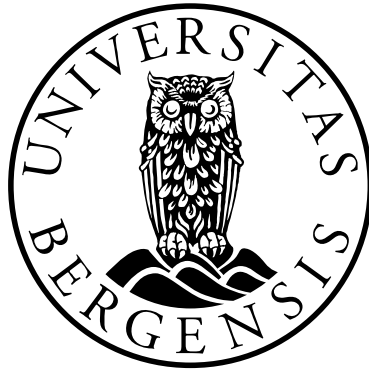# CLASS, STATUS, CLOSURE
THE PETROPOLIS AND CULTURAL LIFE

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the correspondence between relations of social class and relations of social status. Dating back to the early days of the social sciences, the debate about class and status has been revitalised in the wake of the initial advances made by the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), who firmly asserted that class relations express themselves through socially structured, and symbolically significant, lifestyle differences in contemporary societies. As a point of departure this thesis takes the debate about the applicability of Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework and his substantial claims about what I call the class-status nexus to investigate processes of social closure based on lifestyle differences; in particular differences in people's consumption preferences and aesthetical tastes. It addresses the question of whether, and if so in which ways, such lifestyle differences lead to social boundaries being formed between more or less exclusive groups of people. Empirically investigating an urban community located on the south-west coast of Norway – the city of Stavanger – the study is based on qualitative interviews with forty-six individuals located in different classes and class fractions.

Three substantial claims are forwarded. First, the analysis points to structural affinities between class positions and different cultural tastes. In particular, the thesis makes the point that *how* people appreciate cultural and material goods is at least as significant as *what* they prefer, consume or engage in. Based on the assumption that the ways in which people classify various goods are indicative of their modes of perceiving, appropriating and appreciating these goods, four main modes of consumption corresponding to different class positions are identified. These findings indicate that the social distribution of different consumption preferences and aesthetical tastes is clearly linked to the local class structure. Second, the analysis supports the idea that this classed distribution of lifestyles amounts to the formation of more or less exclusive status groups. It is argued that the interviewees' expressed aversions to others indicate more or less explicit lifestyle-related antagonisms between social actors located in different class positions. More specifically, it is

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shown that entwinements of aesthetical and moral criteria of evaluation are used by interviewees to systematically demarcate 'us' from 'them'. These findings indicate that the local class structure not only corresponds to a differential distribution of lifestyles; they also manifest themselves in socially differentiated judgements of lifestyle differences, indicating elective affinities and taste-related status hierarchies. Finally, the analysis suggests that socially recognised lifestyle differences express relations of domination and subordination, in the sense that privileged groups have power over less privileged groups. While the analysis certainly points to an extensive mobilisation of egalitarian sentiments against the perceived 'elitism' implied in certain lifestyles, such classifications are exclusively directed against people who are regarded as 'showing off' in ways deemed to be morally dubious. The unequal distribution of privileges and advantages tied to lifestyle differentials is, however, rarely problematised. On the contrary, if privileged others are perceived as acting in morally acceptable ways, it seems they are provided with an extraordinary endorsement in the eyes of the non-privileged. Thus, the analysis suggests that closure processes are largely misrecognised, because the privileged act under the 'moral radar' of egalitarian sentiments.

The thesis contributes to contemporary sociological debates on class, status and social closure, both on a substantial and on a theoretical-methodological level. Substantially, it expands on a body of research on class and cultural life, in particular the work of Professor Lennart Rosenlund, who has analysed correspondences between class and status relations in Stavanger on the basis of survey data. More generally, the present analysis points to an enduring significance of class in the structuring of social inequalities, in the sense that the social and economic conditions entailed by different class positions fundamentally affect the ways in which people perceive, think and act in the social world. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that these classed modes of conduct amount to social closure, meaning that groups of social actors, intentionally or otherwise, monopolise advantages and privileges by restricting opportunities to outsiders. While the structuring of subjectivities and cultural identities might not always be expressed in class terms by social actors themselves, the expressed

demarcations and symbolic value production nevertheless seem to be systematically structured by underlying class relations.

On a theoretical-methodological level, this thesis explores the applicability of Bourdieu's conceptual framework, employing it to comprehend a different research object than it was originally designed for. It is argued that an extended Bourdieu-inspired analytical framework applied in a relational manner can contribute to a further development of what has come to be known as cultural class analysis, i.e. a type of class analysis which encompasses the cultural sphere of society. While the application of Bourdieu's work is already at the forefront of this development, the present study can be seen as contributing new theoretical-methodological clarifications and elaborations regarding (1) the social distribution of lifestyle properties; (2) the formation of status groups on the basis of lifestyle differentials; and (3) how the unequal distribution of advantages and privileges come to be seen as legitimate in the eyes of the non-privileged.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting the scene

This thesis investigates social inequalities in terms of lifestyle differences and focuses particularly on consumption preferences and aesthetical tastes. It addresses the question of whether, and if so in which ways, such differences lead to boundaries being formed between more or less exclusive groups of people. As its point of departure it takes two related thematics reflected in contemporary sociological debates. The first concerns the notion of 'class' and its usefulness in understanding the structuring of societal inequalities. The second concerns the notion of 'status' and the socially conditioned ways in which people may perceive, estimate and classify other people's ways of life (e.g. consumption choices, aesthetical tastes and moral-political attitudes). On a theoretical-methodological level this thesis draws insights from, expands on, and in certain respects challenges, already existing conceptual and analytical frameworks designed to comprehend social inequalities in terms of class and status. On an empirical level it contributes to an existing body of research by focusing on a specific urban community located on the south-west coast of Norway – Stavanger, Norway's fourth largest city by population. In this regard, the empirical analysis expands on a series of studies conducted by the Swedish-Norwegian scholar Lennart Rosenlund, and it is based on data generated by qualitative, in-depth interviews with forty-six natives of Stavanger from different walks of life.[1]

In this introductory chapter I shall sketch out the basic tenets of the relevant theoretical-methodological debates from the research field. I shall then outline the main research questions guiding the thesis and clarify the rationale for choosing Stavanger as an object for empirical study. Finally, I briefly outline the contents of the subsequent chapters.

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[1] See authorization from Norwegian Social Science Data Service in Appendix 1.

1.1.1 The death of class?

Notwithstanding important differences between countries, all contemporary industrialised societies seem characterised by inequalities in terms of resources, rewards, outcomes, opportunities and privileges. The *causal explanations* for such inequalities are, however, highly contested. One fundamental question raised in the early days of the social sciences was whether inequalities are determined by 'natural' circumstances, i.e. by the innate capabilities of society's members, or whether they could be better explained by the 'man-made' attributes of society, i.e. the ways in which society is organised. Adhering to the latter mode of explanation, scholars such as Karl Marx and Max Weber asserted that the differential distribution of rewards is fundamentally affected by the ways in which the economic and productive spheres of society are organised. The notion of 'class' was pivotal. According to Marx and Engels (1967), the ultimate divisions in society are economic in character, i.e. related to the ownership of private property. In this view, inequalities can be traced back primarily to the antagonistic relation between two classes – the 'bourgeoisie' and the 'proletariat', the former being owners and controllers of society's material means of production, with the latter owning only their labour-power which they are forced to sell to the bourgeoisie to survive. Weber's notion of class, by contrast, is somewhat more complex. Weber (1946, 1978) highlighted that 'class situations' reflect market-determined 'life chances' and not just the ownership or non-ownership of the material means of production; this entails a more fine-grained depiction of class relations compared to that of Marx. Moreover, Weber identified other bases of social inequalities, most notably relations of 'social status', which reflect the differential distribution of honour, prestige and esteem within a given society. Nevertheless, despite apparent disagreements about the nature of class itself, both Marx and Weber asserted that class is a key notion through which to understand societal inequalities, an assertion they share with many sociologists today.

Within contemporary sociological debates, however, the significance of class is increasingly questioned. While few scholars champion the view that societal inequalities may be attributed solely to the innate excellences or deficiencies of

society's members, whether class is a useful or appropriate concept in analysing societal inequalities is heatedly debated. According to Crompton (2008: 73), three main points of contention can be identified. First, an extensive body of research points to epochal changes in the structure of work and employment and in the domains of lifestyles and leisure, which, it is argued, fundamentally challenge previously held assumptions about class relations (e.g. Bell, 1976; Lash and Urry, 1987; Giddens, 1990, 1991; Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2001). Second, it has been asserted that traditional class analysis fails to address the question of other stratifying processes – in particular 'the gender question' – either by neglecting such concerns entirely, or by erroneously subsuming all other stratifying processes to class relations (e.g. Stanworth, 1984; Thrift and Williams, 1987; Birkelund, 1992). Third, scholars have pointed to the decreasing relevance of 'class politics' and have argued that, insofar as the strength of the relationship between class and voting is declining, and/or there are few apparent endeavours to rouse 'class consciousness', the significance of class itself is accordingly diminishing (e.g. Clark and Lipset, 1991; Evans, 1999). Based on one or a combination of these contentious arguments, class has been declared 'dead' (Pakulski and Waters, 1996), and the recurrent use of the term in analyses of contemporary societies has been lamented as the deployment of a 'zombie category' which is 'dead but still alive' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: 204). However, the declaration of its death, to paraphrase Mark Twain, might be an exaggeration. It seems class analysis is still alive and kicking, and in some respects it has even been rejuvenated, despite the fact that the death of class has been repeatedly predicted (see for instance Crompton *et al*, 2000; Savage, 2000; Bottero, 2005; Devine *et al*, 2005; Wright, 2005).

The soundness of the antagonistic stances in debates about class and its alleged declining relevance depends, of course, on the meaning the adherents of the various stances attribute to the term. As several commentators have pointed out, debates on class are often characterised by deploying fundamentally different *notions* of class; this has resulted in rather fruitless debates in which opponents talk past, rather than

to, each other. To clarify the debate and to avoid unfortunate misunderstandings, Crompton (2008: 15) identifies three different meanings of the class concept:

1. Class as prestige, status, culture or lifestyles.
2. Class as structured social and economic inequality related to the possession of economic and power resources.
3. Class as actual or potential social and political actors.

In this thesis I shall employ class in the first sense as a point of departure. This does not mean that I adhere to the view that class should be equated with or subsumed to notions of prestige, status, culture or lifestyles; nor does it imply that debates about class in the last two senses are insignificant. Instead, it means that I shall apply the debate about status, culture and lifestyles as a point of entry through which to discuss class, both on a theoretical-methodological and on an empirical level. While an extensive account of relevant debates will be provided in the next chapter, some preliminary assumptions should be explained at this point.

1.1.2 'Classed' lifestyles pertaining to social closure?

According to Crompton and Scott (2005), sociological debates about class have been crucially affected by what is known as the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences. This has most notably entailed an increasing emphasis on the significance of 'cultural factors', over and above the 'economic' or 'material', in sociological explanation. More specifically, it is repeatedly asserted that people's consumption choices and lifestyles are becoming more significant than production in the structuring of societal inequalities. True though this may be, the general mode of analysis employed to arrive at such conclusions is, according to Crompton and Scott, highly questionable. Unlike the concept of class developed by classical scholars such as Marx and Weber, who, albeit in somewhat different ways, recognised a dual focus in their work and explored both the 'economic' and the 'cultural' as elements in sociological explanation, adherents of the 'cultural turn' collapse the two by treating them as one and the same phenomenon. In distinguishing between a 'dual systems' and a 'unitary'

approach to the culture-economy question, Crompton and Scott convincingly argue that the former should be favoured over the latter:

> In terms of strict logic, if economy and culture are seen to be fused, then the unitary approach cannot even raise the question of whether economic or cultural factors are more significant in social explanation. The economic and the cultural are one and the same thing, and they cannot even be analytically separated. Indeed, it may be suggested that one limitation of a strict application of this totalising 'cultural economy' approach is precisely that the possibilities for causal explanation are significantly restricted. (Crompton and Scott, 2005: 194)

While they welcome 'cultural issues' to sociological debates on class, Crompton and Scott are suspicious of the tendency to omit class *per se* from the agenda of social theory and research by replacing it with 'discussions of culture, consumption, and identity alone' (2005: 199). In this thesis I shall follow their insistence on deploying a dual systems approach to the question of the structuring of societal inequalities. The assumption that economic and cultural dimensions of social stratification can be separated analytically has important consequences for the ways in which I shall analyse the relationship between what Weberians refer to as relations of 'class' and 'status'.

For contemporary scholars who more or less explicitly deploy a dual systems approach in mapping out the relationship between class and status relations, the work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990; Bourdieu *et al*, 1996) often serves as a point of departure.[2] In his analyses of French society in the 1960s and 1970s, Bourdieu suggests that differentiated lifestyles (i.e. more or less unified sets of cultural practices such as dress, speech, bodily dispositions, aesthetical preferences, outlook and moral-political stances) are unevenly distributed among different social classes and class fractions. As the ways in which social actors perceive, think and act in the social world are

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[2] The work of Bourdieu has also influenced, and in some respects even facilitated, the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences (e.g. Skeggs, 2004; Featherstone, 2007). The various appropriations of Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological approach by such 'unitarily' oriented scholars are, however, quite different from those who endeavour to investigate the dialectics between different systems of structural relations.

socially conditioned or 'classed' (or, according to Bourdieu's jargon, structured by the social and material 'conditions of existence' implied in different class positions), observable lifestyle differences are in fact a 'retranslation' of class relations. Furthermore, Bourdieu maintains that mastering certain lifestyles and modes of conduct may lead to such lifestyles and modes of conduct functioning as important assets or 'capitals' in the structuring of class relations, for instance by facilitating success in the education system. In other words, lifestyle differentials – or more generally, status relations – are not only structured by class relations (i.e. a one-way causal explanation), but they also feed back into them, thus constituting a dialectical relationship between what Bourdieu refers to as a 'social space' and a 'symbolic space' respectively. Bourdieu accordingly posits that lifestyle differentials reinforce the stratifying impact of class relations rather than rendering them obsolete, even though the underlying class relations are not perceived as power relations by the social actors themselves.

In the wake of Bourdieu's work, an expanding body of research has investigated the nature of lifestyle differentials in other contexts. Three main thematics may be identified in the contemporary debate. First, the most heatedly debated question concerns the social distribution of lifestyle differentials, particularly those related to aesthetical tastes and cultural consumption. The crucial question here is whether lifestyles vary by class, or whether this distributional principle is diminishing and/or being replaced by other principles. Second, scholars have debated processes pertaining to group formation, i.e. the ways in which more or less exclusive social collectives are formed on the basis of perceived lifestyle differences. One of the main concerns here is whether, and if so in which ways, social actors' evaluations and estimations of others constitute barriers or boundaries between groups of social actors. Third, scholars have debated whether mastering certain lifestyles may be consolidated into assets producing advantage or privilege, and further, how power relations arising from this differential distribution of advantages come to be perceived as legitimate or justifiable in the eyes of subordinates.

These three thematics – lifestyle distribution, group formation and power relations – constitute the basic focal points of this thesis. More generally, this thesis investigates processes of *social closure* based on lifestyle differentials. The notion of social closure originally stems from the work of Weber, in particular his discussion of 'open' and 'closed' social relationships:

> A social relationship, regardless of whether it is communal or associative in character, will be spoken of as "open" to outsiders if and insofar as its system of order does not deny participation to anyone who wishes to join and is actually in a position to do so. A relationship will, on the other hand, be called "closed" against outsiders so far as, according to its subjective meaning and its binding rules, participation of certain persons is excluded, limited, or subjected to conditions. (Weber, 1978: 43)

The notion of social closure has been further developed by scholars expanding on a Weberian analytical framework (Parkin, 1979; Murphy, 1988; Brubaker, 1992), and it has also been discussed in relation to the work of Bourdieu, although he did not use the term himself (Manza, 1992; Hansen, 1995). It generally refers to the process through which groups of social actors, intentionally or otherwise, monopolise advantages and privileges by closing off opportunities to other groups of outsiders.

Deploying social closure as an overarching concept in this thesis is consequential in two main respects. First, it implies that lifestyle differentiation is viewed as *one* of several ways in which processes of social closure can be operative in the social world, meaning that I would not suggest that the structuring of societal inequalities can be conceptually reduced to lifestyle differentiation. By expanding on a crucial conceptual distinction between 'formalised' and 'non-formalised' closure alluded to by Murphy (1988) and Manza (1992), the former can be tentatively defined as structured social boundaries arising from the exclusive possession of scarce resources legally and institutionally sanctioned by the state, and the latter as structured social boundaries arising from subjective evaluations of esteem, honour and prestige, which, in turn, are crystallised into more or less exclusive social collectives that control access to scarce resources, both material and symbolic. This is an *analytical* distinction highlighting that closure processes may take several forms. On an

empirical level, by contrast, these ideal types of social closure may of course be entwined. In this thesis I shall nevertheless accentuate the structuring of social inequalities in terms of non-formalised closure. More specifically, I shall assess the ways in which lifestyle differentiations pertain to such processes, in particular how they are related to relations of class and status.

Second, focusing on social closure implies that other potential ways of studying lifestyles are less relevant to the objectives of this study. These include: thematics related to 'the culture industry' and its means of 'mass deception' and 'commodity fetishism' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972; Marcuse, 1966); the role of consumption in the coming of a new historical epoch, often denoted by terms such as 'post-modernity', 'post-industrial society', 'risk society' and 'consumer society' (Bell, 1976; Lash and Urry, 1987; Beck, 1992; Baudrillard, 1998); the rise of 'postmodernist aesthetics' as a consequence of developments within the 'capitalist economy' (Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1991); the role of lifestyles in the constitution of 'reflexive self-identities' (Giddens, 1991); the ideological aspects of 'consumerism' and its negative impact on the human psyche (Bauman, 2001, 2004); the positive 'use-value' goods of various kinds can imply for consumers (Sayer, 2005); and, finally, 'subcultures' and the significance of 'style' in constituting youthful 'acts of revolt' (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979). In other words, I will not endeavour to provide a *general* account of lifestyles and their multi-faceted meanings and functions in social life; instead, I analytically accentuate the ways in which lifestyle differences pertain to social closure, a manoeuvre that is not *necessarily* incompatible with the assertions forwarded by other bodies of research.

1.2 Research questions

Based on these preliminary clarifications and delimitations, three main research questions can be singled out for further empirical assessment:

1. *In what ways are people's lifestyles differentiated, and in what ways is the social distribution of different lifestyles pertinent to class relations?*

This question relates directly to contemporary scholarly debates about class and status. Despite differences in the theoretical-methodological frameworks employed in empirical analyses, most scholars concerned with the class-status nexus view the question of lifestyle differentials and their social distribution as fundamental. If it is the case that concurrences between class relations and status relations exist, one would expect people's ways of life (e.g. aesthetical tastes, consumption patterns and moral-political attitudes) to be conditioned by the material and social conditions implied in different class positions. Conversely, if there are no such concurrences, one would expect a distribution of lifestyle differences that does not follow class-lines.

2. *In what ways do people perceive, evaluate and classify others in terms of their lifestyles, and in what ways do lifestyle differences amount to the formation of more or less exclusive status groups?*

Although the question of distribution has attracted the most scholarly attention in contemporary debates of the class-status nexus, this second question is of equal importance. Even if one based on empirical investigations can point to a 'classed' distribution of lifestyles within a given society, it is not necessarily the case that this distribution is consequential in terms of social closure. Moreover, while the mastery of certain lifestyles and modes of conduct may amount to *formalised* closure – for instance in facilitating success within the education system and thus constituting 'objective' boundaries between possessors and non-possessors of educational qualifications – they do not necessarily amount to *non-formalised* closure. For instance, person A might prefer drinking vintage wine, listening to classical music and spending her holidays climbing mountains in Peru, while person B might prefer drinking beer, listening to country and western music and spending her holidays sunbathing in Mallorca; yet, the two of them might be the best of friends. Indeed, as

noted by Bourdieu (1985: 730), lifestyle differences exist for a social subject only insofar as they are perceived and recognised as significant. Thus, only insofar as social actors are endowed with the capacity and inclination to make distinctions between practitioners of different lifestyles do such differences lead to the formation of more or less exclusive communal groups.

3. *In what ways do lifestyle differences and social estimations thereof constitute relations of domination and subordination between groups of social actors, and in what ways is the legitimacy of such power relations bestowed?*

Insofar as lifestyle differentials are (1) socially distributed according to a society's class structure, and (2) amount to the formation of more or less exclusive status groups, it is likely, but not necessarily the case, that these circumstances imply relations of domination and subordination. Following Lukes' (2005: 83ff) general definition of domination as a special instance of power that involves individuals' or groups' power *over* others, this implies that groups of subordinate social actors, consciously or otherwise, accept or comply with a differential distribution of power which does not benefit their life chances; indeed, they even contribute to the structuring of asymmetrical power relations.[3] However, if it is the case that this unequal distribution is recognised, perceived as unjust and/or challenged by those who do not benefit from the order of things, power relations cannot be described as domination in any meaningful way. Thus, issues related to social actors' perceptions of the differential distribution of privileges and advantages within a society are crucial in order to attain sociological insights about power relations.

In sum, these research questions constitute an analytical focus on three facets that are mutually interrelated, but not reducible to each other. These questions will thus be

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[3] According to Lukes (2005: 85), power as domination is 'the ability to constrain the choices of others, coercing them or securing their compliance, by impeding them from living as their own nature and judgement dictate.'

treated as relatively autonomous on an analytical level, even though this implies accentuating aspects of a social world in which these aspects are tightly entwined.

