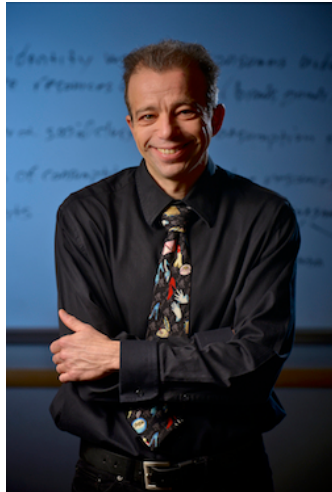
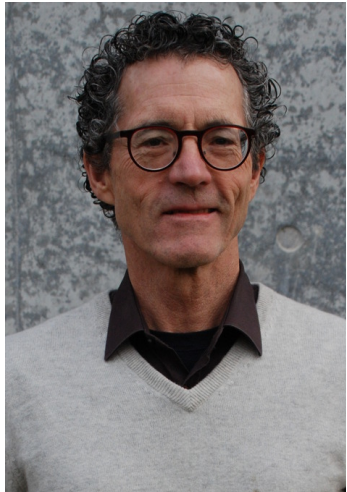


Social Class, Lifestyles, and Subcultures

Hedon Blakaj

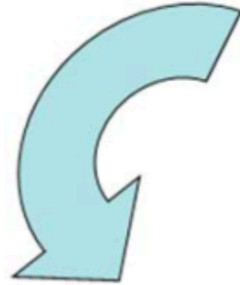


Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research

ERIC J. ARNOULD
CRAIG J. THOMPSON*

This article provides a synthesizing overview of the past 20 yr. of consumer research addressing the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. Our aim is to provide a viable disciplinary brand for this research tradition that we call consumer culture theory (CCT). We propose that CCT has fulfilled recurrent calls for developing a distinctive body of theoretical knowledge about consumption and marketplace behaviors. In developing this argument, we redress three enduring misconceptions about the nature and analytic orientation of CCT. We then assess how CCT has contributed to consumer research by illuminating the cultural dimensions of the consumption cycle and by developing novel theorizations concerning four thematic domains of research interest.

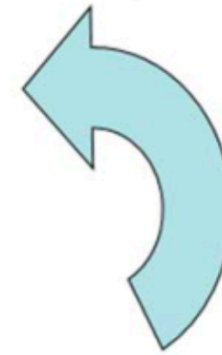
Consumer Resistance; Disruptive Assemblages of Cultural Meanings, Practices & Material Resources



The Socio-Historic Patterning of Consumption

Shaping of consumption by class, ethnicity, gender, and other oversocialized categories; consumption under conditions of attenuated cultural resources; the institutionalization and reproduction of socio-economic hierarchies; interplay of social, cultural and economic capital; ideological production of consumer subjectivities

Governmentality and Structure-Agency Tensions

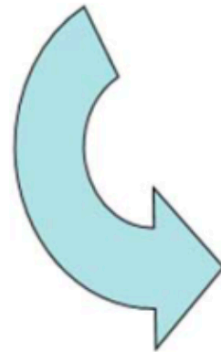


Marketplace Cultures

Socio-cultural processes embedded in brand communities, consumption communities, microcultures, consumption subcultures, consumer tribes; marketplace as mediator of social linkages & social relationships

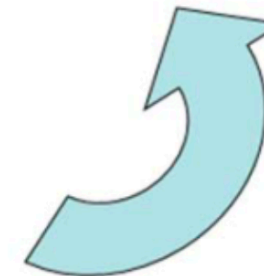
Consumer Identity Projects

Identity goals and experimentation; negotiating body image issues; self-presentation and forging symbolic distinctions to others; extended self; experiential and hedonic dimensions of consumption



Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers' Interpretive Strategies

Representations of consumer lifestyles and consumer culture ideals in media; consumers' active uses of media and practices of co-production; intersections of global media influences and local cultures (glocalization)



