*culture*

# strategic foresight

**PRACTICES AND USERS**

# Generational approach to cultural and media practices[1]

## Contents

## Foreword

*In presenting the results of a generational analysis performed using four waves of surveys on French cultural practices[2], the DEPS wants to start a medium term forward-looking review.*

*The retrospective analysis that has been performed on a dozen cultural and media practices confirms the generational nature of most changes observed since the start of the 1970s: Whether in the increase in screen based culture, the generalisation of listening to recorded music or the fall in reading daily newspapers or books, on each occasion the changes have been initiated by a new generation, before being continued and amplified by those following. In consequence, everything gives reason to think that the fundamental changes currently taking place could increase in the next fifteen years in conjunction with the renewal of the generations. This first step allows us to take the measure of the fundamental transformations that we have experienced in recent decades, even before the internet and digital arrived to overturn the conditions for access to culture. And above all, it emphasises the current necessity of attempting to imagine our future cultural and media practices to be able to adjust provision and public policies.*

**P. C.**

## THE GENERATIONAL APPROACH

The generational approach is an original type of analysis that enriches and goes beyond analysis by age[3]. It is based on three essential principles:

- What unites the members of a generation is living through the same history at the same moment in their life: Each generation has its own life calendar with specific expectations of life that are specific to it, but also more or less long initial training periods, etc.;
- Each generation is "marked" – often for life – by initiating experiences experienced in youth (this is the concept of "generational marker"). This is why a generation is described by the outstanding events of its twenties; the impact is so much greater if History has been intensified by these events or breaks;
- Each generation receives an inheritance of the values transmitted by those before it, but with the most recent generations, they now live and learn more with their peers than their parents (the concept of "generational mimicry").
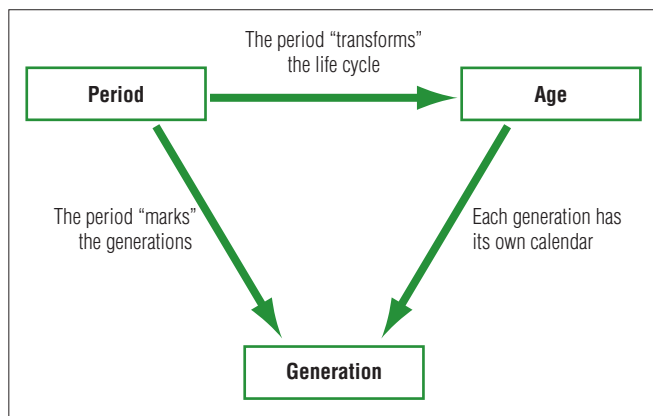


Source: BIPE

## Description of generations

A generation is defined as a grouping of individuals of the same age, sharing the same values, mainly formed at about the age of 20. This is the spirit in which the generations defined by the BIPE were named on the basis of the major events that marked their members around their twentieth year[4] (see Graph 1).

This approach, in covering all the cohorts born in the 20th century, has lead to the identification of three types of generations, depending on their roles in relation to the previous generation (represented by the columns in the table):

1. Generations referred to as "pioneers", who "invent" the components of discontinuity before they are shared by their cogenerationers;
2. Generations known as "changing", who experience a marked discontinuity in feelings, practices and tastes, as demonstrated by those who were 20 years old in May 1968 in generalizing the upheavals initiated by a few individuals from the previous generation;
3. Generations known as "followers", who only apply and diffuse what they receive from the changing generation that precedes them.

But this cyclic aspect of generations must not lead us to forget the course of history, which profoundly influences the "motors" of each generation. Going right back to the start of the 20th century, we observe that the oldest generations, born between 1905 and 1934, define themselves above all by economic criteria, and the generations born between 1935 and 1964 by cultural criteria, whereas the new generations, born between 1965 and 1994, appear to develop with technological changes as a measure.

For each of these generations, it is possible to collect a set of both quantitative (numbers, percentage of single people, etc.) and qualitative (values, outstanding personalities, cult films, etc.) data that characterise them. Given this, adopting a generational approach comes back to considering society as the place where these distinct generations gather together.

To bring out the generational phenomena that can appear in the analysis of individual behaviour, the procedure adopted in this study is above all graphical: The ordinate axis represents an indicator allowing the measurement of the analysed behaviour and along the abscissa the age of the individuals.

The generational emphasis appears when, instead of representing the behaviour of the whole population by a single curve that is like a photograph of society at a given date, we choose to trace a curve for each generation, each retracing the his-

3. This approach has been developed at BIPE over fifteen years by Bernard PRÉEL, the author of two works on the subject: *Le choc des générations* [*Generation shock*], Paris, La Découverte, 2000 and *Les générations mutantes* [*Changing generations*], Paris, La Découverte, 2005.
4. This division into generations results from numerous studies undertaken by BIPE in various domains (culture, media, consumption…). It has been possible to prove its relevance and robustness. It must be clear that the name for each generation – as it appears in Graph 1 – is simply for simplification and communication, a generation naturally not being able to summarise itself in a single word, however characteristic.

*Graph 1 – Description of generations*

| | PIONEERS | CHANGING | FOLLOWERS |
| | Vanguard | Dominant | Rear guard |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wave 1 Economic | **1905-1914** | **1915-1924** | **1925-1934** |
| | 20 years between 1925 and 1934 | 20 years between 1935 and 1944 | 20 years between 1945 and 1954 |
| | *Crazy years* | *Crash (exodus)* | *Liberation* |
| Wave 2 Cultural | **1935-1944** | **1945-1954** | **1955-1964** |
| | 20 years between 1955 and 1964 | 20 years between 1965 and 1974 | 20 years between 1975 and 1984 |
| | *Algeria (Rock)* | *68 (Sixties)* | *Crisis* |
| Wave 3 Technological | **1965-1974** | **1975-1984** | **1985-1994** |
| | 20 years between 1985 and 1994 | 20 years between 1995 and 2004 | 20 years between 2005 and 2014 |
| | *Aids* | *Internet* | *11 September* |

Source: BIPE

tory of the generation at different stages of its life cycle. By reintroducing a historic depth into the graph, this method of representation also allows the interpretation traps in a transverse analysis to be avoided, by adopting the contrasting approach of a longitudinal view of individual behaviour.

The daily press reading case shows the use of these generational curves well (see Graph 2).

On the left part of the graph, we see an instantaneous cut for daily press reading in 1997. It represents the percentage of persons questioned declaring that they read daily press headline "daily or almost" as a function of their age. The curve obtained increases with age and so presents a fairly positive portrait of the future of the daily press, implying that the recruitment difficulties that the

*Graph 2 – Instantaneous cut (1997) and generational curves for reading the daily press*
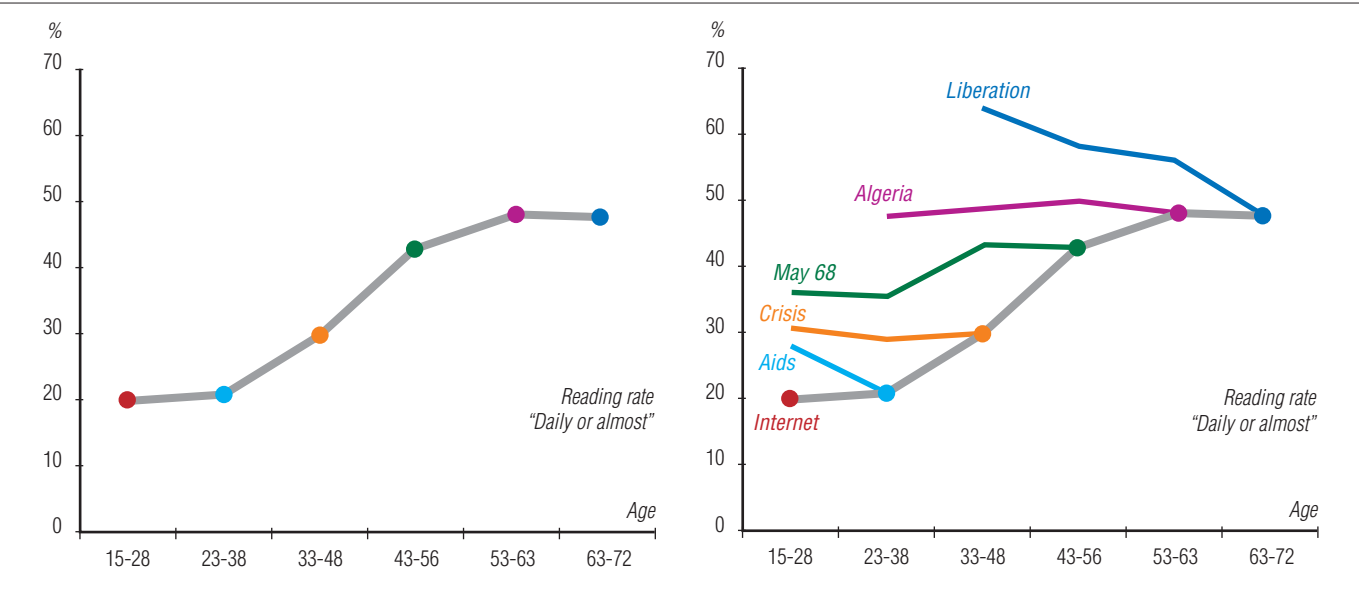
On these graphs, and on those that follow them, the age axis is marked in partly overlapping ranges. In fact, the interval between surveys not being constant, it was not possible to use ten year ranges that would have perfectly corresponded to the ages of the different generations at the four survey dates.

The generations that are significantly represented in the four survey waves have seen their age change as below*:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wave 1: 1973 | 19-**28** | 29-**38** | 39-**48** | | | |
| Wave 2: 1981 | 17-26 | 27-36 | 37-46 | 47-**56** | | |
| Wave 3: 1988 | 15-23 | 24-33 | 34-43 | 44-53 | 54-**63** | |
| Wave 4: 1997 | **13**-22 | **23**-32 | **33**-42 | **43**-52 | **53**-62 | **63**-72 |
| **Choice age slots** | **15-28** | **23-38** | **33-48** | **43-56** | **53-63** | **63-72** |

Each selected range is limited by the minimum and maximum age of the ranges concerned in the four survey waves.

So for the first age range: In 1973, the youngest belonged to the *May 68* generation and were between 19 and 28 years old. In 1981, the youngest belonged to the *Crisis* generation and were between 17 and 26 years old. They belonged to the *Aids* generation in 1988 (Age 15-23) and the *Internet* generation in 1997 (Age 13-22). So to define the first age range (15-28), we choose a scale from the minimum of the young generation at the first survey (*Internet* in 1997, or 15 years old and not 13 due to the protocol for the survey because those under 15 are not taken into account), to the maximum age of the young generation of the first survey (*May 68* in 1973, or 28 years old).

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* The colours, which are identical to those in Graph 2, allow each generation to be followed from one survey to another.

written press currently encounters do not augur for a durable disaffection, but for a simple effect of age, young people today being destined to start reading as they age.

The right part of Graph 2 shows the generational curves that trace the behaviour of each generation individually, as it has changed since 1973. The first observation that comes out of this is that each of the curves is relatively flat: The reading rate that characterises a generation at about twenty remains approximately the same at forty, fifty or sixty years. Consequently we cannot assume that "the older you are, the more you read", but rather that "those who have read, will read" (and its pessimistic version "those who have not read, will not read"). The second observation arises from the comparison of different generational curves between each other. In fact, it appears that each generation is characterised by a lower reading rate than the preceding and higher than the following: So we say that reading the daily press shows a negative generational effect. The prospects thus sketched out for the future of the daily press are radically different from those that were envisaged very recently: If each former generation is replaced little by little by a generation with lower daily press reading habits, the global rate of daily press reading on the scale of the entire population is inescapably destined to fall.

The daily press case appears particularly striking in this sense because it is almost a text book case: It shows a negative generational effect that remains valuable for each of the generations studied, and an almost nil age effect.

In practice, the behaviours studied are rarely so simple. However, it is possible to identify a certain number of typical cases as a function of the age

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5. The additional part of the permanent survey of household living conditions (EPCV) by Insee in October 2003 covered cultural and sporting participation.
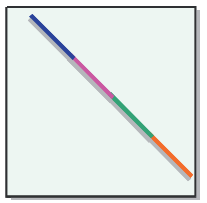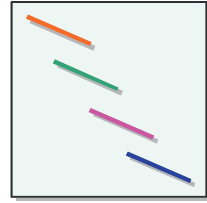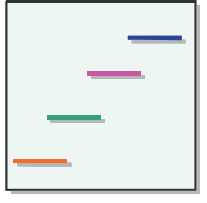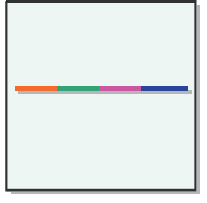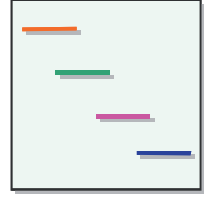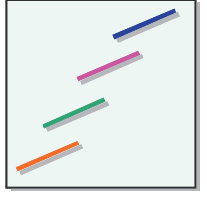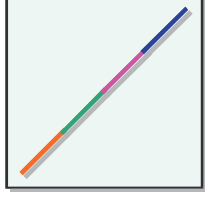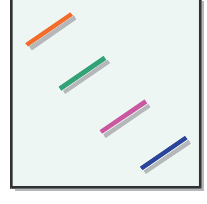
effect, which appears in the slope of each of the generational curves – which can be negative, neutral or positive –, and the generational effect, which appears in the comparison of curves from one generation to the other – which can also be negative, neutral or positive (see Table 1).

This matrix, which combines the age effects and generation effects will serve as an analysis chart to address cultural and media practices because it allows their future to be anticipated. Nine situations can be distinguished:

• We can speak of "pure" generational effects when there is no age effect (the generational curves are flat). The effect can then be negative (this is the case for the daily press) and this case is called the "decline", or positive in the "expansion" case.

