the role of intermediaries in the generation of value, points to the social processes whereby third parties shape the perception, status, and ultimately value of things or individuals without directly altering their intrinsic qualities. We classically think of these processes in two main ways: as processes of credentialing, on the one hand, and as processes of qualification, on the other.

By credentialing, I refer to the fact that certain social actors, through their credentials and perceived expertise, can serve to signal the underlying and often unobservable quality of things or individuals.⁴ The endorsement of a bond by a reputed or high-status bank, for example, can increase the value of that bond, because it reassures potential customers as to its actual quality (Podolny, 1993, 2005). The same reasoning underlies the notion that the reputation of art market intermediaries should enhance the prices of their artists (Bonus and Ronte, 1997).

An implicit assumption behind credentialing processes is that there exists relative agreement as to what constitutes underlying quality. Qualification processes, in contrast, occur when social actors shape the worth of entities by defining the very standards for what can legitimately count as quality (Beckert and Aspers, 2011; Beckert and Musselin, 2013). They act by supplying frames of reference for understanding the properties of things as qualities. This is what happens when certain actors impose “authenticity” or “character” as valuable properties of things or individuals (Peterson, 1997; Karabel, 2005), or more generally in any attempt to spread the criteria for what is “good science”, “good art”, or a “good candidate.”⁵

Processes of qualification and credentialing take center stage in many accounts of how value is constructed in cultural worlds (Becker, 1982; Mulkay and Chaplin, 1982; Lamont, 1987; Smith, 1988; Bourdieu, 1993, 2013; English, 2005; Karpik, 2010; Berthoin Antal et al., 2015). They also figure prominently in previous investigations of the role of

⁴ The idea goes back at least to Michael Spence’s theory of job market signaling (Spence, 1974).

⁵ Qualification work is evident when markets emerge for products which once fell outside the scope of commercial exchange: when it comes to giving monetary value to life, cadavers, or nature for example, the issue is not just to overcome the moral preventions that once kept these outside of the market sphere (Zelizer, 1979, 1981; Anteby, 2010; Fourcade, 2011). Also at stake is the question of what, in these things, will be deemed valuable or, to put it starkly, of what will count (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006; Stark, 2009).

intermediaries in the valuation of their artists. Beckert and Rössel (2013) focus on the credentialing aspect of the problem when they measure how the reputation of galleries affects artist's prices. Rengers and Velthuis (2002) do the same, though they rely on a different measure of reputation. They also look at the qualification work of dealers, through a measure of the number of artists a gallery represents: the lower that number, the more likely each artist is to benefit from the promotional efforts of her gallery (Velthuis, 2005: 109). As we have seen, though, these various approaches all yield underwhelming results.

Nor do we have an explanation for why intermediaries should *not* matter in markets for novel art. If anything, this would run against insiders' sense that galleries' main role consists in increasing the value of their artists, as was already the case in the times of Georges Turpin (e.g. Velthuis, 2005: 125-27; Hutter et al., 2007).

Using the market for modern art as an empirical backdrop, I will here argue that inconsistencies between theoretical predictions, insiders' perceptions, and prior empirical findings cannot be understood unless we realize that previous approaches have essentially conceived of intermediaries as shaping the value of art and artists through the disclosure of information about their individual quality. These approaches, as a consequence, have missed the consecration work of intermediaries as I have started defining it in the previous chapter.

In contrast, I will here build on that definition to suggest that patterns of affiliations in a social system can serve to manifest the existence of quality differences in that system – as opposed to merely disclosing information about its individual entities. This manifestation of the existence of quality divides enhances the status and value of the things or individuals that stand on the right side of these divides by consecrating them. In the analysis to follow, I thus show that market intermediaries did indeed shape the worth of their artists in the golden age of French modern painting (as everybody

thought), yet that only an adequate theory of consecration can explain how they did so and why previous accounts have been unable to detect their influence. The next section lays the groundwork for that analysis. It refines the definition of consecration proposed in chapter 1, relates it with common usages of the notion, and contrasts it with the two major social processes of valuation – credentialing and qualification – I have discussed above.

THE STRUCTURAL DISPLAY OF THE EXISTENCE OF QUALITY DIFFERENCES

There are two common ways to think about consecration in social science and everyday parlance. The first one defines it in reference to the type of things or individuals that get consecrated. It uses the notion interchangeably with that of legitimation, but reserves it for occurrences of legitimation happening in specific settings – in the arts, science, sports or literature (e.g. Lamont, 2012).

While there is merit to that first approach, in the previous chapter I have argued that it mistakes consecration for some of its empirical manifestations. It is a scope condition for consecration to emerge that there should be ambiguity about the worth of things or individuals. As a consequence, cultural universes – where value is often inherently difficult to determine – are prone to exhibiting consecration phenomena. Yet consecration is not a process of valuation specific to these universes, only one that is more easily observed there because of their specific properties.

A second usage identifies consecration with a form of recognition happening late in the game, after individuals have already gone through other instances of recognition. Thus, we talk of consecration when an actor or athlete is inducted into a hall of fame at a later stage in her career, after earning prior distinctions in the form of Academy Awards or

Most Valuable Player titles. This definition is implicit in many empirical case studies of consecration. In particular, operationalizing consecration this way makes possible to study its determinants and to show that it is strongly associated with previous levels of recognition (Allen and Lincoln, 2004; Allen and Parsons, 2006; Schmutz, 2005; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010).

This usage likewise captures an important dimension of consecration, yet it fails to adequately delineate its nature. For one, there are multiple empirical cases that we would unhesitatingly refer to as instances of consecration even though they do not happen late in the career of consecrated individuals – suffice it to think of scientific honors specifically targeted to scholars under a certain age. I will here suggest that we tend to talk of consecration as something happening late in the game precisely because consecration does not come with the revelation of fresh information regarding the individual quality of those who get consecrated. In the realm of science, for example, Zuckerman observes that major awards rarely distinguish individuals whose work's quality had hitherto been missed: typically, in the United States Nobel Prize winners have previously been admitted to the National Academy of Science (Zuckerman, 1977: 196-200). Therefore, consecration associated with earning the Prize cannot be said to act through the disclosure of previously unrecognized merit.⁶ This is only more obvious later in one's career, when merit has already been subjected to considerable prior scrutiny. That we tend to see consecration as happening late in the game therefore tells us something about it, but it is not an integral part of its definition.

If the status increase individuals derive from being consecrated does not arise from the revelation of information about their individual quality, then where does it come from? Despite different usages, I have argued that consecration assumes the drawing of a clear-cut divide between things or individuals that are chosen – and therefore deemed

⁶ This is particularly apparent in conversations that revolve not around *whether* an individual should get a prestigious prize, but instead around *when* she will do so.

worthy of esteem – and others that are not. To better understand how consecration produces its effects, it is crucial to distinguish what the drawing of this divide signals about the quality of selected individuals from what it says about the existence of quality differences in a population. For individuals, being chosen for a prize or being inducted to a hall of fame is a form of credentialing. The selecting entity testifies to their merit or to the quality of their work by selecting them. But by making a spectacle of the boundary they draw between the chosen and the rest, consecrating institutions also assert that there exist qualitatively different subgroups in the population they are selecting from, and that it is possible to distinguish between these subgroups.

Asserting the existence of quality divides decreases the uncertainty that may arise, not only about the quality of individuals themselves, but about the very presence of quality differences in the population. By upholding a tight line between the chosen and others, and by publicly displaying this line's sharpness, acts of consecration help to establish or reestablish the belief in the existence of such differences.

Hence, my definition: consecration is the structural display of the existence of quality differences in a population. In contrast to other processes of valuation, it does not act on the status and value of people or things by disclosing information about their individual merit, quality, or talent. In particular, and this distinguishes it from credentialing processes, consecration does not alleviate observers' doubts about how good something or someone is, given an agreed upon set of criteria. Nor does it help observers understand in what respect something may be good, as qualification processes do. Instead, consecration works by structurally asserting that there is such a thing as good, i.e. that the good can be told from the bad.

Finally, it is important to note that this concept of consecration recasts the way we usually articulate cultural and structural arguments to account for social status and inequality. Research on the cultural origins of social hierarchies often views them as

rooted in the symbolic frames and boundaries we routinely deploy to rank and categorize objects, people, or groups. Under certain circumstances these classification processes can result in unequal access to resources across social entities, in the emergence of structural boundaries between them, and ultimately in social inequality (Bourdieu, 1984; Tilly, 1998; Kahneman and Tversky, 2000; Lamont and Molnár, 2002; Pachucki et al., 2007; Ridgeway, 2011, 2014; Lamont et al., 2014). The definition of consecration I have introduced, while not incompatible with this view, stresses a reverse mechanism for inequality formation. Structural boundaries, it suggests, do not only result from the application of preexisting frames or categories to the elements of a social system. Conversely, the structural divides observed in a social setting – such as the ones that consecrating institutions introduce between the chosen and others – can also shape the overall perception of that setting’s hierarchy. They can, in other words, concatenate into a categorical scheme of their own, thereby acquiring a distinct influence on the worth of social entities.

CONSECRATION IN THE MARKET FOR MODERN ART

That notion of consecration as the structural display of the existence of quality differences is not an entirely theoretical one either. In fact, it was very present to the minds of dealers and artists in early twentieth-century Paris. When they selected artists, prestigious galleries were very aware that they were setting them apart from the rest of the pack. They also monitored their competitors’ selection decisions closely – an aspect that surfaces time and again in dealers’ memoirs and testimonies (e.g. Blot, 1934; Granoff, 1949; Loeb, 1946; Ring, 1931; Vollard, 1936; Weill, 1933). And they were adamant that their artists should not simultaneously be represented by other galleries who were also showing artists that *they themselves* had not selected.

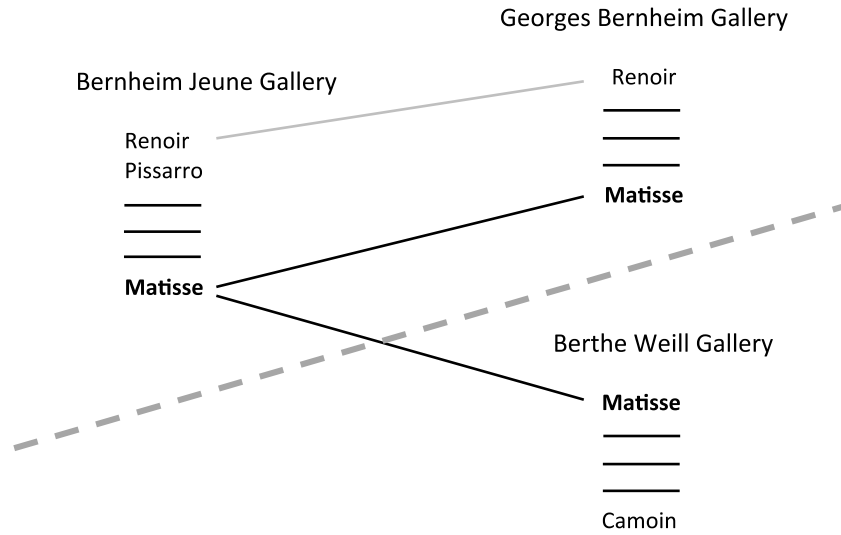


Figure 2.2. A cross-representation with Berthe Weill threatens to blur the divide Bernheim Jeune seeks to introduce between the artists it has chosen and the ones it has not.

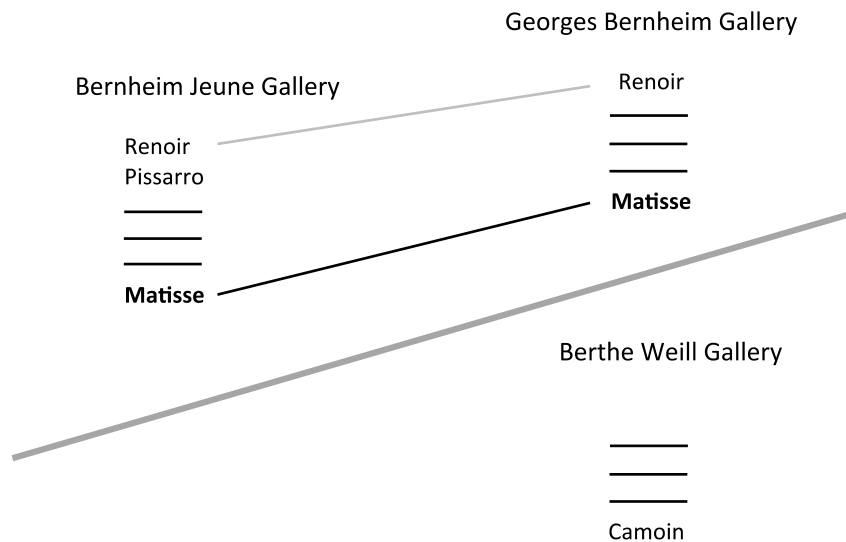


Figure 2.3. The divide is restored if Matisse cuts ties with Berthe Weill.

As an example, in 1909 famous dealers Gaston and Josse Bernheim Jeune decided to take on artist Henri Matisse.⁷ When they did so, they insisted that Matisse should cut ties with another gallery, Berthe Weill, who was also representing fairly low-status artists Bernheim Jeune did not want to represent. But they did not require Matisse to cut ties with a third gallery, Georges Bernheim, who was also representing artists that they themselves already represented, such as Auguste Renoir. In light of the developments above, one can understand why the Bernheim Jeunes behaved this way. A cross-representation with Berthe Weill would have blurred the divide they were trying to draw between the artists they and their fellow galleries had chosen and the ones they had not – like Charles Camoin for example (figure 2.2). In other words, it would have jeopardized the power of these galleries to consecrate the artists they had chosen. By cutting ties with Berthe Weill instead, Matisse was upholding the divide and maintaining Bernheim Jeune’s consecration power (figure 2.3).

While this is a single story, it also suggests that by systematically looking at the cross-representations of artists between galleries, one can gauge whether various galleries, or rather various groups of galleries, wielded more or less consecration power.

Could the population of galleries active in the market for modern art have been a source of consecration for artists? What did the pattern of cross-representations between them look like? And is it consistent with the idea that various galleries or groups of galleries could consecrate more or less? To answer these questions I test whether the network of cross-representations of artists in Parisian galleries displayed the kind of divides evidenced in figure 2.3. If this was the case – that is, if certain high-status galleries or groups of galleries systematically avoided sharing artists with others, thereby inserting structural divides between their artists and others – then the market can be deemed to have provided a breeding ground for consecration processes.

⁷ Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Bernheim Jeune Correspondence, items 090705a, 171018a, 200823a, and 201020b.

Identifying the position of various galleries in that sharing structure should also provide a measure of the respective consecration power that they wielded.

I first describe the general organization of the market in an effort to assess its overall propensity to sustain consecration processes. This is done by fitting a blockmodel to the network of cross-representations of artists by Parisian art dealers. Blockmodeling essentially identifies sets of galleries that are similar to one another as far as their sharing of artists with others is concerned. Importantly, the blockmodeling technique I implement provides information on the clarity of the underlying relational data (Nowicki and Snijders, 2001; see Appendix 2.A for a detailed description of the blockmodeling procedure). It thus indicates whether there was indeed structure in the network of cross-representations, or if in contrast the sharing of artists between galleries occurred at random.

The dataset I build upon records the representation of artists by all galleries active in Paris in season 1928-29, the year in which historical documentation was the most systematic. The population of galleries is defined using a conventional criterion, though it eventually includes most modern art dealers who were active in the city at the time. Specifically, a gallery was included in the analysis if it exhibited at least one living painter over the season of interest. There were 120 such galleries. Two sources then make possible to reconstruct the portfolios of artists who were permanently represented by these galleries.⁸ These two sources yield a total of 665 painters represented

⁸ *La Semaine à Paris*, published weekly over the period (issues 328 to 379), and Fage (1930: 132-151). The two generally agreed on the artists featured by various galleries. When this was not the case, however, artists mentioned by one source only were added to the list of artists represented by a gallery. For some of the dealers, direct or indirect checks were performed to make sure that the two sources reported the names of artists who were indeed distributed on a regular basis by the galleries at stake. Ledger books were thus consulted for the Jeanne Bucher gallery (Fonds Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris) and the Druet gallery (Livre d'enregistrement des oeuvres achetées par la galerie, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Fort de Saint-Cyr, Montigny-les-

permanently by at least one of the 120 dealers – an average of about 16 artists per gallery.

Socioeconomic data were then collected on both galleries (opening date, form of business operation, capital, participation as experts in modern art sales at Paris main auction house, Hôtel Drouot; documented purchases of modern artists at Drouot, publishing activity, and geographic location) and artists (socio-demographic characteristics, stylistic affiliation, and prices at Drouot in 1928-29).⁹ This information provides guidance for analyzing the blockmodel below.

The blockmodeling procedure is described in Appendix 2.A. Table 2.1 displays the image-matrix of the blockmodel best suited to the network of cross-representations of artists between the 120 galleries. It reports the average number of artists shared by two galleries in the various positions of the selected blockmodel, and provides a summary view of the cross-representation network. It thus shows that two dealers in position 1 shared on average 1.6 artists, and that dealers in position 1 typically shared 0.1 artists with dealers in position 5. The few galleries excluded from the analysis at earlier stages, because they did not share enough (position 7) or any (position 8) artists with other galleries (see Appendix 2.A), are not shown in Table 2.1. Table 2.2 reports the means of various socioeconomic variables for the galleries in each of the eight positions.

Bretonneux). As for indirect checks, I compared stocks sold at auction by galleries going out of business in the late 1920s and early 1930s with the lists of painters they claimed to represent in *La Semaine à Paris* and Fage (1930) shortly before their demise.

⁹ Systematic business data come from Registre du Commerce de la Seine, Archives de Paris, série D33U3. Information on sales and prices at Drouot were found in Lang (1918-1929) and Gee (1981).

Table 2.1. Average number of artists shared by two galleries in the various positions of the selected blockmodel.
 Light-shaded cells indicate the consecration order discussed in the text.
 Dark-shaded cells highlight the strong ties of merchant dealers with dealers of every other position.
 Positions 7 and 8 (see Appendix 2.A) are not shown.

	Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5	Position 6
Position 1	1.6	-	-	-	-	-
Position 2	1.4	3.0	-	-	-	-
Position 3	0.1	2.0	3.3	-	-	-
Position 4	0.1	0.9	1.2	0.5	-	-
Position 5	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	-
Position 6	0.9	4.5	5.1	2.1	0.6	8.3

Table 2.2. Socioeconomic characteristics of galleries in the eight positions of the selected blockmodel.