Consumer-Driven Market Emergence and Socially Embedded Consumption Practices

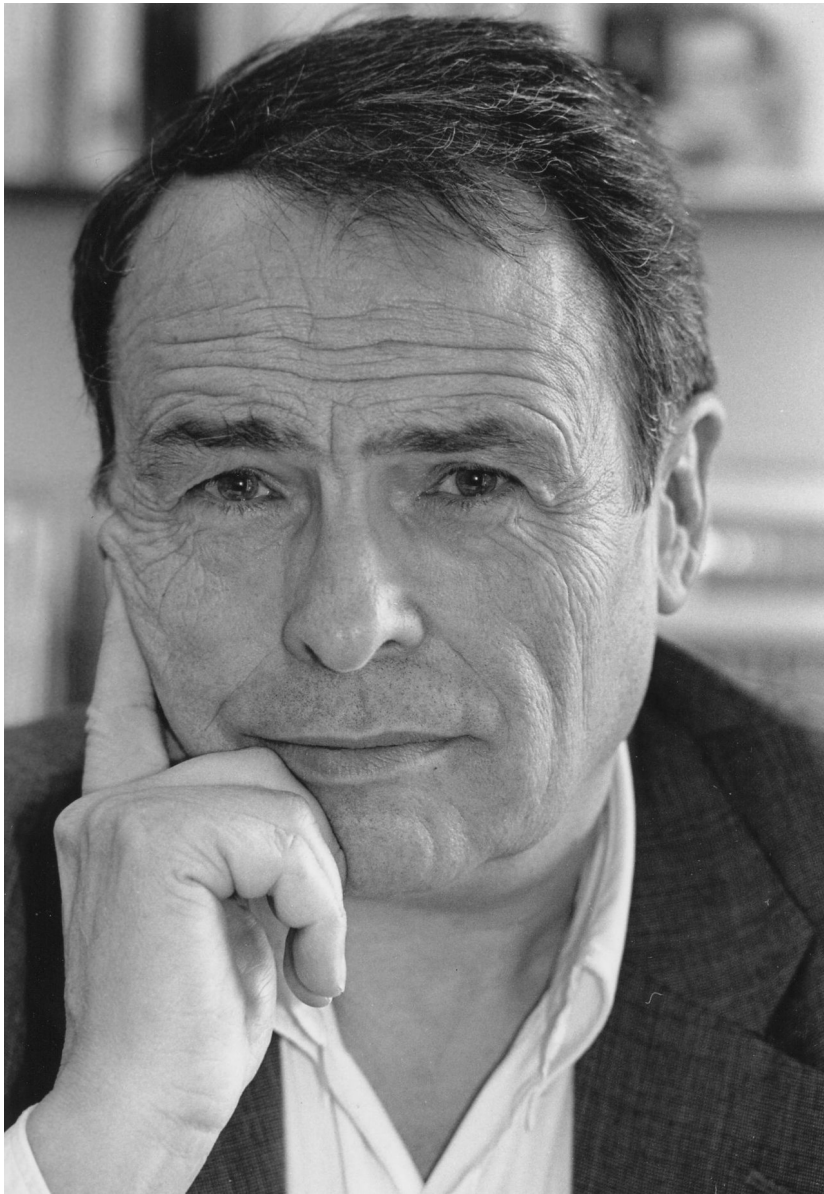
Ideological Shaping of Consumer Identity Goals and Desires

Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?