• These two possible changes can be reinforced by age effects drawing practice in the same direction: This is the "hellish" case in which the negative generational effect is aggravated by a negative age effect (with not only new generations practicing less than old, but, in addition, in ageing, they practice it less and less); it is also the case for the "7th heaven" in which the positive generational effect is amplified by a positive age effect (with young generations not only doing it more than older, but doing it more as they age).

• Other cases allow a more uncertain evolution to be foreseen, when the generational effect and the age effect act in opposite directions: consequently, the case where a negative generational effect and a positive age effect are combined requires careful interpretation. In this configuration, the oldest generations are those that practice the most, both because they are the oldest and because they were born earlier! Their future renewal thus risks impacting the global level of practice negatively, this is why this case is called "the leavers threat". In the inverse configuration, where a positive generational effect is combined with a negative age effect, the young generations are those who practice the most, because they are more "modern" and because they have not yet aged. This configure thus characterises practices largely dominated by the young, which justifies its name of "saved by the entrants".

• In certain typical cases, a "pure" age effect arises, which is shown graphically by the fact that the generational curves are superimposed. This is the case for "juvenile practice" (negative age effect) and "senior practice" (positive age effect). In these configurations, the future of the practice studied depends entirely on the change in the population age structure.

*Table 1 – Matrix of different typical cases in generational analysis*



| Age effect | Generation effect | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Negative** | **Neutral** | **Positive** |
| **Negative** | Hell | Juvenile practice | Saved by the entrants |
| **Neutral** | Decline | Time independent practice | Expansion |
| **Positive** | The leavers threat | Senior practice | 7th heaven |

- Finally, when neither the generational nor the age effect can be identified, "time independent" practice occurs.

## Why use the generational approach in the cultural field?

In what way is a generational approach justified in the cultural field? And how far can it enrich the analysis of cultural and media practices?

The most obvious justification of the relevance of such an approach arises from a simple observation: Our cultural habits and our use of cultural infrastructure are largely determined by the existing cultural provision, the practices of our friends and relations and the social value related to this or that practice – all data that characterise our epoch and affect all members of our generation similarly. Thus, certain discontinuities in cultural behaviour, that can appear to be age-related, in fact originate in the common history of a group of individuals having been the same age at the same time or in all the values that characterise them.

In addition, the major cultural changes of recent decades have been brought about by young people. They have often given rise to misinterpretations by being presented as effects of fashion or "youth" phenomena that are destined to disappear as their enthusiasts get older. In fact we are dealing with phenomena that can be *a posteriori* qualified as generational, affecting a whole slice of the population of the same age and persisting throughout their life.

So the increase in listening to recorded music is not explained by a particular taste among young people for music, but by their belonging to a generation that has experienced a real change in listening conditions. It is from this point of view that the generational analysis can appear useful in identifying among the practices of new generations those that are uniquely linked to their age and those that will last to adult age.

From this, a generational analysis applied to French cultural and media practices has a threefold interest:
- In the observed links between cultural practices and age group, distinguishing what is generational from what is not;
- In the observed links between cultural practices and sociodemographic variables, picking out those that change with generations;
- In the observed links between cultural practices and generations, analyzing what is changing or will change.

We thus understand that the generational analysis constitutes a particularly useful tool as part of a forecasting procedure: In fact, if the behaviour of today's adolescents prefigures that of tomorrow's adults, then the changes in their cultural practices can allow us to anticipate future cultural behaviours.

From this point of view, the existence of surveys of French cultural practices constitutes a real opportunity for several reasons:
- First, they are based on a relatively large and representative sample of the French population of 15 years old and over;
- They are recurrent, with, so far, 4 survey waves spaced in time (1973/1981/1988/1997), which allows longitudinal monitoring of cultural practices (an individual from a given generation passing from one age group to the next between two survey waves);
- They go back to the start of the 1970s, scanning over a quarter of a century of cultural practices, which makes a generational type longitudinal analysis relevant by offering a certain historical depth.

From these four surveys it is thus possible to follow a single generation at different stages of its life cycle and to identify, among the main characteristics of its cultural and media practices, those that are generational and those, linked to a simple age effect, that are more ephemeral.

## Limits and constraints of the exercise

However, the exercise of surveys on the cultural practices of the French using the generational angle comes up against a certain number of limits that it is worth emphasising now, in so far as they will temper our conclusions.

First of all, the first risk is to lend the generational approach omniscient virtues, as though it was sufficient in itself to explain and predict the behaviour of the individuals of each generation. To avoid this pitfall, in addition to taking into account the other usual socio-demographic characteristics, it is important to take into account the scale of the major changes that affect the culture and media field, even if it means returning later to the generational framework to analyse the impact of these changes on the values and practices of different generations.

It is thus important to identify the major trends that affect cultural behaviour, whatever their nature:
- Technological (technological changes, invention of new media, the digital revolution, etc.);
- Socio-demographic (increase in duration of life, modification of the weighting of different gener-

ations, arrival of new seniors from the *baby-boom*, change in life cycle, etc.);
- Socio-economic (change in distribution of income by age group, change in volume and composition of expenditure, change in the proportion of women working, etc.); or
- Sociocultural (change with respect to time, values, etc.).

To take only one example, remember that changes in music listening are closely linked to the different technological changes that have marked recent decades and affected different generations at different moments in their life cycle (see Graph 3).

Another structural change whose effects in the cultural field cannot be ignored: The average educational level has undergone marked change in recent decades, due to increasing education and longer school years (see Graph 4).

So, from these two examples, we see that the *Crisis*, but above all *Aids* and *Internet* generations have fully experienced two profound cultural changes that have modified the context of their cultural behaviours: Audiovisual media (technological) and mass secondary education (socio-demographic). As a result, they have accelerated the movement sketched out by the *May 68* generation, profiting from more diverse provision, new means of access and the widening of the cultural field.

However, the generational approach must not lead to the crushing of other structural variables. All the persons in a single generation not, of course, being identical in their behaviours, it is indispensable to combine the generational criteria with other structural variables to be able to identify generational phenomena that only concern a subgroup of the population: So, for certain cultural or media practices, the generational effect could not be observed on the scale of the whole population, but becomes apparent, for example, when the behaviour of men or Parisians is studied.

In addition to age, a variable with a slightly unique status due to its link with the generation for which it is to some extent the expression at a given date, it appears to us to be desirable to select four criteria[6]:

1. The educational level, an indicator of the "cultural capital" which must be taken into account because it relates to cultural practices;

2. Gender, in so far as masculine and feminine practices appear to move towards increased divergence in younger generations;

3. The conurbation category, whose impact on cultural visits is undeniable, if only because of the geographical distribution of cultural infrastructure;

*Graph 3 – Availability effects in the recorded music field*



Source: BIPE
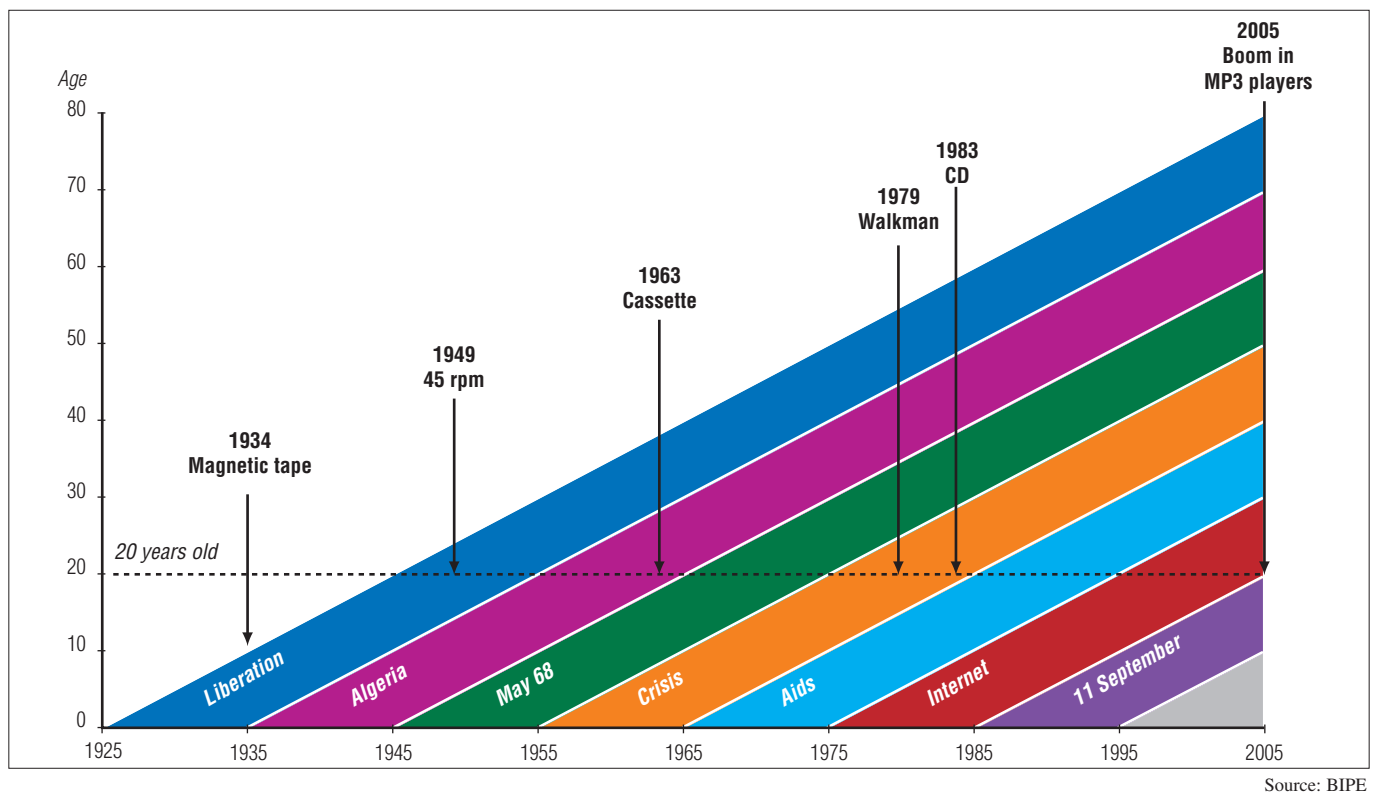
6. The generational curves obtained by combining these four variables are not presented here. They are available on www.culture.gouv.fr/deps

**Graph 4 – Change in percentage of baccalaureate (secondary school certificate) holders per generation (1910-2005)**
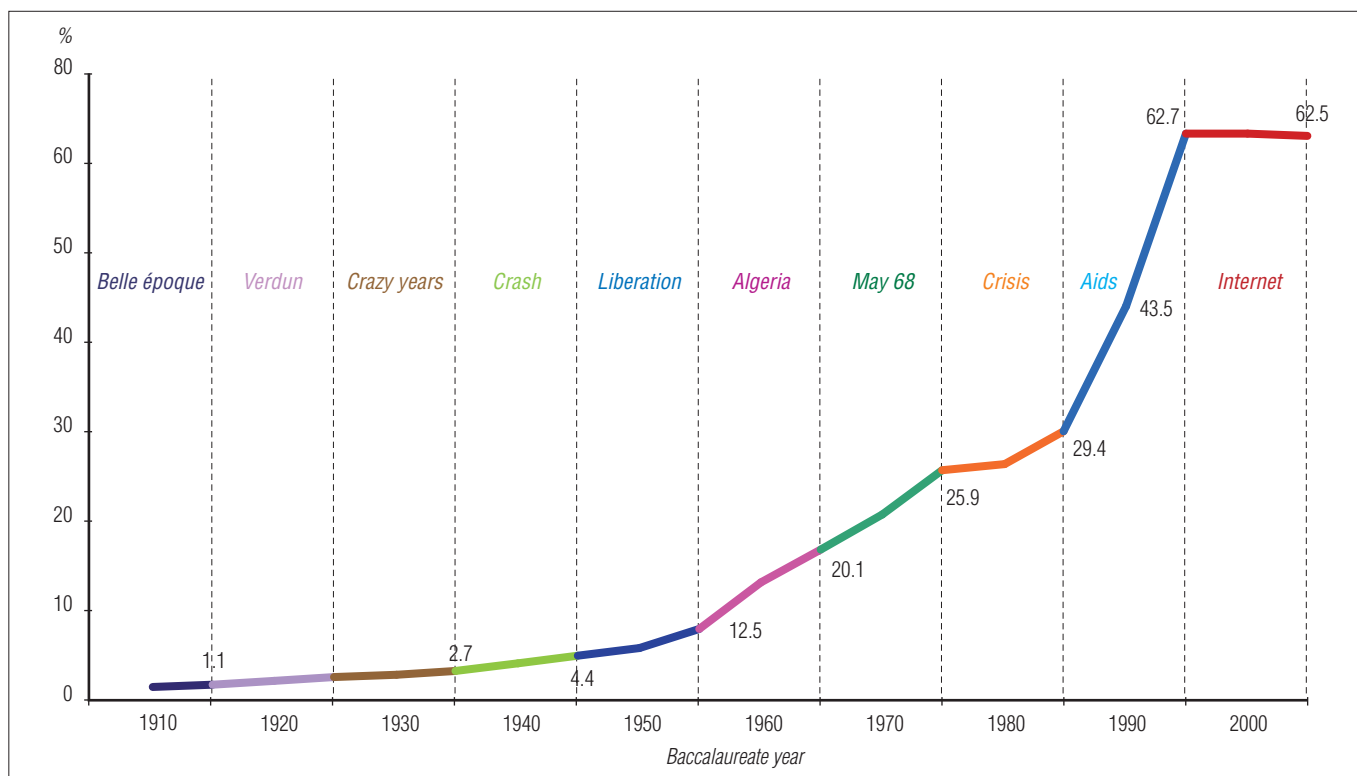


Source: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale/BIPE

4. The family status, which, although often linked to age, fairly clearly determines individuals'social behaviour and outings, and thus has an impact on the type of cultural practices.

For these four criteria, the change in the structure of the samples for the four cultural practice survey waves appears to be relatively stable (see Table 2).