Position	Number of galleries	Average opening date	Average capital and (number) of incorporated businesses	Average number of artists represented	Average date of birth of artists represented by a gallery	Average percentage of a gallery's artists alive in 1929	Average price of a gallery's artists (francs for 100 cm ² of oil on canvas)
1	11	1897	1,070,000 (8)	10.6	1844	24.2	8,237
2	15	1919	344,000 (5)	20.9	1865	64.1	6,305
3	24	1921	813,800 (8)	18.5	1884	92.1	3,273
4	16	1922	63,300 (3)	12.5	1880	87.9	4,880
5	18	1918	210,300 (4)	8.9	1881	88.2	1,424
6	18	1923	325,000 (8)	33.4	1877	82.4	4,553
7	13	1926	290,000 (2)	6.1	1885	91.2	3,202
8	7	1927	200,000 (1)	5.8	1883	100	114
All	120	1920	543,600 (39)	16.2	1876	80.0	4,185

The selected blockmodel suggests a clear-cut structure in the network of cross-representations of artists between galleries. Two aspects are particularly worth noting. The first (highlighted in dark grey in table 2.1) is the centrality of position 6 galleries, which shared a large number of artists with galleries in all other positions. This centrality in turn arises from the large number of artists these galleries claimed to represent: 33.4 on average, as opposed to a more manageable 13.1 in galleries of other positions.¹⁰ Their opening date or geographic location does not clearly distinguish position 6 dealers, nor do the characteristics of the artists they represented. Another feature, however, tells them apart: they were active buyers of modern art at Paris main auction house, Hôtel Drouot. Among the forty-five dealers documented to have purchased at least one piece of modern art at Drouot over the 1920s, thirteen (or 29%) are here found in position 6 – though that position only makes for 15% of the overall population of galleries. In all likelihood, then, position 6 galleries did not so much *represent* the 33.4 artists they claimed to feature on a permanent basis. Rather, they typically had access to their work through the auction house or through second-hand purchases. Their market role, in other words, departed from that of other galleries, concerned with the promotion of a small number of carefully selected artists from whom they purchased directly. In contrast to those “entrepreneur-dealers”, position 6 galleries are therefore more accurately described as “trader-dealers”, who essentially operated on the secondary market (Moulin, 1987).

Putting position 6 aside, however, cross-representations do indeed delineate a structure analyzable in terms of varying consecration power. Specifically, the pattern of sharing between the galleries in positions 1 to 5 displays the features of a relational hierarchy – not unlike a caste system – highlighted in light grey in table 2.1. Position 1 galleries occupied the top of that hierarchy. They tended, first, to be more established: as shown in table 2.2, they had generally been in business longer, their capital was higher, and the artists they represented were older and more expensive than those in the galleries of

¹⁰ All differences in means reported in this section are statistically significant based on appropriate tests.

other positions. A look at their geographic location further suggests that they clustered in the city's most prestigious neighborhoods. But these galleries also occupied the top of a purely relational hierarchy. In that hierarchy they typically shared artists with other galleries in position 1 and with galleries in position 2, yet they did not share with lower-status galleries in positions 3 to 5. Dealers in position 2, in turn, shared artists with other dealers in their position and with dealers in positions 1, 3 and 4, but not with low-status galleries in position 5. Galleries in 3 and 4, finally, shared with those in 5, the bottom end of the hierarchy.

Another way of seeing that relational hierarchy is to say that galleries in position 1 were the most effective at insulating their artists from the low-status ones they did not want to represent. In particular, no other group of galleries systematically represented the artists that position 1 galleries had selected together with artists who were also represented in position 5. Position 1 galleries, in other words, carried the greatest consecration power for their artists. Position 2 dealers in contrast had lesser consecration power – their artists were more likely to be represented (by position 3 and 4 dealers) together with artists found in position 5. As for position 3 and 4 dealers, finally, their consecration power was even smaller, as their artists were often directly represented in position 5 galleries.

By virtue of the general structure of their selection decisions, Parisian galleries in the late 1920s did in fact form a breeding ground for consecration processes. The general pattern of sharing of artists across galleries meant that some of them maintained strong structural boundaries between the artists they represented and the ones they did not. They were thus structurally displaying the existence of quality differences between their artists and others. By definition that power to consecrate rested with prestigious dealers, yet it did not have to correlate perfectly with other, attribute-based measures of their prestige or reputation. As compared with their ability to credential their artists and to set the standards for judging their quality, did galleries' greater or lesser

consecration power influence the value of their artists? And does that help us solve the paradox of artists' valuation in the heyday of French modern painting?

DATA

Auction Prices of Artists as an Indicator of Value

To address these questions I replicate prior analyses that have sought to identify an impact of market intermediaries on the value of their artists, yet I also make room for the consecration power of galleries as a predictor of value. I analyze the prices of artists at Paris chief auction house, Hôtel Drouot, in the late 1920s. Auction prices may not be in total accordance with the prices charged by galleries, yet they are probably a fair indicator of what I am after here, namely the economic value of an artist as determined by the supply of and demand for her work. By the end of the 1920s modern art sales at Drouot had become established enough that they offer a reliable barometer of such value. Further historical evidence supporting the choice of this measure is presented in Appendix 2.B.

I model the selling prices at Drouot, over the season 1928-29, of artists represented by at least one gallery active in Paris that year. Prices are compiled from Lang (1918-1929), a series of yearbooks that record all art sales held at Drouot in the 1920s. In the analysis to follow I focus on the sales of paintings only, ignoring other types of artistic media. Paintings formed the bulk of the modern art works sold at auction in the 1920s. They are also the ones for which Lang most systematically reports size, an important piece of information when it comes to modeling prices. As I am interested in gallery- and artist-related predictors of value rather than in technique-related ones, the focus on paintings has no dramatic consequences for the analysis. Overall, I use information on the sales of

1,196 paintings by 173 unique artists with permanent gallery representation in 1928-29.

Auction prices are modeled using hierarchical models, which make it possible to adjust for the effects of predictors operating at various levels. Sales of individual artworks are nested at the level of artists. Because sales are observed at auctions, however, they do not really nest at the gallery level. Gallery-related predictors are therefore passed onto the artists that these galleries represented. It should also be remembered that artists could be featured by several galleries. When this was the case, gallery-level predictors are expressed as scores at the artist level – that is, as the average of the values they take in the various galleries representing the artist.

Two distinct series of models are fitted below. The first does not adjust for the past prices of artists, in line with both Rengers and Velthuis (2002) and Beckert and Rössel (2013). While this makes for a better comparison with these authors' findings, it also leaves open the possibility that the observed effects of gallery characteristics may arise from a selection scenario, whereby dealers with higher reputation for example would merely choose to represent artists on the basis of their higher past prices. To rule out that scenario, I fit a second series of models, where past prices are included as an additional predictor of 1928-29 prices.

Measuring Consecration Power

Since I am concerned with the role of intermediaries in shaping the economic value of artists, gallery-related characteristics are the chief object of interest – and among them consecration power receives special scrutiny. Consecration power is here captured as a gallery's position in the relational hierarchy I have uncovered in table 2.1. That position essentially measures the propensity of a gallery to insulate its artists from the ones it does not represent, or to structurally display the existence of quality differences

between its artists and the rest. Practically, consecration power is coded as decreasing at a constant rate as one moves down positions in the relational hierarchy. Thus, galleries have a consecration power of 4 in position 1, 3 in position 2, 2 in positions 3 and 4, and 1 in position 5.

The consecration power galleries in positions 7 and 8 cannot be directly defined on the same grounds, as these galleries lack any affiliation to the hierarchy in table 2.1. Position 7 dealers, however, are easily reintroduced if one slightly loosens the threshold used to approach cross-representations between galleries (see Appendix 2.A). When a cross-representation is defined as the sharing of just one artist by two galleries, a blockmodel of cross-representations shows that 12 out of the 13 galleries in position 7 cluster with galleries making up position 5 in table 2.1 to form an even lower step in the relational hierarchy. I therefore give position 7 galleries a consecration power of 0. Position 8 dealers are similarly attributed the lowest possible score, on the grounds that they represent low-status artists that are entirely isolated from others in the hierarchy.

Finally, consecration power is not straightforwardly established for trader-dealers (position 6 in table 2.1). On the one hand these dealers show artists that are also represented in both the highest and the lowest steps of the relational hierarchy, thereby positioning themselves somewhere in the middle. Yet their specific role as trader-dealers also makes them poor candidates to confer any kind of consecration. I therefore implemented two specifications of their consecration power. In the first one, trader-dealers were attributed a middle-of-the-range consecration power of 2. In the second, their consecration power was left undefined. Findings did not differ sharply across specifications. The results below assume an undefined consecration power for position 6 galleries.

Galleries' Credentialing Power and Qualification Work

Although their influence has proved elusive in previous research, other processes involving market intermediaries can contribute to shape the value of artists beyond consecration itself. To capture these processes, I introduce additional gallery characteristics as predictors of prices, measuring in particular galleries' power to credential their artists, and their efforts to set the standards for what should count as artistic quality.

Several indicators can capture a gallery's reputation, conceived as its ability to signal the quality of the artists it selects. Longevity in business is one, as too many ill-advised selection decisions can entail the demise of a gallery. Whether the gallery's manager was asked to act as an expert at auction sales is another: that one's expertise was sought after in that context clearly signals one's recognized ability to identify artistic quality. To understand whether these variables were indeed correlated, and how they tied in with other characteristics, I conducted a principal component analysis of a series of gallery-related attributes. For each of the 120 galleries identified earlier, their opening date, whether they were incorporated or not (variable "inc" in figure 2.4 below) and, in case they were, their capital in 1928-29 were collected from the Registre du Commerce de la Seine at Paris departmental archives.¹¹ Other variables come from miscellaneous sources: the number of times a gallery's manager acted as an expert at Drouot auction sales in 1928-29 (variable "nbexpert") was obtained from Lang (1918-1929). Whether a gallery had a periodical advertising organ such as a bulletin or journal, or alternatively published monographs on its artists, is reported in variable "edit". Finally, I checked the presence of galleries and dealers in the 1928 and 1929 issues of *Bottin mondain*, a directory of Paris highly regarded businesses and personalities (variable "bottin"). Figure 2.4 displays the first factor map obtained from the principal component analysis of this set of variables.

¹¹ Registre du Commerce de la Seine, Archives de Paris, série D33U3.

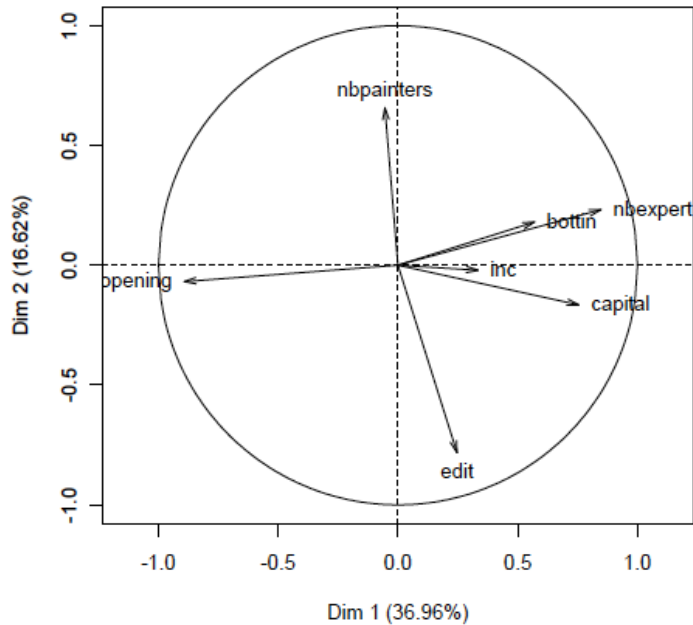


Figure 2.4. Principal component analysis of gallery-level variables: first factor map.

The figure shows that longevity in business (the opposite of opening date) did indeed correlate strongly with the number of times a gallery’s manager acted as an expert at auction. The two variables are actually the ones that contribute the most to the construction of the first factor in the analysis. Thus, that first factor can be seen as capturing something like the reputation of dealers. That a gallery’s mention in *Bottin mondain* positively correlated with that first factor further confirms that interpretation. When modeling art prices as an outcome of gallery-related predictors, I will use the score of galleries along that factor as an index of gallery reputation. Interestingly, economic capital also correlated with that first factor – too strongly in fact to be used as an extra variable in a regression framework. In the models below, economic capital is therefore considered an element among others of a gallery’s reputation.

Finally, I follow previous studies and use the publication of a journal or monographs by a

gallery as a proxy for the promotion it reserved to its artists, and hence for its ability to shape their success through qualification work. This aspect of galleries' activity (variable "edit" in figure 2.4, the largest contributor to the second factor) was hardly associated with their reputation. It correlated negatively, however, with the number of artists a gallery represented ("nbpainters"). This dovetails with the notion that publications capture a gallery's commitment to promote the work of its artists: the larger the number of artists a dealer accepted to take on, the less promotion each of them could logically receive.

Artists' and Artworks' Characteristics

In order to properly untangle the influence of market intermediaries on art prices, the attributes of artworks and artists need to be adjusted for. Because all artworks analyzed are paintings, technique is not a relevant predictor, and the only major variable of interest at the work level is size (e.g. Sagot-Duvauroux et al., 1992). Prices are expected to rise with the size of paintings, yet the strength of that relationship may vary across artists. In particular, size should not matter as much for successful artists, whose mere name makes for a larger share of an artwork's value. Allowing the slope of the relationship between size and price to vary across artists may therefore help refine our modeling of prices.

Artists' demographics should also bear on the value of their production. Age is expected to drive prices up, as it is both a signal of quality – older artists who remain represented by galleries have passed a tougher test of time (Hume, 1757) – and a proxy for the size of the audience of collectors an artist might have been able to build over time (Bowness, 1990). In addition, the death of an artists creates an immediate shortage of her available work, and should positively influence her selling prices, even when her date of birth is

adjusted for.¹²

The number of artworks by a specific artist auctioned off over the course of one season should also have a depressing effect on prices – a basic consequence of the law of supply and demand. I further adjust for the number of galleries representing an artist, which I expect to influence prices in a non-linear way. Being shown by numerous dealers should push prices up: it increases the likelihood that dealers will show up at auctions to support the artist's prices; it may also bolster the demand for one's work, as different dealers do not necessarily reach out to the same collectors. If too many galleries represent an artist, however, collusion between them might be tough to maintain and price competition, which is usually reined in on the primary art market (Velthuis, 2005), might resurface: dealers unable to sell an artist's work because it is already available from too many others might try and undercut competitors. While this would drive value down on the primary market, it could also indirectly affect prices at auction.

Finally, it is crucial to model the influence of one more artist-related predictor – namely the overall perceived quality of an artist's work, as signaled by the judgments of contemporary critics. In the market for modern art, critics would typically review exhibitions for newspapers and art magazines. They would also provide forewords to the catalogs issued by galleries when they showed their artists – and good reviews or approving forewords were certainly helpful in getting noticed by collectors. As unbiased judges of the quality of artists, however, even the most prominent critics, taken individually, were not seen as worthy of unabated trust. In fact, important conflicts of

¹² In the models fitted below, gender was also included as an artist-related predictor, yet it was never found to significantly correlate with prices. This should not be seen as evidence that women did not face strong headwinds in the market for modern art. Quite to the contrary, that predictor's lack of statistical significance arises from a sheer lack of observations. This in turn points to the fact that very few women made it into the population of artists enjoying gallery representation and regular trading of their work at auction in the 1920s. Of the 173 artists with both representation and trading in 1928-29 I analyze below, only 13 were female.

interest could arise between their role as arbiters of taste and their personal ties to certain artists (e.g. Turpin, 1929: 37). To approach the judgment of critics, I therefore rely on a unique resource that corrects for individual biases: in the fall of 1925, art journal *L'Art vivant* organized a survey whereby sixty-four critics with a wide range of aesthetic inclinations were asked to name the ten artists they considered most worthy of entering a projected museum of modern art (no such museum existed in Paris at the time). The survey results were presented in Charensol (1996 [1925]) and are reported here in Appendix 2.C. While the survey was held in season 1925-26, I assume that its results would not have been greatly different three years later. I thus use the tally of votes each artist received in the survey (variable “votes *Art vivant*” in the models below) as a measure of their critical recognition.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations between artist-level predictors, including gallery-related characteristics passed onto artists as scores, are displayed in Table 2.3 for the 173 artists with auction sales in 1928-29.¹³ Table 2.4 reports a series of models of the logged prices of artworks that year. Models 1 is an empty model, and models 2 to 4 include additional predictors respectively associated with artworks, artists, and galleries,

¹³ The 173 artists were not representative of the overall population of artists with permanent gallery representation in 1928-29. They were on average older (47.5 years old vs. 44), were represented by more galleries (6.2 vs. 2.8) and enjoyed higher critical acclaim (1.9 votes vs. 0.6) than counterparts who did not have any work auctioned in 1928-29. They were also featured by galleries with better reputation, though not with greater consecration power. Despite that lack of representativeness, I interpret statistical significance below, as not all artists with similar characteristics to these 173 had works sold at auction in 1928-29.

thereby gradually improving the overall model fit.¹⁴ Model 5 further allows the slope of the predictor associated with artwork size to vary across artists.

Model 4, the most powerful of the first four models, accounts for around 60% of the initial variance in the data, as captured by model 1. It fares better at explaining variance at the artist level (70% of the initial variance explained) than at the artwork level (26%). This is likely because of the small number of predictors available at the artwork level.

Estimates for predictors at the artwork and artist levels are all significant and in the expected direction, and their magnitude does not differ sharply across models. A painting's size positively affected its price, although that relationship loosened for artists whose prices were generally higher, as shown by the negative correlation between the intercept and the size coefficient in model 5. The age of artists also drove prices up, as did the fact that they were no longer alive. Representation by a larger number of galleries was also associated with higher prices, yet the relationship faded as the number of representing galleries got larger (this is captured by the negative quadratic term associated with number of galleries in models 3 to 5). Finally, critical acclaim was positively correlated with prices: on average, each extra vote received by an artist in the survey by *L'Art vivant* came with a 13% increase in this artist's prices at auction ($e^{0.12} = 1.13$).

¹⁴ Mean deviance and DIC, two standard measures of fit for multilevel models, are reported at the bottom of table 2.4. Also shown is the variance left unexplained in each model, broken down by level (artworks and artists). Unsurprisingly, augmenting the models with artwork-related predictors reduces unexplained variance at the artwork level, while adding artist-related predictors – or gallery-related predictors expressed at the artist level – helps account for artist-level variance.

Table 2.3. Correlations and descriptive statistics for variables in the analysis (n artists = 173).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Years elapsed since date of birth	1								
2. Dead	0.436	1							
3. Number of works sold in 1928-29	0.060	-0.048	1						
4. Number of galleries representing	0.080	-0.052	0.482	1					
5. Number of galleries representing (squared)	0.056	-0.043	0.468	0.930	1				
6. Votes <i>Art vivant</i>	0.192	-0.107	0.227	0.597	0.551	1			
7. Journal or publisher score	0.014	-0.073	-0.101	-0.064	-0.040	0.118	1		
8. Reputation index score	0.329	0.160	-0.036	-0.071	-0.047	0.081	0.287	1	
9. Consecration power score	0.381	0.188	0.113	0.109	0.057	0.119	-0.025	0.439	1
Mean	47.61	0.10	6.91	6.24	94.35	1.87	0.08	0.45	2.04
SD	11.90	0.31	9.33	7.46	251.73	4.21	0.18	2.32	0.94
Min	22	0	1	1	1	0	0.00	-1.40	0.00
Max	80	1	89	44	1,936	26	1.00	14.00	4.00

Table 2.4. Multilevel models predicting prices (logged).