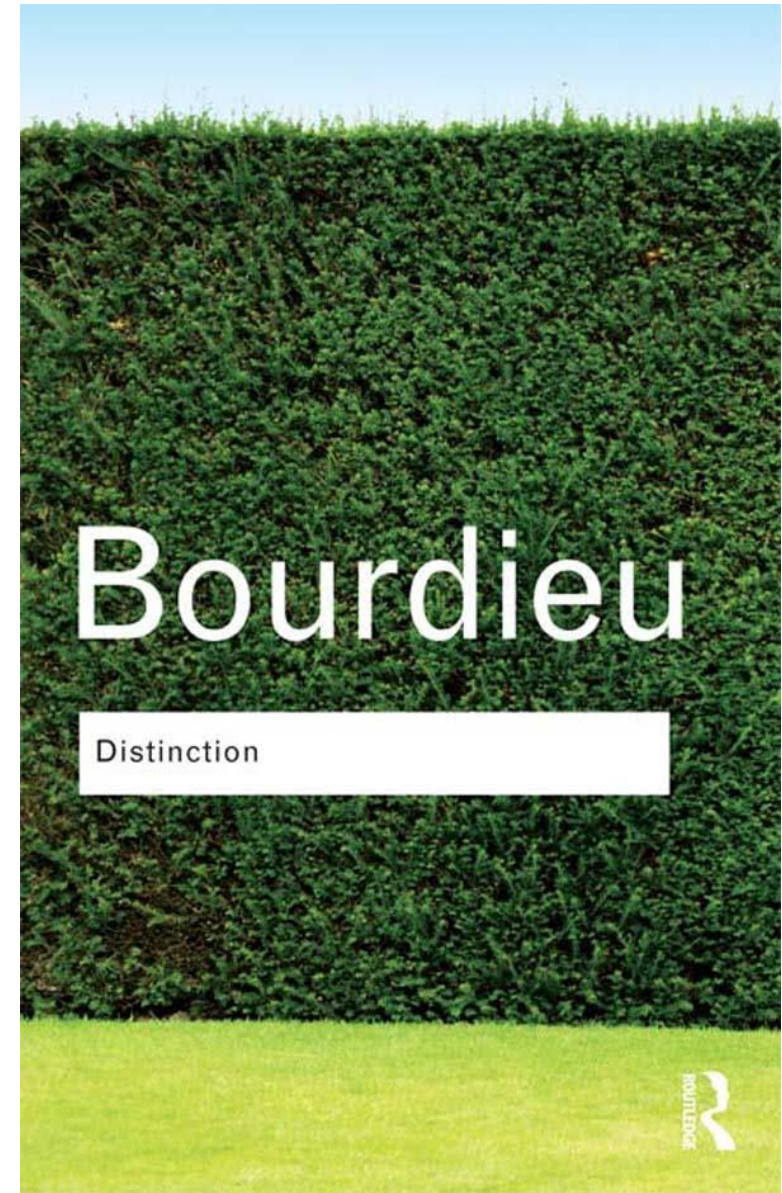
DOUGLAS B. HOLT*



This study examines one of the most debated questions in the sociology of culture: Does Pierre Bourdieu's theory relating levels of cultural capital to consumption patterns apply to the contemporary United States? First, I summarize the innovative characteristics of Bourdieu's theory in relation to the Warnerian tradition of social class research. Next, I critique American appropriations of Bourdieu's theory of tastes and suggest that, in the contemporary United States, the theory should be reformulated to focus on consumption practices rather than consumption objects and on mass rather than high culture. Using this reformulation, I conduct an interpretive empirical study to investigate whether differences in cultural capital resources structure patterns of taste in a mideastern American county. Analyzing a series of ethnographic interviews, I describe six dimensions of taste that distinguish informants with high versus low cultural capital resources: material versus formal aesthetics, referential versus critical interpretations, materialism versus idealism, local versus cosmopolitan tastes, communal versus individualist forms of consumer subjectivity, and autotelic versus self-actualizing leisure. These findings suggest that consumption continues to serve as a potent site for the reproduction of social class.

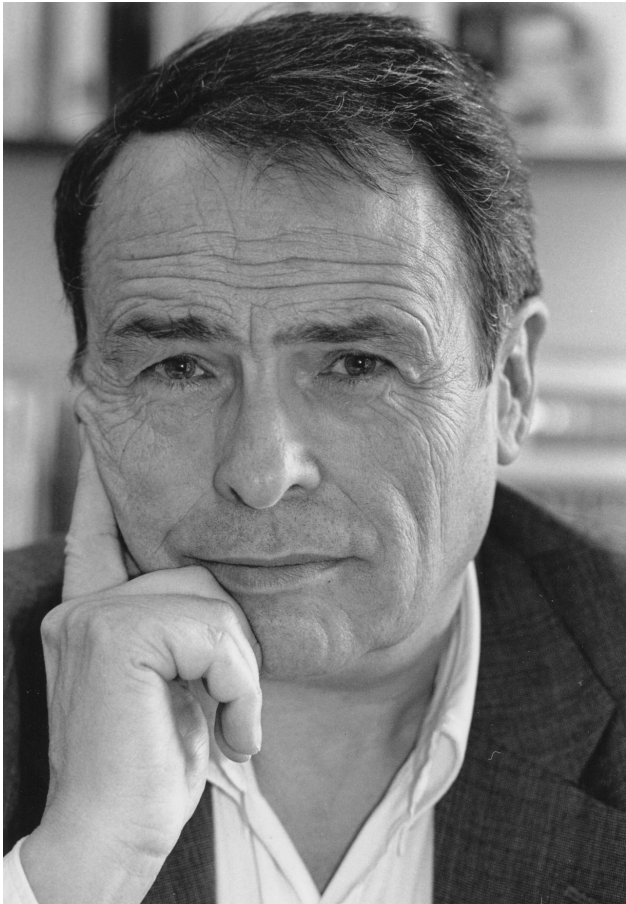


Pierre Bourdieu (1930 – 2002)
French sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher



