

## Introduction

Since the late 1980s, numerous European and American studies have proposed revisions for Bourdieu's single correspondence<sup>1</sup> between class and cultural taste (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007, 2010; DiMaggio, 1987; Erickson, 1996; Katz-Gerro, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Rimmer, 2012; Sullivan & Katz-Gerro, 2007; van Eijck, 2001; van Eijck & Lievens, 2008). However, these studies have not provided further empirical evidence concerning the reason for the cultural taste of elites becoming omnivorous. No related empirical study in Taiwan has investigated the possible turn in cultural taste in Taiwanese society. Therefore, the present study investigated the change of cultural taste distinction in Taiwanese society. Bourdieu's perspectives on habitus, cultural taste, and social trajectory were adopted as a theoretical framework for examining the influence of intergenerational social mobility on the cultural taste of the child generation.

In the past two decades, Taiwan has undergone considerable industrial and social transformation (Lin, T.-H., 2009, 2013; Lin & Hu, 2011). However, few studies have examined the relationship between cultural taste and social mobility from the context of social change. Previous studies have mostly investigated the formation of cultural taste and its validity from the perspective of family background (De Graaf, De Graaf, & Kraaykamp, 2000; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 1989, 2011), overlooking the vital role of social mobility in analyzing cultural taste to distinguish class.

When social transformation brings about a change in social structure, the structural and individual opportunities for social mobility are enhanced. Therefore, this study addressed the following questions: What changes in cultural taste are caused by these trajectories of social mobility? Does high social mobility lead to individuals or groups having omnivorous cultural tastes, or is cultural taste more closely connected to a person's present class position? Through exploring these questions, this article aims to investigate changes in cultural taste and the influence of social mobility on cultural taste in Taiwan.

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<sup>1</sup> Bourdieu (1984) emphasized that a single connection exists between cultural taste and social class. In other words, people of higher social class prefer highbrow or elite culture, whereas those of lower social classes tend to enjoy popular or mass culture. Through daily practices such as leisure activities and art appreciation, class distinction manifests in taste difference between classes.

## Literature Review

### Homology and Omnivore Argument

Early studies in this field have discussed how cultural consumption became a critical social practice (e.g., Simmel, 1971; Veblen, 1931). However, a relatively complete theoretical and empirical foundation did not emerge until the seminal work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Bourdieu, 1984) (hereafter referred to as “Distinction”). The homological argument in *Distinction* was derived from Bourdieu’s rethinking of Weber’s concepts of class and status groups (Bourdieu, 1984, p. xii). To escape the binary opposition between class subjectivism and objectivism in Marxist theory, Bourdieu adopted and reinterpreted two basic concepts from Weber’s theory of stratification (Wright, 1985): class and status group (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 7). Bourdieu considered that in daily life, class always manages to appear legitimately in a status group (Swartz, 1997, pp. 150-153; Weininger, 2005, p. 95). Consequently, under Bourdieu’s theoretical context, homologous associations are generated between class and status groups as well as between class and the cultural tastes of a status group.

Related empirical studies in Taiwan have mostly adopted the single correspondence between class and cultural taste as the theoretical framework for analysis. Several studies have investigated the difference in the cultural preferences of different social groups (Chiu, 1997; Huang, Chang, & Wang, 2010; Hwang, 2000); other studies have examined the validity of cultural capital in various fields (Chang, 2006, 2010; Hsieh & Chuang, 2016; Huang, Wu, & Yu, 2015; Lin & Wu, 2007). However, most studies have focused on the differences in cultural capital among various social groups and the effect of this difference on student academic achievements (Chang, 2011; Hwang & Wu, 2011; Lee & Yu, 2005; Lee & Hwang, 2004; Lin, P.-F., 2009; Su & Hwang, 2009; Sun & Hwang, 1996). However, no study conducted in Taiwan has investigated the influence of social mobility on cultural taste.

Ever since their detection in the U.S. in the 1980s, omnivores have received much attention in cultural sociology. DiMaggio (1987) and Wilensky (1964) have described the phenomenon of omnivorous cultural taste in Western society. Furthermore, Peterson (1992), Peterson and Kern (1996), and Peterson and Simkus (1992) have explicitly identified that the cultural taste of elites in Western society has become increasingly omnivorous. Peterson and Simkus showed that in American society, people with a higher vocational status enjoy not only fine musical genres, but also popular music. Peterson and Kern compared the changes in cultural tastes in American society from