1.3 Stavanger as an empirical case

I focus on a particular urban community – the city of Stavanger, Norway – and the social relations within it. The choice of Stavanger as an empirical case for this study is motivated by three interrelated reasons. First of all, Stavanger makes for an interesting case in terms of its 'structural history'. As previous studies indicate (e.g. Hjellbrekke, 1999b; Rosenlund, 2009a), the advent and expanding presence of a booming offshore oil industry from the late 1960s and onwards has brought with it tremendous changes for the city in population growth, occupational structure, educational level, as well as the average income of the population. Stavanger's economy was long characterised by small-scale fishing and canning industries, but as of today, Stavanger is widely referred to as the 'oil capital of Norway', as several oil companies are headquartered there. Partly due to the presence of oil companies and the influx of well-paid residents, the city features on various lists of the most expensive cities in the world. In 2011, the unemployment rate was less than 2%, significantly lower than the Norwegian and European average.[4] Stavanger also has several higher educational institutions, such as the University of Stavanger, BI Norwegian Business School and MHS School of Mission and Theology. These changes have also brought with them profound changes in Stavanger's cultural life. Initially marked by a high degree of teetotalism and more or less 'temperate' ways of life, Stavangerians have increasingly embraced 'hedonistic' lifestyles associated with increased wealth and prosperity, typically reflected in increased spending on material goods, as well as a higher demand for cultural forms such as theatre, music and literature. Yet, far from all residents have embraced this, and lifestyle-related tensions exist between different demographical segments of the population. Indeed, the appointment of Stavanger as the 'European Capital of Culture' in 2008 revealed

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[4] http://statistikk.stavanger.kommune.no/#arbeidsloshet

explicit lines of conflict in Stavanger's cultural life, for instance manifested in heated debates in the local newspapers, and in diverging opinions on the form and content of cultural events (Berg and Rommetvedt, 2009; Bergsgard and Vassenden, 2009, 2011).[5] For these reasons, Stavanger makes for an interesting case in terms of lifestyle differentiation and its potential relatedness to processes of social closure.

Second, as a main aspect of this study concerns social actors' classifications and estimations of other people's way of life, an analytical focus on a limited geographical area has methodological advantages. More specifically, interviewing people and inviting them to talk about 'the local' (i.e. something they presumably are familiar with, such as cultural institutions, enterprises, urban areas, social milieux and cliques) arguably constitutes advantages compared to inviting people to talk about others *in general*, i.e. in an abstract and perhaps unfamiliar way. Indeed, as previous studies have indicated that Norwegians are particularly reluctant to denigrate others on the basis of lifestyle differences due to 'egalitarian sentiments', which, it is argued, somewhat paradoxically conceal and even help to maintain the hierarchical structures of Norwegian society (Gullestad, 1992; Daloz, 2007; cf. Skarpenes, 2007), the endeavour to invite people to talk about *specific* people and places in a local context is presumably a vantage point in order to investigate such tensions.

Finally, the choice of Stavanger as an empirical case is also motivated by pragmatic concerns. As already alluded to, this study expands on a series of studies conducted by Lennart Rosenlund (e.g. 1996, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2009a). Besides functioning as an important historical-structural contextual backdrop for the present empirical inquiry, Rosenlund's empirical findings also serve as an analytical point of departure in two main respects. First, his construction of a 'local social space' by means of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Hjellbrekke, 1999a; Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) constitutes the basis for the rationale guiding the sampling of forty-six individuals

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[5] The European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union for a period of one calendar year during which it organises a series of cultural events.

subjected to qualitative interviews, in the sense that these are recruited in order to ensure a sample of cases according to the composition of the local class structure. Second, the findings concerning the 'classed' distribution of lifestyles constitute a basis for further empirical scrutiny of such matters. As Rosenlund's inquiries are exclusively based on census and survey data, they imply certain limitations. Thus, by applying qualitative in-depth interviews I shall endeavour to expand on Rosenlund's studies, and, insofar as the empirical findings call for it, challenge them.

1.4 An outline of contents

In Chapter 2 I elaborate on the scholarly debates related to class, status and social closure alluded to above. As the subsequent empirical analysis primarily draws on Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework, a rather extensive account of his work and his critics will be provided.

In Chapter 3 I use the sociological insights discussed in the preceding chapter to construct the current research object. I discuss the epistemological rationale for the deployment of research methods and analytical strategies to map out lifestyle differentials and processes of social closure in present day Stavanger. Here I elaborate on Rosenlund's work and provide an extensive account of how the rationale guiding the sampling of cases draws upon it. In particular, I discuss his construction of a 'local social space', which depicts the local class structure in terms of Stavangerians' possession of various types of capital. I also discuss the advantages and limitations of employing in-depth qualitative interviews in empirical studies of the class-status nexus.

The empirical analysis proceeds in a three-step manner corresponding to the three focal concerns outlined above – the social distribution of lifestyles, processes of group formation and relations of domination and subordination. In Chapter 4 I map out lifestyle differences in terms of aesthetical tastes and consumption preferences. By focusing on the ways in which the interviewees classify and evaluate various

cultural goods and leisure activities, I extract and categorise four 'modes of consumption' from the interview data. The social distribution of these modes is in turn assessed by analysing the interviewees' classificatory practices in light of their positions in the local social space.

In Chapters 5 and 6 the question of social closure and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups on the basis of subjective evaluations of esteem will be assessed. By examining the ways in which the interviewees classify, evaluate and estimate other people's lifestyles, I identify two main types of boundary drawing. The first concerns what I refer to as 'horizontal boundary drawing', meaning mutual classifications of disapproval between interviewees located in different fractions of the upper sectors of the local social space. The second concerns 'vertical boundary drawing', which refers to mutual classifications of disapproval between interviewees located in the upper and lower sectors of the space respectively. Further, I discuss the ways in which these types of boundary drawing may be viewed as strategies to (de)monopolise the power to define the principles governing the social distribution of esteem and prestige.

Chapter 7 focuses on perceptions of hierarchical social relations, and addresses the question of how egalitarian values have consequences for the legitimacy of power relations linked to lifestyle differentials and closure processes. More specifically I ask whether, and if so in which ways, differences in tastes and lifestyles may amount to relations of legitimate domination, despite the explicit mobilisation of moral sentiments against 'elitism', 'pageantry', 'snobbery' and so forth. In order to comprehend the apparent contradiction between egalitarian values on the one hand, and hierarchical relations of power, status and prestige on the other, I map out the ways in which a reluctance to explicitly express condescending classifications of others are manifested in the interview data. Moreover, I discuss how the mastery of certain lifestyles may function as what Bourdieu has referred to as 'symbolic capital' in lieu of deference and endorsement on the part of non-practitioners.

In the concluding Chapter 8 I synthesise the empirical findings presented in the preceding chapters, and return to the overarching questions related to class, status and social closure. I discuss the ways in which sociological insights generated in this study can contribute to various bodies of research, and I also point to limitations. In doing so, I point to future challenges facing class analysis and the endeavour to account for structured societal inequalities related to lifestyle differentiation.

CHAPTER 2
PRELIMINARY
THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

2.1 Introduction

Scrutinising social stratification in terms of 'class' and 'status' dates long back in the history of sociology (Turner, 1988; Scott, 1996). The analysis of the relationship between the two is perhaps best known through the work of Weber (1946, 1978), who asserted that class and status refer to two analytically distinct forms of social stratification. According to Weber, the notion of class refers to social relations as regards ownership of society's means of production as well as labour market-determined 'life chances', whereas the notion of status relations refers to the social distribution of esteem, prestige, and honour – typically reflected in different 'styles of life' among more or less amorphous 'status groups'. Moreover, Weber asserted that the entwinement of class and status relations is contingent, meaning that the two may or may not concur in a given context. While most sociologists informed by the work of Weber would agree to this assertion, *how* one ought to scrutinise the empirical entwinement of class and status relations in contemporary societies has been subject to scholarly debates. As noted by Turner:

> While this analytical distinction is useful, it is empirically and historically the case that class and status as axes of inequality and stratification are usually mixed within social systems. The character of this mixture can only be ascertained by empirical, historical and comparative analyses; it is not a question of a priori theoretical stipulation alone, although of course the analytical relationship between class and status will depend on the particular definitions we ascribe to these terms. (Turner, 1988: 14)

Indeed, as scholars have deployed highly different notions of both class and status relations in empirical inquiries, claims about their entwinement differ substantially. In this regard we can identify three distinct positions within the research field. First, there are those who have merged the Weberian notions of class and status in and through the notion of 'socioeconomic status'. Dating back to the work of Warner and his colleagues (e.g. Warner and Lunt, 1941; Warner, 1949, 1963), this body of research primarily focuses on self-perceptions of prestige. Initially based on anthropological community studies, the notion of socioeconomic status has more recently been associated with attempts to construct scales that reflect the hierarchical structure of society by way of various statistical techniques. Particularly focusing on

the occupational structure, Blau and Duncan have studied processes of social stratification through the deployment of a unidimensional, continuous measure of occupational prestige – the Socio-Economic Index (SEI) (Duncan, 1961; Blau and Duncan, 1967). More recently, Bottero and Prandy (2003; Prandy, 1990) have developed the Cambridge occupational scale, a mapping of networks of social interaction (i.e. patterns of friendships and partnerships), which are thought to give rise to relations of social closeness and distance. Notwithstanding important differences between these approaches, they all share the propensity to treat class and status as one and the same thing, or at least betray an unsettled account of the relationship between the two, in constructing hierarchically ordered scales which are held to reflect the primary bases for the structuring of social inequalities.

Second, there are those who insist on a clear conceptual distinction between class and status, not just on an analytical level, but also by pointing to empirical patterns that, according to this view, warrant a multidimensional depiction of social stratification. This view is forwarded by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, 2007a; Chan, 2010b) who assert that class (defined in terms of the social relations of labour markets and productions units) and status (defined in terms of hierarchical social relations that express perceived and typically accepted social superiority, equality or inferiority) have distinct explanatory power when it comes to studying various domains of social life. Economic security and prospects, they argue, are stratified more by class than by status, while the opposite is true for outcomes in the domain of cultural consumption and lifestyles. While their depiction of status is quite similar to that of the conceptual mergers discussed above (in fact, their status scale is almost identical to the Cambridge scale), Chan and Goldthorpe deploy class as an additional independent variable in empirical analyses using regression based techniques. Thus, they maintain that their clear-cut conceptual distinction is empirically founded.

Finally, there are those who, following the leads of Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu and de Saint Martin, 1976; Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990; Bourdieu *et al*, 1996), adhere to the view that while class relations and status relations can be separated on an analytical

level, they are tightly entwined on an empirical level. Indeed, it is held that class relations (defined as a multidimensional 'social space', i.e. a social topography reflecting the differential distribution of various forms of scarce resources or 'capitals') express themselves symbolically through status relations (defined as a 'symbolic space', i.e. a social topography of differentiated cultural tastes and lifestyles). Moreover, as the mastery of certain lifestyles can itself be converted into scarce resources productive of advantages and privileges, they are thought to feed back into the social space as time goes by, thus constituting a dialectical relationship between class and status. So while Bourdieu shares Chan and Goldthorpe's view that class and status should be regarded as analytically separate, his view of the ways in which the two are empirical entwined fundamentally differs from theirs.

Returning to the point put forward by Turner, claims about the empirical character of the class-status nexus depend on the particular definitions ascribed to the terms. As the three positions sketched out above employ rather divergent notions of both terms, some overlapping and some fundamentally different, it is, perhaps, no surprise that scholars end up advancing quite contradictory claims about processes pertaining to social stratification. As asserted in the previous chapter, the current empirical scrutiny of the relationship between class and status in Stavanger deploys a 'dual systems' approach, meaning that it is a based on a fundamental assumption that economic and cultural dimensions of social stratification can be separated on an analytical level. This view implies that the conceptual merging of the notions of class and status evident in endeavours to construct unidimensional prestige scales does not concern the present study directly. While such 'unitary' approaches might be fruitful for other research purposes, this would, following Crompton and Scott's (2005) line of reasoning, imply an unnecessary limiting on the scrutiny of the contingent relationship *between* economy and culture, or more specifically, between class relations and status relations (see also Trimberger, 1984; Parkin, 1978). A discussion of the discrepancies between Bourdieu's approach to the class-status question and that of Chan and Goldthorpe is, however, more pressing.

I shall start with a fairly extensive outline of Bourdieu's approach. I do this for three reasons. First of all, as the following empirical analysis of class and status relations in Stavanger draws on his works, a clarification of the theoretical-methodological underpinnings of the analysis is necessary. Second, as there exist several contradictory readings of Bourdieu's account of the class-status nexus within the research field, a 'reflexive' appropriation of a Bourdieusian approach is all the more pressing. Finally, a thorough discussion of Bourdieu's work is relevant because of his persistent influence on the research field. Bourdieu's work on the subject has subsequently helped to create a vast stream of empirical research that has expanded enormously in recent decades. Even though the reception of Bourdieu's work ranges from uncritical praise to outright dismissal, most scholars concerned with issues related to class, status and lifestyles take it as a point of departure for discussing their own empirical findings. To put it somewhat crudely, whichever theoretical-methodological framework one chooses to work within, it seems there is no escaping Bourdieu.

In the subsequent section I shall critically assess different aspects of Bourdieu's model by comparing it to approaches that have challenged it in some way. In this section I shall put forward the argument that although there are certain weaknesses and unclear aspects in Bourdieu's framework, there is no need to disregard it. On the contrary, I aim to show that the frameworks employed in alternative accounts of the relationship between class and status are either highly problematical, or that they are not as 'heretical' towards a Bourdieusian framework as they set out to be. In the case of the latter, I shall argue that these frameworks may be better viewed as complementary, and not as alternative, frameworks of sociological analysis and that they thus may provide additional insights into matters that have hitherto been insufficiently scrutinised empirically by Bourdieu and his followers. It should, however, be noted that this is by no means an endeavour to provide an exhaustive account of the objections that have been raised to Bourdieu's inquiries, but it is nevertheless an attempt to discuss what I consider to be the most pressing theoretical issues with regards to the comprehension of the present empirical case of Stavanger.

2.2 Bourdieu's account of the class-status nexus

In recent developments in class analysis, Bourdieu's work has been highly influential. As noted by Flemmen (forthcoming), Bourdieu's influence can in part be attributed to two sets of problems facing conventional class analysis. Externally, class analysis has been challenged by scholars heralding the coming of a new phase of modernity which supposedly renders 'class' an obsolete concept. Internally, the sociology of class has faced at least two challenges regarding the seemingly insurmountable problems connected to the Marxist labour theory of value, as well as what has been perceived as a narrowing of class analysis, associated with the endeavours of both Marxists and Weberians to develop class schemes based on employment relations and conflicting economic interests on the labour market. In this context, many have turned to the work of Bourdieu. In recent times, the Bourdieusian influence has perhaps been most marked within British sociology (e.g. Crompton *et al*, 2000; Savage, 2000; Savage *et al*, 2005a; Savage *et al*, 2005b; Robbins, 2000, 2006; Devine *et al*, 2005; Le Roux *et al*, 2008; Bennett *et al*, 2009; Atkinson, 2009, 2010), but Bourdieu's work on class has also made its mark on Norwegian scholars (e.g. Hansen, 1995; Hjellbrekke, 1999b; Hjellbrekke *et al*, 2007; Gripsrud and Hovden, 2000; Gripsrud *et al*, 2011; Rosenlund, 2000c, 2009a; Hovden, 2008; Flemmen, 2009, 2012b; Denord *et al*, 2011; Andersen and Hansen, 2012; Mangset, 2012).

Notwithstanding Bourdieu's influence, there seems to be considerable disagreement about what Bourdieu 'really meant' as regards the class-status question, both among adherents and detractors (e.g. Brubaker, 1985; Swartz, 1997; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2004, 2007a; Weininger, 2005; Savage, 2012). Considering his dense writing style and continuous refusal to spell out simplified axioms of his position, this confusion is perhaps not surprising. Indeed, as noted by Weininger,

> Bourdieu was deeply opposed to the separation of theory and research – to such an extent that nearly all of his conceptual innovations were developed only in the context of concrete empirical analyses. This creates numerous difficulties for any discussion charged with providing a "foundational" account of this approach to class or any other sociological object. Analytic propositions must be extracted from instances if their application with as little distortion as possible. Furthermore, it is necessary, particularly when undertaking such an account in a place or time different

from that in which Bourdieu wrote, to untangle the substance of these propositions from the peculiarities of the context to which they were applied. (Weininger, 2005: 82ff)

Despite such difficulties I shall nevertheless attempt to 'untangle' or 'distil' the various facets of Bourdieu's argument. While I certainly do not aim to provide an exhaustive exegesis of what Bourdieu 'really meant', a clarification of some ambiguous aspects of his account of the class-status nexus seems pertinent. In this regard, a few comments on Bourdieu's relationship to Weber are necessary.

Weber (1946: 187) held that 'status situations' are 'every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honour,' and that 'status honour' is 'normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle.' Moreover, Weber asserted that status honour is linked to class situations 'in the most varied ways', but that there is no inevitable link between the two, as social esteem and prestige do not *necessarily* follow from property, wealth, high income, occupational titles, etc. In line with Weber's work, Bourdieu (1984) suggests that social esteem is expressed in a range of cultural practices and lifestyles, such as dress, speech, outlook and bodily dispositions. As regards the link between class and status, his relationship to Weber is more uneasy. Indeed, in the preface to *Distinction* (1984: xiff), Bourdieu asserts that his model of the relationship between the 'universe of economic and social conditions' (the social space) and the 'universe of life-styles' (the symbolic space) is based on 'an endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and *Stand* [status].' Unfortunately, he does not provide an elaborate account of his reading of Weber, nor does he state in what ways this 'rethinking' departs from Weber's model. In a 1966 article – when he had not fully developed his notions of the social space and the symbolic space – he does, however, assert that

everything seems to indicate that Weber opposes class and status group as two types of real entities which would come together more or less frequently according to the type of society […]; [however,] to give Weberian analyses all of their force and impact, it is necessary to see them instead as nominal unities […] which are always

the result of a choice to accent the economic aspect or the symbolic aspect – aspects which always coexist in the same reality. (Bourdieu, cited in Weininger, 2005: 84)

Although one could object to Bourdieu's reading of Weber,[6] the above nevertheless highlights his insistence on treating both class and status as 'nominal' rather than 'real' entities, thus rendering possible the view that people may belong to certain distributional groupings on an analytical level, without this necessarily implying that there exist 'mobilised' or 'realised' social collectives on the basis of either economic interests or affiliations as regards lifestyles. Moreover, in a later work Bourdieu upholds that

'Status groups' based on a 'life-style' and a 'stylisation of life' are not as Weber thought, a different kind of group from classes, but dominant classes that have denied or, so to speak, sublimated themselves and so legitimated themselves. (Bourdieu, 1990b: 139)

Thus, Bourdieu maintains that class relations and status relations are not only tightly entwined on an empirical level, but that the latter is a 'misrecognised', symbolic expression of the former. However, this does not, as some detractors seem to believe (e.g. Chan and Goldthorpe, 2004, 2007a, 2010; Rose, 2006) that the notion of status is left 'empirically outmoded' and 'conceptually redundant' within Bourdieu's framework. On the contrary, the notion of status is pivotal in at least three aspects of his model of social stratification, albeit enwrapped in a conceptual framework that differs from that of Weberians. First, it is apparent in the notion of 'symbolic space', which reflects the social distribution of different cultural tastes and lifestyles. Second, it is apparent in the notion of 'elective affinities', which points to the formation of actual social collectives. Third, it is apparent in the notion of 'symbolic capital', which depicts the social distribution of honour, esteem and prestige, albeit in a 'misrecognised' form. In what follows, I shall elaborate on these points.

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[6] Weber did in fact distinguish between status as nominal entities through the notion of *Ständische Lage*, referring to a 'status order' depicting a hierarchy of different 'status situations', and status as real entities through the notion of *Stände*, referring to more or less amorphous 'status groups' or 'estates'. For a further account of this reading of Weber, see Scott (1996).

2.2.1 The social distribution of cultural tastes and lifestyles

Bourdieu's (1984, 1985, 1989, 1991a) account of the correspondence between class relations and a differential distribution of lifestyles rests upon three key concepts: the social space, the symbolic space and (class) habitus. The multidimensional social space objectifies the system of relationships between different social positions. Translated into the language of conventional stratification theory, it reflects a society's class structure. The structure of the social space is shaped by the distribution of various scarce resources (or 'capitals' in the Bourdieusian vocabulary) and the relative strength between them. Thus, it reflects the main lines of division in society in terms of the relations between individuals' capital profiles. In the case of France in the 1960s and 1970s, Bourdieu (1984: ch. 2) constructs the social space by way of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) (Hjellbrekke, 1999a; Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) of survey data which include a wide variety of indicators of the 'economic capital' and 'cultural capital' possessed by individuals. The model provided may be understood as a factorial space constituted by three orthogonal axes, which are interpreted as representing three sets of distributional 'oppositions'. Individuals are located in this space in such a way that the closer they are to one another, the more they have in common in terms of possession of capitals; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common (Bourdieu, 1989: 16).