1979
English translation in 1984

Theory of Tastes → a version of practice theory



Pierre Bourdieu– Theory of Taste / Fields



Anthony Giddens – Structuration Theory



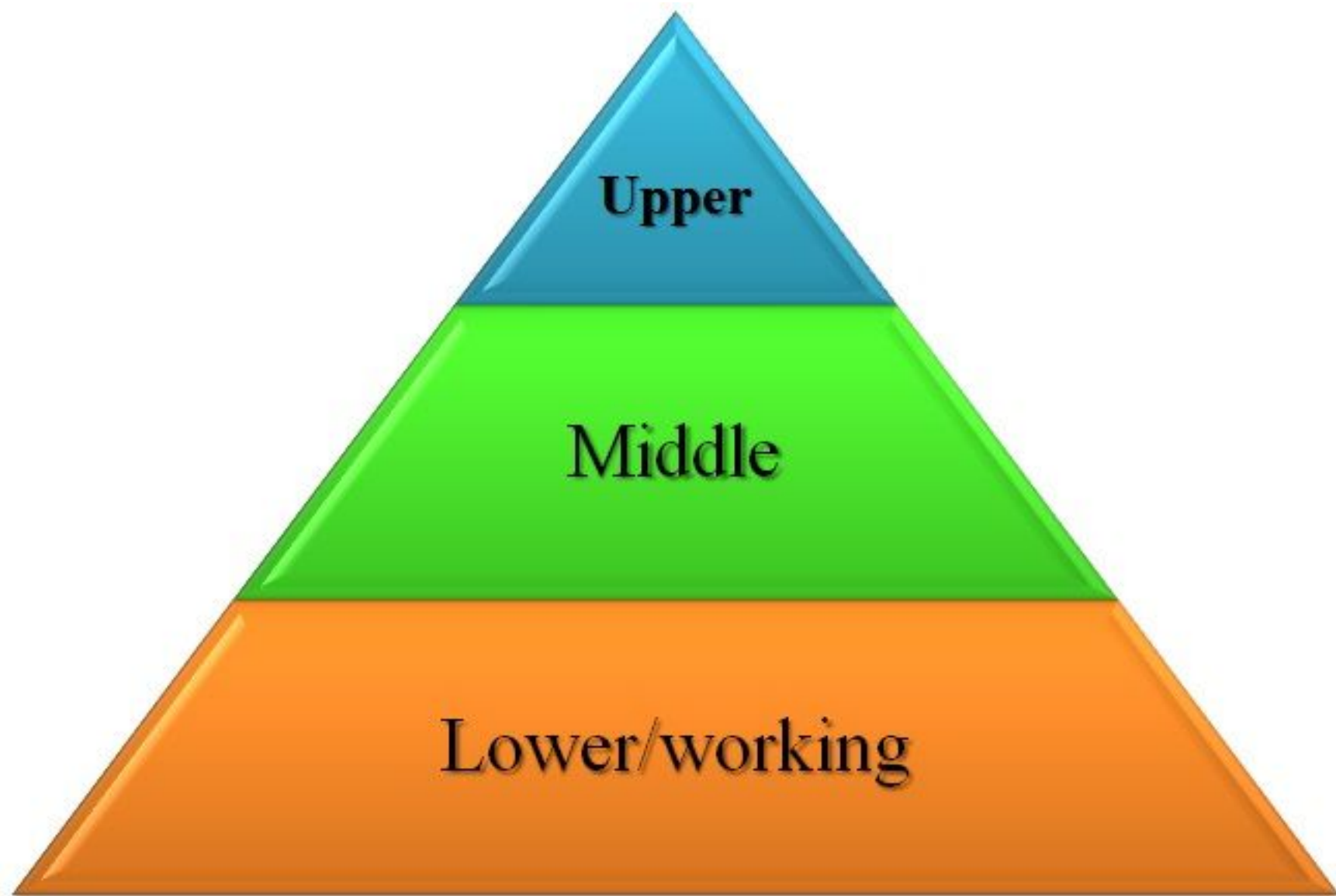
Theodore Schatzki – Practice Theory

Theory of **Tastes**: assumptions and conceptual ingredients



Rudimentary assumptions:

- Social class
- People's *tendencies* to climb up the social ladder
- Status games



“Bourdieu argues that social life can be conceived as a multidimensional **status** game ...” (Holt, 1998)

Climb up the social ladder...



“Consumption as a site for (re)production of social class boundaries”
(Holt, 1998: 1)

What does all this have to do with *taste*?

“Taste classifies and it classifies the classifier”
(Pierre Bourdieu)



“Bourdieu offers a theory of social class consonant with social relations in advanced capitalist societies. Downplaying public displays of status symbols, Bourdieu emphasizes that status is continually reproduced as an unintended consequence of social interaction because all interactions necessarily are classifying practices; that is, micropolitical acts of status claiming in which individuals constantly negotiate their reputational positions (see also Collins 1981; Goffman 1967). Crucial to this process is the expression of cultural capital embodied in consumer actions. Rather than accruing distinction from pecuniary rarity or from elite consensus, Bourdieu argues that cultural capital secures the respect of others through the consumption of objects that are ideationally difficult and so can only be consumed by those few who have acquired the ability to do so.” (Holt 1998: #)

Conceptual ingredients:

- Theory of tastes as a particular kind of practice theory
- This means that we make specific assumptions concerning consumers (people) and consumer behavior → consumers as status seekers
- *We study or examine practices (social interaction)*

