THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL STATISTICS, FROM LEGITIMISATION TO CRITIQUE (FRANCE 1960-1990)[1]

in Making Culture Count: The Politics of Cultural Measurement, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, p. 42-52.

Vincent Dubois, University of Strasbourg (France) SAGE, UMR 7363

The production and utilisation of statistics on cultural audiences and practices has been a matter of public cultural policy in France since the early days of this policy in the 1960s. When they are not directly produced in-house, cultural statistics are generally commissioned by the Ministry of Culture or public cultural institutions. Most importantly, cultural statistics relate to a founding principle of public cultural policy, as they enable the measurement of cultural democratisation - regardless of what the generic term 'democratisation' is supposed to mean precisely (Donnat 1991).

Having established this relation between statistics on cultural practices and public cultural intervention, most scholars go on to investigate the ability of cultural policies to democratise access to culture. As in the fields of unemployment or crime - though admittedly on a different scale - these numbers are used to measure the efficiency of public policy. In this chapter, I do not adopt this evaluative perspective, which, as we will later see, often causes controversy. Instead of emphasising the numbers as such, I focus on those who talk about the numbers and, so to speak, make the numbers talk. In the process, I reconsider the role of numbers-based arguments in the debates, strategies and struggles on state cultural policy.

This role has been a changing one. Here, I wish to address the transformation in the use of statistics on cultural practices and audiences in the legitimisation strategies of state cultural policy in France. I will show how these statistics, which were historically constructed as instruments in the rise of public cultural policy, ended up backfiring and being used as ammunition for the critics of state cultural policy. In order to make this transformation more visible, I will address two key junctures. The first one is the early 1960s, the early days of public cultural statistics, which coincided with the invention of state cultural policy. The second one is the publication of the new national survey in 1990, which sparked controversy on the statistics on cultural practices at a critical point in what is now known in France as the crisis of state cultural policy.

THE DEFINITION OF 'CULTURAL NEEDS' AND THE LEGITIMISATION OF PUBLIC CULTURAL POLICY THROUGH STATISTICS IN THE 1960S

The conditions of possibility of cultural statistics

The production and use of cultural statistics took off in the mid 1960s, thanks to a then unlikely conjunction between the fields of public administration, cultural community work and social science. At the time, distinctive rationales at work in each of these three spaces converged to make such a conjunction possible (Dubois 1999; 2012).

In the early 1960s, the utopia of a rationally planned public policy informed by science was widespread in the field of public administration. While economics was the government's main auxiliary science, sociology also played a part in the elaboration of this 'scienticised' policy. This is in part due to the diversification of public policy domains; the evolution of planning is

a particularly good case in point. Planning was organised after World War II under the authority of the state, with the participation of experts, trade unions and other representatives (Kindleberger 1967). From 1946 onwards, successive multiannual plans were designed to forecast and organise the development of the country. They initially focused on economic infrastructure and production. At the beginning of the 1960s, planning was extended to 'social development', including education, sports and culture (Fourth Plan, 1962-1965). With these new policy domains, planners had to face new 'uncertainties', as they said. In order to reduce these uncertainties, they called upon scientific expertise from sociologists. Leading administrators such as Pierre Massé, *Commissaire Général au Plan* (Commissioner-General of the French National Planning Board), or Claude Gruson, director of INSEE (French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies), openly asked for the input of sociologists, including on cultural matters (see for instance Gruson 1964).

Social scientists were also in demand in the circles of cultural community work and popular education. At that time, cultural management functions were starting to become professionalised, with specialised training programmes, new positions and organisations. They required new skills – both symbolic and practical – that social science was able to provide (see Ion 1993; Saez and Claude 1981).

The fields of social science and of sociology in particular were, for their part, still under construction. Sociology was still a weak discipline in the academic field: it had yet to achieve emancipation from the faculties of humanities and their dominant model, and it offered few professional perspectives (de Montlibert 1982). The public demand for sociological research was accordingly used as a resource to face this double challenge; disciplinary autonomy was conquered at the price of a temporary dependence on those who commissioned this research

(Pollak 1976). Thus, numerous sociologists responded favourably to institutional demands, including for instance, Pierre Bourdieu (Dubois 2011). Culture was one of the areas of this collaboration between policy makers and researchers who specialised in this domain, from Joffre Dumazedier (1967), who prophesised a 'society of leisure', to Pierre Bourdieu, as well as specialists of other fields, who conducted more short-term studies, such as the urban sociologist Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, and the promoter of organisational sociology Michel Crozier.