The first axis represents the differential distribution of the overall volume of capital (i.e. both economic capital and cultural capital) possessed by individuals, and differentiates between high and low overall volumes of capital. Translated into the language of conventional class analysis, the volume axis represents the social positions of three main classes of social actors. Bourdieu depicts the 'dominated class' (sometimes referred to as the 'working classes' and the 'popular classes') as positioned in the lower sectors of the social space; the 'petite bourgeoisie' as positioned in the middle sectors of the space; and finally, the 'dominant class' (sometimes referred to as the 'bourgeoisie') as positioned in the upper sectors of the space. The second axis represents an opposition related to the composition of capital,

i.e. the relative weight of economic and cultural capital possessed by individuals. When the two axes are viewed together, the distributional opposition related to the composition of capital crosscuts the distributional opposition related to capital volume, thus constituting different class fractions within each of the main classes. Bourdieu thus separates between class fractions comprised of individuals endowed with a preponderance of cultural capital, class fractions comprised of individuals with a preponderance of economic capital and class fractions comprised of individuals with balanced capital profiles. The third axis represents an opposition related to changes in the volume and composition of capitals for individuals or groups over time, and is thus interpreted as an analytical dimension that differentiates between different 'trajectories'. Generated from indicators of the capital possessed by the individuals' family of the origin, this axis differentiates between inherited and achieved affiliations with a given social position.

As regards Bourdieu's depiction of class, five points should be highlighted. First, different sectors in the social space represent objective classes, or as Bourdieu (1998: 10) depicts it, 'theoretical classes' or 'classes on paper'. Translated into a Marxist vocabulary, the social space represents 'class-in-itself' and not 'class-for-itself'. Classes as represented in the social space are in other words nominal categories whose construction is independent of the existence of subjective 'class awareness' or 'class consciousness'. Second, the axes constituting the multidimensional social space are continuous; there are no clear breaks or cleavages separating categories of individuals. Bourdieu thus sidesteps the so-called boundary problem of where to draw the line between classes and class fractions – a problem which has puzzled scholars who have attempted to construct class schemes.[7] Third, class positions in the Bourdieusian sense are not derived from the occupation of individuals as is usually done in conventional class analysis. Rather, they are defined in terms of individuals' positions in the relative distribution of various forms of capital. While Bourdieu

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[7] For an interesting comment on Bourdieu's account of class vis-à-vis conventional class analysis, see Flemmen (forthcoming).

provides a depiction of the mean modality points of a variety of occupations within the social space, these are usually projected onto the space as 'supplementary variables', meaning that they do not affect the construction of the space. Thus, individuals in similar occupations may in principle be located in different sectors of the social space, depending on the make-up of their capital portfolios. Fourth, the social space is not a fixed structure, but is better viewed as a 'snapshot' of the relative distribution of capitals at the time and place at which the empirical scrutiny is conducted. This means that it is an empirical question whether the structure of the social space takes on similar forms in contexts different from those of Bourdieu's inquiries, although he puts forward the hypothesis that the basic structure of the social space as depicted in the case of France is transferable to other contexts (Bourdieu, 1991a). Finally, Bourdieu's notion of class is broader than conventional notions of class, in that it is not exclusively tied to economic resources and relations on the labour market, but encompasses 'cultural' and 'symbolic' resources as well.

The second key concept in Bourdieu's model is the symbolic space, which depicts the social distribution of differentiated lifestyles, or a 'system of stylistic possibles'. Just as with the social space, Bourdieu (1984: 128ff, 262, 340) constructs the symbolic space (alternately referred to as the 'space of lifestyles') by way of Multiple Correspondence Analysis of survey data. Deploying a variety of lifestyle variables (e.g. preferences for goods such as musical works, visual art, literature, motor vehicles, interior decor, clothing, food, beverages and sports), the multidimensional symbolic space reflects distributional oppositions between individuals' properties in terms of preferences for certain goods and inclinations to indulge in certain practices and activities. Bourdieu asserts that the symbolic space is 'homologous' to the social space, meaning that positions in the social space correspond to distinct cultural tastes and preferences. However, as regards the deployment of the model in other empirical contexts, Bourdieu warns against what he calls a 'substantialist' or 'naively realist' reading of his analyses:

> Some would […] consider the fact that, for example, tennis or even golf is not
> nowadays as exclusively associated with dominant positions as in the past, or that the

noble sports, such as riding or fencing […], are no longer specific to nobility as they originally were, as a refutation of the proposed model. […] An initially aristocratic practice can be given up by aristocracy – and this occurs quite frequently – when it is adopted by a growing fraction of the bourgeoisie or the petit-bourgeoisie, or even the lower classes (this is what happened in France to boxing, which was enthusiastically practiced by aristocrats at the end of the century). Conversely, an initially lower-class practice can sometimes be taken up by the nobles. In short, one has to avoid turning into necessary and intrinsic properties of some groups […] the properties which belong to this group at a given moment in time because of its position in the determinate social space and in a determinate state of the *supply* of possible goods and practices. Thus at every moment of each society, one has to deal with a set of social positions which is bound by a relation of homology to a set of activities (the practice of golf or piano) or of goods (a second home or an old master painting) that are themselves characterised relationally. (Bourdieu, 1998: 4)

Thus, he insists on a 'relational' or 'structural' reading which he asserts is only possible by comparing 'system to system'. In other words, homologies between the social space and the symbolic space may be quite similar in different contexts, even though the particular goods and activities which constitute the distributional oppositions in the symbolic space may vary considerably. Thus, Bourdieu's notion of homology does not imply, as some scholars would have it, that people located in the upper sectors of the social space exclusively appropriate a fixed set of 'high-brow culture' (e.g. classical music, ballet and opera) while shunning all things 'low-brow' (e.g. country and western music, blues and gospel). What it does imply is that more or less unitary sets of preferences and tastes correspond to different positions of the social space. Thus, lifestyles and consumption choices are viewed by Bourdieu as 'position-takings' in a game of cultural distinctions; the distinctiveness of a given practice is derived from its difference from other practices in the system of stylistic possibles.

The third component of Bourdieu's model is the notion of habitus, which is held to be the mediating factor between the social space and the symbolic space (Bourdieu, 1984: ch. 3; 1990b: ch. 3). Habitus refers to individuals' generative schemes of perception and appreciation guiding practice and thought, and is thought of as durable dispositions inscribed in body and mind. While each of society's members has his/her own unique characteristics in this regard, Bourdieu holds that there are remarkable

dispositional similarities between social actors located in proximity in the social space. Following his Durkheimian heritage, Bourdieu (1996b: 1) asserts that there exists a correspondence between the 'objective divisions of the social world' and the 'principles of vision and divisions that agents apply to it', i.e. between the structures of the social space and the mental structures inscribed in the habitus. Moreover, he holds that the two are structurally homologous because they are genetically linked, implying that the latter is an 'embodiment' of the former: 'Cumulative exposure to certain social and economic conditions instils in individuals an ensemble of durable and transposable dispositions that internalize the necessities of the extant social environment, inscribing the organism the patterned inertia and constraints of external reality' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 13). The social space thus represents the social and economic conditions under which the propensity to act in certain ways is constituted, for instance the capacity to differentiate between and appreciate cultural goods. As Bourdieu finds empirical evidence for more or less unitary sets of preferences and tastes which correspond to different sectors of the social space, he asserts that there exists a limited set of 'class habitus' structured by the conditions of existence as represented by the social space:

> To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or *tastes*) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition and, through the mediation of the habitus and its generative capability, a systematic set of goods and properties, which are united by affinity of style. [...] The habitus is [the] generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices. (Bourdieu, 1998: 7ff)

The notion of class habitus does not, however, mean that social actors located in proximity in the social space are endowed with the exact same schemes of perception and appreciation, but rather that each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others in the same class, thus expressing the singularity of its position within a sector of the social space (Bourdieu, 1990b: 60). Nor does it necessarily imply that social actors consciously adjust their subjective aspirations according to their objective chances of obtaining certain cultural goods. Rather, it suggests that the possibilities and impossibilities are already inscribed in the objective social and

economic conditions associated with different positions in the social space. As Bourdieu (1990b: 54) points out, the most improbable practices are already excluded as unthinkable by an 'immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity'. Thus, social actors reject what is anyway denied to them and, by the same token, they betray a striking 'will to the inevitable'. Moreover, Bourdieu (1984: 466ff) asserts that the habitus work beneath the level of consciousness, and first and foremost as a pre-reflexive 'practical sense'. Thus, the notion of habitus implies a break with sociological depictions of human conduct as stemming from an unreflexive practice of rituals or a vacuous adherence to rules, as well as the assertion that it can be understood solely in terms of conscious pursuits of goals (Prieur *et al*, 2006: 26).

It is also important to highlight what Bourdieu (1984: 170; 1990b: 62) refers to as the diachronic aspect of the conditioning of class habitus. While exposure to social and economic conditions of existence in a social actor's early years continue to structure its conduct later in life, this does not mean that the structures of the habitus are not malleable. Indeed, exposure to different conditions in the course of a social actor's trajectory (i.e. intra-generational social mobility) may imply a secondary conditioning of the habitus which produces structures somewhat at odds with those produced early in life, thus constituting what Bourdieu (2004a) in his later writings refers to as *habitus clivé* – a cleft or divided set of embodied dispositions.

The notion of habitus also implies a further break with 'substantialist' mode of sociological analysis alluded to above. In this regard, Bourdieu distinguishes between 'modus operandi' and 'opus operatum', that is, between different modes of practices on the one hand, and the observable outcomes of these practices on the other:

> In contrast to the atomistic approach […] which breaks the unity of practice to establish partial 'laws' claiming to account for the products of practice, the opus operatum, the aim is to establish general laws reproducing the laws of production, the modus operandi. (Bourdieu, 1984: 573; see also 1990b: 12).

However, as a social actor's modus operandi (i.e. his/her mode of practice as generated by the habitus) cannot be directly observed, it must be apprehended interpretively. Thus, much of Bourdieu's analyses are devoted to the qualitative scrutiny of the various preferences and practices which cluster in each sector of the social space in order to identify the particular 'mode of appropriation' that underlies them (Weininger, 2005: 93).[8] In this regard, Bourdieu suggests that a given cultural good may be perceived, appreciated and appropriated in qualitatively different ways or manners, implying that there ought to be an analytical de-coupling of the 'whats' and 'hows' of cultural consumption. In the case of France in the 1960s and 1970s, Bourdieu portrays three main modes of consumption corresponding to the three main classes as defined in terms of positions in the social space, each with its own internal variants. Members of the dominant class are, according to Bourdieu (1984: ch. 5), endowed with an 'aesthetical disposition' which generates 'a sense of distinction', i.e. an aesthetic orientation implying a valorisation of 'form over function', evident for instance in the celebration of 'art for art's sake'. Members of the petite bourgeoisie are, by contrast, held to exhibit a combination of aspiring to the lifestyle of the dominant class on the one hand, and the insufficient means to attain it on the other. Thus, they are held to betray a 'cultural goodwill', implying a 'gap between acknowledgement and knowledge' (1984: ch. 6). Finally, the members of the dominated class are inclined to assign an absolute priority to function over form, subsuming all consumption choices to practical and moral concerns and, hence, demonstrating a 'taste for necessity' (1984: ch. 7). The explanatory principle underlying this tri-partite model of cultural consumption is that the further away from 'necessity' social actors are situated (i.e. the more capital they are endowed with), the more likely they are to exhibit an embodied 'feel for the game' of cultural distinctions.

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[8] Bourdieu alternately employs the terms 'mode of appropriation' (1984: 1), 'mode of perception' (1984: 50), 'mode of acquisition' (1984: 68), 'mode of utilization' (1984: 65), 'mode of apprehension' (1990b: 88) and 'mode of consumption' (1990b: 54).

To summarise, Bourdieu's model of the correspondence between class relations and a differential distribution of lifestyles rests upon the dialectic interrelation between three main structures: the social space reflects the conditions for the structuring of different class habitus which, in turn, structure more or less unified sets of lifestyles evident in the symbolic space. The mastery of certain lifestyles may in turn be converted into assets productive of advantage and privilege, thus influencing a given actor's position in the social space over time. Translated into a Weberian vocabulary, Bourdieu's model depicts a tight empirical entwinement of class and status, where the former is understood as a system of differences depicting the social distribution of scarce resources/capitals, and the latter is understood as a system of differences depicting the social distribution of cultural tastes and lifestyles. Insofar as Bourdieu can be said to yoke together class and status in this regard, this is, I would argue, *empirically* justified, and not due to an unfortunate *analytical* confounding, as the social space and the symbolic space are separate constructs, and have been shown by statistical assessment to be tightly entwined.

2.2.2 Elective affinities and the formation of social collectives

Notwithstanding Bourdieu's insistence on treating both classes and status groups as nominal entities in and through the notions of the social space and the symbolic space, he also points to the formation of 'real' social collectives. While he explicitly opposes scholars he depicts as confusing 'classes on paper' with 'real classes' and thus erroneously presuming that actual groups automatically emerge from, for instance, conflicting interests on the labour market, he nevertheless holds that proximate positions in the social space constitute 'probable classes' (Bourdieu, 1985: 725ff; 1998: 10ff). Through affinities in the structures of the habitus, people are viewed as 'disposed to get closer, as well as being easier to bring together, to mobilize'. However, Bourdieu holds that the existence of real classes depends on symbolic (and political) labour. For 'classes on paper' to become 'realised classes' they have to be constructed as unified collectives through symbolic representation. In other words, they have to be spoken on behalf of by representatives who endeavour to

impose their views of the world on others. Class struggles are, according to Bourdieu, in fact 'classification struggles' between opposing groups of social actors about the categories of perception of the social world.

Open class struggles are, however, a rarity. Instead, Bourdieu argues, class relations tend to express themselves symbolically as status relations: 'The social space […] tends to function symbolically as a *space of life-styles* or as a set of *Stände*, of groups characterised by different life-styles.' (Bourdieu, 1985: 730). While he, as noted above, considers such groups as nominal entities, he also points to the formation of 'real' status groups in and through the notion of 'elective affinities':

> Taste is a match-maker, it marries colours and also people, who make 'well-matched couples', initially in regard to taste. All the acts of co-option which underlie 'primary groups' are acts of knowledge of others qua subjects of acts of knowledge or, in less intellectualist terms, sign-reading operations (particularly visible in first encounters) through which a habitus confirms its affinity with other habitus. Hence the astonishing harmony of ordinary couples who, often matched initially, progressively match each other by mutual acculturation. This spontaneous decoding of one habitus by another is the basis of the immediate affinities which orient social encounters, discouraging socially discordant relationships, encouraging well-matched relationships, without these operations ever having to be formulated other than in the socially innocent language of likes and dislikes. The extreme improbability of the particular encounter between particular people, which masks the probability of interchangeable chance events, induces couples to experience their mutual election as a happy accident, a coincidence which mimics transcendent design ('made for each other') and intensifies the sense of the miraculous. (Bourdieu, 1984: 243)

The notion of elective affinities points to a concurrence between preferences for types of cultural goods and preferences for types of people. In Goffmanian terms, Bourdieu (1984: 471; 1985: 728; 1990a: 128) depicts social actors as endowed with a social 'sense of one's place', as well as a 'sense of other people's place', meaning that they are endowed with a sense of belonging to certain social groups, and by the same token, a sense of *not* belonging to other social groups. The notion of elective affinities thus resembles what other scholars refer to as 'homophily' (McPherson *et al*, 2001) and 'differential association' (Bottero, 2005), meaning the clustering of individuals into communal groups through, for instance, 'classed' marital endogamy and residential segregation.

However, Bourdieu (1985: 730) notes that differences in cultural tastes and lifestyles exist for a social subject only insofar as they are perceived and recognised as significant. Thus, only social actors endowed with the capacity and inclination to make distinctions – not only between cultural goods, but also between *practitioners* of different lifestyles – form actual social collectives based on cultural tastes. Different cultural tastes – revealed though social actors' consumption choices – are thus subject to evaluation and estimation by other social actors:

> Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu, 1984: 6)

Insofar as lifestyle differences are recognised, the consumption of a given cultural good functions as a sign or a 'classifier'. In this regard, the influence from Saussurian structuralism is apparent (Dosse, 1997: ch. 6; Robbins, 2011: ch. 5). The system of lifestyle differences as depicted in the symbolic space is taken to represent a system of semantic signs or, as it were, a language. This system of signs constitutes a structural whole from which each individual sign derives its semantic meaning. Just as the letter 'A' derives its meaning by virtue of *not* being letter 'B' through to 'Z', a given cultural good – say, red wine – derives its meaning by virtue of not being other cultural goods, for instance white wine, *rosé*, *vin jaune* and so forth. While the consumption of a given good by no means has to be 'conspicuous' (cf. Veblen, 1967) or *intended* as a pursuit of social distinction by the cultural consumer him/herself for it to convey a semantic meaning, Bourdieu nevertheless presupposes that social actors are endowed with the competence to decode, read and in turn classify other people in terms of their lifestyles and consumption choices. Such competence is apparent, he argues, in social actors' aversions to other people's tastes:

> Tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that, when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes. In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distaste, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (sick-making) of the tastes of others. [...] Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent. Aversion to

> different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes; class endogamy is evidence of this. (Bourdieu, 1984: 56)

Bourdieu holds that through social actors' perceptions and recognitions of lifestyle differences, the distributional taste oppositions apparent in the symbolic space manifest themselves as 'real' barriers between groups of social actors. The notion of elective affinities may thus be thought of as constituting an additional component in Bourdieu's model: the differential life conditions as depicted in the social space structure different class habitus which not only generate limited sets of preferences as regards cultural goods, but also limited sets of preferences as regards other people.

While the formation of actual social collectives or status groups on the basis of the social estimation of lifestyles is not a *primary* concern in his empirical inquiries (see Bourdieu, 2008 for a notable exception), the notion of elective affinities and his recurrent insistence on separating between 'theoretical' and 'real' groups further the argument that Bourdieu has not rendered the notion of status 'redundant' or 'outmoded'. Indeed, as noted by several scholars (e.g., Honneth, 1986: 59; Manza, 1992: 279), Bourdieu's model bears important resemblances to the Weberian notion of 'social closure', which refers to processes whereby one group of social actors monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders which it defines as inferior and ineligible (Parkin, 1979; Murphy, 1988). I shall return to this notion below.

2.2.3 Symbolic capital, power and legitimacy

So far I have argued that the notion of status is apparent in Bourdieu's depiction of the social distribution of lifestyles, as well as in his depiction of the ways in which social actors form more or less amorphous social collectives on the basis of lifestyle differentials. The third aspect in which the notion of status is apparent within the Bourdieusian framework is the notion of 'symbolic capital', which depicts the social distribution of esteem, prestige and honour (Bourdieu, 1977: ch. 4; 1990b: ch. 7). In order to appreciate the full extent of the quasi-economistic conceptual framework

implied in the notion of 'capital', a few initial points should be highlighted. First of all, capital is thought of as scarce resources that constitute advantages in social life for their possessors. Scarce resources function as capital by virtue of being constituted, differentially distributed and fought over within distinct social 'fields', or hierarchically stratified 'microcosms' within which individuals struggle for and over unequally distributed material and/or symbolic resources (Bourdieu, 1993a). For instance, for scholastic skills to function as capital it is a necessary for there to exist a relatively autonomous field where such skills are valued, where the definition of the form and content of such skills may be fought over, and where such definitions constitute a stake in the on-going struggles. Second, the notion of capital presupposes that a scarce resource is sought after by non-possessors of the resource in question. Following the logic of basic economics, Bourdieu holds that the value of a scarce resource is determined by both supply and demand. If supply is low and demand is high, the value of the resource will increase. Conversely, if supply is high and demand is low, the value of the resource will decrease. Third, scarce resources become 'capital' only insofar as they can be accumulated and invested for the further accumulation of profit. The notion of convertibility is highly important in this regard. The prime example here is the ways in which educational credentials under certain conditions provide access to higher positions in the labour market, and thus higher wages. Finally, Bourdieu (1986) singles out three main forms of capital (although he alludes to several sub-types): 'economic capital', 'cultural capital' and 'social capital'. The notion of 'symbolic capital' is a different analytical category than these three basic species of capital, in that it is taken to denote the form assumed by the basic forms of capital when these are 'misrecognised' as sources of power, meaning that they are not perceived as such by social actors (Bourdieu, 1989: 21). Nevertheless, the production of the value of symbolic capital follows the same logic as alluded to above.

While Bourdieu adds another layer of meaning in that symbolic capital represents a 'guise' of the basic forms of capital, its functioning is basically the same. Thus, the notion of symbolic capital presupposes that certain properties (e.g. practices,

capabilities and possessions) function as capitals in various (semi)autonomous fields. Tangent to for instance Willis' (1977) classical study of how working-class boys reject the 'rules of the game' in the school system and thereby exclude themselves from trajectories which require education, Bourdieu holds that in various social contexts, structural constraints (i.e. the principles for the distribution of rewards as constituted though the outcomes of previous battles within the fields) partly determine which properties facilitate pay-offs and which do not. Moreover, in cases in which the 'rules of the game' within the fields are perceived as 'natural' or 'given', Bourdieu argues that power relations are misapprehended and thus take on 'misrecognised' or 'symbolic' forms. Thus, Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition does not mean 'deeming someone unworthy of esteem', or a 'refusal of recognition', as Sayer (2005: 60) for instance depicts the term. Rather, it means to misapprehend an asymmetric power relation.

As the basic forms of capital are scarce resources that are valued and fought over, they constitute power relations between possessors and non-possessors, in the sense that the former are endowed with privileges and advantages the latter do not have. Thus, the basic forms of capital active within a field denote what Murphy (1988: 136) refers to as 'power to profit from', meaning that possessors are endowed with the capacity to convert their properties into other forms of resources (e.g. money, educational credentials, advantages in the labour market and membership in exclusive social networks). Symbolic capital, on the other hand, denotes 'power over' in the sense that non-possessors misapprehend, and thus tacitly accept, the rules of the game within the field, and the differential distribution of rewards stemming from these rules. Insofar as this is the case, Bourdieu depicts the relation between possessors and non-possessors as a relation of 'domination'. The notions of 'symbolic power' and 'symbolic violence' are important in this regard. According to Bourdieu (1991b: 154), symbolic power is 'that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it.' Moreover, it is a 'transformed, i.e. misrecognizable,

transfigured and legitimated form of the other forms of power' (Bourdieu, 1991b: 170).