Additionally, the proposed generational analysis is constrained by the characteristics of the main tool used, meaning the survey of cultural practices of the French.

We start by recalling that these survey data correspond to declared and not observed practices. Because, in a survey situation, there is always a divergence between real and declared practices. This leads to the construction of the implicit assumption that declared cultural practices, if they are inexact in volume, are faithful to reality in structure, meaning the relative positions between sociodemographic categories and generations.

And above all, the generational analysis can only cover a limited number of cultural activities, which combine two conditions: being present in the four surveys and having been subject to identical questions; put another way, only those questions whose formulation remained unchanged in 1973, 1981, 1988 and 1997 could be analysed. In addition, for each of the selected practices, it was necessary to

define a precise indicator depending on the availability of data to translate involvement by the French in the field considered. In many cases, this was the general practice rate during the twelve

**Table 2 – Changes in sociodemographic categories during the survey waves on the cultural practices of the French**

*in %*

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 |
| Female | 52 | 52 | 52 | 52 |
| **Diploma** | | | | |
| Low | 85 | 81 | 85 | 78 |
| High* | 15 | 19 | 15 | 22 |
| **Conurbation type** | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 58 | 56 | 56 | 55 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 22 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Paris and RP | 13 | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| **Family statut** | | | | |
| Married | 66 | 67 | 66 | 65 |
| Single | 22 | 18 | 21 | 22 |
| Other | 13 | 15 | 13 | 14 |

* Among the new generations, in which obtaining a *baccalaureate* and higher education have become general (from the *Aids* generation), high cultural capital will be considered as applying to individuals having at least reached "bac + 2" level, whereas in previous generations, it is sufficient to have the bac to belong to this category.

Source: DEPS

months preceding the survey, but it was possible in certain cases to work on a "high practice" rate.

So, for cultural outings (live shows, museum or exhibition visits), it was necessary to limit the analysis to an annual practice rate ("went at least once during the last twelve months"), without being able to distinguish the degree of involvement in the practice, whereas the analysis of book reading covers high readers (20 books and more per year), and that for television viewing those who watch at least 20 hours per week.

Finally, the survey of the cultural practices of the French was repeated about every 10 years, the latest available data date from 1997, which allows neither the most recent changes nor transformations related to the spread of micro-computing and the internet to be taken into account. To overcome this relative obsolescence, we have endeavoured, whenever possible, to reconstitute a more recent point for each of the practices studied, by use of the results of the *Continuous Study of Living Conditions* (*L'Enquête permanente sur les conditions de vie* – EPCV) by INSEE, which, in 2003, specifically covered cultural and sporting practices[7].

## RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

The data collected during the four waves of surveys on the cultural practices of the French offer the possibility of performing a retrospective analysis of the main changes in media consumption, book reading, music listening and cultural outings observed since the 1970s (Table 3).

## Reading the daily press

The proportion of French people reading a daily paper every day or almost has fallen regularly dur-

*Table 3 – Practices studied and indicator selected for each one*

| |
|---|
| **Daily press** |
| Proportion of population reading a daily paper every day or almost |
| **Books** |
| Proportion of population having read 20 or more books during the last 12 months |
| **Cinema** |
| Proportion of population having been to the cinema at least 3 times in the last 12 months |
| **Theatre** |
| Proportion of population having been to the theatre at least once in the last 12 months |
| **Classical concert** |
| Proportion of population having been to a classical music concert at least once in the last 12 months |
| **Dance performance** |
| Proportion of population having been to a dance performance at least once in the last 12 months |
| **Museum and exhibition** |
| Proportion of the population who have visited a museum or exhibition during the last 12 months |
| **Recorded music** |
| Proportion of the population who listen to recorded music every day or almost |
| **Television** |
| Proportion of the population watching television for more than 20 hours per week |
| **Radio** |
| Proportion of the population listening to the radio for more than 20 hours per week |

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7. In most cases, the practice rates observed until 1997 have been extended by an estimate from the EPCV for 2003. When the global practice rate seems inconsistent with the available history, it has been corrected by an estimate based on other sources (Médiamétrie for the media, for example), but making the assumption that the structure of the practitioners (notably the distribution by age) observed by INSEE remains valid.

**Table 4 – Changes in reading the daily press** *in %*

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **55** | **47** | **43** | **36** | **31** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 60 | 50 | 48 | 40 | 33 |
| Female | 50 | 44 | 39 | 32 | 29 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 55 | 48 | 43 | 37 | 30 |
| High diploma | 56 | 44 | 45 | 32 | 34 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 57 | 51 | 46 | 38 | 33 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 59 | 50 | 43 | 35 | 29 |
| Paris region | 44 | 27 | 33 | 30 | 26 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 59 | 50 | 46 | 39 | n.a.* |
| Single | 43 | 39 | 34 | 26 | n.a. |
| Other | 57 | 44 | 43 | 38 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| *11 September* | | | | | 10 |
| *Internet* | - | - | - | 20 | 23 |
| *Aids* | - | - | 28 | 21 | 27 |
| *Crisis* | - | 31 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| *May 68* | 36 | 36 | 43 | 43 | 35 |
| *Algeria* | 48 | 49 | 50 | 49 | 40 |
| *Liberation* | 64 | 58 | 56 | 47 | 42 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 30 | 28 | 20 | 18 |
| 25-34 | - | 36 | 31 | 23 | 26 |
| 35-44 | - | 45 | 44 | 30 | 28 |
| 45-54 | - | 54 | 50 | 45 | 32 |
| 55-64 | - | 63 | 57 | 49 | 40 |
| 65-74 | - | 64 | 59 | 48 | 41 |
| 75 and over | - | 56 | 56 | 61 | 41 |

* n.a.: not available.

To read this table: 55% of persons questioned during the *French cultural practices* survey *(Pratiques culturelles des Français)* in 1973 declared that they read a daily paper every day or almost. At the same date, 36% of the individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they read a daily paper every day or almost.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

other sociodemographic variable appears to be really important beside the "generation" variable. The statement that "whoever has read will read" appears to be true whatever the diploma level, family status, conurbation category or gender. With the only nuance, with regard to this last variable, that men, who were the greatest readers of the daily press, have reduced their practice proportionally more than women.

The fall in the proportion of regular daily press readers is thus explained by a very marked negative generational effect (see Graph 5): The daily press experiences an additional loss in readership with each new generation. So, the *Liberation* generation has a daily paper reading rate situated at about 55%, the *Algeria* generation around 50%, the *May 68* generation about 35-40%, the *Crisis* generation at 30%, *Aids* at 25%, *Internet* at 20% and the first data concerning the *11 September* generation appear to

**Graph 5 – Generational curves for the "Daily press reading" practice**



| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *11 Sept.* | 10 | | | | | |
| *Internet* | 20 | 23 | | | | |
| *Aids* | 28 | 21 | 27 | | | |
| *Crisis* | 31 | 29 | 29 | 29 | | |
| *May 68* | 36 | 36 | 43 | 43 | 35 | |
| *Algeria* | | 48 | 49 | 50 | 49 | 40 |
| *Liberation* | | | 64 | 58 | 56 | 47 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 20% of the individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they read a daily paper every day or almost. At the same ages, 28% of the representatives of the *Aids* generation declare this practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

ing the last three decades, from 55% in 1973 to only 31% in 2003.

During the surveys, the "age" variable always emerged as the best explanation for daily press reading. In contrast, the generational approach (see Graph 5) brought out great stability in the behaviour of each generation, whatever their age (the curve for each generation is almost horizontal), showing a practically null age effect. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that *at a given date*, considering the age or the generation of an individual is strictly equivalent.

The retrospective offered by the different survey waves reveals the reading of the daily press as the archetype of generational practice in so far as no

be situated around 10%! This is thus an old and large negative generational effect that leads to the creation of a pessimistic portrait of a continually declining practice whose reduction is perceptible since the 1950s, or even before the arrival of free daily information papers and the internet reading.

## Reading books

The high book reading rate (defined as the percentage of the population who have read over 20 books in the last 12 months) has experienced regular erosion during the last quarter of a century (28% in 1973 and only 19% in 1997). But even more than the size of the fall in "big readers" it is its general character that is striking (see Table 5): The core of

big readers has regularly diminished among both men and women, among people with low qualifications and people with high qualifications, in all types of households and in all generations.

Unsurprisingly, reading books has and has always had a special link with the level of education, the diploma appearing systematically as the most determining variable for this practice. So, at each survey, a very high discrepancy between the proportion of big readers among the "low qualification" and among the "high qualification" is observed (respectively 23% and 60% in 1973 and 14% and 37% in 1997). However, although more numerous at the start, highly educated big readers have seen their numbers fall proportionately more. We also observe the same phenomenon with those sociodemographic categories who are historically the highest readers (the inhabitants of Paris and the Paris region, and single people notably).

*Table 5 – Change in book reading*

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **28** | **22** | **24** | **19** | **18** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 31 | 23 | 22 | 17 | 14 |
| Female | 26 | 21 | 25 | 22 | 22 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 23 | 18 | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| High diploma | 60 | 41 | 45 | 37 | 31 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 21 | 17 | 20 | 17 | 16 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 35 | 24 | 26 | 19 | 19 |
| Paris region | 41 | 35 | 34 | 28 | 22 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 23 | 20 | 22 | 17 | n.a.* |
| Single | 45 | 33 | 29 | 23 | n.a. |
| Other | 27 | 20 | 22 | 22 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| 11 September | | | | | 17 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 19 | 15 |
| Aids | - | - | 26 | 20 | 16 |
| Crisis | - | 32 | 27 | 21 | 20 |
| May 68 | 42 | 27 | 25 | 19 | 19 |
| Algeria | 31 | 18 | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| Liberation | 22 | 17 | 20 | 19 | 19 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 33 | 26 | 19 | 17 |
| 25-34 | - | 27 | 28 | 20 | 14 |
| 35-44 | - | 20 | 25 | 21 | 20 |
| 45-54 | - | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 55-64 | - | 17 | 22 | 20 | 19 |
| 65-74 | - | 17 | 21 | 18 | 19 |
| 75 and over | - | 12 | 19 | 14 | 18 |

―――――――
*n.a.: not available.
To read this table: 28% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they had read 20 or more books in the last 12 months. At the same date, 42% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

*Graph 6 – Generational curves for "Book reading" practice*



in %

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Sept. | 17 | | | | | |
| Internet | 19 | 15 | | | | |
| Aids | 26 | 20 | 16 | | | |
| Crisis | 32 | 27 | 21 | 20 | | |
| May 68 | 42 | 27 | 25 | 19 | 19 | |
| Algeria | | 31 | 18 | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| Liberation | | | 22 | 17 | 20 | 19 |

―――――――
To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 19% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they had read 20 or more books during the last 12 months. At the same ages, 17% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

The generational curves representing the proportion of high readers (see Graph 6) bring out a relatively clear negative age effect (they decrease globally). This proportion is high during youth, favoured by the school environment and the abundant leisure time that provides strong encouragement to reading, whereas it reduces and stabilises upon entry into active life during which leisure time is more rare. The fact that the proportion of high readers is no longer increasing (or in any case, not in a very marked way) with the arrival of retirement age is explained by the increase in audiovisual leisure activities (radio and above all television) that meet with greater success among retired people.

But if each generation presents, during its life cycle, similar behaviour to the previous (the generational curves have similar shapes), each generation has a smaller number of high readers in the first place (at twenty, 32% of the *Crisis* generation read more than twenty books per year, a proportion that falls to 17% among the *11 September* generation). Reading books thus suffers from a negative generational effect, which shows the structural character of the reduction in the percentage of high readers.

Finally, we note that the generational reduction in the number of high readers is particularly observed among men who have started a more precocious reduction in this practice (between the *May 68* generation and the *Crisis* generation), and who show an even larger fall in succeeding generations (so much so that high readers only represent 12% of men in the *11 September* generation against 24% of women).

## Visits to the cinema

Visiting the cinema is an activity whose level appears to be relatively stable in the French population. Half the population go to the cinema at least once per year and a little more than one third went there at least three times during the last twelve months. This proportion has changed little over the period considered (see Table 6): it reached 39% in 1973, then 35% in 1981, 34% in 1988 and 36% in 1997.

The most determining factor is always age, but the importance of this "age" variable does not hide a pure generational effect for the cinema visit case, as can be observed for the daily press.

Within each generation (see Graph 7), the percentage of individuals going to cinemas at least three times per year decreases regularly with age: A real quasi-linear and clearly negative age effect is thus observed (the generational curves are decreasing and resemble straight lines).

Cinema visits are what are classically called a "juvenile practice": the cinema audience is essentially recruited among individuals aged from 15 to 25 and each individual, whatever generation they come from, tends to reduce their cinema visit frequency as they grow older. This change is observed at all survey dates and whatever the generation considered.