Predictors	Model				
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Characteristics of artworks</i>					
Size (log)	–	.59** (.03)	.60** (.03)	.60** (.03)	.62** (.05)
<i>Characteristics of artists</i>					
Years elapsed since date of birth	–	–	.03* (.01)	.02* (.01)	.02** (.01)
Dead	–	–	.57* (.25)	.54* (.24)	.56** (.24)
Number of works sold in 1928-29	–	–	-.017* (.008)	-.018* (.007)	-.019* (.007)
Number of galleries representing	–	–	.19** (.02)	.20** (.02)	.20** (.02)
Number of galleries representing (sq.)	–	–	-.004** (.001)	-.004** (.001)	-.004** (.001)
Votes <i>Art vivant</i>	–	–	.13** (.02)	.12** (.02)	.12** (.02)
<i>Characteristics of galleries</i>					
Journal or publisher score	–	–	–	.16 (.38)	.17 (.38)
Reputation index score	–	–	–	.07* (.03)	.07* (.03)
Consecration power score	–	–	–	.20** (.08)	.20** (.08)
Intercept	7.19** (.11)	2.47** (.28)	2.34** (.26)	2.34** (.26)	2.10** (.37)
Correlation Intercept / Slope of log(Size)	–	–	–	–	-.95
DIC	3,119	2,825	2,604	2,576	2,550
Mean deviance (-2 loglikelihood)	3,122	2,833	2,657	2,638	2,611
Total variance	2.41	2.34	1.03	0.96	6.08
Variance artworks	0.54	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.37
Variance artists	1.87	1.94	0.63	0.56	5.62
N Artworks	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
N Artists	173	173	173	173	173

** p <.01; * p <.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Most crucial to the purpose of this chapter are the estimates associated with gallery-related characteristics. Models 4 and 5 include three predictors capturing the credentialing power, qualification work, and consecration power of galleries. Qualification work, as approached through the publications put out by dealers, was not decisively associated with higher prices: the coefficient estimate is in the expected direction – one’s work typically made around 18% more at auction if one was represented by a gallery with an advertising organ – yet statistical significance is poor. In contrast, the reputation of dealers, measuring their power to credential their artists, was strongly predictive of higher prices. So was also their consecration power: when all other predictors are adjusted for, a one-unit increase in a dealer’s consecration power came with a 22% bump in its artists’ prices ($e^{0.20} = 1.22$).

That first series of findings, however, may arise from a different scenario from the one whereby galleries causally influenced the prices of their artists. Galleries with higher reputation or consecration power could merely have picked, among artists with otherwise comparable characteristics, those whose prices were higher in the first place. The positive association between prices and reputation, or between prices and consecration power, would then come from a selection process, and not from galleries’ influence on prices.

To rule out that selection scenario, I fit a second series of models including the value of artists in 1927-28 as an additional predictor of 1928-29 prices. I thereby estimate the impact, for artists with similar characteristics (including prior market value), of being picked or of being represented for one more year by a gallery with certain attributes. Prior market value is measured as the average price of an artist at Drouot in 1927-28. This strategy decreases the number of observations, to 796 works by 93 artists whose work was auctioned both in 1927-28 and 1928-29. Table 2.5 reports descriptive statistics and correlations between artist-level predictors for these artists, and the new

series of models is presented in table 2.6.¹⁵

Unsurprisingly, past prices were highly predictive of 1928-29 prices. The magnitude of the estimate also makes sense: a 1 franc difference in price per square centimeter in 1927-28 yielded a 80% difference in 1928-29 prices ($e^{0.59} = 1.80$). With the average price for the work of our 93 artists around 1.3 franc per square centimeter in 1928-29, this translates into a difference of around 1 franc ($1.3 \times .8 = 1.04$). Quite logically, artists whose work was 1 franc more expensive in 1927-28 were also on average 1 franc more expensive in 1928-29.

Estimates for gallery-related predictors in models 6 to 9 offer a more robust assessment of the causal influence of dealers on the value of artists. They confirm that galleries' attempts to promote their artists through publications did not have any significant impact on prices. Remarkably, the same is now true of galleries' reputation: in the market for modern art, there was no clear-cut gain to being picked by a more reputable gallery, or to being represented by one for an additional year. This is an important step in solving the paradox of artists' valuation: in fact, it confirms the findings by Velthuis (2005) and Beckert and Rössel (2013), who focused on the credentialing power of galleries and were already unable to detect its influence on the value of artists.

Consecration power, in contrast, retains most of its impact even in models that adjust for past prices. Being represented by a gallery one step higher in the relational hierarchy of table 2.1 comes with a rise in prices of about 20% between 1927-28 and 1928-29 ($e^{0.18} = 1.20$). It is not possible to disentangle what that rise owes to fresh selections by highly consecrating dealers in 1928-29, and to the continuing effect of earlier selections. Nonetheless, consecration power appears to have a clear, large, and positive impact on the prices of artists.

¹⁵ All of the 93 artists were alive in 1929; whether an artist was alive or dead is therefore an irrelevant predictor here.

Table 2.5. Correlations and descriptive statistics (n artists = 93).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Years elapsed since date of birth	1									
2. Number of works sold in 1928-29	0.022	1								
3. Number of galleries representing	0.076	0.515	1							
4. Number of galleries representing (squared)	0.050	0.510	0.938	1						
5. Votes <i>Art vivant</i>	0.294	0.236	0.590	0.549	1					
6. Journal or publisher score	0.119	-0.139	-0.143	-0.093	0.114	1				
7. Reputation index score	0.349	-0.081	-0.149	-0.104	0.053	0.299	1			
8. Consecration power score	0.342	0.139	0.090	0.046	0.135	0.043	0.472	1		
9. Market status score	0.024	0.187	0.346	0.219	0.235	0.009	-0.041	0.552	1	
10. Prices 1927-28	0.348	-0.085	0.350	0.248	0.819	0.036	0.064	0.197	0.172	1
Mean	48.54	8.559	8.462	153	3	0.10	0.66	2.09	11.89	1.45
SD	10.09	10.94	9.08	325	5.11	0.20	2.39	0.90	4.59	2.73
Min	27	1	1	1	0	0.00	-1.30	0.00	0.00	0.04
Max	77	89	44	1,936	26	1.00	14.00	4.00	17.53	16.00

Table 2.6. Multilevel models predicting prices (logged), including past prices as a predictor.

Predictors	Model			
	6	7	8	9
<i>Characteristics of artworks</i>				
Size (log)	.60** (.04)	.64** (.05)	.60** (.04)	.64** (.05)
<i>Characteristics of artists</i>				
Years elapsed since date of birth	.014* (.0073)	.016 (.0074)	.0139 (.0075)	.0149* (.0075)
Number of works sold in 1928-29	-.006 (.006)	-.006 (.006)	-.006 (.006)	-.006 (.006)
Number of galleries representing	.09** (.02)	.09** (.02)	.10** (.03)	.10** (.03)
Number of galleries representing (sq.)	-.0018** (.0006)	-.0018** (.0006)	-.0018** (.0006)	-.0018** (.0006)
Votes <i>Art vivant</i>	.046* (.018)	.044* (.019)	.047* (.019)	.044* (.019)
Price 1927-28	.58** (.08)	.60** (.08)	.57** (.08)	.59** (.08)
<i>Characteristics of galleries</i>				
Journal or publisher score	.02 (.32)	-.02 (.33)	.05 (.33)	-.01 (.33)
Reputation index score	.055 (.033)	.047 (.034)	.049 (.035)	.040 (.036)
Consecration power score	.18* (.08)	.18* (.08)	.22* (.11)	.24* (.11)
Market status score	–	–	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Intercept	1.06 (.55)	.73 (.63)	1.06 (.55)	.72 (.64)
Correlation Intercept / Slope of log(Size)	–	-.98	–	-.98
DIC	1,539	1,516	1,533	1,509
Mean deviance (-2 loglikelihood)	1,605	1,581	1,605	1,580
Total variance	0.61	5.96	0.61	6.12
Variance artworks	0.37	0.34	0.37	0.34
Variance artists	0.24	5.54	0.24	5.69
<i>N</i> Artworks	796	796	796	796
<i>N</i> Artists	93	93	93	93

** p <.01; * p <.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Finally, consecration power also retains its predictive power when another measure of the credentialing power of galleries is adjusted for – namely their market status, defined as the deference they received from their peers. Following Podolny (2001), I measure market status as the centrality of a gallery in the network of cross-representations, weighted by the centrality of that gallery’s affiliates (Bonacich, 1987).¹⁶ It essentially captures the quality of a gallery’s artists, as signaled by the willingness of its peers to also represent them. Models 8 and 9 show that this signaled quality does not significantly influence artists’ value. Consecration power, meanwhile, remains predictive of prices in both models, further demonstrating that consecration was indeed how galleries created value for their artists.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

We have therefore solved the paradox of valuation I outlined at the beginning of this chapter. In the golden age of French modern painting, dealers did indeed shape the prices of their artists, like everybody thought. Yet also in line with previous research, they did not do so by testifying to the quality of their work through their own credentials, or by setting the standards for evaluating that quality through publicizing efforts. Instead, dealers increased the value of artists by consecrating them. Through their selection decisions, they signaled the existence of quality divides in the artists’ population. And they made those who stood on the right sides of these divides look like

¹⁶ Specifically, market status is calculated as:

$$S(\alpha, \beta) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \alpha \beta^k W^{k+1} \mathbf{1},$$

where α is a scaling coefficient, β is a weighting parameter, W is the matrix of affiliations between galleries, and $\mathbf{1}$ is a column vector whose elements all take the value 1.

the chosen – a group essentially different from the rest – even though their credentials as choosers were apparently inconsequential.

More generally, this analysis has put consecration on the map as a distinct social process of valuation. It has proposed a theory of consecration as the structural display of the existence of quality differences in a population. That definition makes possible to contrast consecration with two other chief processes sociologists have been concerned with when they have been thinking about valuation: credentialing, or the signaling of underlying quality, and qualification, or the definition and imposition of quality criteria. To recap here, one could say that in credentialing there exists an agreed-upon standard for quality, yet that actors turn to various signals to find out whether the things or individuals they are evaluating indeed display quality according to that standard. In qualification, in contrast, it is unclear what the standards are, and valuation works through the imposition of criteria for gauging quality. Finally, as far as consecration is concerned valuation happens without the intervention of any outside criteria, and through the mere signaling that certain things are indeed better than others, and that it is possible to distinguish between them. In the market for modern art, consecration thus arose from the relational display of the existence of quality differences between various sets of artists.

At its core, then, the notion of consecration developed in this chapter points to the propensity of social structure itself to act as an independent source of identity for the elements of a social system. This has implications for research at the crossroad of cultural and structural social science that go beyond issues of valuation. That observed structural patterns can provide a basis for the cultural constructs we mobilize when interpreting reality already lay at the heart of Durkheim's account of cognitive categories (Durkheim, 1965; Durkheim and Mauss, 1963), and the idea that our minds internalize external distinctions in the social world is pivotal to Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977). Recent research on the interplay of social and symbolic

structures, however, has yet to produce an empirically grounded illustration of that idea (Pachucki and Breiger, 2010). The present chapter took one step in that direction, by showing how an observable system of divisions and groupings in the social world can reverberate in the way its elements are apprehended, appreciated, and ultimately valued.

There are, however, limitations to what this chapter could achieve in that regard. In particular, while the blockmodeling technique I implemented made it possible to ascertain the clarity of the structural patterns observable to actors in the market for modern art, I did not evidence the translation of these patterns into the mental structures actors use to interpret and navigate the world they inhabit. I implicitly assumed that translation. If future research is to rest on firmer ground, it should strive to test that assumption systematically. Only then shall we arrive at an empirically grounded vindication of old ideas on structural patterns, symbolic structures, and their intricate relationships.

APPENDIX 2.A. BLOCKMODELING PROCEDURE

For the population of galleries to form a breeding ground for consecration processes, i.e. to structurally display the existence of quality differences between artists, the pattern of cross-representations of artists between galleries needs to display a clear-cut structure to observers – one whereby certain galleries or groups of galleries systematically avoid sharing artists with others, thereby inserting structural divides between their artists and others. Blockmodeling procedures are well-suited to capture this overall structure, yet classic blockmodeling algorithms – such as CONCOR for example (Breiger et al., 1975) – do not come with a robust measure of the clarity of the patterns observed in a set of network data (see Doreian et al., 2005; Hsieh and Magee, 2008; Wheat, 2010).

The stochastic approach to blockmodeling introduced by Nowicki and Snijders (2001) overcomes this limitation. Given a set of underlying relational data and a number of structural equivalence positions, it uses a simulation approach to determine the probability that two individuals belong to the same position, and the probability distribution of relations across positions. Most critically, it also offers various statistics for identifying the blockmodel – if any – that best captures the structure of the underlying data. This permits ascertaining both whether the observed network displays a clear-cut structure and, if this is the case, what that structure is. Two such statistics are of interest here. The information statistic shows how much of the information in the initial data is restituted by a given blockmodel. This statistic is 0 if observed relations between pairs of vertices are entirely predicted by the respective structural equivalence positions they belong to. The higher the statistic, on the other hand, the less these positions tell us about the shape of actual relations between vertices. A better blockmodel thus has a lower information statistic. The second statistic – the clarity statistic – measures for a given number of positions our certainty that any two individuals belong to the same position – or to different positions. In other words, it

indicates the propensity of an n -position partition to unequivocally summarize the actual positions of vertices in the underlying network. The clarity statistic is 0 if, for any pair of vertices, we know for sure that they are structurally equivalent – or that they are not. It is 1 if any pair of vertices has a .5 probability of being formed of individuals belonging to the same position. As with the information statistics, then, the smaller the clarity statistic, the better the blockmodel.

Table 2.A1 reports values of the information and clarity statistics for various blockmodels and for two specifications of ties in the network of cross-representations of artists between the 120 galleries.¹⁷ In the upper panel, a tie between galleries is defined as the sharing of at least one artist. Five galleries, which did not share any artist with other galleries, are excluded from the analysis. In the lower panel a tie is defined as the sharing of two artists or more, which excludes eighteen galleries. Lines in bold signal the blockmodel that the combination of both statistics indicates as most relevant.

While clarity is here considered in terms of its sheer levels, information is interpreted in terms of trends – that is, taking into account the marginal gain obtained by adding one position to the blockmodel. The very low values of the clarity statistic show that the market exhibited a remarkably clear relational structure. Examining the most relevant partitions for various specifications of ties between galleries also reveals many regularities: the number and composition of positions are relatively similar regardless of the dichotomization threshold, suggesting fairly robust results.

¹⁷ Reported values are the averages of three values obtained by running three Gibbs sequences for each partition of the network into n latent classes (Nowicki and Snijders, 2004). Each Gibbs sequence consisted of 45,000 iterations. The three values were generally consistent, suggesting robust findings.

Table 2.A1. Statistics used in determining the optimal blockmodel,
for two specifications of ties between galleries.

Tie definition	Number of positions	Information	Clarity
Tie = 1 or more shared artists	2 positions	.465	.316
	3 positions	.420	.188
	4 positions	.390	.150
	5 positions	.367	.178
	6 positions	.347	.078
	7 positions	.334	.154
	8 positions	.320	.128
Tie = 2 or more shared artists	2 positions	.431	.090
	3 positions	.393	.145
	4 positions	.369	.125
	5 positions	.348	.078
	6 positions	.321	.058
	7 positions	.312	.060
	8 positions	.306	.073

The analyses in this chapter focus on the six-position blockmodel obtained when a tie between galleries is defined as two or more shared artists. Several reasons explain this choice. Theoretically, first, this specification of ties between dealers seems reasonable to capture meaningful affiliations between galleries. The sharing of one painter could more easily be interpreted by observers as the result of chance. This definition of ties also yields the least equivocal blockmodel according to the clarity statistic. Finally, a closer examination of the number and composition of positions in the best blockmodel obtained for each specification of ties shows that the two specifications yield largely consistent results.

APPENDIX 2.B. AUCTION PRICES AS AN INDICATOR OF THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF ARTISTS

For the bulk of artists auction prices fall well below prices asked for their work on the primary market.¹⁸ Figure 2.B1 for example plots the highest and lowest prices asked by gallery Percier for works by three of its young artists – Francisco Borès, Irène Lagut, and Léon Zack – on the occasion of their solo exhibitions, against the highest and lowest prices commanded by their works at auctions over the same period. Size of the works was not reported in the exhibition catalogs, so that the comparison is somewhat rough. Yet it shows that for all three artists, the range of auction prices falls short of reaching even the lower range of gallery prices – despite the fact that the works sold at auctions, especially by Lagut and Borès, were indeed relatively large.

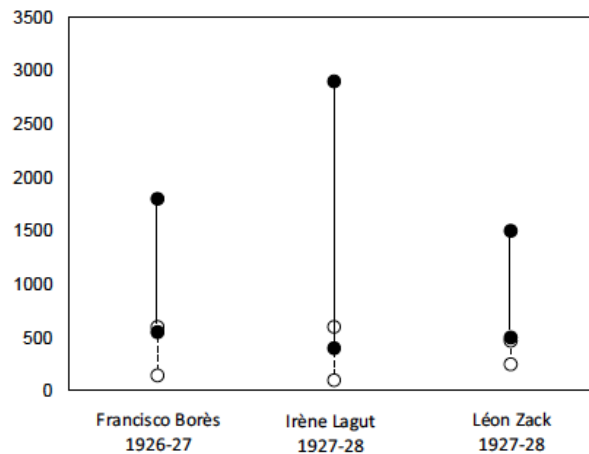


Figure 2.B1. Gallery and auction prices over one season for three artists of the Percier gallery. Full dots indicate the range of prices as posted in the gallery's exhibition catalogs, empty dots the range of selling prices at auctions.

Source: Fonds Galerie Percier, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris, and Lang (1918-1929).

¹⁸ On this issue, see in particular Hutter et al. (2007).

Various mechanisms can explain why gallery prices range systematically higher than auction prices for comparable works by the same artist. Most obviously, as DiMaggio and Louch (1998) have shown in other instances, transactions mediated by personal relations, as is the case when a dealer is involved, are likely to entail an element of trust that auction sales do not provide, and for which customers may be willing to pay a monetary premium.