Bourdieu seems to imply that in situations in which power relations are not *perceived* by social actors as power relations, the original power relation is transformed into another form. The notion of symbolic violence thus implies 'concealment' or 'misrecognition', meaning 'the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: xxii). Thus, Bourdieu's notion of domination presupposes a certain degree of legitimacy. The ultimate form of legitimacy, Bourdieu holds, is a state of 'doxa':

> The adherence expressed in the doxic relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy, and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it. (Bourdieu, 1977: 168)

By contrast, the 'field of opinion' – or the locus of the confrontation of competing discourses – is characterised by critiques and position-takings which bring 'the undiscussed into discussion' (*ibid.*). Moreover, according to Bourdieu, a fundamental objective at stake in this field of opinion is the imposition of the 'dominant systems of classification'. Groups of dominated actors have an objective interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken-for-granted by putting forward 'heterodoxic' opinions. Groups of dominant actors, on the other hand, have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa, or establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, 'orthodoxy'. Thus, Bourdieu proposes two ideal-typical scenarios of power relations: one in which domination occurs through the doxic naturalisation of common sense acceptance, and one in which the legitimacy of power relations is questioned and thereby challenged.

Bourdieu's depiction of doxic power relations between those who gain profits from their properties and those who do not resembles what Scott (2001: 12ff) has referred to as 'domination through persuasive influence'.[9] Unlike power relations in which dominant actors actively use coercion or repression to bring about causal effects, domination through persuasive influence implies that dominant actors have secured the compliance or consent of those whom they dominate, which results in a kind of legitimacy, or a moral grounding, that it would not otherwise have (see also Thompson, 1991; Lukes, 2005). Legitimacy in this sense does not imply that the power relations are acknowledged, or even perceived as such, by dominant and dominated actors alike. On the contrary, it results from a misconception of the 'real' causes of the asymmetric power relation, which according to Bourdieu is the unequal distribution of resources or capitals active within the field in question. In such cases, resources of different kinds take on the appearance of symbolic capital.

Symbolic capital can, in principle, be based on a wide range of properties. In the case of France in the 1960s and 1970s, Bourdieu (1984) asserts that certain lifestyles and tastes assume the form of symbolic capital in the sense that the mastery of such is unequally distributed and that such lifestyles and tastes are sought after by those who do not master them. In other words, such mastery constitutes esteem and prestige in the eyes of non-possessors. Moreover, he argues that members of the dominant class are endowed with the power to both define and profit from the mastery of 'legitimate culture', and thereby have the power to determine the symbolic 'exchange value' of different kinds of cultural practices. Accordingly, the dominant class is wittingly or not in a position to impose its views on the dominated classes. Through the process of symbolic violence this ability is misrecognised as an arbitrary source of power, and

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[9] Scott refers to 'persuasive influence' as an 'elementary form of power', and not as 'domination' in the sense of a 'developed form of power', meaning that power is structured into stable and enduring social relations that make up large-scale social structures. However, in Bourdieu's argument persuasive influence in the guise of symbolic capital is tightly connected to the structures of the social space, and it might thus be argued that it is, indeed, a central component of stable and enduring power relations in Scott's sense.

through the 'cultural goodwill' of dominated actors (i.e. the perception of the dominant class' definitions of good taste as universal truths) it reinforces and legitimises the power of the dominant class. Dominated actors are drawn into the dominant actors' interpretive frames of reference, and the mastery of legitimate culture thus assumes the form of symbolic capital. However, this process does not imply that the dominant perform a cynical calculation to deceive the dominated:

> Culture is the site, par excellence, of misrecognition, because, in generating strategies objectively adapted to the objective chances of profit of which it is the product, the sense of investment secures profits which do not need to be pursued as profits; and so it brings to those who have legitimate culture as a second nature the supplementary profit of being seen (and seeing themselves) as perfectly disinterested, unblemished by any cynical or mercenary use of culture. This means that the term 'investment', for example, must be understood in the dual sense of economic investment – which it objectively always is, though misrecognized – and the sense of affective investment which it has in psychoanalysis, or, more exactly, in the sense of *illusio*, belief, an involvement in the game which produces the game. The art-lover knows no other guide than his love of art, and when he moves, as if by instinct, towards what is, at each moment, the thing to be loved, like some businessmen who make money even when they are not trying to, he is not pursuing a cynical calculation, but his own pleasure, the sincere enthusiasm which in such matters, is one of the preconditions of successful investment. (Bourdieu, 1984: 86)

The rationale of Bourdieu's argument is that if the understanding of 'good taste' is widely recognised as 'natural' or 'given' – and not as an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others – no further legitimising is necessary. The argument nevertheless presupposes that the mastery of legitimate culture functions as an asset (i.e. an 'embodied' or 'incorporated' form of cultural capital) within certain fields, for instance the field of education or the field of cultural production. Indeed, a key explanatory factor in Bourdieu's studies of processes of social reproduction within the French school system is the 'ease and grace' by which the culturally privileged children master the scholastic culture of the school system, as opposed to the 'vulgar mark of effort' common among ambitious children hailing from non-privileged backgrounds (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979, 1990).

The ways in which Bourdieu depicts such doxic power relations may at first sight seem quite at odds with how power and legitimacy are usually depicted in the

literature. Weber, for instance, argued that for relations of domination to be effective, they must somehow be recognised as legitimate; or more specifically, dominant actors must make *successful claims to legitimacy* to exert power effectively (Weber, 1997: 328ff). In other words, some form of obedience or compliance on the part of the subordinate is built into Weber's definition of domination (Parkin, 1982: 74). In line with his ideal type approach, Weber pointed out three bases for claims to legitimacy, namely 'traditional', 'legal-rational' and 'charismatic' authority. For present purposes, these need not be elaborated further. The important thing to note, however, is that whereas Weber seems to imply that dominant actors must consciously make efforts to *legitimise* their power, which, in turn, must be endorsed or accepted by dominated actors in some way, Bourdieu holds that such efforts are often not required. What is more, power is all the more effective when the power relations are not seen for what they really are. Thus, Bourdieu places less emphasis on the dominant actors' conscious efforts to exercise influence and persuasion, as domination through symbolic violence can occur relatively independently of the dominant actors' actions. As long as the categories of perception are deployed in favour of the dominant, efforts at social control are unnecessary: 'Legitimation of the social world is not, as some believe, the product of deliberate and purposive action of propaganda or symbolic imposition' (Bourdieu, 1989: 21).[10] Bourdieu's depiction of the differential distribution of symbolic capital and its relatedness to processes of misrecognition thus implies that the principles for this distribution do not have to be consciously agreed upon by all for such power relations to appear as legitimate.

2.3 (Re)assessments

At the beginning of the previous section I highlighted the need to 'distil' a Bourdieusian theoretical model of the class-status nexus from his empirical work. Accordingly, I have attempted to outline its basic tenets in terms of the social distribution of lifestyle differentials, the formation of actual collectives and the

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[10] The point could also be made that Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition bears certain resemblances to Weber's notion of charismatic authority.

erection of 'real' boundaries on the basis of positive or negative evaluations of lifestyles and cultural tastes, as well as the symbolic rewards accruing to the practitioners of certain lifestyles. However, there are certain ambiguities in Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework. In what follows I shall discuss these by comparing them to other perspectives that have challenged Bourdieu's work in some way.

2.3.1 Class and status

In the introduction I alluded to a fundamental discrepancy between Bourdieu's account of the class-status nexus, and that of Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, 2007a; Chan, 2010b).While both approaches can be contrasted to an unfortunate tendency within the research field to merge class and status through endeavours to construct unidimensional prestige scales (e.g. Duncan, 1961; Blau and Duncan, 1967; Prandy, 1990; Bottero and Prandy, 2003), there are nevertheless important differences in the ways in which they depict the relationship between the two. Whereas Chan and Goldthorpe insist on keeping class and status as separate analytical entities, maintaining that these entities represent two distinct stratifying processes manifesting themselves in different ways in the empirical reality, Bourdieu, by contrast, asserts that while the notions of class and status represent an analytical distinction, the ways in which the two are empirically entwined imply that the latter is a 'symbolic expression' of the former. In the previous section I have attempted to sketch out Bourdieu's model at some length, partly in order to contradict the erroneous view put forward by Chan and Goldthorpe that status is rendered 'conceptually redundant' and 'empirically outmoded' within his model. However, while both approaches can be said to incorporate notions of status in their frameworks, the fact remains that Bourdieu's model is fundamentally different from that of Chan and Goldthorpe.

By analytically distinguishing between a 'status order' and a 'class structure', Chan and Goldthorpe claim that their own approach is in line with Weber's original ideas. In several empirical analyses of cultural consumption and lifestyles in the UK, they

hold that class and status have distinct explanatory power and that status is more closely associated with different forms of cultural consumption than is class. This finding, they argue, is not compatible with a Bourdieusian framework, as it does not properly consider the effects of what they refer to as a 'status order'. By applying multi-dimensional scaling (Kruskal and Wish, 1978) to contingency tables that cross-classify people's occupations with that of their best friends, they claim they are able to extract a dimension that could reasonably be interpreted as a 'hierarchy of status'.[11] Moreover, by employing this status order in a multinomial logistic regression model alongside their (economic) class scheme, their analyses of cinema, theatre and dance performance attendance (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005), newspaper readership (2007b), musical taste (2007c), as well as consumption patterns as regards the visual arts (2007d), are held to confirm their claims.

There is, however, a peculiar view of status implied by Chan and Goldthorpe's explanatory model. While they claim adherence to Weber's view in this regard, their model is in fact far removed from it. While Weber (1946) distinguishes between the notion of *Ständische Lage* (referring to a 'status order' or a hierarchical structure of differentiated 'status situations') on the one hand, and the notion of *Stände* (referring to actual, though more or less amorphous 'status groups' based on affinities in lifestyles) on the other, he does not establish a causal link between the two, in the sense that the former 'structures' or to some extent determines the latter. On the contrary, the two notions of status refer to *two different aspects of the same thing*: the actual status groups on the one hand, and the structure of the hierarchical relations between them on the other. More specifically, the hierarchical structure of status situations is, according to Weber, constituted in and through 'social estimations of honour' related to lifestyles differentials. In other words, Weber does not put forward an explanatory model in which an order of status situations is held to be a primary

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[11] In the case of Norway, Chan *et al* (2011) employ a slightly different approach in that they apply multi-dimensional scaling to contingency tables that cross-classify the occupation of spouses and cohabiting partners.

structuring factor for the differential distribution of lifestyles alongside, or in opposition to, other structuring factors which are held to be less significant. To the extent that Weber points to such causal links, he holds that

> [status] honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of the organized neighborhood, very often the richest man is simply the chieftain. […] But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a 'class situation.' On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property. (Weber, 1946: 187)

Thus, he points to a contingent relationship between status situations and class situations, meaning that they may overlap in certain contexts, but that this relationship is not a necessary one. However, this assertion is quite different from the model proposed by Chan and Goldthorpe, who depict status order as something different from, and even as something that *explains* the social distribution of lifestyle differentials. Insofar as their explanatory model can be read according to a Weberian conceptual framework (as they assert themselves), it is in a sense both circular and logically incoherent, as they endeavour to explain one aspect of status (lifestyle differentials) with another aspect of it (a status order derived from social estimations of these lifestyle differentials). While their empirical analyses can certainly be read as an affirmation that lifestyle differentials *matter* as regards the formation of social collectives, they can hardly be read as a sound endeavour to map out 'the most varied ways' in which class relations and status relations are empirically interrelated. In other words, the disregard of Bourdieu's model of structural homologies between the social space and the symbolic space is not by any means justified by pointing to empirical analyses which show that 'status' has better explanatory power than 'class' as regards lifestyle differentials.

However, the fact that Chan and Goldthorpe's own conceptions of status are somewhat misguided does not, of course, mean that there are not problems inherent in Bourdieu's model. First of all, in order to avoid conceptual confusion, I believe it

is useful to follow Weberians in conceptually distinguishing between class and status, first of all according to the nominal/real distinction (i.e. class should refer to objective positions in different sectors of the social space, while status groups should refer to the more or less amorphous social groupings based on affinities in lifestyles); and second, to properly denote an analytical distinction between different types of 'realised' communal groups (status groups based on lifestyle affinities being one of several other conceivable possibilities). However, to point to a conceptual fuzziness within the Bourdieusian framework does not by any means imply a need to disregard it, as this problem can easily be remedied by increased conceptual stringency. Nevertheless, far more serious objections have been raised to Bourdieu's work than conceptual ambiguities. These include allegations of an outdated model of lifestyle differentiation, an erroneous assumption that lifestyle differentials directly lead to status hierarchisation, as well as a neglect of moral issues. I shall start with a discussion of the former allegation.

2.3.2 The cultural omnivore

Although still immensely influential within the research field, Bourdieu's inquiries have caused controversy regarding the role of cultural tastes in processes pertaining to social stratification. Adherents of what has come to be known as the 'omnivore thesis' represent the most persistent challengers in this regard. The term 'cultural omnivore' was originally coined by Peterson and his colleagues (Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996) and refers to a tendency for 'high-status people', contrary to previously held assumptions about the cultural tastes of this social stratum, to engage in activities associated with 'popular culture'. Unlike 'cultural univores', who strictly adhere to either 'high-brow' or 'low-brow' cultural goods, 'cultural omnivores' develop a 'taste for everything'. This, Peterson argues, indicates a marked historical shift:

> Appreciation of the fine arts became a mark of high status in the late nineteenth century as part of an attempt to distinguish "highbrowed" Anglo Saxons from the new "lowbrowed" immigrants, whose popular entertainments were said to corrupt morals and thus were to be shunned. […] In recent years, however, many high-status

persons are far from being snobs and are eclectic, even "omnivorous" in their tastes. […] This suggests a qualitative shift in the basis for marking elite status – from snobbish exclusion to omnivorous appropriation. (Peterson and Kern, 1996: 900)

The notion of the cultural omnivore (also referred to as 'omnivorousness') has attracted considerable attention, in part because it explicitly challenges Bourdieu's contention concerning the homologous relations between the social space, the symbolic space and the space of class habitus. From the outset, the rise of omnivorous tastes among the upper classes was seen as an anomaly compared to Bourdieu's findings in France in the 1960s and 1970s. Since Peterson's initial studies, many scholars have debated both the notion itself (i.e. its theoretical-methodological underpinnings and issues concerning measurement) and the significance of this purported historical trend (for overviews, see Peterson, 2005; Warde *et al*, 2007; Ollivier, 2008).

Following the terminology of Warde *et al* (2007: 145; 2008: 149), two definitions of the cultural omnivore can be pinpointed in the current debate. The *volume* definition maintains that some people, an identifiable sector of the population, do and like more activities and things than others. Researchers have typically defined this type of omnivorousness operationally by counting the numbers of activities or cultural goods chosen by a respondent in a survey. In this sense, the omnivores are characterised by 'broad' tastes for a wide variety of cultural goods, whereas univores are characterised by 'narrow' tastes for a more limited set of goods. The *compositional* definition suggests that a distinctive taste orientation is entailed in the patterns of cultural preferences involved. This type of omnivorousness has been operationally defined by *a priori* categorizing of cultural goods or activities as 'high-brow', 'middle-brow' or 'low-brow', in order to measure the extent to which respondents' preferences cross-cut these categories. Omnivores are viewed as straddling symbolically significant boundaries, whereas univores are viewed as less inclined to do so.

As regards the substantial implications drawn from such analyses, two main positions can be identified in the general debate about the implications of the rise of the

cultural omnivore, and both expand on Peterson's initial assertions. The *decline of cultural distinctions* argument is tied to what Peterson and Kern (1996) have referred to as an 'openness to appreciating everything', indicating that cultural omnivorousness is 'antithetical to snobbishness'. The usual tendency in this regard is to pitch empirical evidence of omnivorous tastes against the Bourdieusian homology argument (e.g., Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005, 2007b, 2007d, 2007c). In this view, Bourdieu is depicted as having asserted that the members of the dominant class 'seek to demonstrate a superiority of their own lifestyle over those of other classes' (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010: 4). Thus, the rise of omnivorousness is taken to implicate a weakening of such cultural boundaries and, hence, a refutation of the existence of a tight homology between the social space and the symbolic space. The rationale of this argument is that the more social actors located in the upper sectors of the social space tend to like or do the same things as people located elsewhere, the less distinctive their cultural tastes.

The *reconfiguration of cultural distinctions argument,* on the other hand, suggests that the preferential eclecticism associated with the omnivore figure is a *new* embodiment of class domination, in that it implies a capacity to reflect and absorb previously opposed elements of cultural tastes (e.g. Warde *et al*, 2008; Bennett *et al*, 2009).[12] In this view, omnivorousness does not imply a meltdown in cultural distinctions. Rather, it is asserted that the increased occurrence of omnivorousness points to the formulation of 'new rules' governing the pursuit of recognition and social status. Although more sympathetic to Bourdieu's work, proponents of this argument are still caught up in the reading of Bourdieu as having depicted the dominant class as 'snobbish' univores who shun 'popular' or 'low-brow' cultural forms. Thus, the empirical evidence of resourceful people exhibiting 'broad' and/or 'eclectic' tastes is taken to imply a new historical trend that reconfigures and even

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[12] Some scholars (e.g. Kuipers, 2006; Lahire, 2011; Friedman, 2012) have suggested that it might as well be the other way around – that omnivorous tastes can imply *disadvantages* in social life.

challenges 'old' principles of cultural distinctions, thus rendering the Bourdieusian argument somewhat dated.

However, as several critics have pointed out (e.g. Holt, 1997; Atkinson, 2011; Prieur and Savage, 2011; Savage and Gayo, 2011; Rimmer, 2012), there are a number of serious problems inherent in the omnivore thesis, regarding both the crudeness of measurement of cultural preferences and tastes, and the ways in which it has been pitched against Bourdieu's model of taste distribution. First, as most studies of omnivorousness have relied on secondary analyses of survey data not necessarily gathered for the identification of fine-grained cultural distinctions, scholars (have had to) deploy crude measures based on wide genre categories. For instance, in the mapping of musical tastes, champions of the omnivore thesis (e.g. Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007c) have deployed categories such as 'pop/rock', 'classical' and 'country music'. In this way, they have tended to obscure the fact that taste distinctions may exist *within* these somewhat arbitrary genre categories. Indeed, it is arguably a likely scenario that people might like *some* cultural goods associated with a musical genre, while shunning others. As remarked by Gripsrud *et al* (2011: 512): 'Hank Williams is fine, and maybe Dolly Parton on a good day, but most country music singers are not.' In other words, while people located in different sectors in the social space might report preferences for the same musical genres, the preferences for artists or even individual works might be highly different. Thus, assuming that broad pre-constructed genre categories can function as indicators of cultural taste can be highly misleading, as they do not capture the tensions and 'hidden dimensions' within the categories employed (Grossberg, 1992; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2007; Beer, 2010; Atkinson, 2011).[13]

Second, as pointed out by Savage and Gayo (2011: 340), 'brow' categories (i.e. the *a priori* clustering of cultural goods into hierarchically ordered categories of taste

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[13] In this regard, it should be noted that Bourdieu (1984) primarily focused on the differential distribution of preferences for *specific works* across a wide range of cultural domains and genres.

cultures) are erroneously approached as analytical frames rather than as historical artefacts. Which types of preferences and tastes are considered 'high' or 'low' by cultural consumers may vary considerably in different contexts, and depicting certain goods as intrinsically belonging to fixed sets of taste cultures can thus lead to highly questionable claims about the differential distribution of tastes. Indeed, as the usual tendency of the adherents of the omnivore thesis is to see the 'highbrow snob' as reflecting a possessor of an embodied form of cultural capital, the conclusions they draw in pitching their empirical findings against the homology thesis are hardly convincing.[14] As noted above, Bourdieu repeatedly highlighted the distinction between a 'substantialist' or 'naively realist' reading of his analyses on the one hand, and a 'relational' or 'structural' reading on the other. While Bourdieu's own reading instructions should not govern the critical assessments of his work, it is a viable argument in its own right that there might exist homologies between the structures of the social space and the structures of the symbolic space in contexts other than France in the 1960s and 1970s, even though the particular goods and activities constituting the distributional oppositions in the symbolic space differ considerably from Bourdieu's analyses.

Third, the constructed dichotomy between 'snobbishness' and 'openness' is problematic: it confounds social actors' more or less tolerant attitudes towards different types of cultural goods on the one hand, and their attitudes towards the tastes and preferences of other social actors on the other. As rhetorically asked by Lahire,

> [i]s it really a sign of greater tolerance when someone declares that they like a greater number of musical genres than any other people, or is it rather the simple reflection of their having a wider musical knowledge which would not necessarily exclude a severe symbolic hierarchisation? Conversely, does the fact that an individual does not like certain musical genres necessarily signify "intolerance"? There is nothing contradictory in the idea that someone might dislike something whilst believing that others were perfectly within their rights to like it. (Lahire, 2008: 183)

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[14] For an elaborate discussion of misguided notions of cultural capital, see Prieur and Savage (2011).