→ Habitus

→ Field

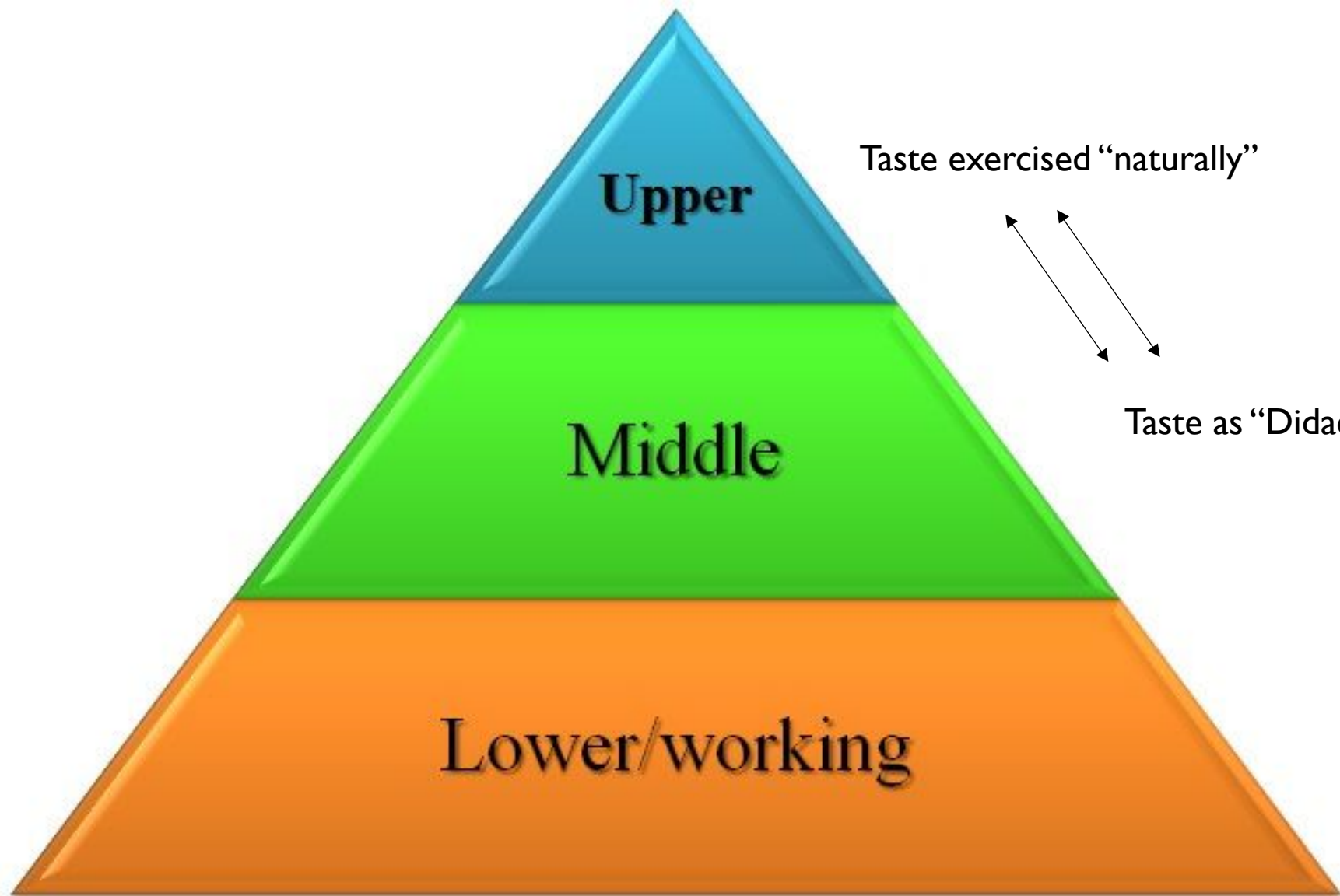
→ Capital(s)

“(Habitus x Capital) + Field = **Practice**”

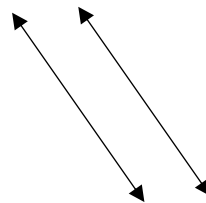
“(Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice”

Habitus → “structured structuring structure”

→ Social class background (upper, middle, working) + upbringing



Taste exercised "naturally"



Taste as "Didactic"

"Taste as necessity"