These favourable conditions for the development of cultural sociology and statistics would probably not have sufficed without the mobilisation of agents who acted as promoters of research applied to cultural policy. A case in point is Joffre Dumazedier who, as he combined activist resources (as the President of the main popular education network at the time, *Peuple et Culture*), scientific authority (his work on the sociology of leisure had a wide audience) and relational capital in senior administration and planning circles, bridged these different spaces alone. He was not only a scholar bringing in his knowledge; thanks to all these different positions he was 'naturally' predisposed to theorising what he saw as necessary relations between science and policy and achieving a synthesis between the two. Another example is Augustin Girard, a rapporteur in the Plan (National Planning Board), who quite literally invented his function as a mediator between decision-makers and scholars, and managed to structure their relations within the framework of the Fourth and Fifth Plans and eventually create the *Service des Etudes et de la Recherche* in the *Ministère des Affaires Culturelles*. Organised in Bourges in November 1964, the conference *Des chiffres pour la culture* (Figures for Culture) was a turning point in the mobilisation for the recourse to scientific research in the elaboration of cultural policies. Bringing together officials, economists and sociologists,

the conference resulted in, among other things, the adoption of a motion for the development of research that benefits cultural policy.

Cultural Statistics as a Legitimisation Tool

This encounter between science and politics played a significant role in shaping the nascent cultural policy. Far from merely helping to improve the rationality of decisions, it was part and parcel of the strategies of legitimising a policy and a ministry that had yet to be properly established within the field of governmental policy.

Created in 1959, the *Ministère des Affaires Culturelles* initially had few resources of any kind and was often perceived as a futile invention, designed to have a short lifespan. This configuration informed the investment of its promoters in planning and in the use of scientific expertise. The recourse to planning and/or to science served as ways to make up for the lack of financial resources (thanks to budgeting for cultural facilities) and informational resources (thanks to studies and various forms of consultation). They also gave cultural policy credibility, conferred by the reference to 'objective facts' established by science, useful to fend off the common suspicion that public cultural choices derive from the arbitrary tastes and whims of political leaders. Lastly, they were helpful to discredit members of the establishment in the cultural field (such as the *Académie des Beaux-arts*) and exclude them from the elaboration of cultural policy; they were now perceived as archaic when the use of statistics and scholarship enabled Ministry officials to assert both their 'modernity' and the 'scientific' legitimacy of their intervention in the cultural world. As they proclaimed an end to the 'era of personal taste' (*des goûts et des couleurs*), cultural policy agents conformed to the norms of public policy and asserted a distinctive competence allowing them to take stances in

the cultural field. They used 'figures for culture' as part of the 'rite of institution' (Bourdieu 1991, 117) through which they affirmed their legitimacy as holders of their new functions.

This logic fully applied to the core of the new state function that was cultural policy: the democratisation of access to culture. By quantifying the humanist project of cultural democratisation in the name of which the Ministry had been founded, the production of statistics demonstrated the well-foundedness of the endeavour. These statistics showed that a high proportion of French citizens never go to museums or attend shows, established 'cultural needs' and revealed gaps in attendance between different social categories (the educated urban bourgeoisie versus small-town working class, for instance). The politico-scientific hybrid of cultural democratisation based on statistic evidence both reinforced the state's 'cultural mission' and translated lofty ministerial language into bureaucratic terms by presenting a state of the arts and measurable objectives. Cultural statistics both served to show the need for a cultural policy of democratisation and to demonstrate the capacity of the Ministry to pursue that policy.

THE SURVEY ON FRENCH CULTURAL PRACTICES IN CRITIQUES OF THE CULTURAL STATE *CA.* 1990

Twenty-five years after the *Colloque de Bourges* and the concomitant production of cultural statistics and cultural policy, the third major survey on French cultural practices, published in 1990, was used as a weapon by the detractors of the 'cultural state'. The numbers indicating the persistence of social differences regarding attendance in cultural institutions and reading practices fuelled the suspicions and controversies surrounding ministerial policies.

A Widened Space of Reception

In 1990, the space of reception - defined as the range of agents who expressed opinions on the findings of the survey - was significantly wider than the relatively limited circle that was concerned with such questions in the 1960s. This time around, the statistics were discussed far beyond the fields of cultural administration and of the sociology of culture.