Thus, the assumption that the extent to which social actors are either 'snobbish' or 'open' directly reflects their preferences and tastes is questionable. Indeed, this dichotomy stems from a highly tendentious reading of Bourdieu, dating back in the Anglophone literature to Elster's (1981) rather sour critique of *Distinction*, and reiterated by recent scholars (e.g. Bryson, 1996; Chan, 2010b; Warde, 2011; Roose *et al*, 2012). According to this view, Bourdieu's argument is supposedly that members of the dominant class exhibit a 'snobbish orientation' and a '*desire to consolidate social hierarchy* by defending clear-cut cultural boundaries as part of an ongoing class struggle' (Roose *et al*, 2012: 492, emphasis added). Thus, the empirical evidence of 'open' and 'tolerant' cultural consumers located in the upper sectors of the social space is pitched against Bourdieu's work. However, this reading is quite reductionist, if not downright contradictory to Bourdieu's initial analyses. Indeed, it misses the whole point of 'misrecognition', which is so pivotal to his argument. According to Bourdieu, the 'illusio' or 'the feel for the game' typical among social actors in the dominant class implies a 'disinterested' appropriation of cultural goods, 'unblemished by any cynical or mercenary use of culture' (1984: 86). While Bourdieu certainly asserts that such disinterestedness is a socially profitable strategy, the point is that the ways in which social actors appropriate cultural goods are perceived as *non*-snobbish and thus misapprehended as a socially profitable strategy, both by others and themselves. The notion of 'snobbish' consumption styles as referred to in the omnivore literature perhaps more aptly describes the way in which Bourdieu depicts the anxious, pretentious and strained consumption styles of the *petite bourgeoisie*, rather than the disinterested, playful and aesthetically transgressing modes of consuming goods typical of the dominant class.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the champions of the omnivore thesis by and large ignore Bourdieu's distinction between *opus operatum* and *modus operandi*, i.e. the methodological point that cultural tastes and their symbolic meanings cannot

simply be 'read' from the cultural goods people consume (Holt, 1997).[15] Notwithstanding Bourdieu's mapping of distributional oppositions in the symbolic space in terms of preferences for a wide range of goods, he nevertheless suggests that the *same* cultural goods may be perceived, appreciated and appropriated in *qualitatively different ways or manners*, implying that there ought to be an analytical de-coupling of the 'whats' and 'hows' of cultural consumption. This point is clearly evident in his depiction of the tastes and practices common among artists and intellectuals:

> [I]n the absence of the conditions of material possession, the pursuit of exclusiveness has to be content with developing a unique mode of appropriation. *Liking the same things differently, liking different things, less obviously marked out for admiration* – these are some of the strategies for outflanking, overtaking and displacing which, by maintaining a permanent revolution in tastes, enable the dominated, less wealthy fractions, whose appropriations must, in the main, be exclusively symbolic, to secure exclusive possessions at every moment. Intellectuals and artists have a special predilection for the most risky but also most profitable strategies of distinction, those which consist in asserting the power, which is peculiarly theirs, to constitute insignificant objects as works of art, *but in another mode*, by other classes or class fractions (e.g., kitsch). In this case, *it is the manner of consuming which creates the object of consumption*, and a second-degree delight which transforms the 'vulgar' artifacts abandoned to common consumption, Westerns, strip cartoons, family snapshots, graffiti, into distinguished and distinctive works of culture. (Bourdieu, 1984: 282, emphasis added)

In Bourdieu's analytical framework, the notion of modus operandi is tightly linked to the notion of habitus. As previously noted, the habitus is not directly observable and measurable, as it works beneath the level of consciousness, and first and foremost as a pre-reflexive 'practical sense'. Thus, first-hand data about the ways in which people perceive, appreciate and appropriate cultural goods are not directly accessible, neither to the sociologist, nor to the social actors themselves. As noted by Weininger (2005: 93), Bourdieu apprehends the structures of class habitus *interpretively* through the analysis of a variety of data. By contrast, the omnivore thesis is based on the assumption that cultural tastes can be directly read from the volume and/or composition of goods respondents in a survey report preferences for. Thus, the ways

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[15] See Ollivier (2008) for a notable exception.

in which the social distribution of tastes is empirically scrutinised is at best limited in scope compared to Bourdieu's analyses.

There are, however, reasons to suspect that historical processes related to both the supply side and the demand side of cultural consumption (e.g. new technologies, increased mass production of goods, increased access to higher education, increased purchasing power) have rendered the basis for social distinction through the consumption of goods more complex compared to earlier times. Nevertheless, as Holt (1997: 103) points out, the fact that cultural goods no longer directly signal social rank does not necessarily entail that lifestyle differentials no longer have social classificatory power. Rather, insofar as the goods themselves no longer serve as an accurate representation of consumer practices, there is all the more reason to follow the analytical strategies proposed by Bourdieu in mapping out possible differences in social actors' embodied *modes* of consuming cultural goods.

In sum, the point could be made that the notion of the cultural omnivore functions as an unfortunate 'red herring' in drawing attention away from important processes pertaining to lifestyle differentiation. Indeed, attempts to 'test' the validity of Bourdieu's model of structural homologies between the social space and the symbolic space by pointing to empirical evidence of 'broad', 'eclectic', 'hybrid', 'open' and/or 'tolerant' tastes among people located in the upper sectors in the social space are far from convincing. While it would, in its own right, be interesting to scrutinise the ways in which distributional oppositions manifests themselves in (dis)similar ways across contexts – for instance by focusing on the fluctuating symbolic value of certain practices and tastes – it is a highly questionable analytical strategy to assume that measuring the pervasiveness of the intolerant 'highbrow snob' figure can function as a litmus test in assessing the Bourdieusian homology thesis. In accordance with several other scholars (e.g. Atkinson, 2011; Friedman, 2011; Rimmer, 2012), I would thus propose a 're-orientation' back to Bourdieu's original analytical concern with social actors' *modus operandi*, i.e. an empirical scrutiny of the 'hows' of cultural consumption.

2.3.3 Symbolic boundaries and social closure

A related but somewhat different objection to Bourdieu's model of the class-status nexus is the supposition that it erroneously presumes that lifestyle differentials directly lead to status hierarchisation. Partly pitched against Bourdieu's inquiries, Lamont (1992, 2000; Lamont and Fournier, 1992; Lamont and Molnar, 2002) has thus championed the study of 'symbolic boundaries' – the conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise people, practices and so forth in everyday life. Of particular interest in the current discussion is the ways in which Lamont (1992) documents the various 'evaluative repertoires' used by upper-middle class men in France and the United States to produce such symbolic boundaries. By way of qualitative interviews she asks her interviewees to state the criteria they use for evaluating others, examining the personal characteristics that interviewees admire and despise, which, in turn, are thought to determine whether they will seek out or avoid interaction with others. Through a comparative perspective, she finds that Americans are less prone to make explicit judgments of other people's cultural tastes than their French counterparts, and it is thus asserted that 'cultural boundaries' have less ritual strength in the US compared to France. In other words, cultural taste is taken to have less stratifying impact in the US than Bourdieu found in France, and Lamont thus rejects the idea that Bourdieu's model is of a universal character.

Furthermore, Lamont (1992: 184) depicts Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework as failing to comprehend 'moral boundaries', which is claimed to be a 'blind spot' in his theory. To remedy this, her analytical strategy is to map out the 'relative salience' of several kinds of boundary work. From her empirical material, Lamont (1992: 4) extracts three kinds of symbolic boundaries: (1) 'moral boundaries', which are drawn on the basis of moral character, and qualities such as honesty, work ethic, personal integrity and consideration for others; (2) 'socioeconomic boundaries', which are drawn on the basis of judgments concerning people's social position as indicated by their wealth, power or professional success; and (3) 'cultural boundaries', which are drawn on the basis of education, intelligence, manners, tastes and command of high culture. By documenting narratives of all three

types of boundary work, Lamont finds systematic patterns corresponding both to differences in national cultures, and to intra-national differences between rural and urban areas. The underlying logic of this particular analytical strategy is that in cases in which interviewees verbally express that certain 'moral' qualities are considered admirable traits – and not 'cultural' or 'socioeconomic' qualities – the former is held to be 'more salient', i.e. outweighing the others, as regards the stratifying impact of boundary work.

While Lamont should be credited for highlighting the dangers of assuming that lifestyle differentials directly translate into status hierarchisation without further empirical investigations, her own analyses rest on at least two problematic assumptions: first, that explicit *subjective* boundary work or consciously intended exclusion is a necessary pre-condition for the creation of *objective* social boundaries; and second, that the relative salience of different forms of symbolic boundaries can be discerned from discursive formations manifested in the ways in which people talk about themselves and others. In this section I shall concentrate on the former assumption. I shall return to the latter in the next section, where a broader discussion of the significance of moral will be provided.

Notwithstanding Lamont's contested reading of Bourdieu – as outlined above, he did in fact explicitly highlight the danger of confusing 'classes on paper' with 'real classes' in stressing the importance of analysing 'classification struggles' between groups of social actors – the most serious objection to Lamont's analytical framework is the problematic assumption that the presence or absence of conscious and/or explicit boundary work is a 'litmus test' for deciding whether or not differences in cultural tastes and lifestyles have any stratifying impact. In this regard, Lamont looks for explicit demarcations among the upper classes in society. In effect, the presence or absence of such demarcations is used as *the* measure for deciding whether or not different properties (e.g. practices, capabilities and possessions) are decisive in the formation of social collectives as well as the differential distribution of privileges and opportunities in society. As noted by Holt (1997), Lamont thus one-sidedly focuses

on the voluntaristic aspect of social practice at the expense of important structural aspects which may have considerable effects on people's life chances, independent of their subjective intention, awareness and/or acknowledgement of such processes. In this regard, the Lamontian boundary work approach fundamentally differs from the Bourdieusian approach in its depiction of the relationship between agency and structure. Whereas Bourdieu focuses on the dialectics between structural relations (i.e. correspondences between social positions, embodied dispositions and manifested preferences/practices), Lamont is almost exclusively concerned with social actors and their self-understandings. This opposition is clearly manifested in the importance the two grant explicit social demarcation. According to Bourdieu, 'misrecognised' or 'doxic' power relations can occur without dominant actors' active boundary work, given that other criteria are fulfilled. In Bourdieu's view, systems of relations between social positions partly determine the structurally defined opportunities and capacities social actors have for exerting power. Through processes of symbolic violence, power relations are misrecognised as such, and relations of cultural domination can thus prevail relatively independently of, for instance, upper class disdain or lower class deference. According to Lamont, by contrast, there cannot be cultural domination without explicit boundary work on the part of the (supposedly) dominant actors. In subjectivist fashion, it is presumed that that which is not discursively manifested will not have stratifying effects. From a Bourdieusian perspective one can argue that relations of domination may prevail independently of whether those benefiting from them explicitly demarcate themselves from those who do not. From a Lamontian perspective one regrettably cannot. While explicit boundary work may be regarded as *one* way in which barriers between groups of social actors are erected, this is not necessarily the *only* form it can take. Indeed, as Holt points out:

> [T]he work of Goffman, Cicourel, Bourdieu and Willis demonstrates that knowledge of and strategic defence of boundaries is not a necessary precondition for their successful enactment. In fact, this sort of explicit ideological struggle to defend boundaries is actually a sign that boundaries are under siege, or, in Bourdieu's terminology, they have moved from common sense acceptance of doxa to orthodoxy and heterodoxy. (Holt, 1997: 106)

Nevertheless, while the conclusions Lamont (1992: 181ff) draws vis-à-vis what she depicts as a 'Bourdieusian view' might very well be questioned, I would argue that it is more fruitful to incorporate the notion of symbolic boundaries into a Bourdieu-inspired framework than simply reject Lamont's work as another example of anti-Bourdieusianism rooted in poorly interpreted depictions of his work. As alluded to above, the mapping out of processes pertaining to the formation of actual social collectives or 'status groups' was never a primary concern in Bourdieu's analyses (although he explicitly referred to such processes on several occasions). However, in order to avoid the one-sided voluntarism implied in the Lamontian framework, a more tenable theoretical model of status group formation is necessary. This is possible, I argue, through a 'cross-fertilization' with the Weberian notion of social closure.

The term social closure was originally coined by Weber (1978: 43ff, 302ff, 336ff, 635ff, 926ff) and refers to processes whereby one group of social actors monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders which it defines as inferior and ineligible (for an eloborate account of Weber's notion of social closure, see Murphy, 1988). According to Weber, monopolisation of opportunities can occur only insofar as a social group has the power to do so. In this way, the notion of social closure is tightly related to Weber's account of power and domination. As regards the formation of status groups, Weber held that social closure involves the identification of certain specific attributes of lifestyles as the basis for excluding those without these attributes from access to particular resources (Scott, 1996: 31ff). Since Weber's seminal work, scholars have elaborated on the notion of social closure (e.g. Parkin, 1979; Murphy, 1988; Hansen, 1995; Manza, 1992). I shall return to some of these developments later, but for present purposes I shall concentrate on a conceptual distinction alluded to, but not elaborated on, by both Murphy (1988: 1) and Manza (1992: 286ff). Expanding on their advice, I put forward the argument that the problems inherent in Lamont's framework can be remedied by a distinction between *formalised* and *non-formalised* closure. We might thus tentatively define formalised closure as structured social boundaries arising from the

exclusive possession of scarce resources legally sanctioned by the state. These include what Bourdieu (1986) has termed 'economic capital' (e.g. property and money) as well as 'institutionalised cultural capital' (e.g. educational credentials, diplomas and certificates). While the value of such resources may fluctuate, for instance due to an altered relationship between supply and demand in the labour market, they are nevertheless institutionally secured to some extent. For instance, in the case of educational credentials, the educational system can regulate the market on the supply side by educating fewer medical doctors, lawyers, social scientists, etc.

Non-formalised closure, on the other hand, might be tentatively defined as structured social boundaries arising from subjective evaluations of esteem, honour and prestige, which may, in turn, be crystallised into more or less exclusive social collectives that control access to scarce resources, both material and symbolic. Such boundary crystallisations may for instance comprise what Weber (1978: 306) has termed 'connubium' (i.e. systematic marriage patterns, for instance arising from restrictions on inter-marriage) and 'commensality' (i.e. shared eating and living arrangements). In other words, this form of social closure arises from informal social networks, residential segregation, social actors' choice of friends and partners, preferences as regards leisure activities and so on. Translated into a Bourdieusian vocabulary, non-formalised closure may be thought of in terms of symbolic capital. Unlike *institutionalised* forms of capital – such as educational credentials, implying a legal monopoly of resources through the licensure of the state – the value of *symbolic* forms of capital is arguably more unstable.[16] Such assets are potentially kept under

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[16] It might, however, be noted that the state may play an important role as regards the distribution of symbolic capital. As pointed out by Bourdieu (1996b), the state functions as a 'central bank of symbolic capital', meaning that a symbolic recognition is already secured institutionally, as is the case with educational credentials, which in a sense lends it an aura of legitimacy. Moreover, the symbolic value of certain practices and tastes may also be safeguarded by the state, at least to some extent. Typical examples would here include the Arts Council's provision of financial support to certain forms of cultural production at the expense of others, as well as the educational system's awarding of certain forms of knowledge and discrediting of others. In these ways, the state indirectly provides legitimacy for certain forms of knowledge, cultural tastes and lifestyles. Yet, this form of safeguarding is arguably much less stable and secure than legal monopolies of resources, such as property, educational credentials and licenses protected by the state.

continuous open review, as there is no resort to the protection of for instance professional licenses when the symbolic value of one's assets is in decline due to inflationary processes. The crucial question is thus how, if at all, processes of social closure are at work when there are few, if any, legal and 'objective' boundaries securing the monopolisation of resources, leaving some groups enriched and others excluded. Given the absence of (or, at least, the weak role of) legal and institutional backing, one may ask how the symbolic value of certain practices (e.g. driving a certain car, or reading a certain author) is secured. Hence, it is necessary to separate formalised and non-formalised closure on an analytical level.

It must, however, be underscored that this is an *analytical* distinction which highlights that closure processes may take several forms. On an *empirical* level, by contrast, these ideal types of social closure may of course be entwined. They are thus not to be read as mutually exclusive. For instance, social actors possessing specific types of credentials – say, lawyers, medical doctors, or other members of *numerus clausus* professions – may evaluate and categorise others on the basis of knowledge, manners and tastes, and, consciously or otherwise, choose friends or spouses with similar educational credentials while avoiding others. Thus, the two types of closure may overlap. However, the two types of closure may not *necessarily* do so, hence the need to avoid Lamont's analytical conflation. More specifically, the deployment of this dual model of social closure in empirical inquiries implies that not finding evidence of social closure through symbolic boundary work does *not* rule out the possibility that there might be evidence of formalised closure through the workings of, for instance, property, credentials and licences safeguarded by the state.

As argued above, the main problem with the boundary work approach is the (partly implicit) claim that conscious boundary work is the *only* form social closure can take in order to be effective. Seen in the light of this dual model, the conflation of social closure with the question of whether social actors located in the upper sector of the social space act as 'snobs' or actively demarcate themselves from others, only

produces a partial picture of social closure, as it neglects important legal and institutional aspects, as well as 'misrecognised' social processes. However, what a focus on explicit boundary work *can* provide is a deeper understanding of whether, and if so in which ways, classification struggles exist between groups of social actors, i.e. endeavours to (de-)monopolise the power to define the dominant principles of social esteem, honour prestige, etc.

So far I have argued that the boundary work approach is *in itself* insufficient to empirically interrogate power relations and the formation of status groups primarily because it conflates the question of social closure with manifested discursive boundaries and that it thus neglects crucial structural and institutional aspects. However, as argued above, there are also gaps and inconsistencies both in Bourdieu's own analyses and in the contemporary use of his analytical tools, especially as regards the formation of realised status groups. While it might be argued that the notion of social closure is already implicit in Bourdieu's vocabulary through his deployment of the capital metaphor, my point is that by *explicitly* making use of the term in empirical analyses, possible exclusionary effects of the unequal distribution of different species of capital may thereby become clearer. In this regard, the boundary work approach may, after all, provide valuable insights about matters that have hitherto been insufficiently scrutinised by most Bourdieusians. By reworking Lamont's approach into a complementary, and not as an alternative, framework of sociological analysis, it may rectify some of the shortcomings of the Bourdieusian framework. In viewing symbolic boundary work as a form of non-formalised closure that operates *alongside* formalised forms of closure – in either reinforcing or contradictive ways – both Lamont's conflation, as well as Bourdieu's somewhat inadequate account of status group formation, can be avoided.

More specifically, in focusing on social actors' classifications of both cultural goods and the tastes and practices of other cultural consumers, a deeper understanding of the ways in which the universe of lifestyles functions as a system of semantic signs is possible. Moreover, focusing on subjective evaluative repertoires can also provide

information about social actors' *perceptions* of power relations tied to the distribution of different species of capital, in that it may provide an indication of whether closure processes are under the spell of doxa (i.e. common sense acceptance), or whether they can be better explained in terms of classification struggles, meaning that there exists a field of opinion in which competing discourses are confronted. However, a thorough rethinking of how different evaluative repertoires work in either contradictive or reinforcing ways is required. It is to the issue of moral, power and legitimacy we turn next.

2.3.4 The significance of moral

The last two decades the issue of moral and its significance as regards the class-status nexus have been increasingly discussed (e.g. Lamont, 1992, 2000; Sayer, 2005; Skarpenes, 2007; Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2008, 2012). Indeed, we might even depict this increased scholarly attention as a 'moral turn' within the research field. As is often the case with scholarly debates related to issues of class, status and lifestyles, the work of Bourdieu serves a point of departure; and as with other aspects of his work, there exist several contradictory readings of it, as well as a corresponding variety of critiques and sympathetic apologies. A key figure in the former category is Michèle Lamont (1992: 184ff) who asserts that Bourdieu's lack of concern with moral betrays a 'blind spot' in his theory. As noted above, she attempts to remedy this by mapping out the 'relative salience' of three kinds of symbolic boundaries: moral boundaries, socioeconomic boundaries, and cultural boundaries. In this regard, Bourdieu is depicted as having given too much attention to the last of these at the expense of the first.

By ranking interviewees on five-point scales pertaining to different kinds of symbolic boundaries, Lamont (1992: 222) asserts that it is possible to analytically break down the components constituting the 'evaluative repertoires' of social actors. Based on the assumption that 'boundaries exist only if they are repeatedly defended by members of inner groups' (1992: 3), the relative salience of the different types of boundary

drawing occurring in the interview situation are held to indicate which types of boundaries that are erected against other people in everyday life, and which are not. In effect, if a given interviewee exhibits a high occurrence of 'moral' aversions to other people (e.g. to 'dishonesty') and a corresponding low occurrence of 'cultural' aversions (e.g. to 'bad tastes in music'), this finding is taken to indicate that moral is more important than aesthetics and cultural consumption for this particular interviewee. Moreover, by comparing aggregates of interviewees with different characteristics, she holds that it is possible to assess the relative importance of different kinds of boundaries, for instance between countries. In other words, Lamont's analytical strategy presupposes a zero-sum relationship between different evaluative repertoires, meaning that the more salient moral boundary work is in the interview data compared to other kinds of boundary work, the less significant the others are as regards the erection of 'real' boundaries between people.