Not only do successive generations experience a similar evolution but they also start from similar levels: so the generational curves superpose almost perfectly. Cinema visits are thus characterised by the absence of any generational effect or, at least, this was the case until a very recent date. The data from the 2003 INSEE survey bring out the start of

### Table 6 – Change in cinema visits

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **39** | **35** | **34** | **36** | **34** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 44 | 39 | 36 | 37 | 34 |
| Female | 34 | 32 | 32 | 35 | 34 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 33 | 28 | 30 | 28 | 28 |
| High diploma | 75 | 69 | 59 | 64 | 50 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 30 | 24 | 25 | 28 | 28 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 46 | 41 | 39 | 42 | 42 |
| Paris region | 60 | 63 | 58 | 52 | 39 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 29 | 30 | 28 | 29 | n.a.* |
| Single | 75 | 70 | 61 | 66 | n.a. |
| Other | 26 | 17 | 22 | 21 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| *11 September* | | | | | 50 |
| *Internet* | - | - | - | 72 | 55 |
| *Aids* | - | - | 65 | 51 | 40 |
| *Crisis* | - | 71 | 44 | 35 | 38 |
| *May 68* | 77 | 45 | 36 | 31 | 30 |
| *Algeria* | 47 | 35 | 27 | 23 | 21 |
| *Liberation* | 27 | 18 | 15 | 14 | 12 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 75 | 63 | 70 | 54 |
| 25-34 | - | 49 | 42 | 45 | 44 |
| 35-44 | - | 38 | 37 | 34 | 40 |
| 45-54 | - | 21 | 25 | 30 | 32 |
| 55-64 | - | 13 | 15 | 19 | 26 |
| 65-74 | - | 10 | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| 75 and over | - | 3 | 10 | 7 | 8 |

*n.a.: not available.
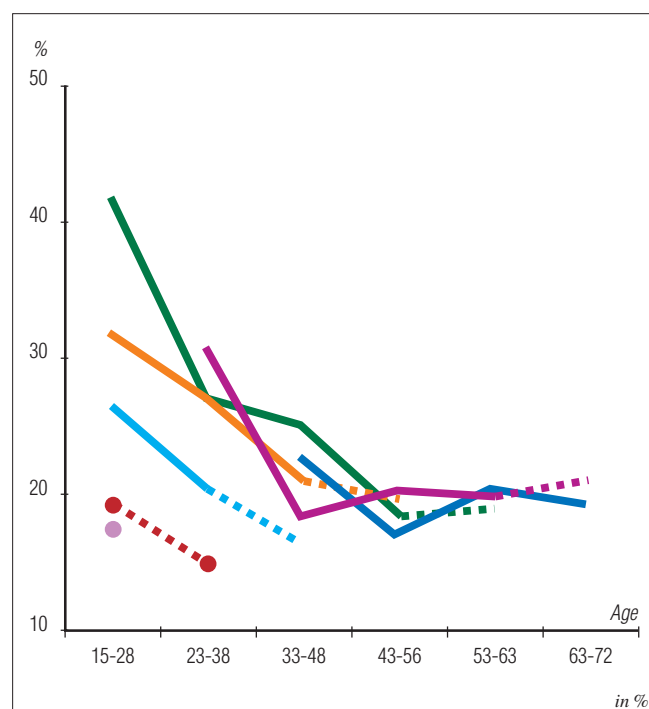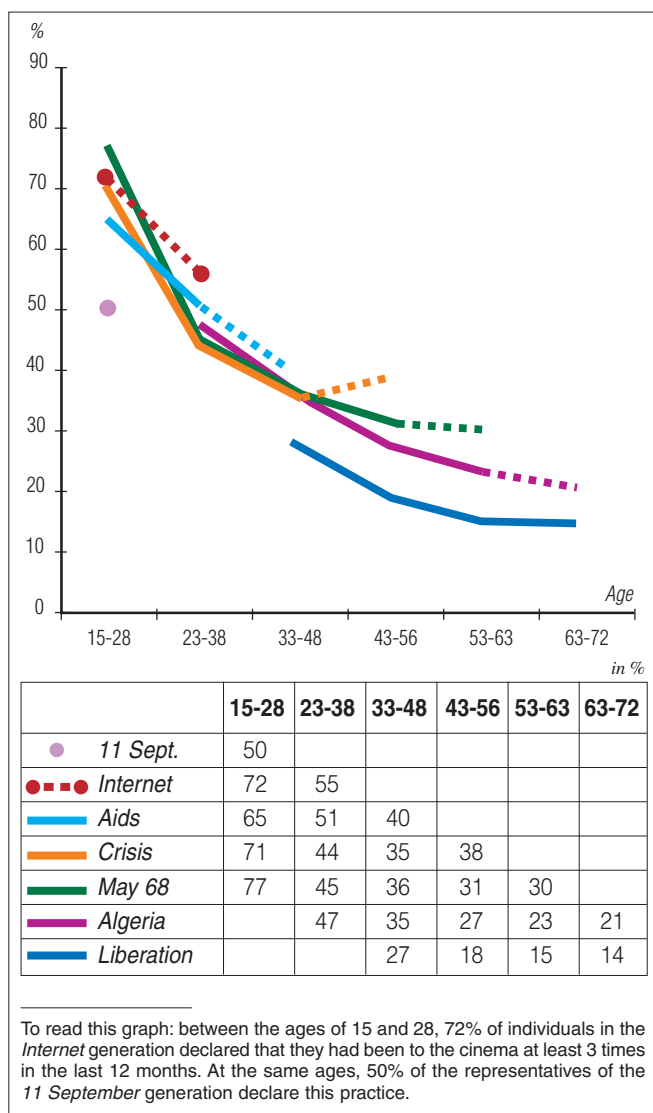
To read this table: 39% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they had been to the cinema at least three times in the last 12 months. At the same date, 77% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

*Graph 7 – Generational curves*
*for the "Cinema visit" practice*

|  | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● *11 Sept.* | 50 | | | | | |
| ●--● *Internet* | 72 | 55 | | | | |
| — *Aids* | 65 | 51 | 40 | | | |
| — *Crisis* | 71 | 44 | 35 | 38 | | |
| — *May 68* | 77 | 45 | 36 | 31 | 30 | |
| — *Algeria* | | 47 | 35 | 27 | 23 | 21 |
| — *Liberation* | | | 27 | 18 | 15 | 14 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 72% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they had been to the cinema at least 3 times in the last 12 months. At the same ages, 50% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

a negative generational effect that only affects the *11 September* generation.

Cinema visits, even if essentially determined by age, are also characterised by a strong diploma effect: The more qualified you are, the more you tend to go to the cinema. It is also noted that it attracts more young men than young women. This effect is corrected later because women desert the practice in smaller numbers as they age than men. Here again, the *11 September* generation displays divergent behaviour because the women in this generation are proportionally more numerous in going to the cinema (54%) than the men (48%): Does this correspond to the start of feminising this practice?

## Visits to the theatre

The rate of theatre visits, defined as the proportion of the population who have been to the theatre at least once in the last twelve months, reflects the image of a globally very stable practice over recent years (see Table 7): This proportion, which was 12% in 1973, reached 14% in 1988 and stabilised at this level: 15% in 1997 and 16% in 2003.

But the indicator that is measured here is too coarse to provide a good account of the transformations that the theatre has experienced during the last quarter century. First because it is very poor at capturing the great diversification of provision that has been shown by the stage arts (multiplication of festivals, success of street theatre, circus shows…) and nor does it take into account the frequency effects that have been strongly modified during recent decades with a global increase in the number of subscribers but a lower volume per subscription.

Unsurprisingly, theatre practice, the typical representative of "cultivated culture", is very dependent upon educational level (see Table 7): in 1973 as in 2003, theatres welcomed a majority of graduates. Theatre visits are also strongly and constantly correlated with conurbation size, which itself determines the provision. The geographic distribution of provision thus plays an undeniable role in the generalisation of this practice. In contrast, the importance of the "age" variable is essentially explained by a strong educational effect that inflates the practice rate for 15-25 year olds[8]. Outside this particular period, theatre visits globally change little with age. The analysis of practice by generation (see Graph 8) also confirms the irrelevance of the "age" variable: The percentage of spectators changes little over the life cycle of each generation, with the exception of the *Internet* and *11 September* generations, which show a practice rate at 20 greater than their predecessors (respectively 24% and 21%) to return, as they approach thirty, to a practice rate closer to the norm (at 14%).

Beyond this phenomenon, which remains to be investigated, the curves for the different generations are globally superposable, which shows the absence of any generational phenomenon. However, this statement must be qualified in two ways.

On the one hand, we observe a positive generational effect between the *Liberation* generation and the *Algeria* generation, which is explained by the low rate of cultural visits by French people born before the war.

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8. Even though the survey questionnaire asked interviewees not to take school visits into account, it is difficult, for example, to believe that 23% of 15-24 year olds who declared that they had been to the theatre in 1997 had not really taken it into account, when this percentage represents a difference of 10 points compared to the following age group!
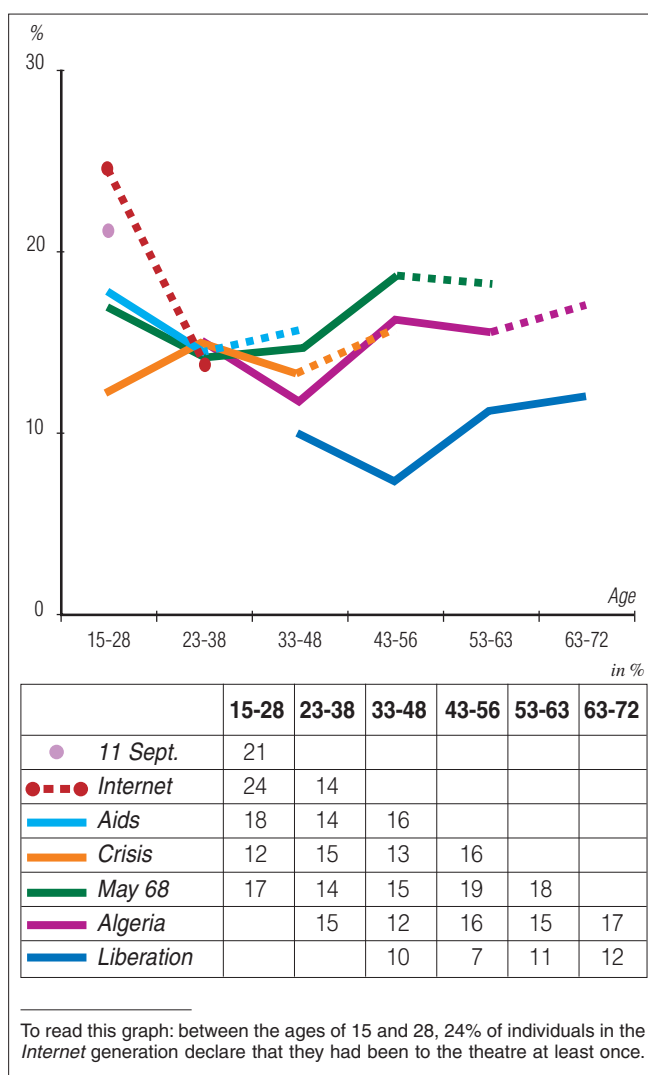
## Table 7 – Change in theatre visits

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **12** | **10** | **14** | **15** | **16** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 12 | 9 | 14 | 16 | 14 |
| Female | 12 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 8 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| High diploma | 38 | 27 | 34 | 31 | 30 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 7 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 12 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 15 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Paris region | 27 | 27 | 29 | 30 | 26 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 10 | 9 | 12 | 13 | n.a.* |
| Single | 17 | 16 | 20 | 24 | n.a. |
| Other | 14 | 8 | 11 | 12 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| 11 September | | | | | 21 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 24 | 14 |
| Aids | - | - | 18 | 14 | 16 |
| Crisis | - | 12 | 15 | 13 | 16 |
| May 68 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 18 |
| Algeria | 15 | 12 | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| Liberation | 10 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 11 | 18 | 23 | 16 |
| 25-34 | - | 14 | 14 | 13 | 16 |
| 35-44 | - | 12 | 16 | 14 | 16 |
| 45-54 | - | 8 | 14 | 19 | 17 |
| 55-64 | - | 7 | 11 | 15 | 18 |
| 65-74 | - | 5 | 9 | 11 | 14 |
| 75 and over | - | 5 | 6 | 6 | 8 |

*n.a.: not available.

To read this table: 12% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they had been to the theatre at once in the last 12 months. At the same date, 17% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

## Graph 8 – Generational curves for the "Theatre visit" practice



in %

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● *11 Sept.* | 21 | | | | | |
| ●●● *Internet* | 24 | 14 | | | | |
| *Aids* | 18 | 14 | 16 | | | |
| *Crisis* | 12 | 15 | 13 | 16 | | |
| *May 68* | 17 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 18 | |
| *Algeria* | | 15 | 12 | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| *Liberation* | | | 10 | 7 | 11 | 12 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 24% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declare that they had been to the theatre at least once.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

On the other hand, given the low accuracy of the annual practice indicator, we can ask ourselves whether the absence of an observed generational effect for the whole public does not disguise a generational effect among those who go to the theatre most often.

We also observe that until the *Aids* generation, the practice rates for men and women in each generation were relatively similar (which possibly testifies to the dominance of theatre visits as a couple), whereas since the *Internet* generation, the practice rate for women at twenty represents nearly double that for men (29% against 14%).

## Visits to classical music concerts

In contrast to the theatre visit, which can be accused of not taking into account the diversity of provision, the indicator for visits to a classical music concert, defined as "the proportion of the population who have been to a classical music (excluding opera) concert in the last twelve months", is perhaps a little too precise, restricting itself to a type of music that even in the best years only counts 9% of the adult population[9].

In a very constant way, attending classical musical concerts has been determined by the same sociodemographic criteria since 1973: Attendance at classical music concerts is greater if you are older, live in a large conurbation and, above all, are a grad-

9. The generational analysis cannot be applied to other types of music due to the changes made to the formulation of the questions concerning them.

## Graph 9 – Generational curves for the practice of "Visits to classical music concerts"



|  | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● 11 Sept. | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| ●●● Internet | 6 | 7 |  |  |  |  |
| — Aids | 5 | 7 | 9 |  |  |  |
| — Crisis | 7 | 9 | 9 | 10 |  |  |
| — May 68 | 6 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 11 |  |
| — Algeria |  | 10 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| — Liberation |  |  | 7 | 6 | 11 | 9 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 6% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they had attended a classical music concert at least once during the last 12 months. At the same ages, 5% of the representatives of the *Aids* generation declare this practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

## Table 8 – Change in visits to classical music concerts

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | 7 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| ***Gender*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| Female | 6 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| ***Diploma*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low diploma | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| High diploma | 21 | 19 | 26 | 18 | 20 |
| ***Region of residence*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 10 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 9 |
| Paris region | 10 | 16 | 18 | 15 | 10 |
| ***Family statut*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Married or living together | 6 | 6 | 9 | 9 | n.a.* |
| Single | 8 | 11 | 10 | 8 | n.a. |
| Other | 8 | 6 | 9 | 9 | n.a. |
| ***Generation*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 September |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 6 | 7 |
| Aids | - | - | 5 | 7 | 9 |
| Crisis | - | 7 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| May 68 | 6 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 11 |
| Algeria | 10 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| Liberation | 7 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 5 |
| ***Age class*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15-24 | - | 8 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| 25-34 | - | 9 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| 35-44 | - | 9 | 12 | 9 | 6 |
| 45-54 | - | 7 | 11 | 12 | 9 |
| 55-64 | - | 7 | 12 | 10 | 13 |
| 65-74 | - | 3 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| 75 and over | - | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 |

*n.a.: not available.