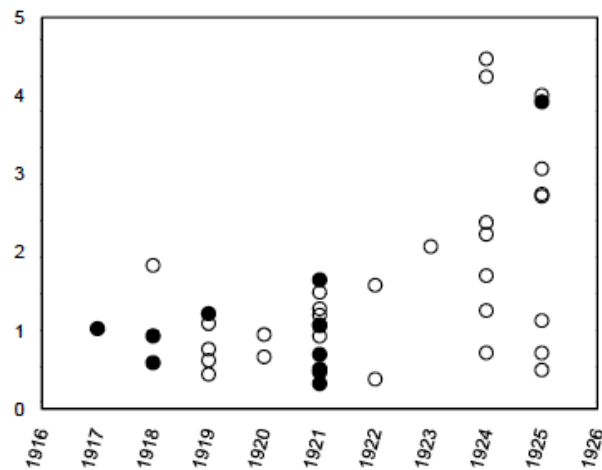


Figure 2.B2. Selling prices per square centimeter for paintings by Henri Matisse. Full dots indicate prices in galleries, empty dots prices at auctions. Prices have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in constant 1917 francs.

Source: Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux, and Lang (1918-1929).

Gallery prices can be in better accordance with auction prices when artists are more established. This seems to be the case of Henri Matisse's paintings throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s (figure 2.B2). When an artist is in high demand, the difference between his auction and gallery prices can even be reversed, with the latter falling behind. Rather than sticking to the auction rate, a dealer can indeed prefer to sell for a lesser price to carefully targeted amateurs, such as those he deems strategic to an artist's career. In a 1917 letter to Henri Matisse, Felix Fénéon, the manager of the Bernheim-Jeune galleries, for example writes:

“Our Lausanne branch has sold two of your paintings, for 11,500 French francs, to Mr. [Josef] Mueller, a Solothurn manufacturer of screws for watches and eyeglasses. [...] This is a very cheap deal. Yet for the first time, to my knowledge, your work enters a Swiss collection, and it was important to make this first step. [...] Switzerland has a handful of amateurs of good painting. We hope they will follow Mr. Mueller's example: if so, we shall no more resort to the concessions we had to make for this debut” (Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Bernheim-Jeune Correspondence, item 170821a, my translation).

Overall however, there is certainly a correlation between prices on the primary market and at auctions – hence the findings by Beckert and Rössel (2013) showing relatively similar patterns in the determinants of the ones and the others. This correlation can be observed both between artists and over time for the same artist, as evidenced by figure 2.B2 in the case of Matisse. Practically, it arises from the shared understanding that public prices breed the expectations of collectors regarding over-the-counter prices on the primary market. As Turpin (1929) puts it,

“The first valuation of an artist takes place when a painting appears at Hôtel Drouot, and generally rests on the *gallery price*. The dealer will sustain this price using all possible means. From this day on, artist and dealer are tied to one

another. If he wishes to, the dealer can even have a few paintings by the artist he wants to establish a value for auctioned off. All he needs to do is add them to the listing of an existing sale. Obviously this strategy involves numerous sacrifices for the dealer, since he must be prepared to absorb all the artist's production that amateurs willing to cash in on their collection could throw onto the market. An artist also has an interest in supporting his prices by himself, in case his dealer fails to do so, since the latter could as well walk away if prices happened to plummet brutally. [...] The artistic strategy thus suggests having one's works valued through auction sales as early as possible, provided that the initial price is not too high, and that one does not already have too many works in private collections.

Upsides of such valuation: amateurs, realizing that they own more than a mere painting, but instead a real asset – that they can realize either at auctions or directly with a gallery – will be less reluctant to buy further pieces by the artist. Gradually, then, artist and dealer should be in a position to increase the market value of the artist's work, which will be recognized by critics and amateurs, and supported by auctioneers" (Turpin, 1929: 102-103, my translation, emphasis in the original).

The second reason for choosing auction prices as a barometer of the value of artists – and therefore as a means to explore its determinants – has to do with the evolution of art market institutions themselves in the wake of World War I. Up until 1914, only a handful of sales organized at Drouot would revolve around the work of living artists.¹⁹ The situation evolved around 1920. Although infamous for having unfairly hit the

¹⁹ The sale of *La Peau de l'Ours*, held on March 2, 1914, was no doubt the most famous of such sales, probably because it was unexpectedly successful, and helped propagate the idea that cutting-edge painting could be a profitable investment. On the *Peau de l'Ours* society, and on the sale itself, see in particular the account provided by the society's manager in Level (1959).

personal businesses of Wilhelm Uhde and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, the sales of these German dealers' collections and stocks, which had been seized at the outbreak of war, also spread the notion that modern art could encounter demand at the auction house. Indeed, however flooded the market was with their work as a consequence of the sales, which took place between May 1921 and May 1923, some artists (in particular Derain, Vlaminck, Van Dongen, and to a lesser extent Picasso) pulled off relatively high and steady prices.²⁰ The growing legitimacy of modern art as a marketable product prompted Drouot auctioneers to organize more auctions featuring modern works alone. Figure 2.B3 thus shows the evolution of the number of modern art auctions at Drouot over the late 1910s and 1920s. Mixed auctions only are reported (as opposed to auctions featuring the estate of single collectors). There were ten such auctions in season 1918-19, and 27 in season 1927-28. As can be seen, despite a drop around 1922, probably attributable to the still depressing effect of the Kahnweiler sales, the growth of modern art specific auctions largely exceeded that of other types of sales. As a market category, in other words, modern art underwent a breakthrough in the 1920s. The new category furthermore had its recognized officiant, auctioneer Alphonse Bellier, who at the end of the 1920s presided over about half of auctions specifically devoted to modern art.²¹

²⁰ For a detailed analysis of these auctions, see Gee (1981, Appendix F: 19-32). On their positive impact on the status and economic fortune of modern art, see Level (1959: 71-72).

²¹ On Bellier, see Turpin (1929: 108-10), Moulin (1987: 18).

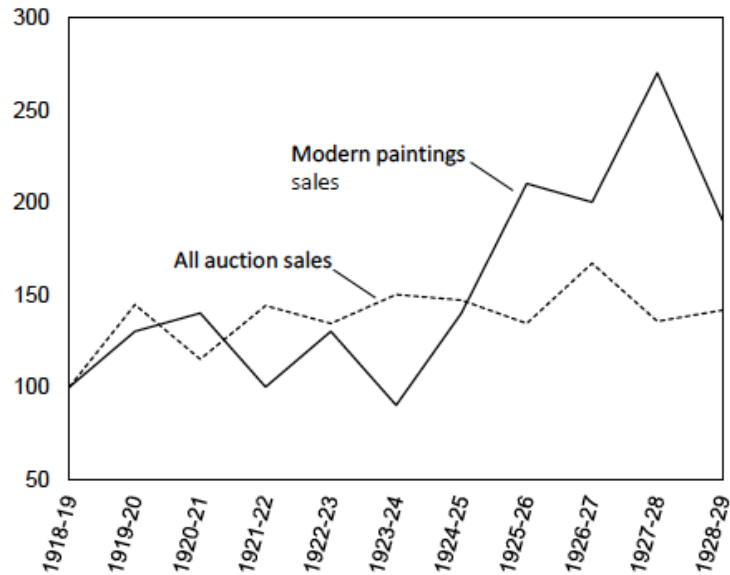


Figure 2.B3. Auction sales and auction sales specifically devoted to modern painting at Hôtel Drouot, 1918-19 to 1928-29. Season 1918-19 = 100.

Source: Lang (1918-1929).

Whether the rise of modern art as an auction category contributed to the general increase in its prices throughout the 1920s is a question beyond the scope of this chapter.²² More important here is the fact that by the end of the decade, Drouot had become a global exchange for modern painting, where the work of living artists would be traded on a regular basis. “Hôtel Drouot is the stock exchange of modern art”, Turpin thus observes in 1929 (Turpin, 1929: 107; also see Basler, 1926). And as early as 1925, Picasso’s dealer Paul Rosenberg writes to the artist:

“I have never had so much to do, every collector in the world is in Paris [...] The

²² For an investigation of this very question in the case of contemporary Indian art, see Khaire and Wadhvani (2010), who build on the recent scholarship addressing sociocognitive categories and valuation in markets (e.g. Espeland and Stevens, 1998; Rosa et al., 1999; Zuckerman, 1999, 2004).

Gangnat sale [held at Drouot on June 24 and 25, 1925] was a triumph, and people are getting crazy. [...] Painting has become an exchange, it is incredible how a universal atmosphere has emerged around French painting” (Paul Rosenberg – Pablo Picasso correspondence, July 7, 1925, Musée National Picasso, Paris, my translation).

The auction market for modern painting, in short, became large, deep and reactive enough in the late 1920s – and it attracted bidders from enough horizons – that it can be deemed a good place to look for an indicator of the value of artists.

APPENDIX 2.C. OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY BY ART JOURNAL *L'ART VIVANT*, 1925

Artist	Sex	Born	Dead	Votes	Artist	Sex	Born	Dead	Votes
Matisse Henri	M	1869	1954	26	Lebasque Henri	M	1865	1937	2
Derain André	M	1880	1954	20	Luce Maximilien	M	1858	1941	2
Dunoyer de Segonzac André	M	1884	1974	19	Mainssieux Lucien	M	1885	1958	2
Bonnard Pierre	M	1867	1947	18	Marchand Jean	M	1882	1941	2
Maillol Aristide	M	1861	1944	18	Metzinger Jean	M	1883	1956	2
Picasso Pablo	M	1881	1973	18	Naudin Bernard	M	1876	1946	2
Utrillo Maurice	M	1883	1955	15	Piot René	M	1869	1934	2
Braque Georges	M	1882	1963	14	Aman-Jean Edmond	M	1858	1936	1
Vlaminck Maurice	M	1876	1958	13	Asselin Maurice	M	1882	1947	1
Rouault Georges	M	1871	1958	12	Bissière Roger	M	1886	1964	1
Vuillard Edouard	M	1868	1940	11	Blanchard Maria*	F	1881	1932	1
Dufresne Charles*	M	1876	1938	9	Blanche Jacques-Emile	M	1861	1942	1
Denis Maurice	M	1870	1943	8	Bouche Georges	M	1874	1941	1
Friesz Othon	M	1879	1949	8	Boutet de Monvel	M	1884	1949	1
Marquet Albert	M	1875	1947	8	Caro-Delvaile Henri*	M	1876	1928	1
Dufy Raoul	M	1877	1953	7	Chavenon Roland	M	1895	NA	1
Moreau Luc-Albert	M	1882	1948	7	Chéret Jules*	M	1836	1932	1
Favory André	M	1888	1937	6	Clairin Pierre-Eugène	M	1897	1980	1
Laurencin Marie	F	1883	1956	6	Dauchez André	M	1870	1948	1
Léger Fernand	M	1881	1955	6	De Dardel Nils*	M	1888	1953	1
Van Dongen Kees	M	1877	1968	6	Déziré Henri	M	1878	1965	1
Signac Paul	M	1863	1935	5	Fautrier Jean	M	1898	1964	1
De Waroquier Henri	M	1881	1970	4	Fix-Masseau Pierre	M	1869	1937	1
Guérin Charles	M	1875	1939	4	Foujita Léonard	M	1886	1968	1
Laprade Pierre	M	1875	1931	4	Fournier Gabriel	M	1893	1963	1
Lhote André	M	1885	1962	4	Galanis Démétrius	M	1882	1966	1
Besnard Albert	M	1849	1934	3	Gleizes Albert	M	1881	1953	1
Boussingault Jean-Louis	M	1883	1943	3	Goerg Edouard	M	1893	1969	1
Flandrin Jules	M	1871	1947	3	Gris Juan	M	1887	1927	1
Forain Jean-Louis	M	1852	1931	3	Guénot Auguste	M	1882	1966	1
Le Fauconnier Henri	M	1881	1946	3	Herbin Auguste	M	1882	1960	1
Léopold-Lévy	M	1882	1966	3	Heuzé Edmond	M	1884	1967	1
Lurçat Jean	M	1892	1966	3	Huyot Albert	M	1872	1968	1
Marval Jacqueline	F	1866	1932	3	Kisling Moïse	M	1891	1953	1
Modigliani Amedeo	M	1884	1920	3	Kvapil Charles	M	1884	1957	1
Puy Jean	M	1876	1960	3	Lipchitz Jacques	M	1891	1973	1
Roussel Ker-Xavier	M	1867	1944	3	Lotiron Robert	M	1886	1966	1
Simon Lucien	M	1861	1945	3	Manguin Henri	M	1874	1949	1
Valadon Suzanne	F	1865	1938	3	Mare André	M	1885	1932	1
Vallotton Félix	M	1865	1925	3	Martin Henri	M	1860	1943	1
Alix Yves	M	1890	1969	2	Ménard René	M	1862	1930	1
Charlot Louis	M	1878	1951	2	Miró Joan	M	1893	1983	1
Charmy Emilie	F	1877	1974	2	Muter Mela	F	1876	1967	1
Cottet Charles	M	1863	1925	2	Ottmann Henri	M	1877	1927	1
Daragnès Jean-Gabriel	M	1886	1950	2	Pascin Jules	M	1885	1930	1
De la Fresnaye Roger	M	1885	1925	2	Péquin Charles	M	1879	1963	1
Desvallières Georges	M	1861	1950	2	Quizet Alphonse	M	1885	1955	1
Dufrénoy Georges	M	1870	1942	2	Sabbagh Georges-Hannah	M	1887	1951	1
Girieux Pierre	M	1876	1940	2	Schuffenecker Emile*	M	1851	1934	1
Gromaire Marcel	M	1892	1971	2	Simon-Lévy*	M	1886	1973	1
Hervieu Louise	F	1878	1954	2	Valmier Georges*	M	1885	1937	1
Laboureur Jean-Emile	M	1877	1943	2	Valtat Louis	M	1869	1952	1
Laurens Henri	M	1885	1954	2	Willette Adolphe*	M	1857	1926	1

An * indicates that the artist was not represented permanently in any of the galleries surveyed in 1928-29.

CHAPTER 3

FROM CULTURAL PURITY TO THE SEGREGATED INCLUSION OF CULTURE: SUBSCRIBERS TO THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC IN THE GILDED AGE

(with Shamus Khan and Adam Storer)

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have argued that the formation of an upper class and its continued dominance rest on two cultural mechanisms: unification and exclusion. Unification strengthens the upper class by making it coalesce around a set of tastes and activities. The boundaries of these tastes help define a cultural community. Exclusion is seen as of central importance in moments of upheaval. It is not enough for the upper class to coalesce around the cultural tastes that define them, these tastes must also be distinct from the tastes of other social groups. In unsettled times, elites both come together around a particular culture and exclude others from it.

Major accounts in sociology (DiMaggio, 1982a, 1982b), American studies (Levine, 1988) and history (Beckert, 2000) converge around unification and exclusion as the explanatory basis for upper class formation and reinforcement. The arguments within

these traditions share an empirical foundation, too: they all argue that the Gilded Age fundamentally transformed American class relations. It was during this moment that an U.S. upper class was constituted, and that a new regime of social inequality began to define America.

This chapter focuses on a dominant cultural institution during the Gilded Age. Using a new database of subscribers to the New York Philharmonic, we examine actual attendance data to directly test the unification and exclusion thesis. Our findings support the thesis in some respects. We observe increasing clustering of a subset of social elite subscribers in the hall, suggesting that the Philharmonic served as a venue for strengthening upper class ties and of these members, quite literally, moving closer together. However, when we look at the hall as a whole, a vastly different picture emerges. During the period historians and sociologists suggest that the New York elite was consolidating through cultural exclusion, we show that one of its main cultural institutions began to include a new group of subscribers who lacked the attributes of the social elite. Members of that group did not share the occupational background of more elite patrons. They were not part of the same social class. And they typically lived in the Upper West Side and Harlem neighborhoods of Manhattan, while the social elite clustered on the East and Upper East Sides.

This chapter has both descriptive and analytical goals. Our primary descriptive aim is to document changes in participation to one of the oldest and most prestigious orchestras in the United States at a key moment of consolidation in the nation's social and class structure. Our analyses are made possible by the existence of a remarkable set of business records, from which we are able to reconstruct who subscribed to the Philharmonic, where they sat in the concert hall, and where they lived in the city throughout our period of interest.

Our analytic contributions are twofold. The first consists in challenging the classic view of how culture works to cement the dominance of elites in society. Elite cultural participation, we argue, does not only operate through a process of unification and exclusion. For the distinctiveness associated with elite cultural endeavors to reinforce elite dominance, these endeavors have to happen against a backdrop of general agreement over their value. In Gilded Age New York, this agreement happened through the inclusion of a group of cultural experts into the cultural institutions championed by the social elite. The strength of our demonstration here comes in part from analyzing a case that has previously been described as the epitome of culture as exclusion.

Our second analytic contribution has to do with class consolidation and the reproduction of upper class dominance more generally. While consolidation is often seen as happening through exclusion and closure, we argue that in a context of rapid social differentiation, marked by the emergence of new areas of expertise, maintaining dominance does not necessarily involve barring access to outside groups. It can also mean being flexible enough to include the experts in emerging spheres. To remain atop the social hierarchy, elites may benefit from incorporating external elements that testify to their own continued relevance. As a consequence, the main skill of elites we need to focus on if we want to explain reproduction is not so much their ability to hand over economic, social, or cultural assets from one generation to the next, and to deprive others from access to these various resources. Rather, it is their ability to remain at the top by including newcomer groups in a way that does not threaten their continued dominance.²³ As the bases of social power differentiate, total dominance across all realms by a single social group is unlikely. Therefore we posit that a kind of inclusion is required. Such inclusion is not full integration – instead, we posit that it often involves a

²³ This idea is different from Pareto's "circulation of elites" (Pareto, 1984) – and closer to Gramsci's concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) – as new members do not fully circulate in. Instead, their expertise is coopted through a process of inclusion that maintains a distinction between them and the established elite (what we refer to as segregated inclusion).

built-in mechanism of protection. In our case, this mechanism is segregation. Hence cultural experts are included to help reify and support upper class status and social power, but in a segregated fashion to protect the upper class from threats or destabilization.

We proceed by first delineating the cultural unification and exclusion thesis in greater detail, and by elaborating how in a context of social differentiation elite consolidation can follow from inclusion rather than exclusion. As a background we describe how in the late Gilded Age the social elite of New York struggled with threats to its dominance arising both from ongoing transformations in its social makeup and from the increasing differentiation of spheres of life in American society. We then introduce the New York Philharmonic and our data sources. The second half of the chapter uses these data to describe evolutions of the population of subscribers in the late Gilded Age, and to identify shifting seating patterns in the concert hall, corresponding respectively to cultural purity and the inclusion of the cultured. We discuss the mechanisms behind the emergence of these patterns, and how they force us to think anew about how culture worked as a resource for elite dominance in late nineteenth-century New York.