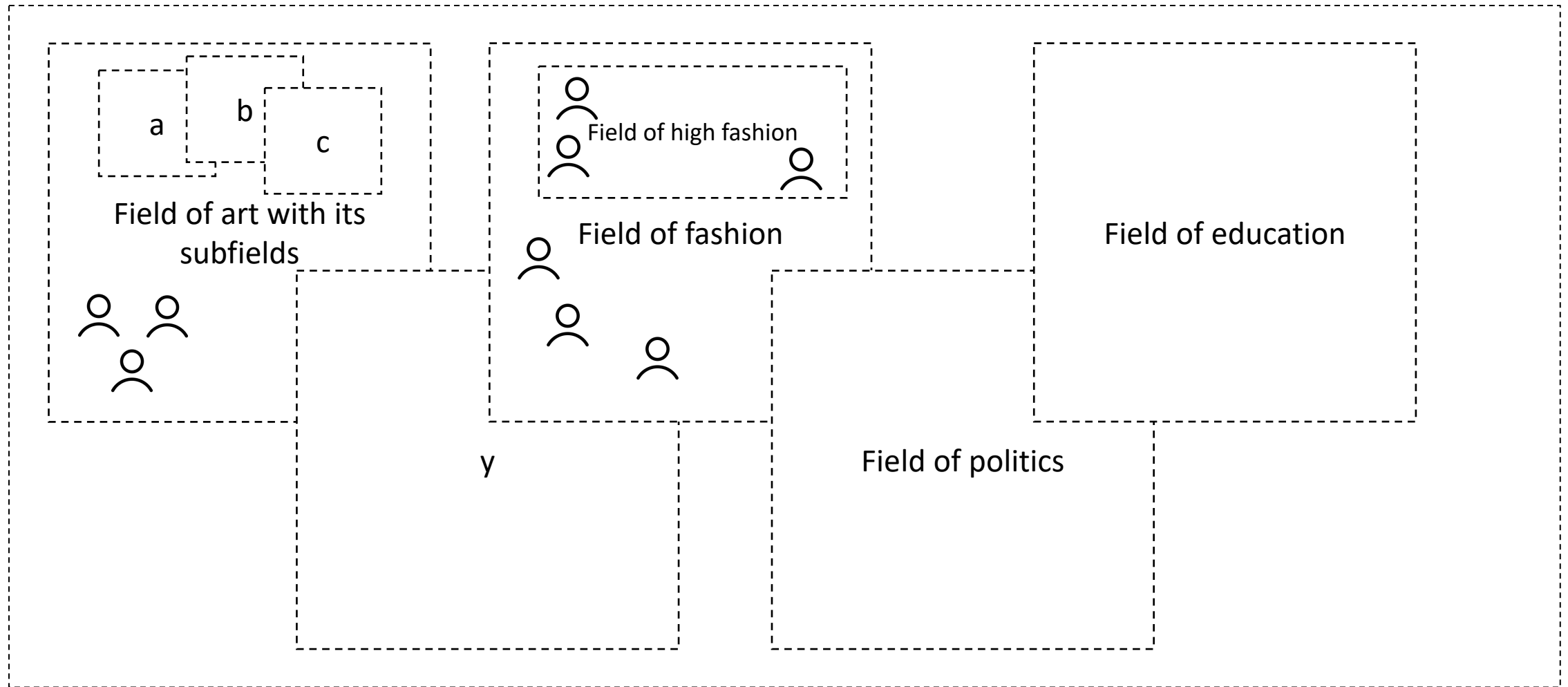
“(Habitus x Capital) + **Field** = Practice”

Rules of the game

“Arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation and exchange of goods, services, knowledge, or status, and the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate, exchange, and monopolize different kinds of power resources (capitals).”