However, while Lamont should be credited for drawing attention to moral and the scrutiny of its consequences in the class-status nexus, the assumption of such zero-sum relationships between different kinds of boundary work is questionable. It may be erroneous to assume that the fact that people disregard others due to moral criteria of evaluation implies that cultural or socioeconomic criteria of evaluation are rendered less significant. Indeed, it is arguably a likely scenario that a given social actor disregards others due to bad morals (e.g. for exhibiting 'racist' or 'misogynist' attitudes) *as well* as due to bad aesthetics (e.g. for exhibiting 'bad' tastes in literature and music). Even the very same practice – say, driving a SUV car – may elicit both moral and aesthetical aversions in that it is depicted as morally wrong due to high fuel consumption contributing to global warming, as well as aesthetically flawed due to a bad car design. In other words, different criteria of evaluation may very well be tightly entwined and working in reinforcing rather than contradictive ways. Thus, what type of repertoire is most salient may depend more on the perceived characteristics of the classified people in question, and not whether the classifiers themselves are predominantly 'moral', 'socioeconomic' or 'cultural' in their boundary work orientations. While it might be fruitful to differentiate between

different ideal types of boundary work on an analytical level, the argument put forward by Lamont about the relationship between them is hardly convincing.

A related, but slightly different view of the significance of moral has been advanced by the Norwegian scholar Skarpenes (2007; Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010). Drawing on the works of both Lamont (1992, 2000) and Boltanski and Thévenot (2006), Skarpenes' inquiry focuses on 'legitimations' and different 'grammars of worth' which social actors use to justify their actions. Based on in-depth interviews with highly educated Norwegians in the public and private sectors, he finds that the interviewees rarely pass judgements on other people's practices and tastes, nor do they attempt to legitimise or justify themselves through references to elevated aesthetics and scholastic knowledge. Moreover, they explicitly draw on moral repertoires of evaluation in depicting themselves *in opposition to* what they conceive of as dubious cultural 'snobbism'. Thus, it is argued that the highly educated middle class has internalised 'egalitarian values' deeply embedded in Norwegian society which, in turn, have negative consequences for both the currency of certain cultural practices and the legitimacy of taste hierarchies. Thus, Skarpenes refutes the idea that the Bourdieusian model of symbolic domination can be applied to the case of Norway. Indeed, he even argues that in the case of Norway Bourdieu's model should be 'turned on its head'. Whereas Bourdieu (1990b: 54) argues that dominated actors (i.e. people of the working classes) make 'a virtue of necessity' by refusing 'what is anyway denied to them' and by 'willing the inevitable', Skarpenes argues that it is the other way around in Norway. According to Skarpenes, it is the people of the highly educated middle class who deny themselves consumption of 'high culture' because the people of the working classes deny them such practices (Skarpenes, 2007: 553).

While the analytical strategies and their related premises bear important resemblances to those of Lamont, Skarpenes' inquiry focuses more on legitimacy than does Lamont's. Moreover, he points to the existence of a mobilisation of moral criteria of evaluation directed directly against a type of cultural snobbism perceived to be morally dubious. Thus, he does not just presuppose a contradictory relationship

between different evaluative repertoires, but rather points to empirical examples of it, which is arguably a great improvement vis-à-vis Lamont. Nevertheless, this study has been harshly criticised for a biased reading of Bourdieu's model, certain methodological flaws, as well as questionable interpretations of the interview data (Skogen *et al*, 2008a, 2008b). Perhaps more important as regards the current discussion is the fact that the study is based on a different theoretical footing than that deployed by Bourdieu and his followers, which, among other things, implies that it operates with a rather different conception of legitimacy (Andersen and Mangset, 2012). Legitimacy in the Bourdieusian sense means the extent to which power relations are (tacitly) accepted or endorsed by subordinate groups. As Bourdieu's own analyses have suggested, legitimacy may be brought about by processes of misrecognition, i.e. social actors' misapprehension of the power relation in question. Thus, legitimacy is bestowed because power relations are naturalised and taken for granted. Legitimacy in Skarpenes' sense, by contrast, means the extent to which actions – including expressing aversions to other people in the interview situation – are justifiable in moral terms. While there are reasons to suspect that legitimacy in the latter sense may have consequences for legitimacy in the former sense, it is not, however, *necessarily* the case that a low degree of justifiability (for instance as regards explicitly asserting oneself and/or denigrating others on the basis of one's lifestyles and cultural tastes) means that power relations tied the differential distribution of lifestyles and tastes are not legitimate in the Bourdieusian sense of the term. For this reason, the two meanings of the term should not be confused. Indeed, as noted by Parkin:

> Legitimations are the claims that dominant groups make about themselves – claims that they would naturally wish everyone else to accept. Legitimacy, on the other hand, refers to the conditions in which such claims have in fact been accepted and endorsed by subordinate groups. That is, the grounds upon which obedience is claimed are accepted as valid by those who are expected to do the obeying. Legitimations emanate from on high, but legitimacy is bestowed from below. (Parkin, 2002: 77ff)

Thus, focusing only on (the absence of) explicitly stated claims to legitimacy, as for instance Skarpenes does, might lead to a reductionist view. As Parkin goes on to

argue, there is no necessary connection between the two, and it would thus be questionable to make inferences about *legitimacy* on the grounds of empirical inquiries into the form and content of *legitimations*.

Moreover, as suggested by Gullestad (1984, 1985, 1992), there exists an 'egalitarian ideology' among Norwegians that somewhat paradoxically conceals, and even helps to maintain, the hierarchical structures of society. More specifically, Gullestad holds that a 'code of modesty' prevails in Norwegian society which implies an 'under-communication of success' among the successful. The typical Norwegian code of conduct thus demands a person be self-effacing, not boastful, not forthcoming; in short, not 'blowing one's own trumpet'. In effect, this code of modesty entails that successful people cannot claim prestige for themselves, and accordingly they have to 'downplay' their successfulness. The egalitarian values pointed to by Skarpenes might thus, in the light of Gullestad's inquiries, be interpreted as a form of impression management (Goffman, 1959), employed consciously or otherwise, rather than evidence of a lack of legitimacy for power based on cultural capital, or even that certain practices and tastes function as symbolic capital. Indeed, as suggested by Daloz (2007, 2010), impression management in the form of 'conspicuous modesty' is a hallmark of members of various elites in Scandinavian countries.

However, pointing out questionable aspects in both Lamont's and Skarpenes' analytical frameworks is not to say that moral has no significance as regards the class-status nexus. Nor does it imply that the Bourdieusian framework is flawless in this regard. The point is, however, that the arguments they advance about the significance of moral are, for reasons outlined above, unconvincing. Moreover, the ways in which their empirical findings are held to have repercussions for a Bourdieusian model of social stratification are somewhat misguided. True, moral was never a primary concern in Bourdieu's work, but as noted by several scholars more sympathetic to it (e.g. Sayer, 2005; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2012), the significance of moral can be perfectly well comprehended within a Bourdieusian framework. As argued by Sayer (2005: ch. 2), a qualification of the notion of habitus to encompass 'ethical

dispositions' might remedy the shortcomings pointed out by Bourdieu's critics.[17] Thus, in similar ways as the model proposed for the structuring of aesthetical dispositions, the structuring of ethical dispositions might be thought of in a similar fashion: the social space reflects the basic conditions for the structuring of different class habitus which, in turn, structure unified sets of practices more or less in accordance with certain moral standards, as well as perceptions, classifications and moral judgements of other people's attitudes and practices. To expand on this argument, I shall point to six different, though interrelated, ways in which moral can be apprehended in a Bourdieu-inspired mode of analysis.

First, moral can be thought of as differentially distributed moral-political attitudes or stances as regards a range of themes and issues. In fact, such an analysis is performed by Bourdieu himself. In *Distinction* (1984: 452), the construction of a 'political space' reveals that different political stances (e.g. adherence to various political parties) are distributed according to the structures of the social space in similar ways as different cultural tastes and lifestyles. Moreover, Bourdieu (1984: 312) depicts how the distribution of specific moral attitudes varies systematically by classes and class fractions. Following a Bourdieu-inspired approach, researchers associated with the COMPAS project (e.g. Prieur *et al*, 2008; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2008, 2012; Harrits *et al*, 2010; Faber *et al*, 2012) have shown that social actors located in different sectors of the local social space in the Danish city of Aalborg hold oppositional stances as regards a range of both political and moral issues. What these analyses suggest is that the distributional oppositions of moral-political stances seem to map neatly onto the structural oppositions in the social space, and work in tandem, as it were, with distributional oppositions involving cultural preferences and tastes. Thus, such analytical strategies might remedy the questionable notion that moral necessarily contradicts aesthetics as regards the erection of symbolic boundaries between groups of social actors.

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[17] The notion of ethical dispositions is alluded to, but not elaborated on, by Bourdieu himself (e.g. 1998: 70).

Second, moral can be analysed in terms of cultural taste itself. That is, moral concerns can be an important part of social actors' mode of consumption, i.e. the ways in which they perceive, appreciate and appropriate cultural goods. Indeed, as noted by Bourdieu in his discussion of the 'popular aesthetic',

> working-class people expect every image to explicitly perform a function, if only that of a sign, and their judgements make reference, often explicitly, to the norms of morality or agreeableness. Whether rejecting or praising, their appreciation always has an ethical basis. (Bourdieu, 1984: 5)

Unlike the 'moral agnosticism' associated with the cultural tastes of the dominant classes (i.e. a 'distanced' and 'disinterested' mode of consumption), people of the working classes are portrayed as predisposed to 'annex aesthetics to ethics'. In other words, moral is according to Bourdieu part and parcel of some groups' aesthetical tastes. Furthering the point advanced above about the need to scrutinise the 'hows' and not just the 'whats' of cultural consumption, a focus on moral could, indeed, be a fruitful endeavour in this regard. For instance, the increasing demand for 'vegetarian', 'green' and 'organic' goods points to an increased number of 'morally conscious' consumers. As such goods are predominantly consumed by resourceful consumers, it is far from a given that moral is predominantly a concern of the working classes. Moreover, it might also be the case that moral criteria of evaluation are more linked to *some* types of goods (e.g. food, clothing, motor vehicles) and less to others (e.g. music, literature, films), and/or that such moral concerns vary by classes and class fractions. Either way, a mapping out of the social distribution of different moral modes of consumption vis-à-vis other modes of consumption might bring about additional insights into lifestyle differentiation.

Third, moral can function as (a part of) the evaluative repertoires social actors employ, consciously or otherwise, in their perceptions, classifications and judgements of *other people*. Moral in this sense is close to the way in which Lamont depicts it (i.e. as symbolic boundaries drawn on the basis of moral standards such as honesty, work ethic, personal integrity and consideration for others). However, as discussed above, the interpretation of such boundary work vis-à-vis other forms of boundary

work should be conducted with some caution, as moral may work in both reinforcing and contradictory ways as regards the judgement of others. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that moral boundary work is an important component of what I have referred to as non-formalised closure. An extended analytical focus on moral boundary work can thus provide insights into matters that have hitherto been understudied by scholars concerned with the class-status nexus.

Fourth, moral, or rather acting in moral ways, can be analysed in terms of field-specific symbolic capital. Certain moral practices or modes of conduct might in themselves have currency within a social field and thus function as assets that may under certain conditions be converted into privileges and advantages. For instance, as asserted by Daloz (2007, 2010), exhibiting a form of 'conspicuous modesty' is socially profitable among various Scandinavian elites, due to (tacit) egalitarian moral standards. More generally, in line with a Bourdieusian field analytical approach, the power to define 'correct' moral conduct can be thought of as constituting struggles within hierarchically stratified fields (e.g. the religious field) in which social actors endeavour to impose their perceptual categories and world-views on others. While most scholars within the research field have been preoccupied with *aesthetical* matters (e.g. consumption choices and cultural tastes) as regards the distribution of symbolic capital, there is, in principle, no reason why *moral* matters should not be of equal analytical importance.

Fifth, moral sentiments can be thought of as position-takings directed against powerful others, potentially pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of power relations, and thus functioning as a means to challenge and reduce the effects of symbolic violence. Insofar as such position-takings result in 'bringing the undiscussed into discussion' (Bourdieu, 1977: 168), they can be regarded as a 'heterodoxy' explicitly challenging the 'orthodoxy'. For instance, the egalitarian sentiment that 'all people are of equal value' might have implication for the ways in which non-possessors of certain assets (e.g. money or educational credentials) perceive and relate to possessors of these assets. Indeed, such sentiments

may even entail feelings of suspicion and mistrust towards resourceful others. So while such assets may very well function as *economic* and *cultural* capital within certain fields, they do not necessarily function as *symbolic* capital, in the sense of a misrecognised source of power constituting awe or deference in the eyes of non-possessors. However, whether such challenges and position-takings are fuelled by egalitarian values to eradicate or compress social hierarchies, or if they are merely endeavours to usurp power in order to reshape the principles for social hierarchisation, it is important to note that the mere existence of heterodoxic position-takings does not necessarily entail an eradication of relations of domination and the legitimacy which bestows it. As the work of Gullestad has suggested, it might also be the case that egalitarian sentiments somewhat paradoxically conceal, and even help to maintain, the hierarchical structures of society. Nevertheless, insofar as there exists a 'field of opinion' constituted by more or less antagonistic position-takings, a focus on moral sentiments may draw attention to issues concerning power and legitimacy in fruitful ways.

Finally, moral sentiments can be conceived of as one of several principles social actors use to legitimise and justify their actions to others. As suggested by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) and Skarpenes (2007), empirical studies of how social actors draw upon different types of justifications in order to assess whether an action benefits the 'common good' can illuminate the ways in which different 'grammars of worth' work in either reinforcing or contradictive ways in different social contexts. Indeed, this analytical framework is particularly designed to elucidate the most 'legitimate' (i.e. justifiable) types of arguments, which are held to be those social actors actually use when debating public issues to appeal to common interest (Lamont and Thévenot, 2000: 5). While interesting in its own right, this analytical framework is also of interest as regards the issue of legitimacy in the Bourdieusian sense. Insofar as there exist position-takings that push back the limits of doxa and/or explicitly challenge the legitimacy of power relations, the scrutiny of how powerful groups or individuals attempt to justify and legitimise their privileges and advantages to others in different situations can provide valuable sociological insights which do not

necessarily contradict those put forward by Bourdieu, although the proponents of this framework explicitly pitch their framework against Bourdieu's work (e.g. Boltanski, 2011).[18]

In sum, I argue that the significance of moral as regards the class-status nexus is perfectly comprehensible within an extended Bourdieusian framework, although Bourdieu himself has been criticised for paying it lip-service. It is, however, important to highlight that pervasiveness of moral in *one* of the senses alluded to above does not necessarily imply consequences for stratifying processes linked to moral in the other senses. Nevertheless, insofar as analytical precautions are taken into account, the inclusion of the issue of moral in empirical inquiries into processes pertaining to social stratification implies a broader conception of 'lifestyles' than is usually the case within the research field. Indeed, this might remedy an unfortunate tendency of scholars preoccupied with mapping out the social distribution of a limited set of cultural tastes. As noted by Scott,

> It is symptomatic […] that the term 'lifestyle' has virtually replaced the term 'style of life' in academic discourse. This particular distinction was not made by Weber, but the common English translation of his term *Lebensstil* as 'style of life' properly grasps the way in which he saw it as reflecting the totality of a group's existence: its whole way of life. A person's status, Weber argued, typically follows from their 'style of life'. […] As Weber showed, these styles of life are rooted in specific class relations that condition a way of life and, therefore, form the bases of status judgements. By contrast, the term 'lifestyle' has been popularized in discussions of contemporary consumerism and is simply 'a way of using certain goods, places, and times that is characteristic of a group but is not a totality of their social experience'. (Scott, 2002: 33ff)

A broadening of scope of what constitutes different lifestyles (or 'styles of life') might, therefore, help to remedy this unfortunate tendency. Attempts by researchers to include issues related to moral in their scrutiny of the universes of lifestyles are thus a much-welcomed contribution to a body of research that has been predominately concerned with consumption choices and cultural tastes.

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[18] See Andersen and Mangset (2012) for an interesting comment on the possibilities of cross-fertilising the two analytical frameworks.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavoured to 'distil' or 'untangle' a general Bourdieusian model of social stratification on the basis of Bourdieu's empirical inquiries. Tentatively justified by the assertion that several fruitful aspects of Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework have been eviscerated by adversaries' misguided recasts of his work (which in turn have served as 'straw men' against whom rival arguments have been directed), I have offered a reading of Bourdieu's account of the class-status nexus which I hope does it more justice. However 'apologetic' this account may be, my aims have not been to lament that fact that Bourdieu's work has been poorly interpreted. Rather, I have discussed his work at some length to extract important sociological insights which are unfortunately often ignored and/or poorly understood in contemporary debates on social stratification. Thus, the aim of this chapter has been to (re)construct a theoretical-methodological framework inspired by that of Bourdieu in order to make sense of the present empirical case. In this regard I forward the argument that a *relational model* of the class-status nexus may be distilled from his empirical analyses. Somewhat simplified, a Bourdieu-inspired model of the class-status nexus can be portrayed as encompassing four interrelated insights:

1. A depiction of the principles for a differential social distribution of lifestyle properties (e.g. cultural tastes and moral-political attitudes).
2. A depiction of the principles for how more or less exclusive status groups are formed on the basis of such lifestyle differentials.
3. A depiction of the principles for how the mastery of certain lifestyles can be consolidated into assets productive of advantage or privilege.
4. A depiction of the principles for how power relations arising from this differential distribution of such advantages come to be seen as legitimate in the eyes of subordinates.

These insights, I argue, may help to scrutinise societal inequalities and processes pertaining to social stratification in empirical contexts different from France in the 1960s and 1970s, regardless of whether or not these processes take on exactly the same forms as the ones depicted by Bourdieu himself. Despite certain critics' recurrent insistence, then, I argue that there is no need to disregard the Bourdieusian framework. On the contrary, I advance the argument that a Bourdieu-inspired framework makes for a more fruitful framework for the analysis of the relationship between class and status than the alternatives proposed by rival perspectives, although these may contain certain additional insights that may prove helpful in empirical analyses. Thus, I maintain that a 'distilled' Bourdieusian model and a related conceptual tool kit can be fruitfully deployed in order to construct another 'particular instance of the possible': present day Stavanger.

CHAPTER 3
CONSTRUCTING
THE RESEARCH OBJECT

3.1 Introduction

Expanding on the discussions in the previous chapter, I now move on to clarify the way in which I have constructed the research object. In this regard I shall respond to Bourdieu's (2004b; Bourdieu *et al*, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) invitation to conduct a 'reflexive sociology' by endeavouring to practise 'participant objectivation' in constituting the present empirical case of Stavanger as a 'particular instance of the possible'. Put in less complicated terms, in what follows I elaborate on the theoretical-methodological rationale for matters regarding the deployment of research methods, sampling strategies and analytical strategies in order to comprehend the entwinement of class and status relations in present day Stavanger.

In the previous chapter I argued that several fruitful aspects of the Bourdieu's model of social stratification are eviscerated by his detractors' somewhat misguided disregard of it, and that the alternative analytical approaches employed often lack a proper conceptual framework whereby to attain crucial sociological insights. More specifically, I cast doubt upon the soundness of the ways in which several scholars have conceptualised, operationally defined, measured and drawn substantial conclusions about different aspects of the class-status nexus. Accordingly, I proposed a 'reorientation' back to Bourdieu's original relational concern with the scrutiny of social actors' *modus operandi* and the social and economic conditions which structure different sets class habitus, in order to break with questionable assumptions implied in much contemporary research on matters concerning class, status and social closure. To follow Bourdieu's leads thus implies that one ought to construct research objects differently than both 'methodological individualists' and 'methodological collectivists'. Whereas the former hold that social phenomena must ultimately be explained in terms of individuals or individual actions, the latter hold that the same phenomena must ultimately be explained in terms of supra-individual factors that have a structuring power over individual agency (Hjellbrekke, 1999b: 60ff). By contrast, Bourdieu's call for a 'methodological relationism' entails an endeavour to 'transcend' or 'overcome' what he depicts as a misguided epistemological dichotomy between these methodological approaches by insisting that no analytical level or

unity can be attributed *the* ultimate explanatory power as regards a social phenomenon.[19] Rather, Bourdieu's relationism insists that sociological explanations must focus on the complex relations existing *within* and *between* social structures, fields, positions, position-takings and so forth.

In the construction of the present research object – which may be tentatively defined as an attempt to map out *processes of social closure on the basis of lifestyle differentials between social actors geographically situated within the borders of the municipality of Stavanger* – I shall employ a similar relational approach. More specifically, I endeavour to map out possible structural relationships or correspondences between what Bourdieu has referred to as 'objectivity of the first order' (i.e. the social space, or the system of relations between individuals' possession of capitals), and 'objectivity of the second order' (i.e. the space of class habitus, or the system of relations between individuals' modes of perceiving and comprehending the social world) (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 7).

In this 'double reading' of social relations in Stavanger I shall expand on a series of studies conducted by Lennart Rosenlund, who, inspired by the work of Bourdieu, has mapped out structural relationships between the local social space and the space of lifestyles by subjecting survey and census data to different forms of Geometric Data Analysis (GDA) (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2004). In this chapter there will be a fairly extensive discussion of Rosenlund's work, both in order to provide the reader with contextual information on what he refers to as a 'structural history of Stavanger', and because the theoretical-methodological rationale for the sampling of cases draws upon his work. I then move on to discuss the advantages and limitations of employing in-depth qualitative interviews in empirical studies of the class-status nexus, addressing in particular the issue of generalisability. Finally, I discuss the ways in which I have approached the interview data in a relational mode of analysis, focusing

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[19] For a different type of critique of a 'sociology of the variable', see Blumer (1969, ch. 7).

especially on sampling strategies and procedures regarding the conducting of the qualitative interviews.