Two volumes were published simultaneously: one presented the findings of the new survey; the other made a synthesis of the evolutions that had occurred since 1973 (Donnat 1990; Donnat and Cogneau 1990). The latter sold 11,000 copies (far more than the compilations of findings from preceding surveys, and double the amount sold by the next one). The two books were commented on by specialists, but many politicians, journalists and pundits also chimed in to discuss the results displayed in these volumes.

In the press, my main point of interest here, many write-ups appeared in mainstream publications, authored both by columnists and culture writers. The (non-exhaustive) press kit prepared by the research unit of the Ministry of Culture (*Département des Etudes et de la Prospective*) includes more than 90 articles published in the six months following the release of the survey. More than half appeared in the mainstream media (this amounts to 49 articles, including 15 in national daily newspapers, 15 in regional daily newspapers, 12 in weekly news magazines and seven in monthly generalist or news magazines), and a dozen featured in mainstream cultural magazines. The rest were from professional publications of the cultural sector (13) and specialised or professional publications outside the cultural sector (17). During the month of April 1990 (when both books were released), around ten radio programmes focused exclusively or essentially on the survey (mostly on France Culture, but also on other major national stations like RTL). A few mentions were made on television, and

a segment addressed the subject in the main national channel's evening news broadcast (TF1, 2 April 1990).

The Critics' Arguments

The new comments were mostly critical. The tone was set by the story published in weekly news magazine *Le Point* (four pages at the beginning of the issue), which had received exclusive advance copies (de Saint-Pulgent 1990). Three main types of arguments stand out from the articles on the books.

First, the validity of the survey results was occasionally questioned, particularly because they were based on self-reports (see *La Quinzaine littéraire*, May 1-15, 1990; *Libération*, May 11, 1990). Although they were generally deemed too low, the numbers on practices were accused of being overestimated or artificially inflated as they aggregated activities with quite variable intensities and meanings (when one reports 'making music', this can refer both to a regular amateur practice and to occasional doodling on an instrument one can't really play).[2] Second, there were some manifestations of hostility toward the statistical objectification - and more broadly of the scientific analysis - of cultural matters: why spend so much money to say what everyone already knows? In the newspaper *Le Monde*, writer Danièle Sallenave urged to fight against the 'terrorism of social science' which 'reduces the literary experience to polling numbers' (1990, 6).

Unsurprisingly, the bulk of the criticism was directed at the findings of the survey, on which the third type of argument focuses. Judged essentially in negative terms, the numbers on

cultural practices provided an opportunity to point out the 'failures' and the 'shortcomings' of state cultural policy.

The insufficient progression (or regression) of several practices (attendance of theatrical plays, reading, et cetera.) fuelled the general thesis that cultural policies have a very limited impact on practices, or even that they have nothing to do with their evolution, be it good or bad. This idea was expressed through four propositions of varying critical intensity. The first one posits that the results achieved are weak in light of the investments that were made: 'The considerable efforts made for the development of public reading, for instance, only resulted in a very small increase of the number of library registrations' (Lepape 1990); or, phrased more aggressively and unequivocally: the French people are 'reluctant to follow directives from the *rue de Valois* [the Ministry] and do not care for its largesse' (de Saint-Pulgent 1990). The second one states that the Ministry of Culture has little impact on the evolution of practices: those that have increased are mostly outside its jurisdiction (purchase of audiovisual equipment, record listening, TV watching) or have not specifically been the target of cultural policy (amateur practices). In addition to failing to enable a significant progression of cultural practices, cultural policy was unable to curb their decline. This third proposition is particularly emphasised regarding reading, a cultural practice *par excellence*: 'Not only has the "relationship to reading" not changed socially, despite the aspirations for democratisation, but it has actually weakened among the most loyal practitioners' (Lepape 1990). Ultimately, according to a fourth proposition, government is powerless: television and new technologies, not the state, are 'the masters of the game'. 'Now practically independent from political authorities, the [cultural] phenomenon has largely fallen in the hands of industrials (as technological progress advances), creative types and […] pollsters' (Bourcier 1990). For these critics, all of the above suggests calling into question the very need for a cultural policy -

generally between the lines, but sometimes in a very explicit fashion: 'Should we do away with the Ministry of Culture?' (*Le Figaro*, June 23-24, 1990).