To read this table: 7% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they had attended a classical music concert at least once in the last 12 months. At the same date, 6% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

uate. The importance of this last variable is very clear, even if it is tending to fall (see Table 8): whereas in 1973, the rate of practice among the "highly qualified" was over five times greater than for those with "low qualifications" (21% against 4%), in 1997, it was only "over" three times (18% against 6%).

In general, the generational curves are fairly superposable, with a slightly increasing trend as age increases. However, it must be noted that the *Internet* and *11 September* generations are situated at a lower level than previous generations at the time of entry to adult life.

It is also to be noted that the positive age effect for the "highly qualified" – their practice rate increases with age – appears to cease with the *Aids* generation which has maintained its practice rate at 11%, the same at twenty as at thirty, so reducing the difference from those with "lower qualifications" (6%). It will be necessary to wait to be able to observe graduates from the *Internet* generation to determine if this is a characteristic of the *Aids* generation or actually a discontinuity likely to affect succeeding generations.

## Visits to dance performances

A practice that could be described as "rare", visits to dance performances only attract 5 to 6% of the French population each year, although there was a slight increase in 1997 (see Table 9). Undeniably belonging to "cultivated culture", the practice is very clearly dependant on the level of education. In contrast, an individual's age does not appear to play an obvious role in visits to dance performances.

Table 9 – Change in visits to dance performances

*Table 9 – Change in visits to dance performances*

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **6** | **5** | **6** | **8** | **8** |
| ***Gender*** | | | | | |
| Male | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Female | 7 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| ***Diploma*** | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| High diploma | 14 | 12 | 15 | 16 | 13 |
| ***Region of residence*** | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| Paris region | 12 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 9 |
| ***Family statut*** | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | n.a.* |
| Single | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | n.a. |
| Other | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | n.a. |
| ***Generation*** | | | | | |
| *11 September* | | | | | 8 |
| *Internet* | - | - | - | 10 | 8 |
| *Aids* | - | - | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| *Crisis* | - | 5 | 8 | 10 | 9 |
| *May 68* | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 10 |
| *Algeria* | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| *Liberation* | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| ***Age class*** | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 5 | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| 25-34 | - | 6 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| 35-44 | - | 6 | 8 | 10 | 9 |
| 45-54 | - | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| 55-64 | - | 4 | 4 | 7 | 10 |
| 65-74 | - | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 75 and over | - | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

*n.a.: not available.

To read this table: 6% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they had attended a dance performance at least once in the last 12 months. At the same date, 5% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

*Graph 10 – Generational curves for the "Dance performance visit" practice*



in %

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● *11 Sept.* | 8 | | | | | |
| ●●● *Internet* | 10 | 8 | | | | |
| — *Aids* | 8 | 7 | 8 | | | |
| — *Crisis* | 5 | 8 | 10 | 9 | | |
| — *May 68* | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 10 | |
| — *Algeria* | | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| — *Liberation* | | | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 10% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they had attended a dance performance at least once during the last 12 months. At the same ages, 8% of the representatives of the *Aids* generation declare this practice.
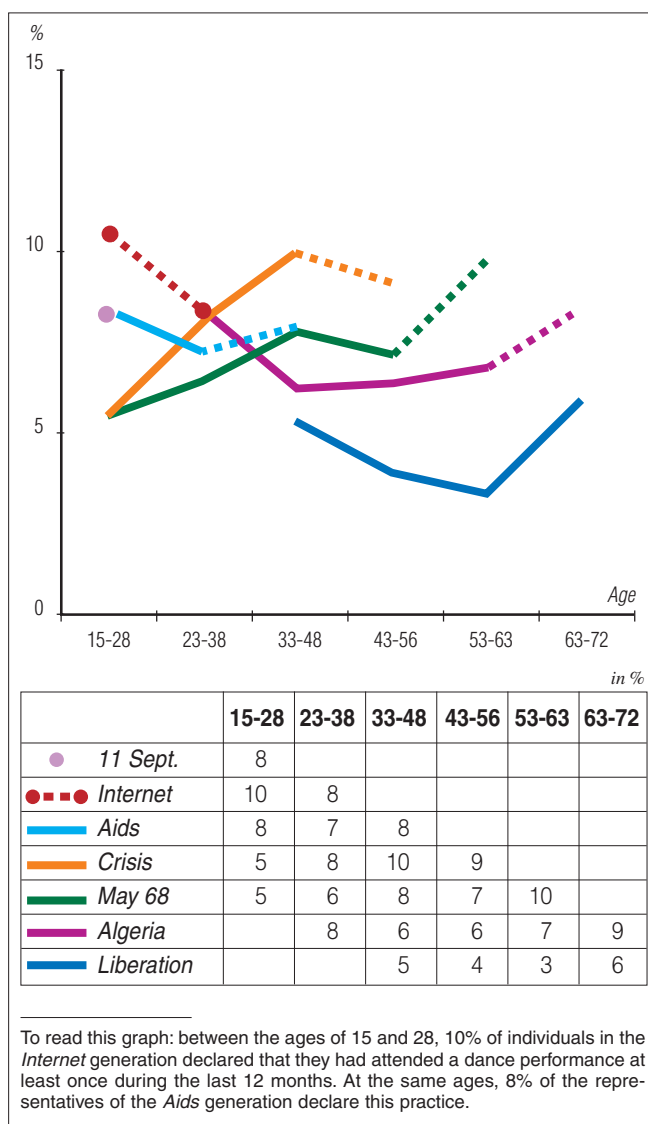
Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

The generational curves as a whole reveal a practice with little differentiation by generation (see Graph 10). However, we can note the distinctive behaviour of the *Liberation* generation, which is characterised by relatively low choreographic habits at any age (average practice rate of 4 or 5%). It is also tempting to consider the relatively high practice rates of the *Internet* and *11 September* generations as the start of a generational effect that could in the future revitalise dance performances, although these results are situated in such a narrow range (from 7 to 10%) that the difference is barely significant.

## Visits to museums or exhibitions

Cultural practices that form part of the heritage domain (museums, exhibitions) follow a different logic from the other cultural visits discussed so far. First, because they are mainly daytime and no longer evening visits and because they bring into play different behaviours, different audience types (with notably a larger proportion of "family visits" with children). But these visits are also distinctive because they are on the borders of tourism and culture: They mostly take place during journeys, a long way from home, even abroad[10].

10. We also remark that the surveys of the cultural practices of the French count visits made by French people, whether these take place in France or abroad: So they exceed the framework of national entries counted by French sites, without including them totally because visits to French sites are largely due to foreigners visiting France.

Museum or exhibition visits have increased constantly for thirty years, touching 33% of the adult population in 1973 and 40% in 1997 (see Table 10). This change reflects the development of provision during the period, with the regular opening of major Paris museums during the last few decades being emblematic, and the increasing attraction of events, the major part of annual entries being achieved for either temporary exhibitions, or for new museums benefiting from a strong fashion effect.

A museum or exhibition visit has always been a practice very closely linked to cultural capital. In fact, the "diploma" variable systematically comes out at the most explanatory for this practice, equally in 1973 as today, and the practice appears to maintain itself among the "highly qualified", including in young generations.

We also note a non negligible influence of the conurbation category on the degree of practice. The level of practice is notably higher for Parisians and probably demonstrates their propensity to travel rather than the abundance of provision. The discrepancy between Paris and the rest of France is also diminishing with the young generations.

Museum or exhibition visits do not show a very marked generational character (see Graph 11). However, we can note a lower interest in the *Liberation* and *Algeria* generations related to the fact that the average educational level of these generations is distinctly lower than for succeeding generations.

Age does not seem to play a major role in the level of museum practice: The practice rates for each generation are globally flat during their lif

*Table 10 – Change in museum or exhibition visits*
<span style="font-style:italic">in %</span>

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **33** | **36** | **38** | **40** | **43** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 36 | 36 | 38 | 41 | 41 |
| Female | 31 | 35 | 38 | 39 | 45 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 27 | 28 | 32 | 32 | 33 |
| High diploma | 64 | 67 | 71 | 66 | 71 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 27 | 29 | 32 | 36 | 39 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 40 | 39 | 40 | 42 | 47 |
| Paris region | 46 | 54 | 57 | 51 | 50 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 31 | 36 | 38 | 40 | n.a.* |
| Single | 45 | 48 | 45 | 47 | n.a. |
| Other | 24 | 22 | 29 | 30 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| 11 September | | | | | 40 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 47 | 43 |
| Aids | - | - | 44 | 41 | 48 |
| Crisis | - | 46 | 42 | 44 | 48 |
| May 68 | 43 | 43 | 41 | 42 | 50 |
| Algeria | 39 | 35 | 42 | 43 | 43 |
| Liberation | 31 | 32 | 33 | 37 | 35 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 46 | 44 | 46 | 40 |
| 25-34 | - | 43 | 43 | 41 | 47 |
| 35-44 | - | 38 | 41 | 43 | 49 |
| 45-54 | - | 32 | 39 | 43 | 48 |
| 55-64 | - | 32 | 34 | 41 | 49 |
| 65-74 | - | 24 | 29 | 37 | 37 |
| 75 and over | - | 15 | 15 | 14 | 19 |

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*n.a.: not available.
To read this table: 33% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* Survey in 1973 declared that they had visited at museum or exhibition at least once in the last 12 months. At the same date, 43% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had the same practice.

*Graph 11 – Generational curves for the "Museum or exhibition visit" practice*



<span style="font-style:italic">in %</span>
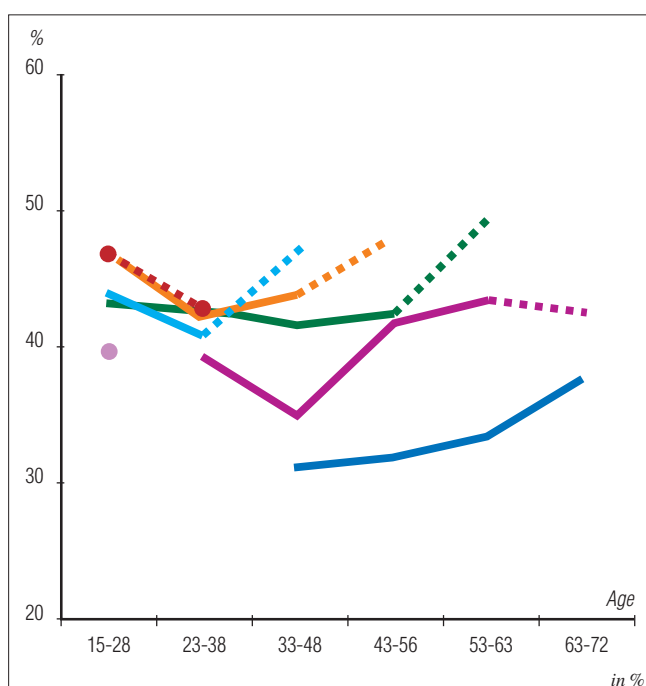
| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *11 Sept.* | 40 | | | | | |
| *Internet* | 47 | 43 | | | | |
| *Aids* | 44 | 41 | 48 | | | |
| *Crisis* | 46 | 42 | 44 | 48 | | |
| *May 68* | 43 | 43 | 41 | 42 | 50 | |
| *Algeria* | | 39 | 35 | 42 | 43 | 43 |
| *Liberation* | | | 31 | 32 | 33 | 37 |

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To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 47% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they had visited a museum or exhibition at least once during the last 12 months. At the same ages, 40% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

cycle. However, since 1997, we note an increase in visits related to the arrival at retirement age of the generations most attracted to museums and particularly among women who appear, in 2003, to have exceeded the practice rate for men (45% against 41%).

## Listening to recorded music

Since the start of the 1970s listening to recorded music, defined as the percentage of the population listening to it every day, has seen an impressive growth in strength: Whereas in 1973 this practice only regularly concerned 9% of the population, it affects 33% of the total population in 2003!