THEORY AND BACKGROUND

Cultural Exclusion and Elite Dominance in Gilded Age America

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the United States rapidly industrialized and urbanized; it experienced massive immigration from Europe; and it was witness to the rise of large and powerful corporations and the accumulation of unprecedented fortunes built on the profits of the second industrial revolution (Chandler, 1977; Licht, 1995; Roy, 1999; Trachtenberg, 2007 [1982]). These

transformations presented major challenges to the established American elite. As Lawrence Levine vividly conveyed, “In an industrializing, urbanizing nation absorbing millions of immigrants from alien cultures and experiencing an almost incomprehensible degree of cultural change and spatial mobility, with anonymous institutions becoming ever larger and more central and with populations shifting from the countryside and small town to the city, from city to city, and from one urban neighborhood to another”, the old elite was seized with a sense “of anarchic change, of looming chaos, of fragmentation, which seemed to imperil the very basis of the traditional order” (Levine, 1988: 176).

Historians and sociologists have argued that as a response to these threats, the American elite in the Gilded Age consolidated into an upper class by closing ranks spatially, socially, and culturally. Through neighborhood closure, the cultivation of distinctive tastes, and participation in exclusive social clubs and institutions, elites insulated themselves from an increasingly tumultuous society, and became a more coherent class by coalescing along a range of social and cultural dimensions (Almond, 1998 [1939]; Baltzell, 1958; Beckert, 2000; DiMaggio, 1982a, 1982b; Levine, 1988).

This account of the Gilded Age has often served as an empirical backdrop for theorizing the role of culture in upper class consolidation. Researchers generally argue that cultural participation strengthens the dominance of elites in two main ways: by unifying elites around a set of shared cultural practices, and by defining social and symbolic boundaries that distinguish them from other groups in society.

Cultural participation reinforces positions of power by strengthening the bonds that unite the upper class, as illustrated by Sven Beckert in his history of bourgeoisie formation in Gilded Age New York (Beckert, 2000). High culture venues work alongside elite social clubs, select schools, and marriage alliances to generate the social networks

that ultimately transform those who share a privileged position into a social class, with a sense of its collective interests (e.g. DiMaggio, 1987; Lizardo, 2006; Ostrower, 1998).

In a more elaborate way, culture also helps elites to draw social and symbolic boundaries between themselves and other social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Lamont and Lareau, 1988; Lamont and Fournier, 1992). The gradual distinction and separation between highbrow and popular culture, and the ensuing exclusion of the masses from elite cultural institutions are often posited as mechanisms that contributed to maintain the status of elites in the Gilded Age (DiMaggio, 1982a, 1982b; Green, 1966; Horowitz, 1976; Levine, 1988). This general process, described by Lawrence Levine as the sacralization of culture and by Paul DiMaggio as its purification from references to the popular, affected museums' collections as well as theaters' and orchestras' repertoires, and defined culture as an arena immune to the assaults of working-class masses and incoming immigrants. It was made possible by the elite's control over the boards of trustees that presided over the destinies of cultural institutions.

DiMaggio delineates these dynamics in greater detail in a pair of influential articles exploring the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts from the end of the Civil War to the early 1900s (DiMaggio, 1982a, 1982b). In the early period of his analysis (roughly from 1865 to 1880), DiMaggio observes that Boston's "Brahmins were a status group, and as such strove for exclusivity, a core part of which was defining a 'prestigious culture' that they could monopolize as their own. Yet they were also a social class, and they were concerned, as any dominant social class, with establishing hegemony over those they dominated." The basis of such hegemony was the cultural education of the masses. By the end of the 1880s, though, the elite had gradually shed their interest in education. "In both institutions the processes of classification and framing led to a shift in goals away from education. And in both cases the processes made art less accessible to immigrants and members of the working class" (DiMaggio, 1982b: 304). Levine reaches a similar conclusion: "In spite of the flood of rhetoric

embracing the task of converting the unwashed masses to true culture, the spokesmen for culture at the turn of the century were less missionaries than conservators, less bent upon eradicating the cultural gap between themselves and the majority than on steadfastly maintaining that gap" (Levine, 1988: 218; see also Harris, 1962).

Social Differentiation, Cultural Authority, and the Inclusion of Culture

DiMaggio and Levine's basic insight has been central to many subsequent arguments about upper class formation as a process of cultural exclusion and monopolization (Beisel, 1990, 1997; Beckert, 2000; Lears, 2005).²⁴ It offers a general template for understanding the role of culture in consolidating the position of elites, both in the Gilded Age and beyond. In establishing this account sociologists and historians have carefully documented the elite's experience with and relationship to cultural institutions. Yet there have also been a number of problems with that approach.

Methodologically, these studies often use the repertoires of cultural institutions as proxies for the groups attending these institutions. Thus, the fact that orchestras or museums increasingly featured highbrow culture has been taken as evidence that they gradually excluded popular audiences. But without evidence on who actually attended concerts we cannot know that increasing highbrow culture meant increasingly elite audiences and increasing exclusion of others.

²⁴ A version of the cultural monopolization and exclusion thesis was already articulated in Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, which as early as 1899 satirized the old American elite for its withdrawal into the realm of refined culture (Veblen, 2009 [1899]). The obsession of old patrician families with form and etiquette is also central to Edith Wharton's Gilded Age novels. Both Wharton and Veblen, however, regarded these trends as increasing the irrelevance of the traditional elite, and precipitating its unseating by a rising group of newly moneyed industrialists.

On a substantive level, accounts of culture and elite consolidation tend to focus on the tensions and conflicts between the elite and the popular masses (the working class and immigrants), thereby ignoring how other social groups could play a role in the maintenance, reinforcement, or undoing of elites' status in that era. In particular, this position rests on two problematic assumptions. First, that Gilded Age society was essentially a two-class society – elites vs. masses – without other social groups characterized by distinct practices, interests, and positions. Second, and related, the cultural exclusion thesis is oblivious to the fact that the Gilded Age was also a period of social differentiation in the United States – one that saw the emergence of new groups that could challenge or buttress the authority of established elites over various realms of social life, among them the cultural.

Finally, a theoretical weakness of the cultural exclusion thesis lies in the fact that it has no mechanism for explaining the authority of the cultural tastes embraced by the social elite. As noted by DiMaggio, cultural participation insulates the upper class from outside groups, but absent a concern for education it does not serve to legitimate the status of elites, or to grant them hegemony over other groups. If elite tastes become so exclusive and removed from the tastes of others, we might ask, how do such cultural tastes exert their influence?

These substantive and theoretical issues cast doubt upon the cultural exclusion thesis. We therefore advance a modified view of how cultural participation contributes to class formation. Specifically, we propose a relational class analysis that is not only about conflict and exclusion, but also makes room for cooptation, appropriation, and inclusion as parts of a more complete picture of upper class formation during the Gilded Age.

There are three primary components to our alternate view:

1. We first expand our understanding of Gilded Age upper class formation by considering the challenges posed to the status of established elites by the transformations of U.S. society beyond mass migration and the rise of an American working class. These transformations, we argue, involved an increased differentiation of spheres of life in American society. The deepening of the division of labor and the emergence of separate spheres of social life meant that the economy became increasingly differentiated from the household and the local community (Bender, 1978; Wiebe, 1967); that markets separated from politics (Dawley, 2005); and that political organizations gradually pulled apart from civil society (Hammack, 1982).

This growing differentiation entailed the rise of new groups who possessed expertise in specific domains, and it threatened the authority of the polymath, traditional elite over these domains. This was notably the case in the economy, which in the wake of the Civil War saw the emergence of new industrial tycoons whose entrepreneurial clout threatened to overwhelm the grip of old elites over business affairs. Yet a similar dynamic was at work in the professions, in science, and in the arts. Victoria Johnson and Woody Powell thus observe that “in the early nineteenth century, the fields of law and medicine had seen an increase in expertise via the introduction of educational reforms, the establishment of board exams and licenses, and the diffusion of local, state, and national professional associations. (...) In the arts and sciences, the social production of the disciplinary ‘expert’ took pace more slowly, but by the 1870s, polymaths (...) were on the verge of extinction.” Hence, “transformations in the organization of knowledge replaced the polymaths of the early Republic – men who were at one and the same time politicians, doctors, writers, or lawyers, painters, and philanthropists – with disciplinary specialists and professional managers to whose expertise Gilded Age industrialist-philanthropists deferred” (Johnson and Powell, 2015: 36, 50; on the professions, see

Abbott, 1988; Bledstein, 1976; on the rise of cultural experts in New York, see Bender, 1987; on science, see Olenson and Voss, 1979; Reingold, 1976; Sloan, 1980).

We take account of these dynamics by focusing on a rising group of cultural experts who were neither owners of economic capital nor the descendants of prestigious lineages. The emergence of this group represented a challenge to the social elite's claim to cultural authority. Indeed, while the upper class sought to consolidate around art, opera and classical music, they no longer controlled these realms completely. Some of the prominent actors and arbiters of taste in cultural affairs were now artists and musicians themselves, and other educated individuals who were not part of elite society nonetheless possessed a cultural expertise that could exceed that of the social elite.

2. Our modified view suggests that elites did not just ignore and shut off these emerging groups. Instead, their inclusion provided the upper class with a mechanism for maintaining their authority over cultural affairs. In a society where cultural expertise could increasingly be found outside of elite circles, the legitimacy of elites' cultural endeavors could no longer be taken for granted. It had to be fought for and reasserted. As DiMaggio and Levine have argued, in the late Gilded Age this was not done by enforcing upper class cultural tastes on the other groups through education. Rather, legitimacy was achieved through the enlisting of cultural experts into the audience of elite-sponsored cultural institutions. Under these circumstances, cultural participation did not only serve to separate the upper class from the populace. By publicly showcasing the worth of their cultural enterprises, the inclusion of an educated audience also provided elites with a stamp of cultural legitimacy.

Economic historians have made similar arguments. In contrast to Veblen's classic vision of an old American upper class gradually alienated by the growth of big business (Veblen, 2009 [1899]), they show how in the Gilded Age established elites maintained positions of power by directly coming to terms with the new economic forces. Old

Boston Brahmins or New York merchant families, whose prestige by that time rested primarily on ancestry, did not just marry into the fortunes of newly moneyed capitalists (Jaher, 1968, 1972). By embracing the very lines of business these capitalists had been pioneering, they displayed openness to new forms of success and expertise that helped sustain their legitimacy (Dawley, 2005; Kolko, 1967; Lasch, 1973; Lears, 2005).

In the analysis to follow, we show that in the realm of culture too, elites maintained authority by including an emerging group of cultural experts. At the New York Philharmonic, the socially and economically elite sought to attract a cultured audience by raising the profile of concerts. They were obsessed with who was in the audience, yet in a way that was not what one would expect from Veblen's leisure class: they wanted the audience to feature more culturally knowledgeable people, and to minimize the socially fashionable types.

3. The inclusion of non-socially elite experts was facilitated by the fact that they were unlikely to mingle with the social elite in the space of cultural institutions. This is what we refer to as segregated inclusion – a form of inclusion that preserved the purity and distinctiveness of the social elite. At the New York Philharmonic, segregated inclusion was made possible by the stratified nature of the concert hall, which meant that cultural experts participated in a way that differed from that of the social elite.

In this chapter we observe segregated inclusion in the realm of culture, but we posit that the process is a more general one. Under conditions where the bases of social power are multiple, expanding, or transforming, and as non-dominant groups gain dominion over specific areas of expertise, dominant groups can seek to take advantage of the potential influence of these non-dominant groups, while not including them fully. Whereas cooptation, whether it is actual integration or mere tokenism, is premised on the sharing of social power (real or apparent), segregated inclusion does not gesture toward the full inclusion of members of a non-dominant group. It is clear that the two

groups remain unequal, and that the non-dominant group is included merely for its expertise in a specific domain. This also has the effect of demonstrating how that form of capital is beholden to the other capitals the dominant group more securely holds.

In brief, our modified view argues that for culture to strengthen the status of elites in that era, it had to be inclusive, but that such inclusion required bounding. In a rapidly differentiating society, maintaining control required drawing support from within a more diverse and specialized environment. Elites could not simply consolidate and exclude; they needed to integrate others who held expertise over the domains of interest and importance. Yet this inclusion was segregated so as to limit the potential power of these new groups.

Gilded Age New York and the New York Philharmonic

In the final decades of the nineteenth century millions poured into lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, fundamentally transforming social and class relations in New York City. Most of these migrants were poor; many spoke different languages and had different religions. In response to the influx of working-class immigrants, elites moved away from their homes in lower Manhattan to what is now the Upper East Side.

The immigrant influx was not the only change to the class structure, however. At the top too, New York society evolved toward something much more divided and diverse. As David Hammack describes,

“Between 1880 and 1910 Greater New York became the first American metropolis to assume a modern character. Nineteenth-century New York had been a great mercantile center; by 1895 corporate managers were displacing merchants and the city’s economy was demanding more specialists, more white-

collar workers, more semiskilled laborers. New York had always been remarkable for its social heterogeneity; by the 1890s its Anglo-Protestant social elite was both internally divided and challenged by competing German Christian and German Jewish social elites” (Hammack, 1982: xv).²⁵

Culture helped the elite address the twin challenges of a growing working class and a fragmenting upper class. By making the content and places of their cultural activities distinct from those of working-class groups, elites gradually built a “class-segmented public sphere” (Beckert, 2000: 267) and added a layer of cultural distance to the geographic distance they were achieving by moving uptown. In part this meant founding or sponsoring a set of high culture institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Opera, and the New York Philharmonic (Cone, 1983; Eisler, 1984; Kolodin, 1966; Shanet, 1975; Tomkins, 1989). These institutions also contributed to clarify what elite tastes were, and thus helped to consolidate the fractured upper class around a shared understanding, shared practices, and shared experiences. As Beckert argues, “cultural identifications would increasingly provide the glue that kept an expanded bourgeoisie together” (2000: 254).

The New York Philharmonic played a central role in this process. Founded in 1842, it is one of the oldest symphonic orchestras in the world, and it has long been a beacon of American cultural life. The orchestra was initially a musicians’ cooperative, with players owning shares and splitting the proceeds from ticket sales. Yet the early orchestra was almost always in debt. This left an opening for the social elite: through their role as

²⁵ Hammack further emphasizes the continual differentiation of these groups: “By the 1890s New York City’s lawyers as a group were losing the near-monopoly over municipal expertise they had so long enjoyed. (...) In the last decade of the century, lawyers were further crowded aside by graduates of the new university programs in public law and administration, economics, social welfare, and education who were taking positions in the city’s universities, welfare agencies, and editorial boards and developing their own policy ideas there” (1982: 54). These new sources of power and their potential coordination are at the center of our question.

benefactors, they could exert influence over the institution and its artistic direction. Further, without an endowment the orchestra needed to satisfy the tastes of its socially elite attendees, lest they abandon the institution (Shanet, 1975; Mauskapf, 2012).

Between the 1850s and the 1910s, the elite gradually gained *de facto* control over the Philharmonic. We here provide evidence of this growing control by looking at the evolution of the orchestra's repertoire over the period. This evolution parallels the purification observed in Boston around the same time (DiMaggio, 1982a). Thus, we are able to replicate the analysis at the core of the exclusion and monopolization thesis in a different city and for a different orchestra. As the New York elite increased its influence over the direction of the Philharmonic, the orchestra gradually turned into a sanctuary for the music of a small number of consecrated composers (Block, 2012). By 1892, music critic Henry Krehbiel described a repertoire of purified, great works:

“If I were to attempt an interpretation of the record I should say that [the orchestra] has conceived its duty primarily to be the conservation of musical compositions which the judgment and taste of the cultured would have admitted of the first rank. Only secondarily has it made propaganda for new and progressive composers who have widened the boundaries of the art. [...] The [Philharmonic] Society is also enjoined to exercise the greatest care in the admission of new compositions into its lists. A work that has been played at a Philharmonic concert is, by virtue of that circumstance, looked upon as bearing the most valid stamp of excellence which the New World can bestow” (Krehbiel, 1892: 9).²⁶

²⁶ The conductor of the Philharmonic in the late 1870s and 1880s, Theodore Thomas, explicitly decided to limit his repertoire, and was celebrated for it. He noted in an interview in 1882 that he wished to perform “only standard works, both of the new and old masters, and to be thus conservative and not given to experimenting with the new musical sensations of the hour” (quoted in Shanet, 1975: 167).

A systematic look at what was played at the Philharmonic confirms this movement toward purification. The full record of programs, available from the Philharmonic archive, makes it possible to compute the number of unique composers played every season between the 1850s and the early twentieth century. Figure 3.1 displays the evolution of that number, adjusted for the changing number of concerts in a musical season. In the mid-nineteenth century, as musician members of the Philharmonic Society mostly retained control over the orchestra's repertoire, one could expect to hear the work of up to thirty different composers played in a single season. In fact, Philharmonic members did not hesitate to program music they had composed themselves, as well as pieces by contemporary American composers. By 1880, however, the number of unique composers programmed in a season declined by half to about fifteen, and it remained there throughout the late Gilded Age. The Philharmonic increasingly focused on a small range of canonical composers, most of them German, and most of them dead.

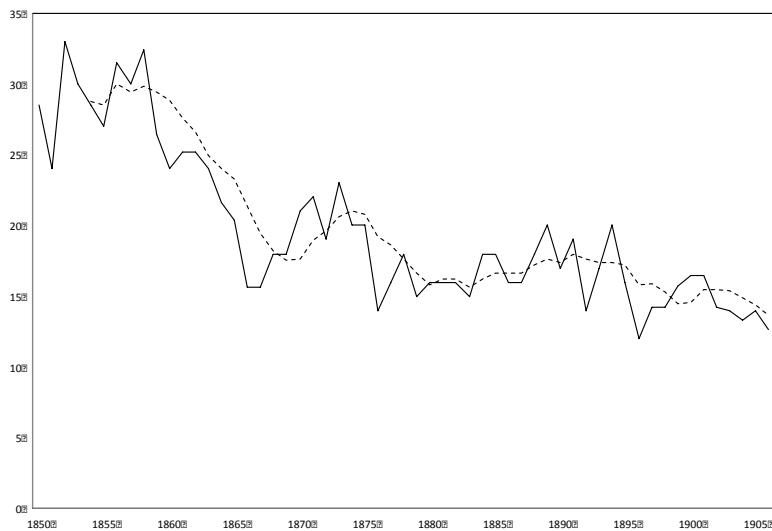


Figure 3.1. Number of unique composers played in a season, adjusted for number of programs, seasons 1850-1851 to 1906-1907 (dotted line: five-year moving average).

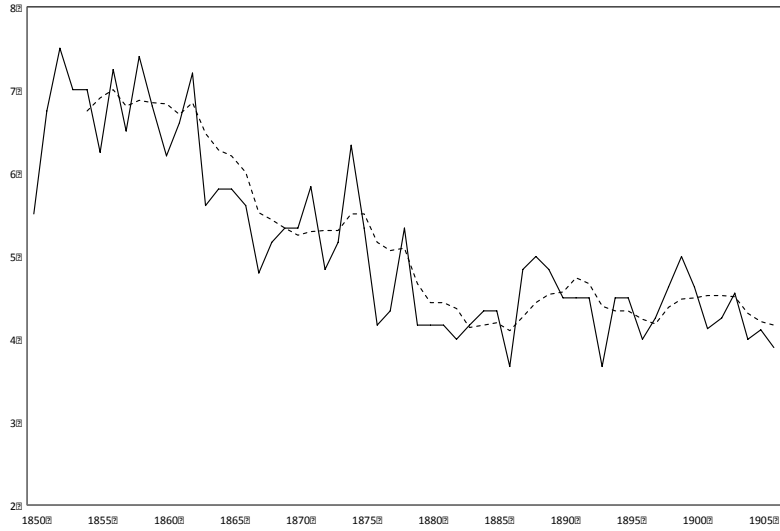


Figure 3.2. Average number of pieces per program, seasons 1850-1851 to 1906-1907 (dotted line: five-year moving average).