This question was asked not only because democratisation policies were thought to have been inefficient, but also because cultural policy was accused of having had negative effects. Critics argued that however noble, the initial intentions ultimately yielded undesirable consequences. The support given to artists, they said, amounted to 'clientelism': a patronage system to the advantage of a select few in good standing with the state that did not actually benefit the best artists. Likewise, the organisation of cultural life for democratisation purposes birthed a self-serving bureaucracy.

The publication of the survey on cultural practices also served as an opportunity for a variation on the usual discourses of cultural pessimism: 'the era of emptiness', 'the demise of the written word', 'the civilisation of leisure', 'the decline of true culture' – these mainstays of the rhetoric were at least partly blamed on public authorities. Judging from the headlines of daily and weekly papers – often on the front page – the situation was critical: 'Barbarism is nigh', 'Culture: no longer what it used to be' (Poirot-Delpech 1990; *Télérama* 1990). The 'defeat of the mind', denounced by Alain Finkielkraut (1987) not long before, was again placed in the spotlight.[3] Genuine culture was seen as under threat, due to the inconsiderate broadening of the definition of 'culture', leading to the triumph of screens over written words, and of leisure over intellectual activities. The survey on cultural practices played a doubly central role in this controversy. First, it could be read as the validation of a growing relativism: 'the space of leisure' was no longer structured only on the basis of traditional cultural classifications but now characterised by 'eclecticism'. Secondly, the survey itself was accused of being an instrument for the promotion of 'levelling', because it gave equal

consideration to different cultural ‘genres’ but also to ‘cultured’ practices of ‘infra-cultural’ activities, such as eating out and going to the opera (‘outings’), playing music and DIY (domestic leisure activities). Beyond the survey as such, the entire cultural policy of the 1980s, and the relativistic ideology that was thought to have underpinned it, were of course being targeted.

Between the lines, the absence of other possible stances becomes apparent as one analyses these comments. It was implicitly agreed that watching TV is the opposite of a ‘good’ cultural practice (‘TV has killed reading’), but virtually no one thought it useful to consider the transformations that encouraged the commodification of audiovisual media. Pundits unanimously observed that democratisation had ‘failed’, but did not give any thought to what might stop the trend (such as alternative strategies for cultural diffusion or a reassessment of the role of education). Lastly, although the Ministry and the Minister were blamed in harsh terms, no one in the institution stepped up to make a statement, organise a press conference or launch a counter-offensive - a fact that seems somewhat surprising considering that the Ministry and the Minister usually had a strong media presence.

In other words, the survey was received and read in almost exclusively negative terms. The three modes of arguments evidenced by Albert Hirschmann (1991) in the reactionary rhetoric prevailed as categories of reception for the survey results: public policy has no impact on cultural practices (the futility thesis); cultural policy has produced unplanned and adverse effects (the perversity thesis); or it has encouraged a ‘relativist’ trend that is harmful toward ‘true culture’ (the jeopardy thesis). In the next and last section, I attempt to understand the reasons why this type of reception dominated.

The reasons for a critical reception

Some of the reasons for this critical reception arguably relate to the survey as such, and particularly to the synthesis on the evolution of cultural practices since 1973. In addition to the usual effect of using percentages (which implicitly suggests that reaching 100 per cent is the goal), there is also an effect induced by the long-term historical presentation format, which highlights the lack of a positive evolution during a period when cultural policies were particularly active.[4] Seen in light of the democratisation project, this fuels a doubly negative judgment (in the sense that the diffusion of practices has been weak and that there has been no progress), which even comes out in the formulation of the AFP dispatch: '75 per cent of French people *still* haven't attended a dance performance or a classical music concert' (Agence France Presse, April 2 1990, my emphasis). The survey could therefore be received as a negative evaluation of state cultural policy, especially at a time when public policy was being increasingly evaluated.[5] Additionally, since the previous survey dated back to 1981, the 1988-89 survey was perceived as a means to assess the results of the policy conducted during the 'Lang years', that is, the period during which Jack Lang, a popular political leader at the time, was Minister of Culture.[6] The new numbers on cultural practices could therefore be used in the cultural, political and media controversies on this policy.