*Table 11 – Change in listening to recorded music*
*in %*

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **9** | **18** | **21** | **27** | **33** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 10 | 19 | 23 | 29 | 35 |
| Female | 8 | 17 | 20 | 26 | 32 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 8 | 15 | 20 | 24 | 30 |
| High diploma | 17 | 29 | 30 | 37 | 42 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 6 | 13 | 17 | 25 | 29 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 11 | 21 | 23 | 29 | 38 |
| Paris region | 15 | 28 | 34 | 31 | 39 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 6 | 14 | 16 | 22 | n.a.* |
| Single | 20 | 39 | 43 | 52 | n.a. |
| Other | 5 | 9 | 10 | 14 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| 11 September | | | | | 66 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 59 | 60 |
| Aids | - | - | 49 | 46 | 44 |
| Crisis | - | 42 | 31 | 31 | 34 |
| May 68 | 20 | 22 | 19 | 16 | 21 |
| Algeria | 10 | 15 | 11 | 10 | 17 |
| Liberation | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 10 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 45 | 49 | 59 | 65 |
| 25-34 | - | 23 | 29 | 42 | 49 |
| 35-44 | - | 17 | 19 | 28 | 37 |
| 45-54 | - | 9 | 10 | 14 | 25 |
| 55-64 | - | 5 | 9 | 8 | 17 |
| 65-74 | - | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12 |
| 75 and over | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 |

*n.a.: not available.
To read this table: 9% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they listened to recorded music every day. At the same date, 20% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they had this practice.
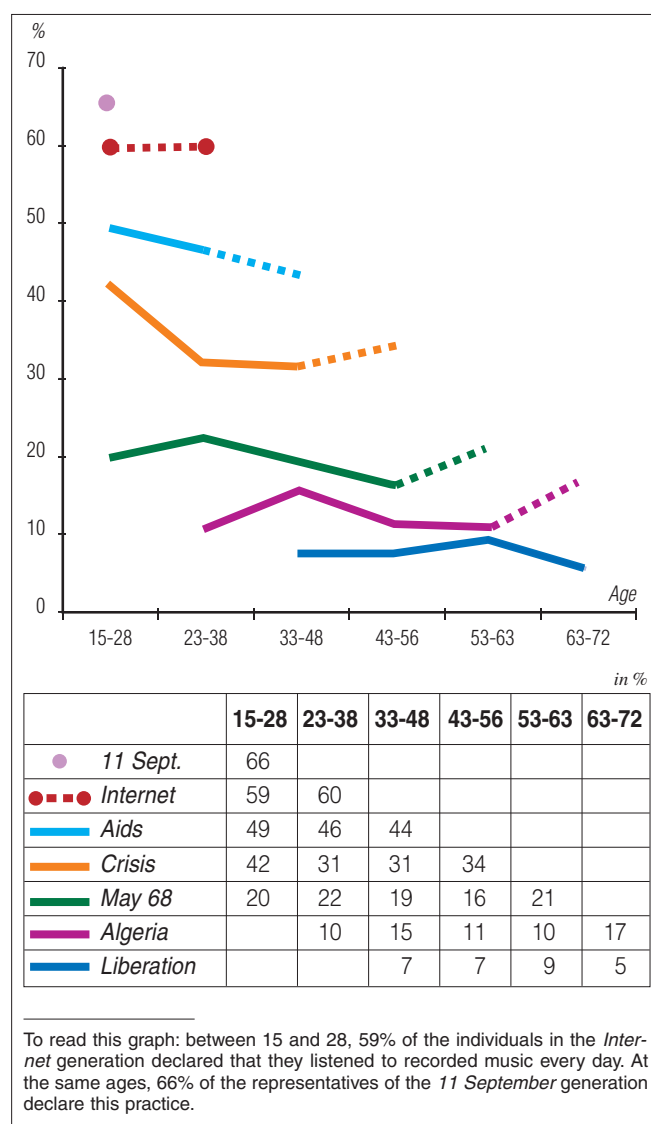
Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

This increase in listening to recorded music has been supported by a set of technological innovations that have regularly overturned listening conditions and have provided a new lease of life to the practice as they were adopted by young people (see Graph 3, p. 9).

Listening to recorded music has always been considered as a practice that is typical of young people, and justly so: The 15-24 age group appeared more numerous listeners in each survey than the succeeding age group (see Table 11). As a result, the analysis of the different explanatory variables systematically brings out the "age" variable as the most determining.

But, as in the daily press case, the importance of the "age" variable is in fact only the sign of a fundamental generational phenomenon, with each group of individuals retaining throughout its life the attitude to recorded music that it had adopted in its youth (see Graph 12). However, in contrast to the

*Graph 12 – Generational curves for the "Recorded music listening" practice*



*in %*

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Sept. | 66 | | | | | |
| Internet | 59 | 60 | | | | |
| Aids | 49 | 46 | 44 | | | |
| Crisis | 42 | 31 | 31 | 34 | | |
| May 68 | 20 | 22 | 19 | 16 | 21 | |
| Algeria | | 10 | 15 | 11 | 10 | 17 |
| Liberation | | | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 |

To read this graph: between 15 and 28, 59% of the individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they listened to recorded music every day. At the same ages, 66% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

daily press, listening to recorded music benefits from a very clear positive generational effect. At twenty, 20% of the members of the *May 68* generation listened to music daily, whereas 66% of the *11 September* generation do so.

This change is amplified by the different technological innovations that are, turn by turn, adopted by the young people of the generation concerned, so influencing their degree of practice.

Finally, we remark that listening to recorded music is a "pure" generational practice and extremely robust, in so far as the same positive generational phenomenon always remains observable in a similarly marked way whatever the sociodemographic sub group considered: Low or high qualifications, men or women, Parisians or provincials, single or married.

## Watching television

As a symbol of the emergence of audiovisual culture, watching television has been a constantly increasing practice during the last quarter of the 20th century: The proportion of the population watching television for more than 20 hours per week went from 29% of the adult French population in 1973 to 44% in 2003 (see Table 12). This development of the practice was accompanied and encouraged by a continuous widening of television provision, with the successive appearance of different chains in the 1960s and 1970s and above all the "explosion of the French audiovisual landscape" (FAL) in the middle of the 1980s.

Principally determined by age and qualification level, this practice is relatively well rendered by sociodemographic subgroup. So the proportion of those who watch television for more than 20 hours per week is on average 50% greater among French people aged over 50 and a distinct increase in the percentage is noted at retirement age.

It is thus not surprising that very clearly increasing generational curves are obtained (see Graph 13), each age group including proportionately more regular television viewers than the previous, the prize being taken by the over 60s, who, whatever the generation to which they belong, include the largest proportion of assiduous television viewers.

Despite a slight trend to a reduction in differences between age groups or between the educational levels observed in different survey waves, the determination of practice by age and diploma still remains as valid today as it was thirty years ago. But this apparent stability must not give the illusion of a complete absence of change. In transposing the

generational scale analysis, we can see that changes are taking place.

In the first place, observation of the generational curves (see Graph 13) reveals that from the *Crisis* generation, the curves separate upwards for each new generation. So, at around 30, the proportion of assiduous television viewers changes from 25% for the *May 68* generation to 35% for the *Crisis* generation, then 39% and 38% for the succeeding generations. The *Crisis* generation has thus initiated a break in television viewing that is shown by an intensification of the practice in its ranks and among its children. This rupture is explained by the fact that its members were twenty at the time of the explosion of the FAL and that this widening of tel-
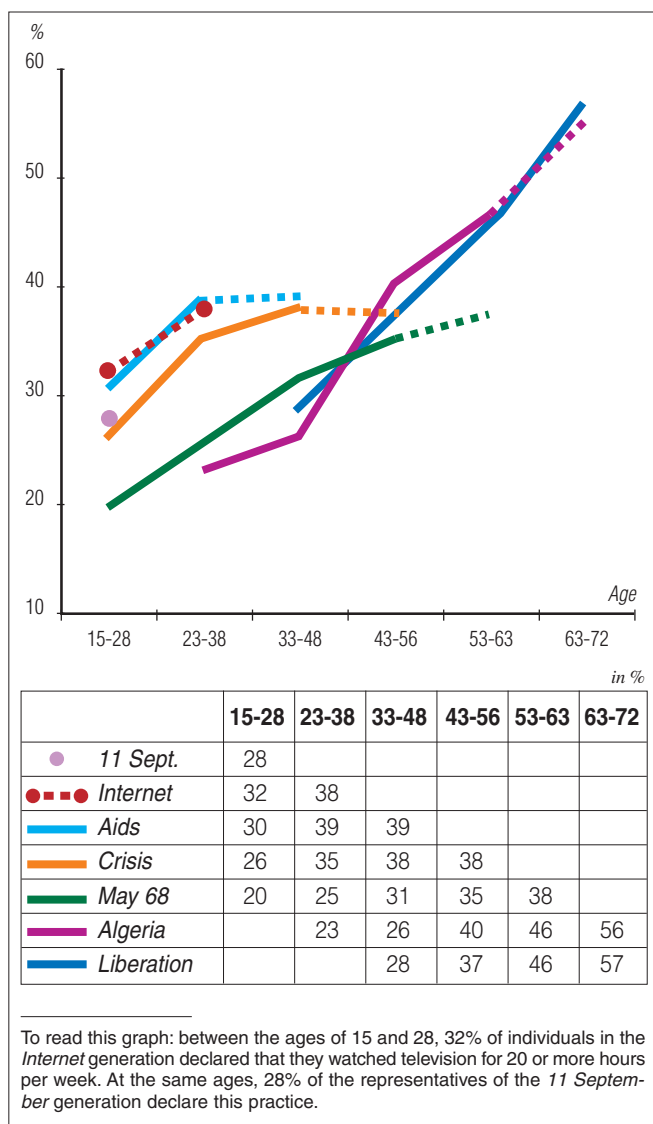
*Table 12 – Change in television viewing*

in %

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **29** | **35** | **39** | **42** | **44** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 23 | 30 | 35 | 39 | 42 |
| Female | 34 | 40 | 43 | 45 | 46 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 32 | 40 | 43 | 47 | 50 |
| High diploma | 11 | 15 | 20 | 26 | 26 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 32 | 36 | 41 | 43 | 46 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 25 | 39 | 42 | 46 | 45 |
| Paris region | 25 | 28 | 29 | 34 | 36 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 32 | 37 | 40 | 43 | n.a.* |
| Single | 15 | 20 | 28 | 34 | n.a. |
| Other | 36 | 47 | 53 | 52 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| *11 September* | | | | | 28 |
| *Internet* | - | - | - | 32 | 38 |
| *Aids* | - | - | 30 | 39 | 39 |
| *Crisis* | - | 26 | 35 | 38 | 38 |
| *May 68* | 20 | 25 | 31 | 35 | 38 |
| *Algeria* | 23 | 26 | 40 | 46 | 56 |
| *Liberation* | 28 | 37 | 46 | 57 | 66 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 24 | 31 | 35 | 32 |
| 25-34 | - | 28 | 34 | 37 | 42 |
| 35-44 | - | 25 | 31 | 38 | 36 |
| 45-54 | - | 33 | 41 | 36 | 36 |
| 55-64 | - | 50 | 47 | 50 | 49 |
| 65-74 | - | 58 | 58 | 58 | 62 |
| 75 and over | - | 50 | 53 | 61 | 68 |

*n.a.: not available.
To read this table: 29% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they watched television for more than 20 hours per week. At the same date, 20% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they watched television for more than 20 hours per week.

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

**Graph 13 – Generational curves for the "Television viewing" practice**



To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 32% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they watched television for 20 or more hours per week. At the same ages, 28% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● *11 Sept.* | 28 | | | | | |
| ● ● ● *Internet* | 32 | 38 | | | | |
| — *Aids* | 30 | 39 | 39 | | | |
| — *Crisis* | 26 | 35 | 38 | 38 | | |
| — *May 68* | 20 | 25 | 31 | 35 | 38 | |
| — *Algeria* | | 23 | 26 | 40 | 46 | 56 |
| — *Liberation* | | | 28 | 37 | 46 | 57 |

Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)

evision provision has subsequently been accentuated for succeeding generations.

But the increase in degree of practice has not occurred homogeneously across the different sociodemographic subgroups. It has predominantly concerned the historically lowest consuming subgroups, meaning the "highly educated" and men. In fact, since the *Crisis* generation, the "highly qualified" have experienced a positive generational effect due to the fact that each new generation includes more high television consumers than the previous, until, with the *Internet* generation, it reaches a similar proportion of assiduous television viewers as the "low qualified". The same phenomenon can be observed between the sexes: A traditionally female practice, television viewing tends to become less sexually differentiated among the young generations, with men experiencing a positive generational effect since the *Crisis* generation (or even the *May 68*).

However, this phenomenon seems to be ending with the *Internet* generation, because the latest available data indicate that the *11 September* generation is characterised by a lower use of television (28% against 32% for the *Internet* generation at the same age). Possibly we see here the start of a substitution by young people of audiovisual leisure activities by new leisure activities, made possible by the digital revolution.

## Listening to the radio

Compared to the rise of television, listening to the radio has increased relatively little since 1973: The percentage of regular listeners, defined as the proportion of the population listening to the radio for more than 20 hours per week, was 29% in 1973 and only reached 33% in 1997 (see Table 13). Furthermore, it seems to have stabilised since the end of the 1980s because in 2003, an almost identical level was again reached (31% in 1988 and 32% in 2003).

Although regular radio listeners are recruited partly from the work force and in certain professional categories in particular (among artisans for example), we can note a positive age effect related to their increase at the time of retirement. This age effect tends to acquire greater importance over the years, accentuating the contrast between young people who are little attracted to radio and older regular listeners.

In any case, this is what the generational curves for this practice show (see Graph 14): Whereas, from the *Algeria* generation to the *Aids* generation, we obtain remarkably similar and superposable curves (a sign of the absence of any generational effect on the practice), the curves for the *Internet* and *11 September* generations are detached from the set by recording distinctly lower levels (around 25%), announcing a future fall in total radio listening.

The "diploma" variable tends, for its part, to lose importance over generations. The link between radio listening and low qualification levels is more or less verified for all age groups and all the *Algeria* and *Aids* generations. However, it appears to break with the *Internet* generation, essentially due to a reduction in the frequency of high practice in the unqualified population. It is thus the sociodemographic group that traditionally supplied the most regular radio listeners that the highest fall is recorded.