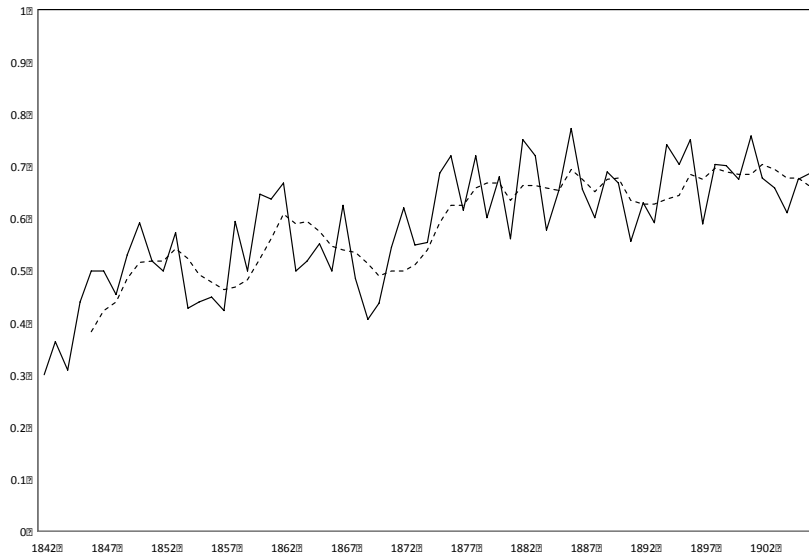


Figure 3.3. Proportion of full pieces in a season's program, seasons 1842-1843 to 1906-1907 (dotted line: five-year moving average).

A second, more subtle indicator of the purification of the repertoire can be found in the way programs were organized and musical pieces were actually given. Figure 3.2 shows the average number of pieces in one night's program. That number decreased sharply through the mid-1880s, dropping from around seven to around four pieces a concert.

Less diverse programs not only meant that each concert was now more focused on a few, carefully chosen musical works. It also made it possible to perform the pieces that were played in their entirety. Thus, while early on only about forty percent of the music given by the orchestra consisted of full pieces – the rest being made of a miscellanea of excerpts such as famous opera arias or single movements taken from symphonies – that percentage gradually rose to about seventy percent in the 1880s (figure 3.3). The repertoire, in other words, was not just purified from the music of composers deemed unworthy of its stamp of excellence. The music itself also achieved greater sacredness, as it became increasingly unlikely that the orchestra would disregard the composer's complete vision by cutting their work to feature only popular excerpts.

The evolution of music at the Philharmonic in the second half of the nineteenth century seems to support previous findings of purification and sacralization. A closer look at the timing of that evolution, however, complicates the picture. The bulk of the purification occurred between the 1850s and the 1870s. The three indicators we introduced – number of composers in a season, number of pieces on an average night, and percentage of full pieces – all display sharp changes until 1880, yet remain stable through the 1900s. If the consolidation of high culture was the response of the upper class to the threats of fragmentation and of a rising working class it faced in the final decades of the century, we are left with a problem: cultural purification was essentially completed prior to that time.

In the remainder of this analysis we study the Philharmonic audience in the period that immediately followed this purification of the repertoire. We show that elite

monopolization had indeed occurred by the 1880s. In contrast to the received view, however, we also find that the audience kept evolving significantly well after the music had been purified. The correlation between the evolution of the music and that of the audience was not perfect, and focusing on the changes in the music provides limited insight into audience dynamics. Because our data directly record who attended the Philharmonic in the late Gilded Age, we have a much better window into the structure and dynamics of the audience. We use this window both for descriptive ends and for refining our understanding of how culture helped strengthen the status of elites in late nineteenth-century New York.

DATA

Primary Data Sources

To understand how the structure of high culture participation evolved at the New York Philharmonic, we draw upon complete subscription records for all Philharmonic subscribers from the late 1880s to the late 1900s. The primary data are contained in the orchestra's subscriber and seating books, which respectively report the names and addresses of subscribers and the names of the tenants of each subscribed seat.

As part of a collaborative project with the Philharmonic we compiled a data set of all subscribers to the orchestra, in all seasons wherein subscriber and seating books were available between the founding of the Philharmonic in 1842 and the present day.²⁷ For

²⁷ "Subscribers to the New York Philharmonic, 1842-Present", supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. While subscriber and seating information was available for almost every season after 1950, there are significant gaps in the data in earlier periods. Thus the Philharmonic archive does not retain any substantial data on subscribers prior to season 1882-83 and between seasons 1906-07 and 1950-51.

every subscriber we recorded the address they reported to the Philharmonic, the number of seats they held, and the location of these seats in the concert hall. Over the period this chapter focuses on, a Philharmonic season included between six and eight different programs. Each program was given twice, as a public rehearsal on Friday afternoon, and as the actual concert on Saturday night. Both the rehearsal series and the concert series were open to subscription, and we have information on subscribers to both.

It is important to note that we do not have data on all attendees to Philharmonic performances. Our information is restricted to those who subscribed entire seasons of the orchestra's concerts, and therefore ignores single-ticket holders. We believe that these data are relevant nonetheless, as subscribers were those who had not only an interest in the music, but also a symbolic commitment to the orchestra itself, making them a meaningful group to look at. While the Philharmonic archive does not retain information on the number of single-tickets sold for each concert, we know that subscribed seats accounted for about 27% of the seats in the hall in 1889-90, and 43% in both 1897-98 and 1906-07.

Historical Focus and Contextual Data

In order to contextualize subscribers within the broader social life of the city, we selected three specific seasons, roughly nine years apart, to focus on in greater detail: 1889-90, 1897-98, and 1906-07. These years span the period we are interested in. They are also among the ones for which we have complete Philharmonic information. We have no reason to believe that the completeness of the data in these years relates to the explanations that we provide. Importantly for our argument, prices and pricing schemes for season tickets did not evolve significantly over these three years: prices

increased by about twenty percent in all sections of the Philharmonic's hall between our first two seasons, and then remained constant through the third.

There were 918 unique subscribers to the Philharmonic in 1889-90, 1,323 in 1897-98, and 1,297 in 1906-07. In any of these years a recorded subscriber could hold more than one seat, and on average held around two.²⁸ While we can expect that subscribers generally attended the concerts they subscribed to, we do not know who occupied the additional seats that they subscribed. As the vast majority of subscribers were married women, however, we can reasonably assume that a number of these extra seats were held by their husbands and children. In line with this interpretation the analyses presented in this chapter are conducted at the family level, and we treat married subscribers as representing their larger household in the halls of the Philharmonic.

With our three focal years in mind, we collected supplemental materials to contextualize subscribers within the larger population of New York, and within the city's upper class in particular. We use the New York Social Register, a directory of predominantly white Anglo-Saxon protestant families, as an index of the city's social elite. The Social Register was created in New York in 1886, initially as a compilation of the visiting lists of old elite families. By 1889 it had grown into a full-fledged directory of New York good society, listing around 12,000 prominent families, or 1% of the city's population. In order to be included in the Social Register one had to either be born to listed parents, marry into a listed member, or be proposed and supported by letters from current members, before being voted upon by an advisory board. Marrying inappropriately, being subject to a scandal or considerable downward mobility could be grounds for exclusion. We take membership in the Social Register as evidence of

²⁸ Specifically, each recorded subscriber held an average of 2.1 seats. That average remains constant over our three years of interest, as does the variance in the number of seats held by recorded subscribers. Every year a small proportion of subscribers (about 4%) held seats both for the rehearsal and the concert series. They may have attended both, or subscribed on behalf of someone else for one of the series.

belonging to the established social elite (Higley, 1995).²⁹ We collected a 10% sample of the Social Register for 1889, 1897, and 1906. This sample reports the names, addresses, alma maters and club affiliations of about 1,800 individuals in each of the three years. For every subscriber to the Philharmonic we checked if they were listed in the Social Register, and for each of them we garnered the same information as above. When subscribers were married women we reported the details of their husbands, essentially using men's status as a proxy for that of their household.

Occupational data taken from the census are relatively sparse in this period. We therefore used additional sources to gather information on the occupation of Philharmonic subscribers. The first – *Club Men of New York* – is a registry based on the full membership lists of about one hundred clubs located in and around New York City. It was published three times, in 1892, 1897 and 1902. Further to addresses and club affiliations, it reports the occupation of the individuals it lists as club members. Using the website Ancestry.com, we also garnered occupational information from other administrative and business archives, such as city directories. Through a careful combing of *Club Men* and a systematic search of the census and Ancestry, we were able to retrieve occupational data on about 52% of subscribers in 1889, 50% in 1897, and 43% in 1906.³⁰

²⁹ This is why we prefer the Social Register to *Who's Who in America: Who's Who* is based on meritocratic selection criteria that make it less representative of the social elite.

³⁰ The drop in the final year likely arises from a greater temporal mismatch between our year of interest at the Philharmonic (1906-07) and the edition of *Club Men* we compared it to (1902). Because part of our information comes from *Club Men* and clubs were often elite pastimes, the social elite may be over-represented in the group for whom we have occupational information. *Club Men* however lists a large number of individuals who belonged to various clubs but were not part of the social elite – as defined by inclusion in the Social Register. An analysis of the home addresses of a sample of individuals listed in *Club Men* shows that their residential backgrounds differed quite sharply from those of the social elite, and matched those of the New York population better.

Finally, we augment our quantitative data with the commentary of contemporary cultural critics. We draw upon the writings of the dominant cultural newspaper of the day, *The New York Times*. We read every article published in the *Times* pertaining to the Philharmonic from the period of 1870-1910. To verify that the *Times* reporting was representative we also read the reviews of *The Nation* and *The Tribune* of every classical concert during this same period.

We begin our analysis by sketching the changing participation of New York's social elite to the Philharmonic over the final decades of the Gilded Age. We then turn to other social groups to show that the Philharmonic became more inclusive over time, and we describe the new audiences that were thus included in greater detail. Finally, we use seating data to analyze changing patterns of attendance and to ask how the location of various groups in the space of the concert hall related to their broader position in the city's social landscape. We show that these changes are consistent with a shift in the function of the Philharmonic, from a place for cultural monopolization by the social elite to a place for the segregated inclusion of the cultured and the reassertion of the elite's cultural worth.

ENDURING DISTINCTIVENESS: THE SOCIAL ELITE AT THE PHILHARMONIC

Throughout the end of the Gilded Age attendance of New York Philharmonic concerts was and remained a distinctive elite practice. To approach the participation of the social elite we first focus on individuals listed in the New York Social Register, a directory of prominent families in the city. Table 3.1 presents the proportion of Philharmonic subscribers who were listed in the register in respectively 1889, 1897 and 1906. That proportion was fairly high throughout the period: though the register only listed around 1% of the population of the city in those years, about one in five Philharmonic

subscribers were part of it. What is more, while the number of subscribers increased over time, the number of subscribers featured in the Social Register rose at a faster pace, bringing the proportion of subscribers in the register from 15.7% in 1889 to 19.8% in 1897 and 21.3% in 1906.

Table 3.1. New York Philharmonic subscribers in the Social Register.

Season	1889-90	1897-98	1906-07
Proportion of subscribers listed in the New York Social Register	15.7%	19.8%	21.3%
Total number of subscribers	918	1,323	1,297

That Philharmonic attendance remained an elite practice is further suggested by the geographic spread of subscribers in the city, as displayed in figure 3.4, which focuses on the borough of Manhattan.³¹ Throughout the late Gilded Age subscribers' homes clustered in the city's most prestigious and less populated areas, such as the administrative wards that contained sections of Fifth Avenue on the East and Upper East Sides of Manhattan. An even more striking view is provided by a look at subscriber rates – the proportion of subscribers in an area's population – at the tract level in 1906 (figure 3.5). We here extrapolate tract level population information in 1906 from the 1910 population census, as the tract system replaced the rougher-grained ward system at that later date only. Tracts with the highest rates of Philharmonic subscriptions in 1906 clustered around Fifth Avenue, where as much as 3% of the population of certain tracts could be subscribers. If one keeps in mind that an average subscriber subscribed two seats, this means that 6% of the people living in these tracts held seats to the Philharmonic on a given evening (assuming that subscribers were going with family members).

³¹ Manhattan supplied the bulk of Philharmonic subscribers, though it is difficult to establish an exact proportion. Some subscribers who lived in Manhattan for most of the year only provided the Philharmonic with the addresses of their summer homes out of the city. Of subscribers who reported an address in one of the five New York City boroughs, 99% came from Manhattan in 1889, 98% in 1897, and 96% in 1906.

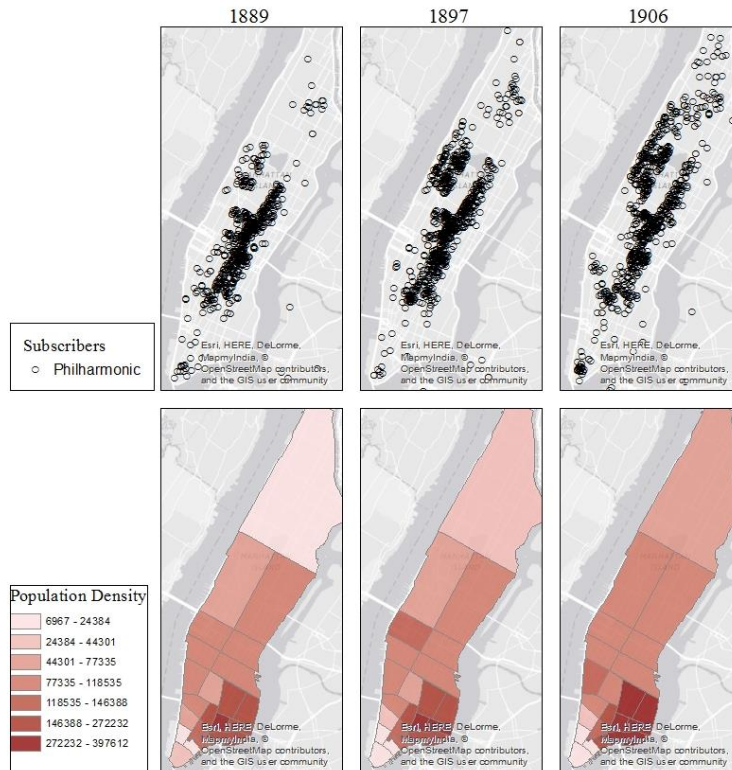


Figure 3.4. Philharmonic subscribers in Manhattan and population density by Manhattan ward, 1889-90, 1897-98 and 1906-07 (densities, in population per square mile, are calculated using a linear extrapolation of each ward's population based on census data in 1890, 1900 and 1910).

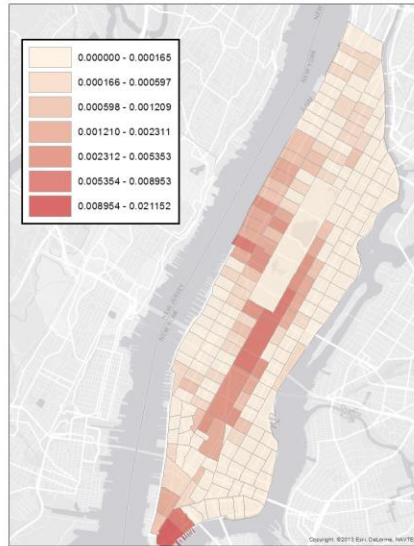


Figure 3.5. Philharmonic subscription rates by Manhattan census tract, 1906-07 (rates are calculated using a linear extrapolation of each tract’s population based on tract-level data in 1910 and ward-level data in 1900).

Increasing Gap in Long-Term Commitment to the Orchestra

The turnover of subscribers with various social backgrounds from one season to the next comes as a third piece of evidence for the enduring special relationship of the social elite with the Philharmonic. Throughout the late Gilded Age subscribers listed in the Social Register were more likely to renew their commitment to the orchestra over successive musical seasons. They formed a core of stable, dedicated patrons. Table 3.2 displays the Philharmonic’s retention rates of subscribers between seasons 1889-90 and 1897-98, broken down by subscribers’ social background. It shows that 20% of 1889 subscribers without a social elite background – as approached through membership in the Social Register – remained subscribers in 1897. Over the same time window social elite subscribers were more than twice as likely to stick with the Philharmonic: 45% of 1889 subscribers listed in the Social Register held a subscription to the orchestra in

1897. If anything, this difference in long-term commitment across social groups grew wider in the following decade, suggesting that the social elite did not loosen its grip over the institution. While only 12% of non-social elite subscribers in 1897 remained subscribers in 1906, social elite subscribers were now almost three times as likely to stay: 30% of those who held seats in 1897 still did in 1906. The overall decline in retention rates from one time window to the next likely arises from the mere difference in the length of these windows (eight to nine seasons), as well as from the organizational and artistic turmoil at the Philharmonic in the early 1900s. Yet the growing gap in retention rates between social elite and non-social elite subscribers is the pattern we would expect if the social elite increasingly distinguished itself from other social groups through its sustained participation in high culture, as argued in the monopolization thesis.

Table 3.2. Retention rates of subscribers from various social backgrounds

($\chi^2_{1889-90 \text{ to } 1897-98} = 40.7, p < .0001$;

$\chi^2_{1897-98 \text{ to } 1906-07} = 53.3, p < .0001$).

	Social elite subscribers	Other subscribers
Proportion back from 1889-90 to 1897-98	45.4%	20.2%
Proportion back from 1897-98 to 1906-07	30.4%	11.7%

Who attended these concerts is not only of interest to the authors of this chapter; it was a matter of public scrutiny and reporting. Most *New York Times* reviews during the era commented on the quality of the audience. The *New York Times* report of April 15, 1882 thus noted: “The audience yesterday afternoon was one of the best and most intelligent that has appeared at any concert or rehearsal of the society.” Decade by decade this continued:

“The public that attends its [the Philharmonic’s] concerts is recognized as the embodiment of the musical intelligence of New York, and from the approval or condemnation of this public there is no effective appeal. Today the Philharmonic audience represents, nay more, it actually is, the genuine musical public of New York” (April 25, 1892).

“[The Philharmonic] is still the highest musical court in New York, and its Saturday night audiences are the flower of the refinement and culture in the city. The Saturday night audience of the Philharmonic concerts comprises the inner circle of music lovers, those who really know what is what. Approbation from this audience is applause indeed” (April 6, 1902).