The reception of the cultural statistics should therefore be considered within the broader space of the debates surrounding state culture policy in the 1980s, and in light of the state of that space at the time of the two books' publication. During the turn of the 1980s, two anniversaries provided opportunities for taking stock of past achievements: the thirtieth anniversary of the *Ministère des Affaires Culturelles* and that of the 'Mitterrand decade' (see for instance *Commentaire* 1989; 1990a; 1990b). A lot of water had passed under the bridge since the early 1980s, when many media and cultural pundits were quite enthused by the

cultural changes brought by the government. The sense of disillusionment that comes after a long time in power resulted in the decrease of support for Jack Lang's policies. In the months that followed his return to the helm of the Ministry of Culture after François Mitterrand's re-election, the reports on the so-called Lang II policies spread the idea that the advocate of 'imagination' was 'running out of steam' - the observation did not only apply to the Minister himself, but also to his eponymous policy.[7] In hindsight, the debate sparked by the publication of the survey on French cultural practices appears as a rehearsal of the later controversy caused by Marc Fumaroli's book *L'Etat culturel* (The Cultural State), in which he used cultural policy as a parable on the 'left in power' (see Fumaroli 1991; Dubois 1993).

These transformations and political struggles combined with ongoing ones in the intellectual field. Indeed, the 1990 debate on the survey on French cultural practices coincided with the rise of conservative intellectuals in the space of cultural commentary: traditional academic conservatives enjoying recognition from major institutions (like Marc Fumaroli) and neo-conservatives working on the boundaries between literature, essayism and philosophical journalism, who were more indebted to the media, such as Alain Finkielkraut and Danièle Sallenave (see Pinto 1998, 62). This shift in the power relations of the intellectual field tended to reverse the meaning ascribed to cultural gaps. From the same negative observation - the cultural level of French people is declining - two entirely different consequences were drawn. Whereas it originally justified the 'creation of new "needs" for "filling" the gaps in [giving access] to job markets' (Pudal 1992, 181) and the provision of symbolic rewards to those who worked at filling these gaps with cultural policies, it was now used to defend the necessity of protecting classical culture against the 'barbarians'. This shift gave intellectual-essayists in need of academic legitimacy the opportunity to act as custodians of 'true culture' in the updated media landscape – in opposition to cultural policy, or at least state cultural policy. It

is clearly not an accident that the denunciation of cultural 'decline' focused on the written word – precisely the medium through which these new 'cultural watchdogs' hoped to gain recognition.

Conclusion

Having enabled the 'pioneers' of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs to rationalise their faith in the need to democratise culture, statistics on cultural practices fuelled controversies on the very existence of a cultural policy twenty years later. They were also used to give a bad conscience to those in the Ministry and in public cultural institutions accused of having failed in their mission of proselytism. This historical comparison shows that there is no inevitability to the essentially negative use of these statistics - and by extension the negative meaning ascribed to them - that has progressively prevailed in France. This goes to show that numbers do not speak for themselves. They only fully make sense in light of the contexts in which they are used and of the uses they elicit. The analysis of these contexts and uses is therefore necessary to understand what statistics socially and politically mean, beyond their technical and scientific significance. This is what I call the politics of cultural statistics.

Chapter references

Bourcier, Jean-Pierre (1990) 'Image et Son au Menu Culturel des Français', *Libération*, April 3.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

Commentaire (1989) 'La Politique Culturelle en France I', 12(48).

Commentaire (1990a) 'La Politique Culturelle en France II' 13(49).

Commentaire (1990b) 'La Politique Culturelle en France III' 13(50).

de Montlibert Christian, (1982) 'La Professionnalisation de la Sociologie et ses Limites', *Revue Française de Sociologie,* 23(1), 37-53.

de Saint-Pulgent, Maryvonne. (1990) 'Culture: l'Etat de la France', *Le Point*, April 2.

Donnat, Olivier (1990) Les Pratiques Culturelles des Français. Résultats de l'Enquête de 1989 (Paris: La Documentation française).

Donnat, Olivier and Denis Cogneau (1990) Les Pratiques Culturelles des Français. Évolution 1973-1989 (Paris: La Documentation française / La Découverte).

Donnat, Olivier (1998) *Les Pratiques Culturelles des Français, Enquête 1997* (Paris: La Documentation Française).

Donnat, Olivier (1991) 'Démocratie Culturelle: la Fin d'un Mythe', *Esprit,* 3(4), 65-79.

Donnat, Olivier, and Sylvie Octobre (eds) (2001) *Les Publics des Equipements Culturels. Méthodes et Résultats d'Analyse* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture).

Dubois, Vincent (1993) 'Politiques Culturelles et Polémiques Médiatiques', *Politix*, 24, 5-19.