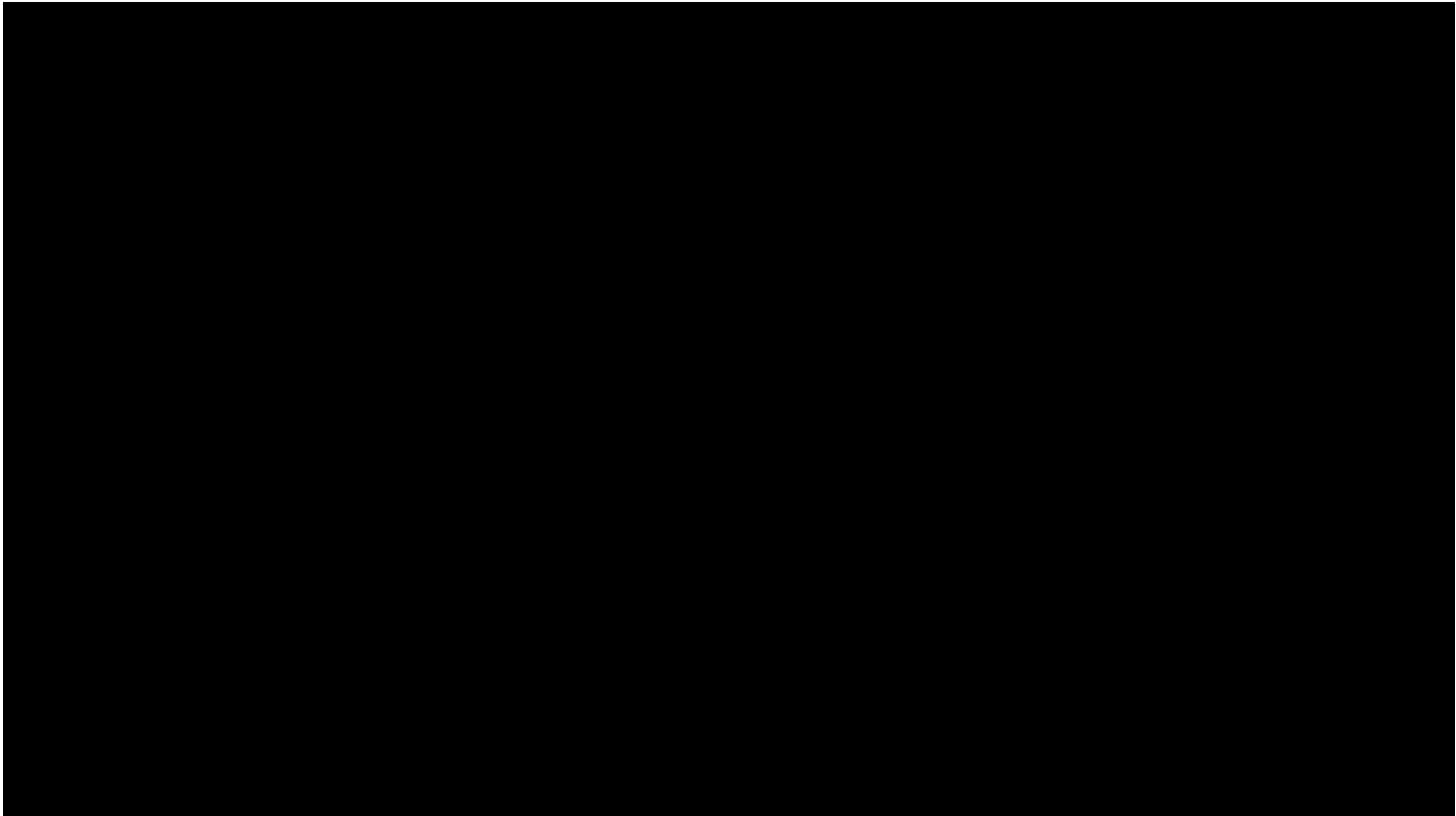


“(Habitus x Capital) + **Field** = Practice”



“(Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice”

- Economic capital
- Cultural capital (high - low)
 - Embodied form (i.e., implicit practical knowledges, skills, and dispositions)
 - Objectified form (i.e., ownership of material *objects*)
 - Institutional form (i.e., university degrees, diplomas that certify the existence of the embodied form)
- Social capital (important for social status within a field)



- Social practice/situation: fine dining + leisure field

- Agents' habitus:

 - Leo (working class) vs. the rest (upper/affluent class)

- Capitals:

 - Cultural capital:

 - Leo (LCC)
 - The rest (HCC)



Notice the etiquette over the dining table (the rules): body posture, talk including tone of voice, the handling material objects like glasses and so on...

 - Econ capital:

 - Leo (LEC)
 - The rest (HEC)



Becomes more vivid when Leo is asked: how did you get here? i.e., where did you get the €€€ → effectively, hierarchies (status) become apparent

Sparring session



- How taste classifies and it classifies the classifier?
- Consider the field dynamics (what kind of fashion (sub)field are we talking about here ... high fashion vs. fast fashion vs. ...) → How is the field structured (rules of the game)?
- Habitus (what is the background of the people in the video?) what does it say about them, about their taste?
- Cultural capital and social interaction in the video: how is cultural capital deployed by the agents (people) in the video? How are objects spoken about?



Subcultures and market research

Why are subcultures important?

- *Authentic* experience takes place in subcultures
- Subcultures are considered to be a great source of innovation
- Subcultures as having distinct culture, values and norms about an activity or a consumption practice
- Subcultures tend to be very hierarchical → the ones with HCC sitting at the top and so on...

Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers

JOHN W. SCHOUTEN
JAMES H. MCALEXANDER*

This article introduces the subculture of consumption as an analytic category through which to better understand consumers and the manner in which they organize their lives and identities. Recognizing that consumption activities, product categories, or even brands may serve as the basis for interaction and social cohesion, the concept of the subculture of consumption solves many problems inherent in the use of ascribed social categories as devices for understanding consumer behavior. This article is based on three years of ethnographic fieldwork with Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners. A key feature of the fieldwork was a process of progressive contextualization of the researchers from outsiders to insiders situated within the subculture. Analysis of the social structure, dominant values, and revealing symbolic behaviors of this distinct, consumption-oriented subculture have led to the advancement of a theoretical framework that situates subcultures of consumption in the context of modern consumer culture and discusses, among other implications, a symbiosis between such subcultures and marketing institutions. Transferability of the principal findings of this research to other subcultures of consumption is established through comparisons with ethnographies of other self-selecting, consumption-oriented subcultures.

Branding related example:

Lets say you are the brand manager working for the Genelec brand



Market research in order to promote, position (or something else) the Genelec series speaker monitors as a go to option among a segment(s) of consumers

Market research to generate insights!