In addition, we emphasise the important change in the figures for the "gender" variable: Whereas in

*Table 13 – Change in radio viewing*
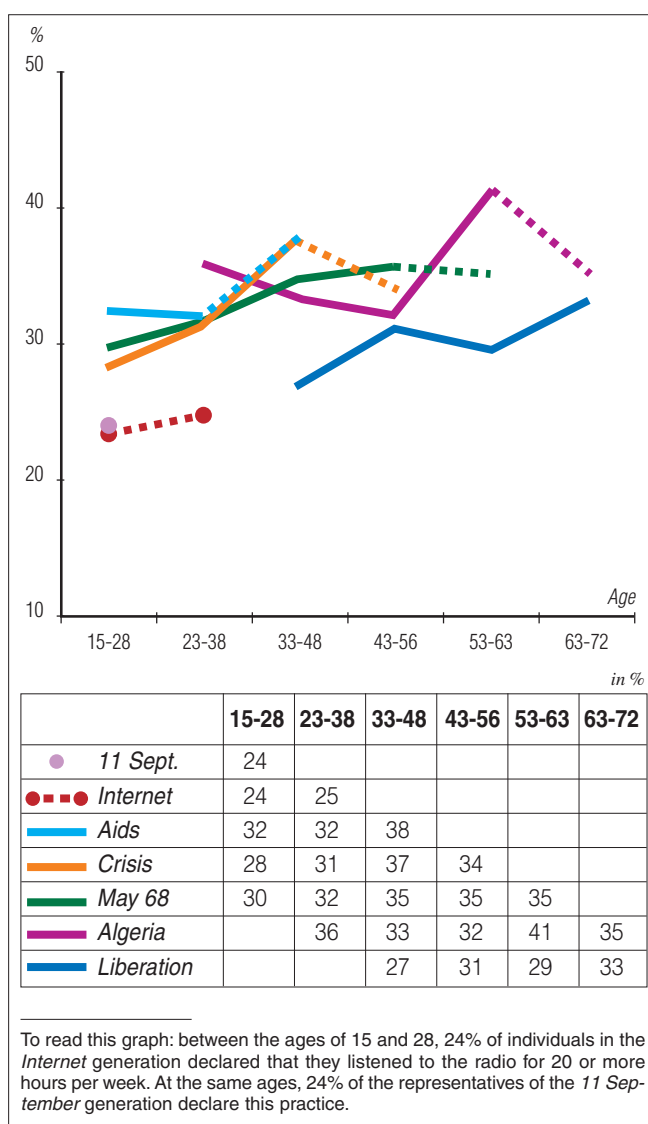
<span style="float:right">in %</span>

| Survey date | 1973 | 1981 | 1988 | 1997 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All** | **29** | **29** | **31** | **33** | **32** |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | 19 | 23 | 28 | 29 | 31 |
| Female | 37 | 34 | 34 | 36 | 33 |
| *Diploma* | | | | | |
| Low diploma | 30 | 31 | 32 | 34 | 32 |
| High diploma | 23 | 19 | 26 | 27 | 31 |
| *Region of residence* | | | | | |
| Fewer than 100,000 inhabitants | 28 | 28 | 31 | 34 | 31 |
| More than 100,000 inhabitants | 31 | 32 | 32 | 34 | 34 |
| Paris region | 28 | 26 | 30 | 27 | 34 |
| *Family statut* | | | | | |
| Married or living together | 30 | 30 | 31 | 34 | n.a.* |
| Single | 26 | 26 | 30 | 27 | n.a. |
| Other | 23 | 27 | 32 | 34 | n.a. |
| *Generation* | | | | | |
| 11 September | | | | | 24 |
| Internet | - | - | - | 24 | 25 |
| Aids | - | - | 32 | 32 | 38 |
| Crisis | - | 28 | 31 | 37 | 34 |
| May 68 | 30 | 32 | 35 | 35 | 35 |
| Algeria | 36 | 33 | 32 | 41 | 35 |
| Liberation | 27 | 31 | 29 | 33 | 32 |
| *Age class* | | | | | |
| 15-24 | - | 27 | 31 | 25 | 23 |
| 25-34 | - | 31 | 32 | 34 | 34 |
| 35-44 | - | 33 | 34 | 37 | 34 |
| 45-54 | - | 31 | 33 | 34 | 36 |
| 55-64 | - | 26 | 29 | 42 | 35 |
| 65-74 | - | 26 | 26 | 31 | 34 |
| 75 and over | - | 19 | 28 | 20 | 23 |

*n.a.: not available.
To read this table: 29% of persons questioned during the *Cultural Practices of the French* survey in 1973 declared that they listened to the radio for more than 20 hours per week. At the same date, 30% of individuals in the *May 68* generation declared that they watched television for more than 20 hours per week.

<span style="float:right">Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)</span>

*Graph 14 – Generational curves*



<span style="float:right">in %</span>

| | 15-28 | 23-38 | 33-48 | 43-56 | 53-63 | 63-72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Sept. | 24 | | | | | |
| Internet | 24 | 25 | | | | |
| Aids | 32 | 32 | 38 | | | |
| Crisis | 28 | 31 | 37 | 34 | | |
| May 68 | 30 | 32 | 35 | 35 | 35 | |
| Algeria | | 36 | 33 | 32 | 41 | 35 |
| Liberation | | | 27 | 31 | 29 | 33 |

To read this graph: between the ages of 15 and 28, 24% of individuals in the *Internet* generation declared that they listened to the radio for 20 or more hours per week. At the same ages, 24% of the representatives of the *11 September* generation declare this practice.

<span style="float:right">Source: DEPS/INSEE (EPCV 2003)</span>

1973 the proportion of regular listeners among men (19%) was distinctly less than for women (37%), this is no longer the case in 2003 (31% against 33%) (see Table 13). The increase in radio listening among men is detectable from the *Algeria* generation up to the abandonment started by the *Internet* generation, which reduces its practice whatever the gender.

## LOOKING FORWARD

From the main trends that the generational analysis has allowed us to uncover, it becomes possible to attempt to imagine the future in 2020.

Undertaking such a generational forecasting exercise consists in practice in extracting from the past, for each generation, a trend that describes its future behaviour, and if necessary correcting this trend depending on the main identifiable or forecast sociocultural changes. The generation by generation forecasts for each practice are then aggregated, taking account, of course, of the forecast demographic weight of each generation for the time

frame considered – here 2020 – and including new arrivals (see Graphs 15 and 16).

In fact, when we evoke the generations that will form the adult population in 2020, it becomes necessary to introduce an additional generation that combines the individuals born between 1995 and 2004, and which we will call generation *X* because we still do not know what event will mark their twenties. Neither do we have a reference for their involvement in each practice and we must thus be content, to predict their future behaviour, with reference to the behaviour of the previous generations by assuming the continuation, reversal or acceleration of the previously observed changes from one generation to another.

Firstly, let us clarify the limits of this generational forecasting exercise. To avoid any error in interpretation, it is important to emphasise several points from now on:

• The reductions in the level of observed practices in young generations, which sometimes appear alarming, will be partly attenuated in future decades by the ageing of the population (the over 60s who represent 27% of the adult population in 2003 will form 31% in 2020): The older cate-gories who remain high consumers will have a greater weighting in the total population;

• The indicators selected to measure cultural practices are often indicators of high practice: Their fall does thus not predict that there will be no audience in the wider sense of practice. This could well lose assiduous practitioners whilst continuing to affect most of the adult population more occasionally (this is the case for television for example);

• Finally, practice indicators are to be differentiated from any forecasts for entries or use of cultural infrastructure, notably in the case of heritage related practices, in which taking foreigners into account creates a large difference between French practices and infrastructure use.

Once this small number of usage precautions has been stated, what can be selected from the retrospective analysis whose main results have just been presented? Its essential contribution has been to confirm that many cultural breaks that have occurred in the last few decades are generational in nature: The expansion or fall in practices observed in the population as a whole are in fact often initiated by a particular generation, with succeeding

*Graph 15 – Demographic weight of generations in the French population from the age of 15 in 2003*



* People over the age of 88 belong to the *Crazy years* generation.
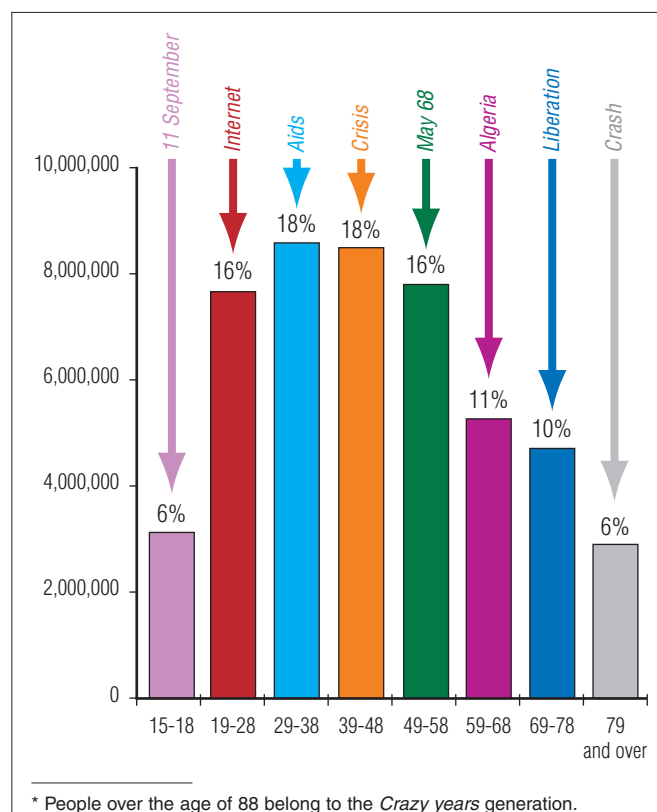
Source: Eurostat

*Graph 16 – Demographic weight of generations in the French population from the age of 15 in 2020*



* People who will be over 85 in 2020 belong to the *Liberation* generation.
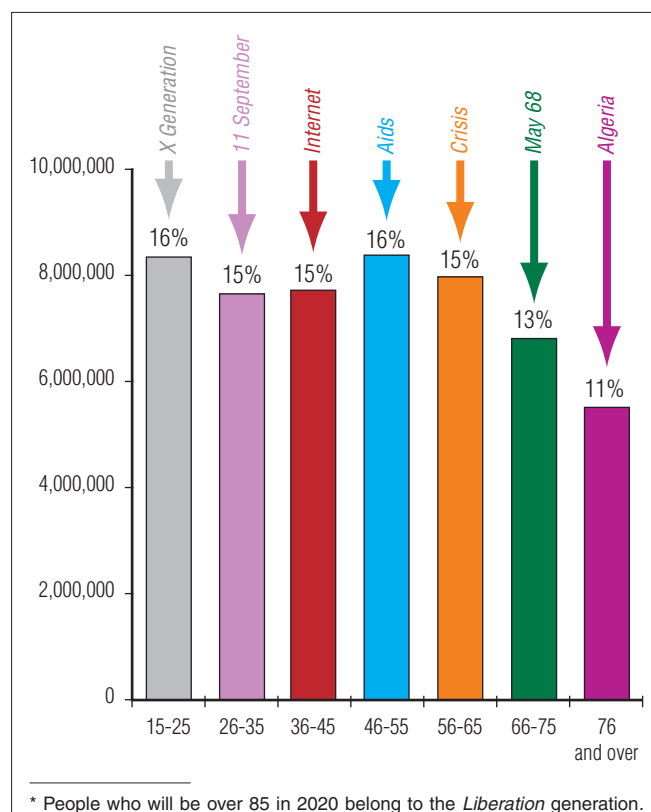
Source: Eurostat

generations continuing the movement and amplifying it.

This observation allows a new viewpoint for the increase of audiovisual compared to written, which appears as an eminently generational change. This transition occurred over thirty years, involving three different generations: The *Algeria* generation who started the generational fall in daily press reading, the *Crisis* generation who increased the proportion of young people who watch television for more than 20 hours per week and the *Aids* generation who initiated the movement to lose affection for reading books.

The analysis also gives information relevant to the influence of other explanatory variables like "level of education" and "gender".

Whereas for the preceding generations, the "qualification" variable was a very good discriminator for a certain number of practices, educational level seems to be less and less determining for the new generations. In the ranks of the *Aids* then *Internet* generations, the most highly qualified have progressively deviated from the behaviour of their predecessors to reach practice levels closer to those for the unqualified for television viewing, reading books and visits to classical music concerts.
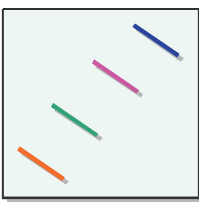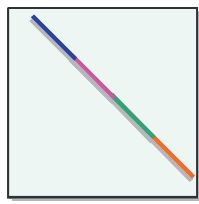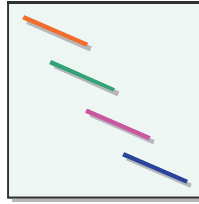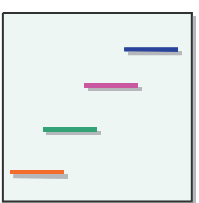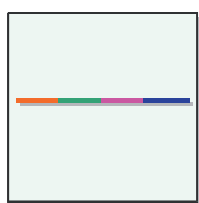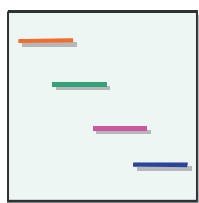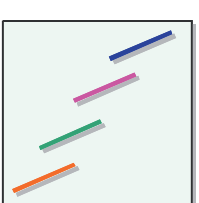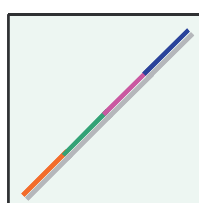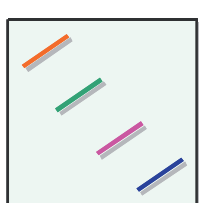
We also observe the feminisation of many practices related to traditional culture, because they have been abandoned more by men than by women: This is the case for example for reading books, theatre visits or dance performances. But it also appears that practices related to audiovisual culture (radio and television), which in the past concerned women more due to the higher presence of the latter in the home, are the place for a certain generational catch up by men that makes an increasingly mixed media culture appear.

By setting out the general matrix proposed in the introduction (page 7), we can thus resume the observed change trends before attempting to image the changes to come (see Table 14).

## Printed culture

Printed culture is marked by a generational fall in reading both the daily press and books. A sign that the golden age of "paper" culture is definitely gone, reading recruits fewer and fewer enthusiasts in each new generation. This loss of affection by the young generations combines, in the book reading case, with a negative age effect that accelerates its

*Table 14 – Matrix of cultural and media practices from the generational analysis for the period 1973-1997*



Source: BIPE

decline, each having a tendency to read less and less as they age. Located in the upper left part of the table, this section of culture clearly corresponds to declining practices.

The retreat of printed culture is visible since the start of the 1970s for the reading the daily press, and later (since the end of the 1980s) for reading books. We have seen that this fall is mainly generational: Since the *Algeria* generation for the daily press and the *Aids* generation for books. In future years, if we apply a simple continuation of the trends of the last few decades, we are forced to diagnose an ineluctable retreat by printed culture through the simple renewal of generations: Each former generation that has died is replaced by a new generation that is characterised by a three to six times lower proportion of readers. From this point of view, this proportion can only reduce in the next few years in the total adult population.