The majority of reviews in the *Times* did not solely comment on the music; they routinely mentioned the character and makeup of the audience.

Changing Patterns of Elite Participation

Focusing on social elite members who subscribed to the Philharmonic shows not only that socially elite members were more likely to attend concerts, but also that the very way subscribers attended the orchestra evolved toward greater stratification around the turn of the century. Not all seats were equally desirable. Seats in first- and second-

tier boxes trumped parquet, dress circle and balcony seats in that order, a hierarchy reflected in the pricing scheme for seats in various sections of the hall.³² Even though that pricing scheme remained unchanged over the period, figure 3.6 shows a strong pattern in the evolution of the proportion of subscribed seats held by the socially elite in various sections. Throughout, seats located in better sections were more likely to be subscribed by patrons listed in the Social Register. But while only about 40% of first-tier boxes were held by members of the social elite in 1889, one in two were in 1897, and almost 70% in 1906. A smaller uptick observes in other good areas of the hall (second-tier boxes and parquet). Less desirable sections (dress circle and balcony) in contrast experience a drop in their proportion of social elite subscribers. Over time the socially elite can be seen as having increasingly used the orchestra as a means of distinction not only by going more, but also by going in more distinctive ways, deserting less desirable seats and concentrating in first- or second-tier boxes.

Within the social elite itself, the status of subscribers also became increasingly predictive of the quality of their concert seats. To capture prominence in the elite we use the number of club affiliations individuals reported in the Social Register – now focusing on Social Register listees who were also Philharmonic subscribers. We then use this measure as a predictor of a subscriber’s seat quality, rated on a scale of one to five, where one stands for a seat at the balcony and five for a seat in a first-tier box. If a subscriber held multiple seats in various sections we measure the quality of the best of their seats. We report the results in figure 3.7. In 1889 a subscriber’s number of club affiliations was not statistically associated with the position of her seats in the concert hall. Prominence in the social elite in contrast becomes a relevant predictor of seat quality in 1897: by that time Social Register subscribers affiliated with one additional club had an average seat quality .13 points higher than their counterparts with one less

³² While the Philharmonic moved halls in 1892, the seating charts of the old Met House and the new Carnegie Hall had comparable structures. The old Met had a larger seating capacity, however. It could fit an audience of about 3,600, against only around 3,200 at Carnegie Hall.

club. The relationship gets even steeper in 1906, when every extra club membership is associated with a seat quality .16 points higher.

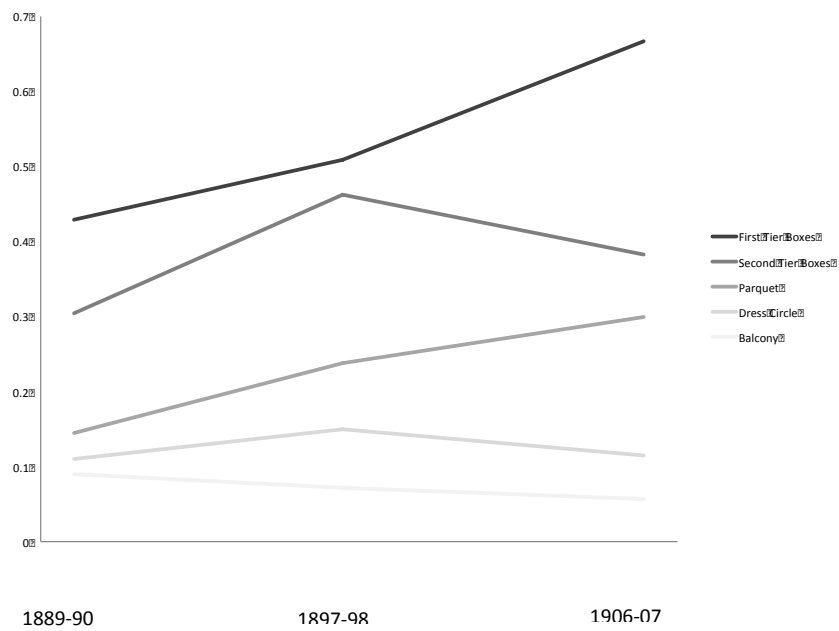


Figure 3.6. Proportion of subscribed seats held by Social Register listees, broken down by seating section.

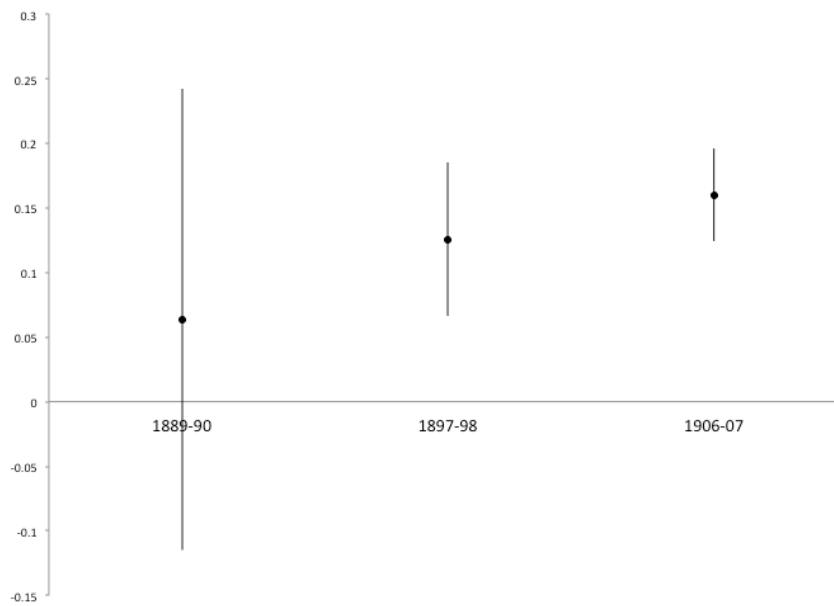


Figure 3.7. Impact of club affiliations on the seat quality of social elite subscribers.

For subscribers with social elite backgrounds, prominence in the elite was thus increasingly associated with sitting in more desirable areas, so that by the end of the Gilded Age the hierarchy within the social elite could not only be read in differential rates of subscription to the Philharmonic. In fractal fashion, it was also reflected within the hall itself, in the way more or less prominent elite members arranged in the seats of various sections. This evolution at the fine-grained level of seats held further buttresses the notion that participation in high culture increasingly served social distinction purposes. In the late Gilded Age, attending the orchestra was not only a way for the social elite to distance itself from other groups in the city. Holding specific seats in the concert hall also became a means for the most prestigious members of the social elite to draw even subtler boundaries between themselves and less prominent counterparts

who also attended the orchestra's performances.³³ These findings suggest that the relationship of the social elite to the orchestra grew stronger over time. Logics of monopolization and distinction through cultural participation were gaining steam, in line with the monopolization thesis.

The enduring distinctiveness of the Philharmonic was not lost on the commentators of the day. In their eyes there the audience's overall command of culture contributed to their social value. Writing on "The Philharmonic Audience" on April 25, 1892, the *Times'* lead music critic noted, "to the glory of music it can be said that the Philharmonic audience represents an element of the highest general culture in the city. It is composed of persons whose knowledge of what is excellent extends to literature, to fine arts, and to drama, whose social character and refinement are beyond a moment's question."

This view of an overlapping social and cultural elite is largely mirrored in academic scholarship. Indeed, from reports like this we can see why historians and sociologists would argue for cultural monopolization and exclusion as being central to upper class formation during the Gilded Age. Focusing on the social elite alone, however, obscures what else was going on in the hall in that period. A firmer grip of the elite on the orchestra did not have to happen at the expense of other groups' participation. Our next section examines who else attended Philharmonic performances, and how this

³³ Not surprisingly the changing relationship we report here only occurs for Saturday concerts. At the Philharmonic, Saturday night concerts always carried more prestige than did Friday afternoon rehearsals. Social elite subscribers were in particular always more likely than others to subscribe Saturday over Friday performances. By this measure the relative prestige of concerts also increased over time. In 1889, 36% of social elite subscribers, and 34% of non-social elite ones, chose concerts over rehearsals. By 1906, social elite subscribers were twice as likely to choose concerts over rehearsals, while the rest of subscribers divided about equally between the two. Logics of distinction through seat choices within the population of social elite subscribers thus became more salient at events whose prestige was itself increasing. At Friday performances, elite prominence was predictive of seat quality throughout the period, but the magnitude of the relationship decreased over time.

challenges the notion that participation in high culture consolidated the status of elites through a mere process of exclusion and monopolization.

INCREASING INCLUSIVENESS: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW AUDIENCE

Looking at the spread of Philharmonic subscribers in the city shows that new subscribers gradually joined the orchestra's ranks even though they did not share the residential choices of more elite patrons. Figure 3.8 plots subscribers' home addresses, distinguishing between subscribers with and without a Social Register background. It focuses on Manhattan alone, as this is where the vast majority of subscribers in New York City lived, and as addresses found for other parts of the country in the Philharmonic's subscriber books are often hard to match unambiguously with a precise geographic location.

Over time new areas in the city, most notably the Upper West Side and Harlem, started sending subscribers to the Philharmonic. These areas were typically not the dwelling areas of the socially elite – as suggested by a map of the geographic clustering in Manhattan of our 10% sample of the Social Register (figure 3.9). Figure 3.8 shows that few subscribers from these new areas were Social Register listees. In fact, these areas at the time were predominantly populated by recent German immigrants and by Jews (Gurock, 1979; Rischin, 1962) – two groups typically excluded from the WASP social elite. We thus observe the emergence of a geographically clustered group that subscribed to the Philharmonic, yet that departed from the more traditional social elite as far as their residential choices were concerned.

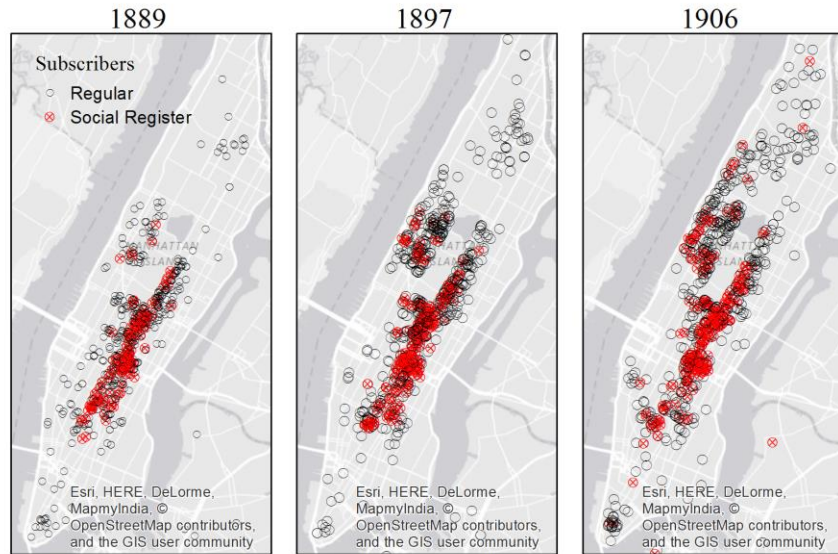


Figure 3.8. Philharmonic subscribers' home addresses in Manhattan, 1889-90, 1897-98 and 1906-07 (red dots = subscribers listed in the Social Register; black dots = other subscribers).

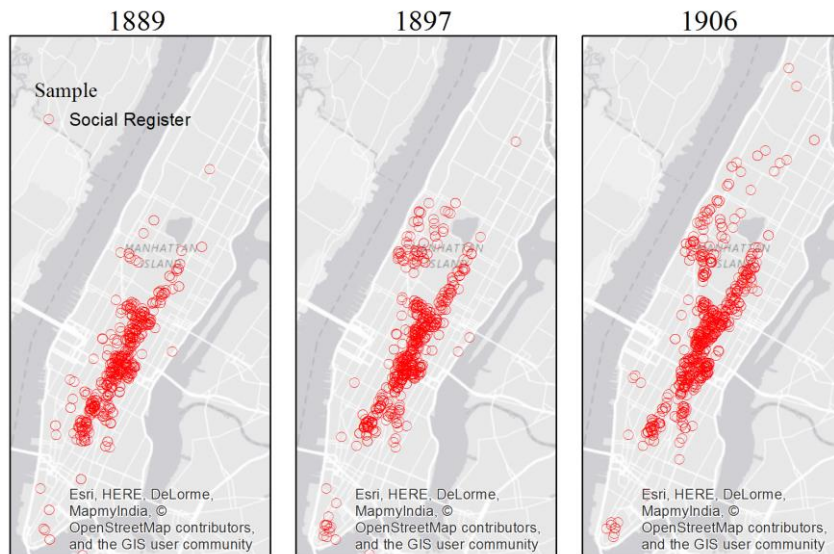


Figure 3.9. The social elite in Manhattan, 1889, 1897 and 1906: home addresses of a 10% sample from the Social Register.

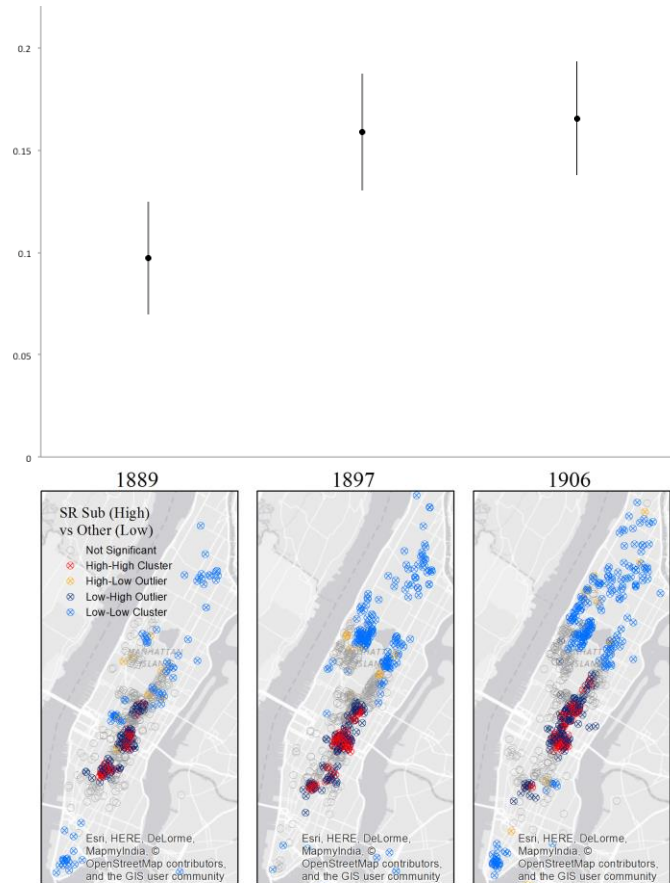


Figure 3.10. Overall residential clustering (Moran's I, with 95% confidence interval, top panel) and residential clusters of Philharmonic subscribers with (red dots) and without (light blue dots) Social Register representation (bottom panel), 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

Figure 3.10 supports that view by measuring the residential clustering of social elite and non-social elite subscribers. Clustering is here approached through the spatial autocorrelation of subscribers' Social Register representation with the Social Register representation of their twenty-five nearest subscriber neighbors in the city. A different definition of neighborhood yields similar findings. As evidenced in the top panel, spatial autocorrelation rises significantly between 1889 and 1906, indicating that Philharmonic subscribers in and out of the social elite increasingly came from different areas in the city. The bottom panel, based on a local indicator of autocorrelation, or local Moran's I, decomposes the increase and shows that through the period residential clusters of social elite subscribers remained located around Fifth Avenue, while clusters of non-social elite subscribers emerged in the Upper East, Upper West, and Harlem areas of Manhattan.

This new group of audience members did not just make different residential choices from the social elite. Their occupational background also departed significantly from that of Social Register subscribers. Throughout the late Gilded Age, the lion's share of subscribers belonged to occupational groups that owned economic capital or organized its flows. Almost half of the subscribers for whom we have occupational information were merchants, manufacturers, bankers, brokers or corporate lawyers in 1889, and while that proportion declined it was still around 40% in 1906. Against this backdrop, figure 3.11 shows how the occupational background of non-social elite subscribers diverged over time from that of their social elite counterparts. Early on subscribers in and outside of the social elite were about as likely to come from occupational groups involved in the organization of economic capital. Rapidly though, subscribers without a Social Register background further departed from more elite patrons in terms of their occupational profile. They were not just less social elite; they were also significantly less likely to partake in the conduct of corporate affairs. Only 44% of them did in 1897, and

no more than 35% in 1906 – against 55% and 47% of social elite subscribers in these respective years.³⁴

The growing occupational gap between social elite and non-social elite subscribers can be observed in reverse if we focus on a second series of occupations. While they form a more heterogeneous cluster than those associated with the possession or organization of economic capital, teachers, professors, artists, musicians, actors and writers, designers, architects, clerks and managers share a common feature: they are occupations involving a relatively strong endowment in cultural and educational capital. Figure 3.12 shows that in the late Gilded Age non-social elite subscribers were always more likely to come from those occupations associated with cultural capital. It also evidences how the difference between this group and social elite patrons became more sizable over time. A mere 5% of social elite subscribers had a background in one of these occupations in 1889, and even though that proportion rose to almost 12% in 1906, it remained limited. This contrasts with the strong rise in the prevalence of these occupations for non-elite subscribers: from 13% in 1889 to almost 30% in 1906.³⁵

While social elite subscribers continued to be predominantly characterized by an occupational background in the possession and organization of economic capital, subscribers outside of the social elite increasingly came from backgrounds involving either cultural skills or administrative ones. Possessors or managers of economic capital outside of the social elite, in other words, were increasingly replaced by a cultured class of educated, non-social elite subscribers.

³⁴ Chi-squared tests for the three years confirms that within the population of subscribers, being involved in the organization of economic capital and belonging to the social elite became significantly associated over time.

³⁵ Again here a series of chi-squared tests substantiate the growing departure between social elite and non-social elite subscribers.