Bourdieuian conceptual tools:

“(Habitus x Capital) + Field = (Consumption) **Practice**”

- Field
- Habitus
- Cultural capital

In order to understand a cultural phenomenon, we study them in practice

“Consumption as a site for reproduction of social class boundaries”

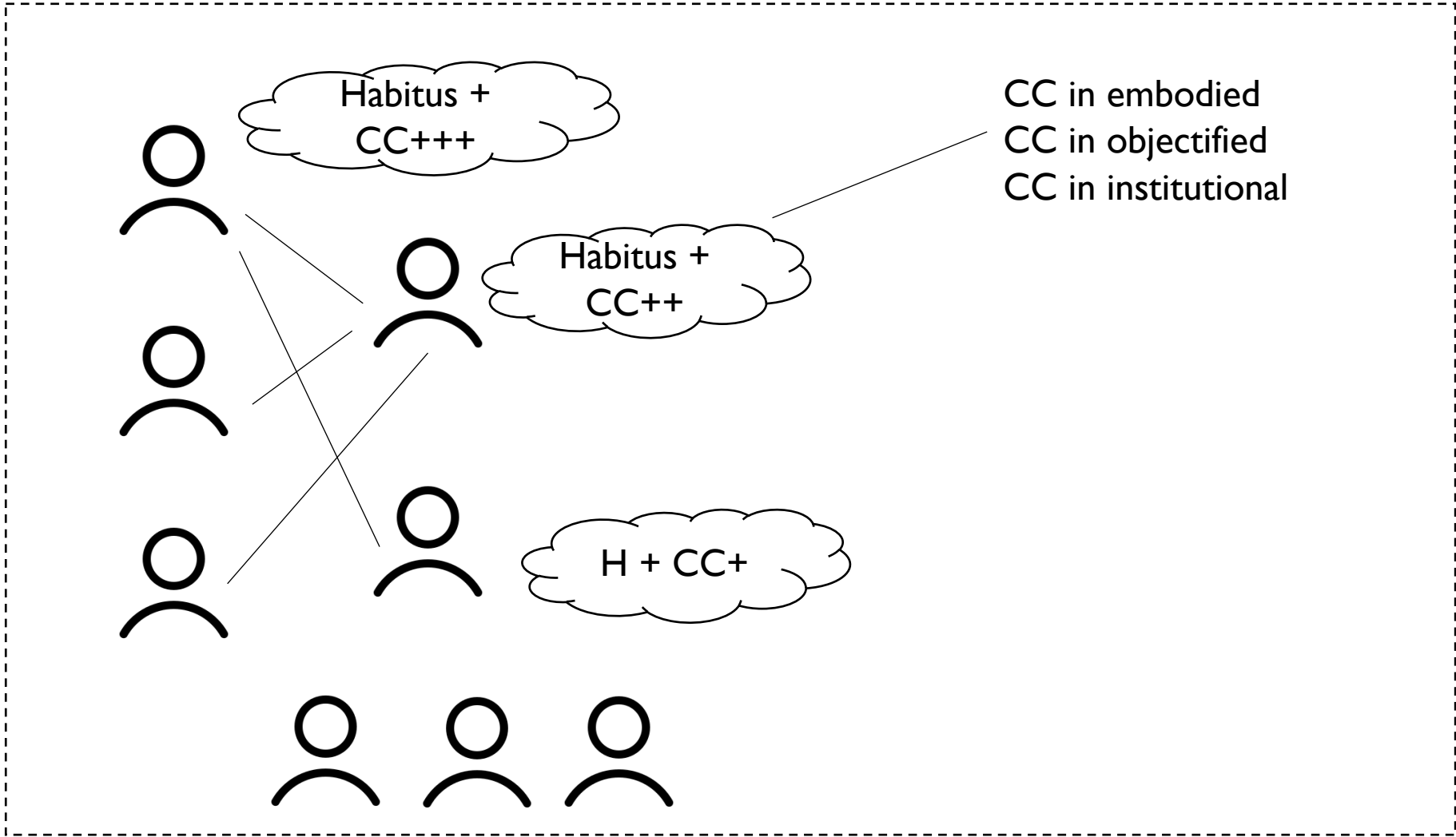
The global **field** of the underground dance club music

A sub field of the
underground dance club
culture in Berlin

A sub **field** of the
underground dance club
culture in Helsinki

A sub field of the
underground dance club
culture in Amsterdam

...



CC in embodied
CC in objectified
CC in institutional

Hierarchies
Values + norms

- CC in embodied form → how they say and what they say about music genres and styles
 - → “analogue sound”
 - → disposition about other adjacent sub-fields (the mainstream) → CC in objectified form
 - Record collections
 - Record releases
 - Other material objects necessary for carrying out the consumption practice
- CC in institutional form

Insights:

- To (re)position the brand?
- To embark in an integrated market communication campaign
- And so on...

Q&A!