Dubois, Vincent (1999) 'L'Administration Culturelle entre Investissement Technique et Dénégation Technocratique', in Vincent Dubois and Delphine Dulong (eds.) *La Question Technocratique* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg), 199-216.

Dubois, Vincent (2011) 'Cultural Capital Theory vs. Cultural Policy Beliefs: How Pierre Bourdieu could have become a Cultural Policy Advisor and why he did not', *Poetics*, 39(6), 491-506.

Dubois, Vincent (2012) *La Politique Culturelle. Genèse d'une Catégorie d'Intervention Publique* (Paris: Belin).

Dumazedier, Joffre (1967) *Toward a Society of Leisure* (New York: Free Press).

Finkielkraut, Alain (1987) *La Défaite de la Pensée* (Paris: Gallimard).

Fumaroli, Marc (1991) *L'Etat Culturel* (Paris: De Fallois).

Gruson, Claude (1964) 'Planification Economique et Recherches Sociologiques', *Revue Française de Sociologie,* 5(4), 435-446.

Hirschmann, Albert O. (1991) *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Ion, Jacques (1993) 'Sciences Sociales et Education Populaire : un Vieux Concubinage ?' in Geneviève Poujol (ed.) *L'Education Populaire au Tournant des Années Soixante. Etat, Mouvement, Sciences Sociales* (Paris: Peuple et Culture, Document de l'INJEP), 127-133.

Kindelberger, Charles P. (1967) 'French Planning' in Max F. Millikan (ed.) *National Economic Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press), 279-303.

Lepape, Pierre (1990) 'Années Télé, Années Musique' *Le Monde*, April 1-2.

Looseley, David (1997) *The Politics of Fun: Cultural Policy and Debate in Contemporary France* (London: Bloomsbury Academic).

Pinto, Louis (1998) 'Épreuves et Prouesses de l'Esprit Littéraire' *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales,* 123, 45-64.

Poirot-Delpech, Bertrand (1990) 'Alerte à la Barbarie', *Le Monde*, April 25.

Pollak, Michael (1976) 'La Planification des Sciences Sociales', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 2-3, 105-121.

Pudal, Bernard (1992) 'Lettrés, Illettrés et Politique', *Genèses* 8,169-181.

Sallenave, Danilèle (1990) 'La Reconquête du Reel', *Le Monde*, May 11.

Saez, Guy, and Jean-François Claude (1981) 'De l'Educateur-Chercheur à l'Animateur Sociologue. Science de la Formation et Formation à la Science à Peuple et Culture', *Revue Internationale d'Action Communautaire* 45(5), 105-114.

Télérama (1990) 'La Culture Fout le Camp'. May 16.

Endnotes

---

[1] This is a revised version of 'La statistique culturelle, de la croyance à la mauvaise conscience', in Olivier Donnat, Pierre Tolila (eds.) (2003) *Public(s) et Politiques Culturelles*, (Paris: Presses de Sciences), 25-32. I want to thank the editors and the publisher for authorising this new publication. This text was translated from French by Jean-Yves Bart, and received support from the Excellence Initiative of the University of Strasbourg funded by the French government's Future Investments programme.

[2] See for instance a response to the survey taking the form of a monograph in a *lycée* (high school) near Paris, which aims to demonstrate that musical practices are being overestimated: Jacques Drillon (1990) 'Vous faites de la musique ?', *Nouvel observateur*, 21 June.

[3] *L'événement du jeudi* (19-25 April 1990) published a two-page-long interview with Alain Finkielkraut as part of an extensive and mostly very critical feature on the reception of the survey.

[4] Incidentally, this is a highly debatable assertion, but discussing it would be the subject of a different paper altogether.

[5] The 1997 update of the survey included the following disclaimer: 'In light of the reactions the publication of the previous survey results elicited, it does not seem unnecessary to point out a few precautions to keep in mind while reading this book; the survey […] should not be made into something it isn't – a tool for evaluating public policy on cultural matters'. (Donnat 1998, 10).

[6] The survey 'allowed Jack Lang to assess the actual impact of the roughly 65 billion Francs that were spent by his ministry to improve the culture of French people' (de Saint-Pulgent 1990). On the 'Lang years', see Looseley (1997).

[7] See, among many others, ‘Culture: Lang I et Lang II’, *Le Monde*, November 16 1989; ‘Le “veston rose” perd des couleurs’, *Le Figaro*, October 26 1989; ‘Jack Lang, acte II’, *Le Point*, February 12 1990.