3.2 A structural history of Stavanger

Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of the social space, this study is based on a fundamental assumption that the population of Stavanger can be understood as a system of class relations, objectified as a stratified space of social positions in which scarce resources are unequally distributed. In this sense, the units of analysis – forty-six Stavangerians who underwent qualitative research interviews – are initially viewed as cases of a set of nominally differentiated class positions. In this regard, it is important to underscore that Stavanger *itself* is not constructed as a case, but rather viewed as a *historical-structural context* in which the units of analysis are situated. In other words, Stavanger will not be analysed as a member of a larger set of objects or cultural entities in relation to which the empirical findings about the attributes of this specific city as a whole are compared and discussed (e.g. as a Norwegian city, as a socially stratified community, or as a subject to historical change due to a booming oil industry). While the empirical findings generated in this study might very well be used for such comparative purposes, this is not my focal concern here.

Although this study is based on assumptions concerning the make-up of Stavanger's class structure, these assumptions are nevertheless empirically founded. In a series of studies Rosenlund (1996, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2002a, 2002b, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011) has deployed and extended Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological framework in empirically mapping out the historical evolution of the local class structure, as well as the social distribution of lifestyle differentials. Rosenlund's studies point to structural homologies between the local social space and the space of lifestyles that are strikingly similar to those depicted by Bourdieu (1984) in France in the 1960s and 1970s. In this way, Rosenlund demonstrates that Bourdieu's conceptual and methodological tools are 'perfectly applicable in another country, from a different cultural area and at the scale of the metropolis rather than an entire

society' (Wacquant, 2009: iii). In what follows I shall focus on three facets of his inquiries so as to provide a historical-structural point of departure for my own empirical study: first, the historical evolution and transformation of the structures of the local social space; second, the correspondence between the social space and the space of lifestyles in present day Stavanger; and finally, the socially stratified appropriation of physical space in Stavanger's urban areas.

3.2.1 The structural transformation of the local social space

Based on diachronic analyses of census data from 1970 and onwards, as well as survey data from 1994, 2007, and 2009, Rosenlund (2009a: ch. 7; 2009b) points to historical processes of what is referred to as a 'metamorphosis from a small town to a city'. Stavanger's economy was long characterised by fishing and canning industries. The advent of the oil industry in the late 1960s, however, brought with it tremendous changes for the city. Most importantly, these changes implied a restructuring of the industrial sector – away from food processing towards manufacturing high-tech products adapted to the needs of the oil industry. Moreover, compared to the development in other Norwegian cities in the post-war period and onwards, Stavanger has undergone the most profound and far-reaching changes in terms of the size of the working population, occupational structure, education level and income. Indeed, the presence of oil companies offering high-paid jobs has profoundly increased the average income of the population. The influx of a well-paid work force has also contributed to increasing the housing costs to among the highest in Norway, in some segments surpassing Norway's capital Oslo.

As regards the make-up of the class structure, Rosenlund identifies two interconnected developmental traits or change patterns. First, a major re-shaping process of the social hierarchy – defined in terms of volume of capital – is identified. On average, Stavangerians have become 'richer' in both economic and cultural capital. Moreover, Rosenlund holds that there are signs indicating that the hierarchical principle of social differentiation has lost some of its former strength; the

analysed occupational groups are less differentiated according to their average volume of capital in 1990 than they were in 1970. A reconstruction of the local social space based on 1970 data reveals a small upper class, a relatively small intermediate class and a large working-class segment. By contrast, the reconstructions based on 1980 and 1990 data indicate that the upper and intermediate classes have grown substantially in relative size, while the working classes have diminished correspondingly.

Second, Rosenlund identifies a re-shaping process in terms of the emergence and growing strength of the capital composition principle of social differentiation – the second dimension of the social space. Through a series of successive analyses of the upper and intermediate classes in 1970, 1980 and 1990, Rosenlund reveals that the inverse or 'chiastic' relationship between indices of cultural and economic capital has grown in strength decade by decade. This second developmental trait is seldom considered by sociologists concerned with structural changes, and far from heralding 'the death of class' on a structural level, Rosenlund (2009a: 262ff) posits that the structural history of recent decades instead points to a metamorphosis 'from a one-dimensional social hierarchy to a space in two dimensions'. Thus, by the 1990s, the local social space of Stavanger had developed into a structure that is by and large similar to Bourdieu's theoretical model of the social space, which depicts a differential distribution of capitals both according to the capital volume and capital composition principles of social differentiation. So while the inquiry into the structural history of Stavanger in one sense indicates a change process corresponding to the views forwarded by scholars who claim that class differences are 'fading' due to the fact that the relative size of the working classes is decreasing while the relative size of the intermediate classes is increasing (e.g. Colbjørnsen *et al*, 1987), the structural change process is, according to Rosenlund, better conceptualised as a 'reshaping' of the local class structure, as the capital composition principle of social differentiation seems to be increasingly prominent.

Parallel to this development Rosenlund (2009a: ch. 2; ch. 8) points to profound changes in Stavanger's cultural life. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Stavanger was divided by two cultural 'poles'. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie was developing a taste for culture of the continental European type. In this regard, *Det Stavangerske Klubselskab* played a pivotal role, and the local 'aristocracy' of wealthy merchants met daily to discuss the matters of the day, business and cultural matters.[20] On the other hand, a pietistic religious movement had a distinct influence among craftsmen, shopkeepers, workers, fishermen and farmers. Their interests and ways of life were predominantly shaped by low-church layman movements and teetotalism, and this stood in stark contrast and at times clashed with the bourgeoisie's increasing embracement of music, literature and theatre.

While the tension between these cultural poles continued to exist throughout the twentieth century – remnants exist even today – Rosenlund points to a development in cultural life corresponding to the metamorphosis of the Stavangerian class structure. First of all, the number of highly-educated professionals employed in firms related to the oil industry (e.g. geologists, engineers, economists and lawyers) as well as in academia, media, advertising, design and cultural production has grown strongly throughout recent decades. These highly-educated professionals – many of whom are foreigners and out-of-towners – have brought with them new impulses and ways of life to Stavanger, as well as an increased demand for cultural diversity. Simultaneously, the 'supply side' of cultural consumption has expanded and diversified enormously. The advent of cultural institutions such as art associations (*Stavanger kunstforening*, as well as several private associations run by oil firms), museums (*Stavanger kunstmuseum, Norsk oljemuseum*), theatres (*Rogaland teater, Kjellerteateret*), a cultural centre (*Sølvberget*), a cinema (*Stavanger kinematografer*), a professional orchestra (*Stavanger symfoniorkester*), music venues (*Stavanger konserthus, Folken, Tau Scene*), music festivals (*Mai-Jazz, Den internasjonale*

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[20] There was, however, a certain tension within *Det Stavangerske Klubselskab*, and the embracement of European bourgeoisie culture was not unison (see Furre, 1990).

kammermusikkfestivalen, Numusic, Rått og Råte), a literature festival (*Kapittel*), a food festival (*Gladmat*) – all point to an increase in Stavanger's cultural life. In 2008 Stavanger was even appointed the official 'European Capital of Culture'.[21] Moreover, the ever-increasing number of shops, restaurants, bars and cafés leads the development away from a pietistic and temperate past towards 'hedonistic' lifestyles associated with increased wealth and prosperity.

3.2.2 Structural homologies

Notwithstanding historical change processes as regards the make-up of the class structure and the diversification and intensification of cultural life, present day Stavanger is marked by a 'classed' distribution of different lifestyles and cultural tastes. By way of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) (Hjellbrekke, 1999a; Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010) of survey data on lifestyle properties from three points in time (1994, 2007 and 2009), Rosenlund (2009a, 2009b) has shown persistent structural homologies between the local social space and the space of lifestyles, meaning that more or less unitary lifestyle properties (e.g. consumption choices, cultural tastes and moral-political attitudes) correspond systematically to different classes and class fractions.

As noted above, the local social space is structured in similar ways to Bourdieu's (1984) theoretical model of social stratification – both according to the capital volume and the capital composition principles of social differentiation. The characteristics of Rosenlund's second space construction – the local space of lifestyles – are also commensurable with those presented in *Distinction*; the various components of lifestyles are structured in patterns that correspond to both differentiation principles in the social space. Among respondents located in the upper sectors of the social space one finds preferences and practices which require large

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[21] The European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union for a period of one calendar year during which it organises a series of cultural events. For studies of the events taking place in relation to what is referred to as 'Stavanger2008', see Bergsgard and Vassenden (2009; 2011) and Berg and Rommetvedt (2009).

amounts of economic and/or cultural capital, as well as rejections and a dislike of taste expressions common in the lower sectors of the social space. In the lower sectors, by contrast, one finds inversions of the taste expressions common in the upper sectors – typically preferences for cultural goods and practices which require fewer resources, as well as corresponding rejections and a dislike of taste expressions common among more resourceful respondents. Thus, the capital volume principle of social differentiation is manifested in the distributional opposition between the practices and tastes of respondents endowed with high and low volumes of capital respectively. This empirical finding fits well with Bourdieu's (1984) assertion that the further away from 'necessity' social actors are situated (i.e. the more capital they are endowed with), the more likely they are to exhibit an embodied 'feel for the game' of cultural distinctions, either through consumption of cultural goods (e.g. literature, theatre and music) or through consumption of material goods (e.g. cars, yachts and electronic gadgets).

Along the capital composition dimension of the social space a somewhat different logic prevails; the liking and disliking of cultural goods and practices correspond systematically to the respondents' 'balance sheet' of capital endowment. Respondents endowed with a preponderance of cultural capital (i.e. those located in the 'cultural' fractions of the social space) typically report high interest in the universe of cultural goods and a corresponding low interest in the universe of material consumption goods, whereas respondents endowed with a preponderance of economic capital (i.e. those located in the 'economic' fractions of the social space) typically report diametrically opposed preferences and tastes. Thus, the capital composition principle of social differentiation is manifested in the distributional opposition between the practices and tastes of respondents endowed with preponderance of cultural and economic capital respectively.

Moreover, by comparing survey data from 1994, 2007 and 2009, Rosenlund (2009b) finds remarkably persistent patterns in the socially stratified distribution of lifestyles and cultural tastes. Contrary to the claims of the champions of the omnivore thesis,

the structural homologies between the social space and the space of lifestyles seem to be strikingly steadfast. In other words, there are few signs of a decline or a dramatic reconfiguration of the differential distribution of lifestyle properties in Stavanger during the course of the past fifteen years. As the two space constructs are homologically structured, Rosenlund concludes that they are 'two translations of the same sentence':

> The social space gives a picture of a social structure or a social topology which is a system of ordered positions hidden from the everyday experience and comprehension. The space of lifestyles is an objectivation and a representation which systematises and structures the symbolic world of all the ways and means by which the social agents are participating in the experienced social world, how they think about it and how they perceive it. The features of the two space constructs based on data from Stavanger and the demonstrated relationships between them are supporting Bourdieu's claim of the general applicability of his model. (Rosenlund, 2009a: 187)

3.2.3 The appropriation of physical space

Expanding on Bourdieu's (1996a, 1999) model of homologies between social, mental and spatial structures, Rosenlund (2009a, 2011) suggests that the homology principle extends to the appropriation of urban physical space via the workings of differentiated class habitus. First of all, he demonstrates that there exist tendencies for 'classed' residential segregation, meaning that different classes and class fractions tend to reside separately from one another in different parts of the urban environment. By subjecting demographic indicators of 68 geographical zones to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2004), Rosenlund demonstrates two sets of distributional oppositions corresponding to the capital volume and the capital composition principles of social differentiation. The distributional opposition along the capital volume dimension of the social space is manifested in an opposition between high-priced areas located at some distance from the city centre – typically where social actors endowed with high volumes of capital of either form reside – and considerably less expensive areas located in the vicinity of the city centre – typically where social actors endowed with low volumes of capital reside. The distributional opposition along the capital composition dimension, on the other hand, is even more

dramatic in terms of physical distance; the cultural fractions of the upper sectors of the social space tend to live close to the city centre in old working-class areas now subjected to gentrification, while the economic fractions mainly live on the outskirts of the city.

Second, on the basis of survey data Rosenlund scrutinises how respondents perceive and classify residential areas other than the ones in which they reside. In this regard he finds strong tendencies indicating that those who perceive a certain residential area as attractive are endowed with similar capital portfolios and tend to have similar lifestyle profiles as those who actually live there. Conversely, the antipathies towards various areas follow an opposite logic; those who dislike a certain area tend to be endowed with dissimilar capital portfolios as well as dissimilar lifestyle profiles than those who reside in these areas.

Finally, Rosenlund demonstrates that the frequenting and appropriation of public spaces (e.g. concert halls, theatres, cinemas, restaurants, pubs, cafés and sport arenas) are stratified according to the same logic. The respondents who report frequenting certain public spaces while avoiding others tend to have diametrically opposed capital portfolios compared to those who report opposite preferences or guiding principles as regards their movements in public space. In other words, Rosenlund's analysis indicates that members of different classes and class fractions tend to choose their movements in urban areas with great care, seeking out places where they feel 'at home', while avoiding places where they feel 'out of place'. Thus, Rosenlund (2009a: 302ff) asserts that the structure of social relations as depicted in the social space retranslates itself into physical and geographical structures via the mediation of the habitus. Stavangerians tend to appropriate physical space according to the same logic as they appropriate cultural goods and leisure activities; their perceptions of the various parts of the city and their actual appropriation of them are governed by the capital volume and capital composition principles of social differentiation. In other words, Stavangerians seem to be endowed with 'practical knowledge' of the social

geography of the city and they 'know' where they fit in and where they do not. They are, to put in it Goffmanian terms, endowed with a highly concrete 'sense of one's place', as well as a 'sense of other people's place'.

To summarise, Rosenlund's inquiries lend extensive empirical support to the Bourdieusian model of social stratification, meaning that there exist homologies between social, mental and spatial structures in Stavanger. Besides functioning as an important historical-structural contextual backdrop for the present empirical inquiry, Rosenlund's empirical findings also serve as an analytical point of departure in two ways. First, his construction of the local social space constitutes the basis for the rationale underlying the sampling of forty-six individuals subjected to qualitative interviewees, in the sense that these are recruited so as to ensure a distributional dispersion along both the capital volume dimension and the capital composition dimension of the social space. Second, the empirical findings concerning the structural homologies between the social space and the space of lifestyles constitute a basis for further empirical scrutiny of the social actors' *modus operandi*. As Rosenlund's inquiries are exclusively based on census and survey data, they imply certain limitations, especially as regards social actors' modes of perceiving cultural goods, other people's lifestyles and tastes, different urban areas, etc. Other types of data would arguably be required to examine such aspects in depth.

3.3 The qualitative interview method

Notwithstanding the illuminating aspects of quantitatively oriented studies such as Rosenlund's, they do entail certain limitations. As discussed in the previous chapter, inquiries into the 'whats' of cultural consumption only get us so far in understanding the ways in which lifestyle differentials pertain to social stratification. More specifically, studies of lifestyle differentials based on survey data (i.e. in terms of statistical distributions of tastes and preferences for certain goods and activities) entail two important limitations. First, data on *how* respondents perceive, appreciate and appropriate goods are difficult to obtain. Although it might be possible to extract

different modes of consumption *interpretively* from statistical patterns arising from analyses of survey data, such arguments remain largely unsubstantiated and thus speculative. Second, survey data on cultural preferences lack information on the ways in which respondents relate to other cultural consumers, for instance how they evaluate other people's tastes in terms of social esteem. While scholars associated with the omnivore thesis have put forward sweeping claims about the 'democratising' consequences of 'open', 'broad' and 'eclectic' cultural tastes, such inferences are hardly convincing, as there is nothing contradictory in the idea that people might exhibit preferences for a wide range of cultural goods, while judging other people's preferences and tastes. Conversely, even though taste oppositions are systematically distributed according to the structures of the social space, it does not necessarily follow from this that estimations of honour or prestige are involved, nor that certain tastes function as cultural and/or symbolic capital whose distribution amounts to processes of social closure and relations of domination and subordination.

In other words, in lieu of data on such matters scholars have tended to treat social actors' modes of perceiving both goods and other people as a 'black box', either by ignoring this aspect completely, or by reflexively admitting the limitations of their analyses by pointing to the need to assess such issues by way of qualitative methods (e.g. Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010: 18; Chan, 2010a: 242ff). Either way, the existence of this black box betrays important shortcomings in a body of research that has been preoccupied with the analysis of survey data (for notable exceptions, see for instance Lamont, 1992; Holt, 1998; Skarpenes, 2007; Ollivier, 2008; Lahire, 2008; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2008, 2012; Bennett *et al*, 2009). This is of course not to say that quantitatively oriented inquiries have not provided valuable insights in this regard. However, notwithstanding the sophistication of quantitative methods, there are certain limitations to them which highlight the need to assess certain empirical questions by different means. In what follows I shall discuss the ways in which the qualitative research interview (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008; Silverman, 2011) can function as a tool to empirically assess stratifying processes regarding social actors' modes of evaluating and classifying cultural goods and other cultural consumers.

3.3.1 What can qualitative interview data tell us?

Following Geertz' (1975) call for a context-sensitive scientific approach by way of what he has dubbed 'thick descriptions', I shall take his discussion of the difference between a 'twitch' and a 'wink' as a point of departure for discussing qualitative interviews more generally:[22]

> Consider […] two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend. The two movements are, as movements, identical; from an I-am-a-camera, "phenomenalistic" observation of them alone, one could not tell which was twitch and which was wink, or indeed whether both or either was twitch or wink. Yet the difference, however unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed communicating in a precise and special way: (1) deliberately, (2) to someone in particular, (3) to impart a particular message, (4) according to a socially established code, and (5) without cognizance of the rest of the company. […] The winker has done two things, contracted his eyelids and winked, while the twitcher has done only one, contracted his eyelids. Contracting your eyelids on purpose when there exists a public code in which doing so counts as a conspiratorial signal *is* winking. […] That, however, is just the beginning. Suppose […] there is a third boy, who, "to give malicious amusement to his cronies," parodies the first boy's wink, as amateurish, clumsy, obvious, and so on. He, of course, does this in the same way the second boy winked and the first twitched: by contracting his eyelids. Only this boy is neither winking nor twitching, he is parodying someone else's, as he takes it, laughable, attempt at winking. Here, too, a socially established code exists (he will "wink" laboriously, overobviously, perhaps adding a grimace – the usual artifices of a clown); and so also does a message. Only now it is not conspiracy but ridicule that is in the air. If the others think he is actually winking, his whole project misfires as completely, though with somewhat different results, as if they think he is twitching. One could go further: uncertain of his mimicking abilities, the would-be satirist may practice at home before the mirror, in which case he is not twitching, winking, or parodying, but rehearsing; though so far as what a camera, a radical behaviourist, or a believer in protocol sentences would record he is just rapidly contracting his eyelids like all the others. (Geertz, 1975: 6ff)

Here, Geertz makes a crucial analytical point. Without concepts such as 'winking', given meaning by a theory of communication, the most precise study of 'eyelid-contracting by human beings' would be quite meaningless. Accordingly, Geertz favours an 'adverbial' approach, as it provides 'thicker' descriptions, in the sense that it does not just tell us *what* was done but *how* it was done. By paying attention to the

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[22] In this example Geertz expands on the work of Ryle (1971).

context in which the action has occurred, it is argued that more valid inferences from the analysis in question can be drawn. In this particular case, the crucial distinctions between 'twitching', 'winking', 'parodying a wink' and 'rehearsing a wink' provide descriptions of at least four qualitatively different ways of 'contracting eyelids'. Thus, by paying attention to the context of the situation, interpretative distinctions are rendered possible.[23]

This important insight can be easily transferred to issues regarding lifestyle differentiation and social stratification. Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, Bourdieu's analytical distinction between *modus operandi* and *opus operatum* follows a similar logic. By distinguishing between different modes of practice as generated by different class habitus on the one hand, and the observable outcomes of these practices on the other, Bourdieu breaks with an unfortunate 'substantialist' tendency within the research field to conflate the two aspects of human conduct. In other words, a given practice might have different meanings in different social contexts. For instance, there is, according to Bourdieu's (1984) line of reasoning, an important difference between appreciating a given cultural good – say, a performance of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* – with 'ease and naturalness', as opposed to appreciating it in an 'educational' and 'instructive' manner.

However, the notion of habitus radically complicates matters, as it suggests that a considerable part of social life is conducted in a taken-for-granted, unreflective manner. Thus, it would be problematic to assume that a given social actor placed in a qualitative interview setting can function as what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) have referred to as a 'vessel of answers', i.e. a wellspring of opinions and emotions, providing 'facts' about underlying intentions, reasons for conduct and so forth. As the habitus first and foremost functions as a pre-reflexive 'practical sense', valid data on

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[23] This is a point which is, I presume, quite uncontroversial among sociologists. However, as Hammersley (2008:57) has pointed out, Geertz is 'notoriously elusive on some key points' and it is not clear what background information that needs to be provided in order to comprehend what is 'going on'. However illuminating Geertz' point may be, then, a sound foundation for how for instance qualitative interview data is to be interpreted is not provided.

how or *why* people perceive, appreciate and appropriate cultural goods are not directly accessible, either to the sociologist, or to the social actors themselves.