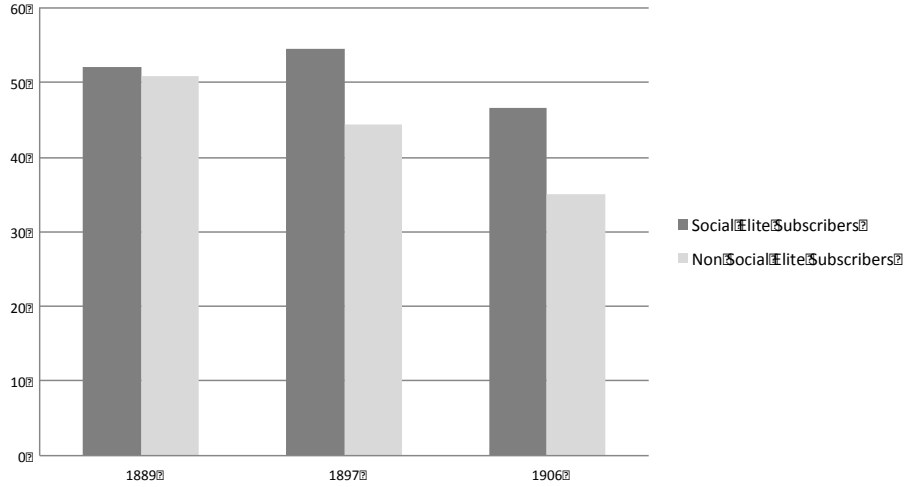


Figure 3.11. Proportion of merchants, manufacturers, bankers, brokers or corporate lawyers among Philharmonic subscribers, 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

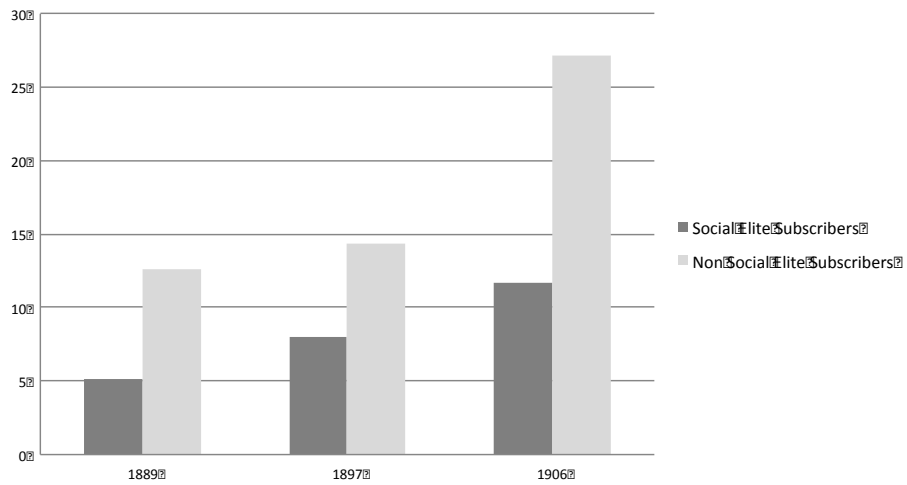


Figure 3.12. Proportion of teachers, professors, artists, actors, musicians, writers, designers, architects, clerks or managers among Philharmonic subscribers, 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

Not surprisingly, the areas of residence of this emerging, educated group of subscribers largely overlapped with those of new, non-social elite joiners. Figures 13 and 14 report the residential clustering of subscribers in occupations associated with respectively the ownership or organization of economic capital and the possession of cultural capital. Again here, clustering is approached as the spatial autocorrelation of subscribers' type of occupation with that of their twenty-five nearest subscriber neighbors. In both cases that clustering grew from 1889 to 1906: subscribers from different occupational backgrounds were increasingly coming from different city neighborhoods. In fact, while subscribers with economic occupations continued to concentrate on the East Side around the central section of Fifth Avenue, a cluster of cultured subscribers gradually emerged in Harlem and the Upper West Side – the same neighborhoods that around that time were increasingly sending non-social elite subscribers to the Philharmonic.

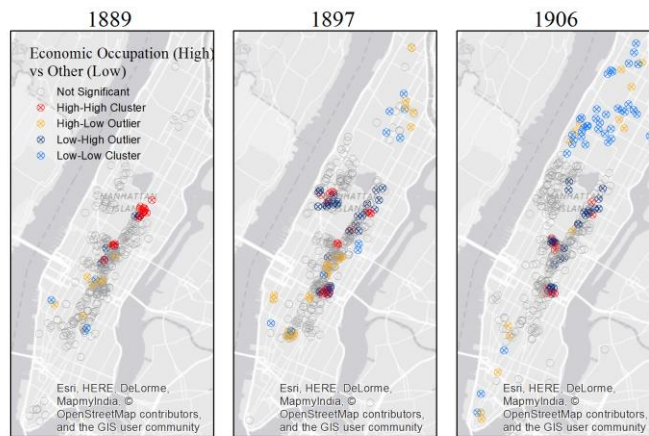
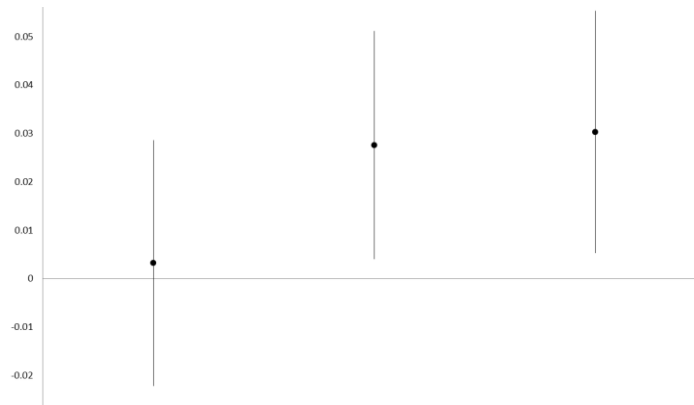


Figure 3.13. Overall residential clustering (Moran's I, with 95% confidence interval, top panel) and residential clusters of Philharmonic subscribers with economic (red dots) and non-economic (light blue dots) occupations (bottom panel), 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

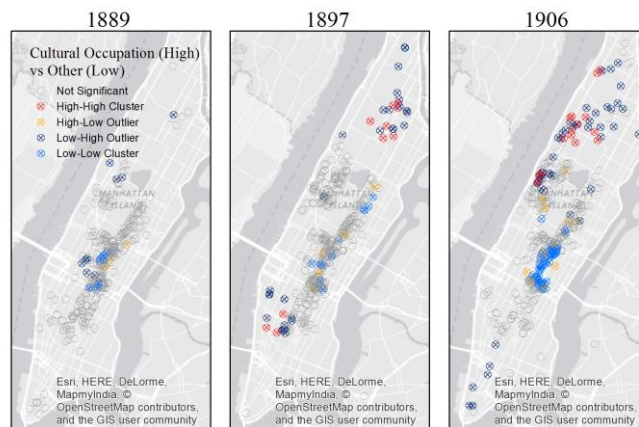
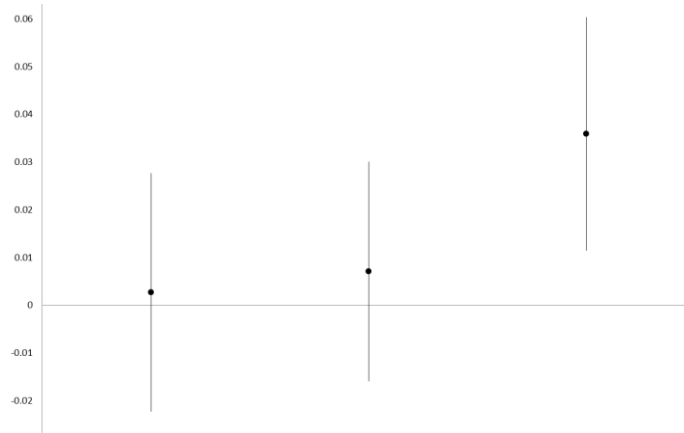


Figure 3.14. Overall residential clustering (Moran's I, with 95% confidence interval, top panel) and residential clusters of Philharmonic subscribers with cultural (red dots) and non-cultural (light blue dots) occupations (bottom panel), 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

The opening of the Philharmonic to a new audience did not go unnoticed. Andrew Carnegie was already celebrating it in his 60th anniversary address to the orchestra in 1902: “It is gratifying to look over its lists and see how from generation to generation, the Philharmonic has been supported by those most devoted to music, many of the best known names being found; so it is also to see the number of new faces which appear” (reprinted in the *New York Times*, April 6, 1902). Three years later the *Times* was writing of “widening musical interest” in the New York, and noting that “the public for all sorts of music and the public appetite for it seem to increase as the population of the city increases” (October 22, 1905). And later that year the *Times’* critic celebrated the reception of classical music by the “wage-earners of the city,” noting that this was important, since “it is from their ranks that the best students come” (November 5, 1905).

Writers during this time also retrospectively noted that in the early days (from the 1840s to the 1870s), attendees to the Philharmonic had not been a “musical crowd.” Looking back at this period, the *Times’* main musical critic, Richard Grant White, observed: “The Philharmonic became fashionable among the younger part of the rich and ‘elegant’ people who began to throng New York; and the result was that, although rehearsals and concerts were crowded, the seats were filled with a gossiping, gabbling, flirting crowd of finely dressed girls and youths who made it difficult for others to enjoy the music.” Yet by 1880 this had changed. The audience was noticeably more knowledgeable and refined. But they were also starting to be different, confirming the shift we observe in our data: “The majority of the audiences”, White continues, “are neither New-York nor American by birth and breeding, but chiefly German. When I first attended the rehearsals and the concerts of the Philharmonic Society, no speech was heard among the audience but English – with, of course, such rare exceptions as might occur in London or Liverpool or any large town. Now at these concerts (...) there is a spraching of German all around me, in my in-going, in my down-sitting, in my out-coming” (December 26, 1880).

For all its differences this new audience also represented a more refined cultural taste. Another *Times'* critic returned to this theme twenty years later. He critiqued the early musical inclinations of New Yorkers, but rejoiced that, especially in relationship to the orchestral music played by the Philharmonic, "the love of good music grew mightily in New York in the latter part of the nineteenth century" (January 5, 1902).

The inclusion of a more culturally savvy group in fact went beyond the audience and permeated into the very heart of the Philharmonic's organization. Mary Sheldon was one of the most important people in the history of the orchestra. In the 1900s she saved it from its financial struggles by organizing elites around a funding campaign. Yet her successful attempt to re-organize the orchestra had a key provision: "It is proposed to have the orchestra under the absolute control of a conductor" (*New York Times*, December 11, 1908). Market logics or social influence upon repertoire were strictly constrained. Further, Sheldon's insistence on a combination of "professional and non-professional men" to make up a board of trustees meant creating alliances between cultural elites (professional music men) and philanthropists. In her quest Sheldon consulted not just men like Carnegie, but also sought to enlist local and even international cultural experts. She thus travelled to Munich to consult conductor and composer Richard Strauss, in advance of hiring Gustav Mahler and eventually handing over control of the orchestra to this musician in 1909.

The trend we observe is one of inclusion of a cultured or educated class of non-social elite subscribers. This goes against the notion of monopolization of high culture by the social elite. In the early period the social elite itself did not fully monopolize the concert hall, but it tended to be surrounded by others like them, by which we mean that non-elite subscribers shared their occupational attributes and residential backgrounds. By 1906, however, the non-elite subscribers were increasingly diverging from the elite: they tended to live in different neighborhoods, and to work in different, more culturally

oriented occupations. This new group, however, did not drive the social elite away from the Philharmonic; if anything, the elite went at higher rates. This is because the opening of the audience involved educated subscribers, whose presence enhanced the cultural profile of Philharmonic concerts. In the next section we suggest one further reason that may explain why the social elite stayed: the inclusion of new, non-elite subscribers was segregated.

FROM CULTURAL PURITY TO THE SEGREGATED INCLUSION OF CULTURE

In the late Gilded Age subscribing to the Philharmonic remained socially distinctive while it also became inclusive of a new group of audience members with strong cultural backgrounds. To better understand this process we now turn to how these groups attended the Philharmonic. Our hypothesis is that the fine-grained structure of the sitting in the hall explains how enduring distinctiveness was possible in the presence of greater inclusiveness. The transformation of the seating, we argue, reflects the changing role of the Philharmonic, from a place for distinction to a place for the segregated inclusion of the cultured.

In a first step we contrast the geographic origin in the city of subscribers of high quality and low quality seats. Figure 3.15 displays how these origins changed over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It shows that while subscribers of first-tier seats continued to come from the most prestigious addresses, over time subscribers in balcony seats increasingly came from Harlem and the Upper West Side of Manhattan. One's seat location within the space of the hall was increasingly reflecting one's residential location in the space of the city.

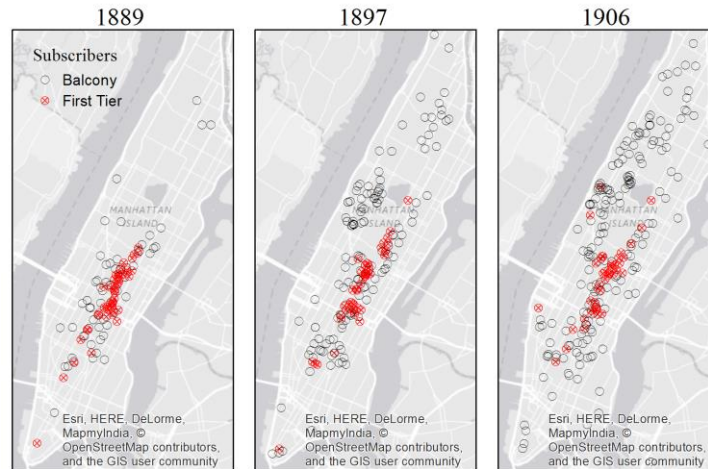


Figure 3.15. Home addresses of Philharmonic subscribers in first-tier and balcony seats in Manhattan, 1889-90, 1897-98 and 1906-07.

To further substantiate this view, we measure whether sitting close by in the hall was associated with living close by in the city, and how this association evolved over time. We compute the spatial autocorrelation between a subscriber's seat quality and the quality of the seats held by the twenty-five subscribers who lived closest to that focal subscriber in the city. The top panel in figure 3.16 shows that this autocorrelation goes up consistently over time, meaning that living close by in the city was increasingly associated with sitting close by in the concert hall. The pattern of sitting within the hall indeed became a mirror of the pattern of living in the city.

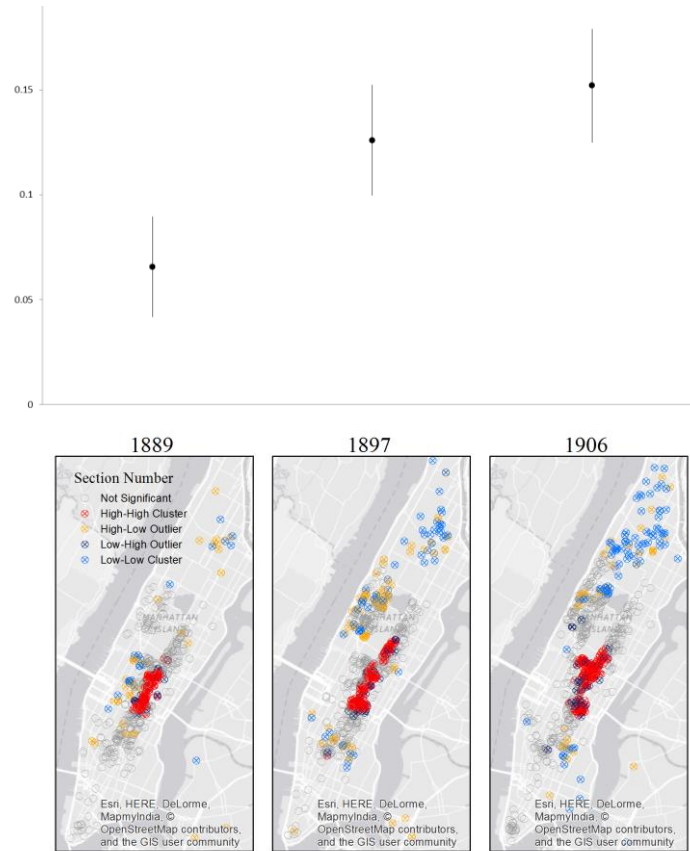


Figure 3.16. Overall residential clustering (Moran's I, with 95% confidence interval, top panel) and residential clusters of Philharmonic subscribers holding more desirable (red dots) and less desirable (light blue dots) seats, 1889-90, 1897-98, 1906-07.

Local indicators finally make it possible to observe in greater detail the precise dynamics that drove the evolution toward greater spatial association in seat quality. In the bottom panel of figure 3.16, bright red dots are individuals who sat in a good seat and whose seat quality correlated positively with that of their subscriber neighbors in the city. Conversely, light blue dots represent individuals who sat in less desirable seats and whose seat quality was positively associated with that of their city neighbors.

Throughout the period the growing association between residential and seat proximity was due in part to East Side subscribers seating in the hall's more desirable locations. These were typically social elite subscribers. Yet a large chunk of the increase in spatial autocorrelation is explained by subscribers sitting in less desirable sections, and who lived in Harlem and the Upper West Side. These new members of the audience were welcome, but their place in the hall was distinctly separated from that of the social elite.

CONCLUSION

On October 24, 1909, the *New York Times* outlined a plan put into place by the Philharmonic's new conductor, Gustav Mahler, to provide tickets to those who could not afford them. "It is only right", Mahler is quoted as saying, "that those who feel they cannot afford to pay the sum necessary to secure a seat at the regular symphony concerns should have the opportunity to hear good music well played at prices within their incomes (...) students at the universities, music pupils, working people of all sections of this great city are entitled to hear the best classical and modern programmes of orchestral music just as much as others who can easily afford such a privilege. The aim of the Philharmonic concerns will be to education. We do not want to give the public music it does not desire, yet we hope that what we offer will be not only suitable

to the tastes, but that it will broaden their musical understanding.” By that time the process of inclusion seems to have been the dominant logic of this institution.

Yet, as we argue, such inclusion was not unbridled. For Mahler continues by stating:

“Naturally, these concerts would have to be separate from the regular series.”

Celebrating good culture was important and it should include those who could not afford tickets, but not at social expense of those who could. Inclusion was important, but segregation was necessary.

In this chapter we show greater distinctiveness *and* greater inclusiveness happening together, through the segregated inclusion of a cultured audience. This segregated inclusion preserved and perhaps even increased the purity of the social elite, while also potentially providing them with a stamp of cultural legitimacy. Our findings are not completely incompatible with the cultural exclusion thesis, but they suggest a far more complex picture.

A looming question is whether the social elite deliberately engineered segregated inclusion with an eye to greater cultural legitimacy, or whether the pattern emerged as an adaptive response to what the non-elite were doing. It is a question that is difficult to answer with the kind of historical material available to us. Our qualitative sources suggest that the social elite sought to attract a cultured audience, in particular by trying to increase the profile of concerts and by transferring authority to cultural elites. Yet this evidence is not strong enough for us to fully adjudicate between engineering and adaptation.

There are important implications to our findings for understanding upper class formation. The consolidation and exclusion thesis is located within a kind of class analysis that does not have much room for the differentiation of social groups and of

realms of expertise. From this view, elites have the power to exclude ideas and people, and to subsume others under their tastes and interests.

Yet our findings suggest that consolidation did not involve the elite alone. Indeed, after the orchestra consolidated around a more consecrated repertoire it became a more popular space for new audiences to attend. Cultural participation was a way for the social elite to reassert their hegemony over other groups in society, yet only because they were able to benefit from the deference and cultural legitimacy accorded to them by a cultured audience. We thus propose a relational class analysis where cooptation, appropriation and segregated inclusion – as opposed to exclusion, monopolization, and conflict between fractions of the upper class – are central to explaining the experience of culture in the Gilded Age.

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