However, these sombre perspectives require qualification: Here we are only talking of the future of reading books or the paid for daily press, meaning the most "traditional" practices of written or printed culture. It would appear that during recent years, the development of new written provision, on the internet or through the free information press, better suited to the requirements of the new generations, has encouraged a return to reading among young people.

## Juvenile culture

Juvenile culture, represented by cinema visits, combines the different forms of socialisation that are specific to young people, whatever their generation of origin. It is thus marked by a distinctly negative age effect and by the absence of significant generational movement. However, it is important to remark that we are starting to detect the first signs of what could be the beginning of a negative generational effect. In fact, although it has been relatively stable since the start of the 1980s, the "frequent" visit (at least three times per year) to the cinema could demonstrate the start of a decline in coming years if the "abandonment" by the *11 September* generation accentuates with the following generation. It can also appear astonishing that the development of even more flexible and high performance competing possibilities for film viewing (DVD, internet downloading, video on demand, etc.) is still imperceptible in the figures for cinema visits.

We also note, and linked with the cinema visit which it partially intersects, that going out in the evening in the wider sense risks experiencing the same type of evolution due to the reduction in the frequency of going out among young people. In fact, we can also think that going out, as a priority factor in young people's socialisation, will effectively be penalised by "digital sociability" in the new generations (through forums, instant messaging systems or network games). In contrast, starting from lower levels in their youth, the new generations should reduce their rate of going out less than their seniors as they age. We will thus observe generational curves characteristic of the young generations that will have a tendency to "horizontalise" compared to those of their predecessors, very strongly decreasing.

## Cultivated culture

Cultivated culture corresponds to all the practices related to live performances and heritage. By default, all these practices are classified in the central box corresponding to the absence of any age or generation effect, the few phenomena observed not in our sense presenting a sufficient amplitude to be taken into account. However this classification must be interpreted more as a temporary indeterminacy than as a sign that time will have no effect on these practices. This indeterminacy arises from both the lack of precision of the high practice indicators, which does not allow the changes at work among the most assiduous practitioners to be revealed, and the nature of the provision, which must be identified more finely to cause finely shaded change forecasts to appear.

In future years, without experiencing a real upheaval, it appears that certain forms of live performance will be subject to a certain loss of affection by the young generations, and more particularly the highest educated among those who started from the highest level. The declines will doubtless be less marked for rarer practices, due to the already small size of their public, but negative generational effects could also affect certain types of performance, like dance, which have however shown increasing success with each successive generation since the *Algeria* generation.

Over the next few years heritage should also show a slight fall if we believe the figures for the *11 September* generation in 2003. Museum and exhibition visits risk experiencing a negative age effect that will hit the older generations at the end of their life cycle. This effect will cause a general reduction in practice that the new generations, in all the heritage sub-consumptions, will no doubt not

compensate, unless an ambitious educational and cultural policy and the integration of new technologies arrive to reorient this trend.

## Musical culture

Here, musical culture is composed only of listening to recorded music, in default of being able to integrate concert visits in the analysis. It represents the exact symmetry of printed culture, each generation subscribing a little more to this section of culture and intensifying its degree of practice to reach a yet higher level than the previous generation. In the face of a practice showing such an expansion, the questions for the future cover the limits of such an increase: How close can we approach to 100% daily listening (for the most recent generations, we have already reached 66%)? At what stage will this generational rise slow down or even dry up?

It is true that this practice has not yet expressed all its growth potential. The first item that supports this hypothesis relates to the "generational mechanism" itself: Each new generation replaces an older generation that listened to music much less systematically, so that the proportion of those who listen a lot increases mechanically as the new generations gain in demographic weight.

Listening to recorded music should also benefit from a certain number of favourable technological factors. In fact, this practice continues to develop with the support of technical innovations that push young people towards regular listening to music. Portable MP3 players, with their increasing capacity and their continually more numerous functions, have made listening to music more general (in space and in time) than it has ever been. Even more, most of the new mass market electronic developments tend to include the possibility of listening to almost all available equipment (in particular mobile phones), which tends towards an even greater generalisation of musical listening. Finally, the increase – more or less measurable but nevertheless real – in musical file downloading over the internet also drives in the direction of the increase in recorded music consumption.

In view of these changes, it does not appear excessive to envisage that in 2020 young people from generation *X* will continue the movement that has resulted, since the 1970s, in each new generation reaching a higher involvement in music than the preceding.

## Audiovisual culture

Audiovisual culture, perhaps because of its time consuming nature, is essentially marked by positive age effects. Television has even benefited from a positive generation effect that has made it a practice in clear expansion during the last quarter of a century. However, we have seen that this movement has dried up during the most recent generations. It appears to us to be realistic to assume that users of radio and television will no longer experience a positive generational effect in the future and that they could eventually even record a fall in future generations.

The fact that in 2003 television watching by the *11 September* generation was less than for previous generations at the same age could be interpreted as a sign of a reversal of this trend. It is in fact possible that the proportion of assiduous television viewers at the age of twenty, which has reached the record of 32% with the *Internet* generation, and which falls back to 27% with the *11 September* generation, will experience a generational fall for generation *X*.

At the same time, the increasing development of audiovisual practices with age will remain valid for the older generations: So, for example, the *May 68* generation could see its proportion of high television consumers exceed 38% in 2003 to reach 50% in 2010 and 62% in 2020, the date at which its members will be 70 years old on average.

Radio, for which young people started to turn away earlier (from the *Internet* generation), could record the same acceleration of the fall in listening at the age of 20 as the generations renew (more than 15% for generation *X*).

Finally, it is probable that the expansion of both practices will be completed with the end of the 20th century and that in future years we will see a falling off, progressively for television and more marked for radio. For all that, the most realistic vision for the future of television consists in considering that it will be consumed differently (transmission on demand, more often on a computer screen, a games console or a mobile phone, etc.) and that the practice, as it is treated in the surveys, must be carefully redefined. Radio, for its part, has already started this change to "*à la carte*" consumption (the *podcast*, which is still seeking its economic model).

The signs of a downturn observed in younger generations concerning the traditional forms of radio and television listening must in fact be interpreted in the light of the spread of new audiovisual practices. If, after radio, it will next be television

and cinema from which the young people in the *11 September* generation are starting to turn away, this is because new technology related leisure practices are developing among the young generations, taking part in what we can already call the "digital culture".

## The emergence of digital culture

Of course, no cultural and media practice forecasting exercise can ignore this constantly evolving digital culture, because the new technological possibilities opened by digitisation have radically modified the conditions for the creation, distribution and consumption of cultural works and products. We will briefly summarise some points that influence the development of "pre-digital" practices.

– First, we can note a certain detachment from physical media (books, CD, DVD…) in favour of dematerialised formats. The digital revolution has thus broken the notion of "cultural goods" in the physical sense, a phenomenon at the origin of a profound change in the cultural industries[11], starting, of course, with the music industry. The emergence of digital culture has perhaps less caused a reduction in "predigital" practices than contributed to their migration to different media: Young people no longer buy "paper" newspapers, but regularly consult the internet sites of the main dailies, they watch less television but are assiduous users of video on demand or video content exchange sites (of the *You Tube* or *Daily motion* type), etc.

– In connection with this dematerialisation of cultural objects, the digital revolution generates a spirit of gratuity: Free information dailies, free (illegal) or unlimited (by subscription) downloads of films and music fragments, etc.

– The emergence of digital culture has also generated new customisation requirements among customers. Better and better equipped with reproduction instruments, the new consumers take a more active part in the preparation of their cultural programmes. They are also developing a new expectation of freedom, of flexibility in the time and place of practice and of immediacy that is opposed to slow time scale social and cultural practices like reading.

– Finally, digital technologies modify sociability behaviours by transcending geographic distance and making remote socialisation a primary form of interaction.

The surveys of the cultural practices of the French do not provide useable information on digital culture because, at the time of the last wave (in 1997), the internet was only starting to be introduced into French households. So, to include these new practices in the forecast analysis, it is necessary to draw on other sources of data.

Even though we do not currently have sufficient distance to analyse the development of the behaviours of different generations as they increase in age, it is difficult not to think that digital usages will spread over the next few years in conjunction with the renewal of the generations. In fact, all the available data for digital culture bring out important differences in practice rates as a function of age.

So, for example, 20% of 60-69 year olds are connected to the internet against 95% of 12-17 year olds[12]! As a practice based on mastery of new technology, it is natural that the affinity of everyone with the internet depends largely on the age at which it was encountered for the first time.

So it is probable that the internet will remain a fundamentally generational practice and that, if each generation significantly increases its degree of practice over the next few decades, we will not see a catch up effect by those who started lower.

It is the same for video games practice, which occupies a very significant part of the time budget for new generations whereas it represents an almost totally unknown practice for their seniors. A study performed by Médiamétrie for the Leisure Software Publisher's Syndicate (SELL – *Syndicat des éditeurs de logiciels de loisirs*) reveals the still very marginal character of practice because only 7% of the population of thirteen years and older[13] had played video games during the last twenty four hours before the survey. But it is the breakdown of the practice by age that conceals the most precious information: whereas the over 25s hardly play at all (with practice rates around 6 or 7%, and even 3% for the over 50s), 15% of 20-24 year olds and 21%

11. Philippe CHANTEPIE and Alain LE DIBERDER, *Révolution numérique et industries culturelles* [*Digital revolution and cultural industries*], Paris, La Découverte, 2005, p. 108.
12. *La diffusion des technologies de l'information dans la société française* [*The spread of information technologies in French society*], CRE-DOC, 2006.
13. This low rate must be viewed taking into account the fact that here we are measuring the individuals who have played during the last 24 hours, which is a very intensive practice. Weekly or monthly practice rates (not available) will probably bring out video games as a much more widespread practice.

of 13-19 year olds had played on the day before the survey. It thus appears that there is a very important jump in the level of practice between individuals who were more or less than 25 years old in 2006. For a forecasting task, the whole question is thus to know whether this attachment of the young generations to video games constitutes an ephemeral practice that will pass as they grow up or whether the proportion of players will increase as the playing generations (*Internet, 11 September,* etc.) grow older.

Here too it seems probable that not only will these generations continue to play as they grow older and will thus play more, at the same age, as those who preceded them, but whether future generations will extend the generational climb by playing yet more frequently than those before them, encouraged in this by a diversification of the provision of games that will accompany the increasing age of the players.
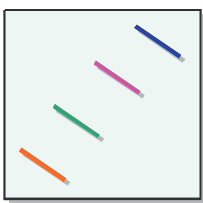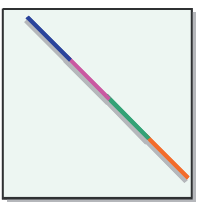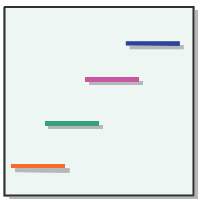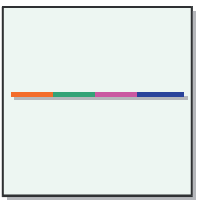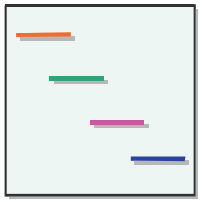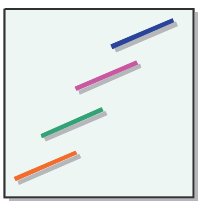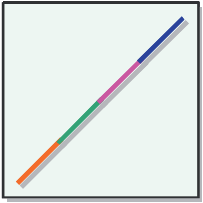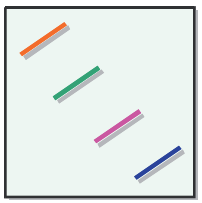
## TOWARDS NEW BALANCES

On conclusion of this forward looking survey, we are forced to note that all the cultural and media practices that have traditionally been measured since the start of the 1970s (with the well known exception of listening to recorded music) appear to be heading towards a more or less marked decline during the next few years. In reality, this general fall represents the appearance of a new cultural field, supported by digital technologies, whose emergence will mechanically limit the importance of the "old practices" due to the budget and time constraints imposed on the French.

So we can take the risk of projecting to 2020 the combined matrix of the effects of age and generation constructed on the basis of changes observed over the period 1973-2003.

The comparison with the previous matrix constructed as a reference for the period 1973-1997 (see Table 14, p. 25) brings out the effects of the emergence of digital culture supported by a strong positive generational current. This new culture is developing to the detriment of all other practices, whether they belong to printed (excluding the free

*Table 15 – Cultural and media practice matrix for 2020*



Source: BIPE

press), "juvenile", "cultivated" or even audiovisual culture. These practices are thus found offset to the left of the matrix, on the side for falling or ageing practices. Whether we want it or not, there is definitely at least a partial substitution phenomenon in so far as the emerging cultural practices compete with preexisting practices in terms of budget and time budget. By their nature they also constitute substitutes by giving access to written, audio or video content.

The importance of these generational phenomena in the cultural developments of the last quarter of a century makes their strengthening during the coming decades probable: This phenomenon is translated by the polarisation of cultural practices in the left and right hand columns of the matrix, corresponding to either rather negative generational effects (printed, cultivated and audiovisual culture), or to clearly positive generational effects (digital culture in which listening to recorded music will naturally be included).

These generational phenomena are amplified by the increasing strength of the technological factor. The technological aspect thus becomes more and more central in the determination of cultural practice, but above all, due to the accelerated rhythm of the innovations, it imposes its rhythm on the whole cultural field. It is at a point such that the "pre-digital" cultural practices risk being absorbed by the new technologies (Internet in the lead) that are coming to blur the frontiers between the different cultural fields and eventually impose a necessary redefinition of all cultural practices. The general fall expected for "traditional" cultural practices is, in this sense, perhaps to be interpreted less as a fall in the general level of cultural practices or a loss of cultural diversity than as a failure of the former definitions of these practices, which are too centred on the concept of material media to be able to capture the future reality of these practices. ∎