Nevertheless, what is accessible is the ways in which social actors *classify* objects in the social world (e.g. cultural goods, and their own and other people's consumption styles). In this regard, qualitative interviews can be a suitable method to map out different *modes of classificatory practices*. Unlike standardised questionnaires – which inevitably entail certain limitations due to pre-constructed response options – open-ended questions in a qualitative interview may render possible an inquiry into interviewees' classifications of goods, people and so forth *in their own terms*. In this way, interviewees' more or less explicit standards of evaluation can be assessed indirectly. Thus, major improvements vis-à-vis the unfortunate crudeness implied by some scholars' one-sided attention to statistical distributions of tastes and preferences are rendered possible, as 'thicker' descriptions of such preferences are provided. The structures of the habitus can in other words be approached by proxy, in directing attention to the ways in which interviewees classify objects in either positive or negative terms.

In this way, I argue that qualitative interview data can provide important sociological insights about the class-status nexus in at least three ways. First, by scrutinising the ways in which interviewees classify, evaluate and judge various cultural goods, qualitative interview data can provide insights about social actors' modes of appropriation of such goods. Second, scrutinising the ways in which interviewees classify, evaluate and judge other people's cultural tastes and ways of life can provide valuable information on processes pertaining to group inclusion and exclusion, i.e. non-formalised social closure. Finally, the ways in which interviewees classify both cultural goods and other people's ways of life can potentially reveal hierarchical relations of domination and subordination, through the scrutiny of speech acts expressing feelings of superiority, aversion, ressentiment, deference, awe and so forth.

3.3.2 The limitations of qualitative interview data

All empirical inquiries that aim to draw, or aim to provide a basis for drawing, conclusions about some general type of phenomenon or about members of a wider population are faced with certain challenges as regards generalisability, both internally (i.e. within cases) and externally (i.e. between cases) (Gomm *et al*, 2000). While the qualitative interview is a well-suited method with which to scrutinise social actors' modes of classificatory practice, it does, however, entail certain limitations that render both types of generalisation particularly challenging. As regards generalisation *within* cases (for instance, drawing inferences from an individual's actions in one observed setting to the same individual's actions in another unobserved setting), the qualitative interview method is particularly prone to errors as interviewees' speech acts may be susceptible to the influence of the situational context, in the sense that the setting in which the data are generated affects the data itself. Potential influences include the (positive or negative) perceptions of both interviewer and interviewee, for instance the former may cause the latter's speech acts to be affected by what he or she perceives to be the former's values and definition of the 'right answer' (Lamont, 1992: 19). There is the danger of interviewees, consciously or otherwise, modifying their speech acts so as to resemble, or differ from, the perceived characteristics of the interviewer. This might threaten both the reliability and the validity of the data.

However, the crucial question is to what extent the construction of data is affected by such processes; or, to put it somewhat differently, how 'malleable' social actors may be in the interview situation. While this question is in a sense unanswerable, assumptions about such matters are nevertheless decisive for the ways in which scholars approach interview data. This question ultimately boils down to the ontological and epistemological view of the 'subject'. For instance, radical constructionist critics (e.g. Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) have abandoned the idea of generating data about interviewees as more or less coherent social subjects, and through various forms of 'discourse analysis' or 'conversation analysis' they have turned their attention to how data about speech acts are produced in the first place.

Translated into the current problematic, the search for an interviewee's 'true' classifications of goods or other people would, according to this view, be rather futile, as it would imply the erroneous assumption that there is a 'true' set of opinions located in the subject. Instead, a context-sensitive analytical focus on how speech acts come into play in the interview situation is favoured.

However, as Hammersley (2008: ch. 5) has pointed out, there is an unfortunate tendency for radical constructionists to abandon ship too early, as it were. In other words, despite critics' declarations of 'the death of the subject', there might in fact be something valuable to learn about social subjects by way of qualitative interviews. According to Bourdieu's (1990b: 53) assertions about the habitus, it is both *transposable* and *durable*, meaning that a given social actor will always betray an idiosyncratic 'signature' on his or her actions across various social settings, for instance on his or her speech acts in the interview situation. Habitus has the capacity to generalise, through analogical transfers, its fundamental 'generative schemes' to different areas of social life. Bourdieu's (1996b: 273) preferred example in this regard is that of handwriting, which is depicted as embodying a 'stylistic affinity' for each social actor regardless of the materials used (a blackboard or a sheet of paper, a pencil or a pen, etc.). Moreover, the structures of the habitus are viewed as 'embodied history', meaning that each social subject has its own history, its own unique experiences, that make up a relatively fixed structure or a repertoire of possible 'constructions' of speech acts.

It should, however, be noted that the assumption that speech acts are reflective of the structures of individual habitus does not necessarily entail an essentialist search for a subject's 'one true opinion', but rather an attempt to interpret speech acts as being a part of a (limited) repertoire of meanings, preferences and classifications located in each subject. Contrary to the view that all social actors draw from a 'common pool' of linguistic resources on equal terms, the notion of habitus implies that the access to

this common pool is socially stratified.[24] This does not imply that the subject is not susceptible to the influence of the local or situational context, but it does point to a questionable assumption implied by the view that such situational factors by and large *govern* the form and content of speech acts, as some radical constructionists would have it. By contrast, the assumption that the classificatory repertoires of social subjects are more or less *limited* renders possible the view that what the interviewees say in the course of a qualitative interview – and perhaps more importantly, *how* they say it – can be interpreted as reflecting at least parts of the structures of their habitus. Although this remains an *assumption*, as the empirical question of whether, and if so in which ways, classificatory repertoires are limited can hardly be assessed by any sound research design, it is arguably more viable than assuming that interviewees are malleable and entirely susceptible to the influence of the local or situational context.

As regards generalisation *between* cases, for instance drawing inferences from a set of observed individuals to a larger set of unobserved individuals, there are according to Gomm *et al* (2000) two effective strategies for drawing conclusions – 'theoretical inference' and 'empirical generalisation'. Theoretical inference is typically applied by experimental researchers in order to reach conclusions about what always happens, or what happens with a given degree of probability, in a certain type of theoretically defined situation. Empirical generalisation, by contrast, is typically applied by survey researchers in order to draw inferences about a larger but finite population of cases from the study of a sample drawn from that population. A hotly debated question within the social sciences is whether, and if so in which ways, some form of generalisation is possible for analyses based on qualitative data. Some scholars argue that such generalisation is of a different *kind* than that of statistical analysis, and that

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[24] Against what he depicts as an 'illusion of linguistic communism', Bourdieu (1991b: 37) asserts that '[e]very speech act and more generally, every action, is a conjuncture, an encounter between independent causal series. On the one hand, there are the socially constructed dispositions of the linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things (the expressive interest) and a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and a social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation. On the other hand, there are the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships.'

what is involved is something that is 'logical', 'theoretical' or 'analytical' in character (e.g. Yin, 1994; Mitchell, 2000). Others suggest that qualitatively oriented studies need not make any claims about the generalisability of their findings. What is crucial, it is argued, is what others make of them; *they* facilitate the 'transfer' of findings from one setting to another on the basis of 'fit' (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Yet others argue that there are ways to draw inferences on the basis of qualitative data that are in effect the same as those which survey researchers produce. Although empirical generalisations are *usually* couched in a probabilistic logic (i.e. that conclusions about a population are drawn on the basis of the numerical probability that the differentially distributed features of the sample cases also can be found in the population), this is not necessarily the only means through which such conclusions can be drawn. Indeed, as argued by Gomm *et al*,

> [d]enial of the capacity of case study research to support empirical generalization often seems to rest on the mistaken assumption that this form of generalisation requires statistical sampling. This restricts the idea of representation to its statistical version; it confuses the task of empirical generalisation with the use of statistical techniques to achieve that goal. While those techniques are a very effective basis for generalization, they are not essential. After all, […] we all engage in naturalistic generalization routinely in the course of our lives, and this may take the form of empirical generalization as well as of theoretical inference. Given this, there is no reason in principle why case study research should not provide the basis for empirical generalization. (Gomm *et al*, 2000: 104)

However, the use of qualitative methods such as the qualitative research interview entails certain limitations in that such methods are unable to provide a numerical probability that the features found in the studied cases also applies to unstudied cases. With a statistically representative sample, by contrast, such probable accuracy can be calculated. Nevertheless, as Gomm *et al* (2000: 105) point out, it is possible for qualitative researchers to try to take account of probable relevant heterogeneity within the population with which they are concerned in at least two complementary ways: first, by using theoretical ideas and information about the cases and the populations in their analyses; and second, by selecting cases for study on the basis of such ideas and information. So while case studies cannot provide sound information about the distribution of features across the population, it can, nevertheless, show

features that seem likely to be modal, given that they are observed within all or most of the sample cases irrespective of their other differences. It is to the theoretical-methodological rationale of my analytical strategies we now turn.

3.4 Analytical strategies

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) notion of a field of cultural consumption which constitute a totality of more or less antagonistic 'stylistic possibles' from which each singular consumption choice – or, more generally, each classifiable act – derives its social meaning, I shall analyse speech acts and classifications uttered by interviewees as stances or 'position-takings' within this field. That is, I shall view interviewees' classificatory practices as being implicated in a more or less 'misrecognised' game in which the definitions of what constitute socially esteemed lifestyles are one of the fundamental stakes.[25] As discussed in the previous section, this study is based on the assumption that interviewees' speech acts are drawn from a limited repertoire of classificatory practices located within each subject, i.e. in their individual dispositions or habitus. Moreover, it is informed by the notion of class habitus and the working hypothesis that there are structural affinities between the system of relations between social actors' modes of classificatory practice on the one hand, and the system of relations between social actors' endowment of different species of capital on the other. In other words, this study hinges upon the general epistemological idea that it is possible to empirically assess whether, and if so in which ways, there exist homologies between the structures of the space of class habitus and the structures of the social space. In what follows I shall clarify the ways in which I endeavour to assess this empirical question by discussing the theoretically informed sample strategies as well as the procedures through which data on classificatory practices is obtained.

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[25] It is important to highlight that the notion of position-taking does not necessarily imply a conscious acknowledgement of participating in a pursuit for social distinction, esteem and prestige. On the contrary, as discussed in the previous chapter, Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition implies that a differential distribution of lifestyle choices can have stratifying effects without the existence of social actors intentionally pursuing a 'cynical' calculation or a 'mercenary' use of cultural goods.

3.4.1 Sampling and recruitment strategies

As the work of Rosenlund shows, the class structure of Stavanger can be represented as a two-dimensional social space constructed by means of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). The rationale underlying the sampling of interviewees directly draws on Rosenlund's constructions, in that the interviewees are recruited so as to ensure a distributional dispersion along both the capital volume dimension and the capital composition dimension of the local social space. Before I move on to elaborate on the specifics of this sampling strategy, a few notes on the deployment of MCA are necessary.

MCA is a statistical technique which provides a geometric model of categorical data, and is used to detect and visually represent underlying structures in a data set (Hjellbrekke, 1999a; Le Roux and Rouanet, 2010). It proceeds by calculating chi-squared distances between individuals (rows) and categories (columns) in a data matrix. The geometrical distances between rows and columns are maximized in order to uncover the underlying dimensions best able to describe the central oppositions or distributional differences in the data. The statistical correspondences between the rows and columns are thus represented graphically as a low-dimensional Euclidean space, meaning that the axes constituting the space represent the central oppositions in the data. Each axis represents a portion of the total variance in the cloud. The graphical 'maps', i.e. the factorial planes, thus facilitate and ease the interpretation of the underlying structures of the data.

When interpreting the results from an MCA one focuses on two clouds. The cloud of categories facilitates a visual assessment of the coordinates of the mean modality points of all the categories, i.e. the mean position of all individuals characterised by a given category within the low-dimensional space. An inspection of the categories' contributions to the axes, as well as the distances between the mean modality points of the categories, are of great importance to the interpretation of substantial

sociological 'meaning' of the oppositions within the space. In Rosenlund's construction of the local social space,[26] the cloud of modalities can reasonably be interpreted as indicating a differential distribution of cultural and economic capital following a dual distributional logic accounted for above. As we can see in Figure 1, the first axis depicts an opposition between high and low volumes of capital of either form. The second axis depicts the chiastic or inverted distributional relations between individuals endowed with preponderance of cultural and economic capital respectively.[27]
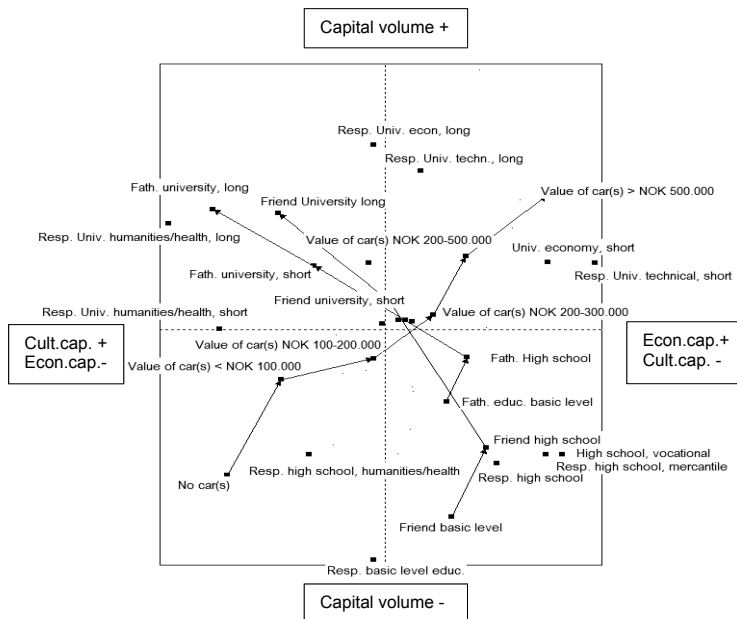
Figure 1: The cloud of categories, fac.plane 1-2

[26] Rosenlund's construction of the local social space is based on data generated through the Stavanger2008 survey, administered by University of Stavanger and International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS) (see Berg and Rommetvedt, 2009: 16ff). For a detailed account of Rosenlund's social space approach, see Rosenlund (2009: 87ff).

[27] See Appendix 2 for a full list of the categories' contributions to the axes and Appendix 3 for a full list of the coordinates of the active categories. In order to ease the readability, the axes have been inverted in factor plane 1-2. This does not affect the interpretation of the substantial results.

The second cloud – the cloud of individuals – facilitates a visual assessment of the system of relations between all the individuals subjected to the analysis. Each individual has a singular set of coordinates according to the axes in the low-dimensional space, meaning that their position is determined by their characteristics as regards all the categories included in the analysis. In other words, each respondent subjected to Rosenlund's survey can be located within the social space. As the first two axes can reasonably be interpreted as capital volume and capital composition dimensions respectively, an individual's position within the cloud of individuals can thus be interpreted as its 'situatedness' within the two-dimensional capital distribution, relative to the other individuals' capital portfolios (see Figure 2).

Capital volume +

Cult.cap. +
Econ.cap. -

Econ.cap.+
Cult.cap.-

Capital volume -
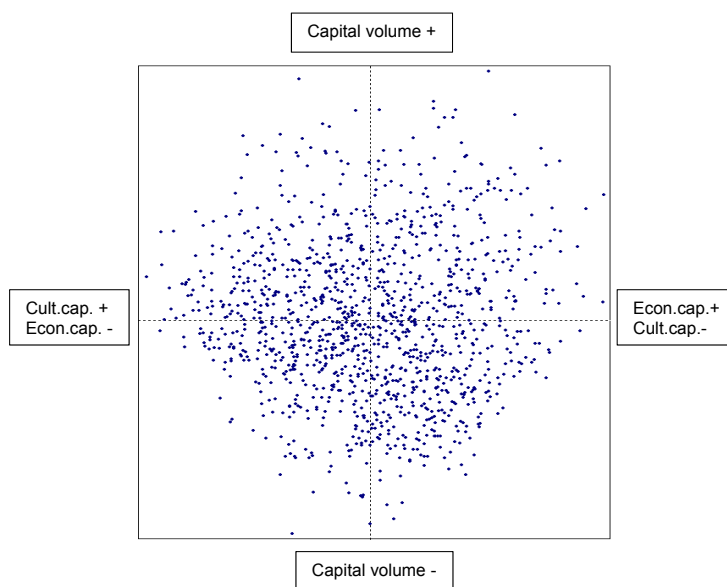
Figure 2: The cloud of individuals, fac.plane 1-2

The logic underlying the interpretation of the cloud of individuals is that the closer the individuals are to one another, the more they have in common in terms of possession of capitals; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common. In other words, individuals located in the upper left quadrant are endowed with high volumes of capital, with a preponderance of cultural capital;

individuals located in the upper right quadrant are endowed with high volumes of capital, with a preponderance of economic capital; individuals located in the lower left quadrant are endowed with low volumes of capital, with a preponderance of cultural capital; and individuals located in the lower right quadrant are endowed with low volumes of capital, with a preponderance of economic capital. It might also be noted that the cloud of individuals is shaped like a tulip, meaning that the capital composition principle of social differentiation is more prominent in the upper quadrants than in the lower quadrants.

Having outlined the basic tenets of MCA and Rosenlund's construction of a local social space, we now move on to the sampling strategies and the procedures through which the interviewees' location within the social space is determined. The sampling strategy is inspired by the Danish COMPAS project (e.g. Prieur *et al*, 2008; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2008, 2012; Harrits *et al*, 2010; Faber *et al*, 2012), in which a mixture of MCA and qualitative interviews was employed in order to analyse interviewees' classificatory practices in the light of their positions in the social space. More specifically, the COMPAS project employed an innovative two-step sampling strategy in the following fashion. First, a random sample of individuals drawn from the population was subjected to a survey questionnaire. Subsequently, a smaller sub-sample drawn from the original sample was subjected to qualitative interviews. As the individuals subjected to qualitative interviews had also participated in the survey, these individuals' positions in the cloud of individuals – constructed on the basis of survey data by way of MCA – could be located. In this way, the speech acts uttered in the qualitative interviews could be analysed in the light of their positions in the social space.[28]

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[28] A similar strategy was employed in the British CCSE project (e.g. Le Roux *et al*, 2008; Bennett *et al*, 2009; Silva *et al*, 2009). However, as opposed to the COMPAS project, in which a 'reciprocal approach' (i.e. the construction of both a social space and a space of lifestyles and the mapping out of the correspondences between them) was deployed, the Britons did only construct a space of lifestyles, and interviewees' position in the social space could thus not be located.

In the present study it was not, however, possible to recruit a subsample from Rosenlund's original sample of survey respondents due to anonymity issues. A 'second best' strategy was thus employed as follows. First, informed by Rosenlund's construction of the local social space the mean modality points of a range of occupational categories were located within the cloud of categories. Second, based on an 'educated guess' informed by Rosenlund's findings as well the Oslo Register Data Class Scheme (ORDC) (Hansen *et al*, 2009), [29] a number of occupations were chosen to tentatively represent the four quadrants of the social space. Third, forty-six interviewees were strategically recruited on the basis of information on their occupation in order to ensure a dispersion of interviewees across the four quadrants. Fourth, at the end of the interview sessions the interviewees were subjected to parts of the original survey questionnaire to attain information on their scores on the active categories used in Rosenlund's construction of the social space (i.e. indices of capital endowment, such as household income, value of house, value of second home, value of car, education level, education type, occupation, occupational sector, father's education, father's occupation, number of books at home, frequency of theatre visits last year, etc.). Fifth, information on the interviewees was coded and then added to the original survey data set. Finally, by way of MCA the local social space was reconstructed with the forty-six interviewees projected onto the space as supplementary cases, meaning that their position within it could be located without it affecting the construction of the space. Thus, the interviewees' positions in the local social space could be located without them being part of the original sample of survey respondents.[30] As shown in Figure 3, the interviewees are dispersed across all four quadrants of the social space, i.e. both along the capital volume dimension and the

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[29] The ORDC is a class scheme inspired by Bourdieu's (1984) notion of the social space, and distinguishes class and class fractions according individual's occupations and their presumed capital portfolios.

[30] The construction of the social space and the projecting of the interviewees onto the space were conducted by Rosenlund using SPAD 7 software.

capital composition dimension of the space.[31] In other words, the initial goal of achieving a distributional dispersion of interviewees along both axes of the social space through an 'educated guess' was successful.

While the structures of social space constitute the basic rationale for the sampling strategy, additional 'secondary characteristics' also guided the recruitment of interviewees. First of all, it was a requirement that the interviews resided and/or worked within the borders of the municipality of Stavanger. Second, based on information on the characteristics of the population, I endeavoured to achieve an approximately even distribution of males and females. The final sample includes 25 males and 21 females. Third, I endeavoured to ensure a distributional dispersion according to the age of the interviewees. In accordance with Rosenlund's rationale for the survey sample, I recruited interviewees aged 25-67. The average age of the interviewees is 39.8. Finally, I excluded ethnic non-Norwegians from the sample. This is of course not to say that ethnicity is viewed as unimportant as regards the assessment of lifestyle differentials. However, as this analysis focuses on the relationship between status and class – and not ethnicity – I only included ethnic Norwegians in the sample.

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[31] The graph does, however, reveal that the sample is somewhat skewed towards the 'cultural pole' of the second axis, meaning that there could ideally have been proportionally more interviewees endowed with a preponderance of economic capital.

Capital volume +

Cult.cap. +
Econ. cap -

Econ. cap +
Cult.cap. -

Capital volume -

Anna
Lucas Mikkel
Pia Georg
Sofia Henrik
Freja
Jonas Kristian
Marta
Theodor Sara Johan
Thomas Wilhelm
Helene Oda August
Peter Olivia Nora
Elias
Andrea
Elisabeth Lea
Maria Sebastian
Oliver Julia Klara
Philip
Oscar
Emma
Marianne
Emil Jon Robert
Aurora
Patrick Eva
Daniel Ella
Martin David
Lars
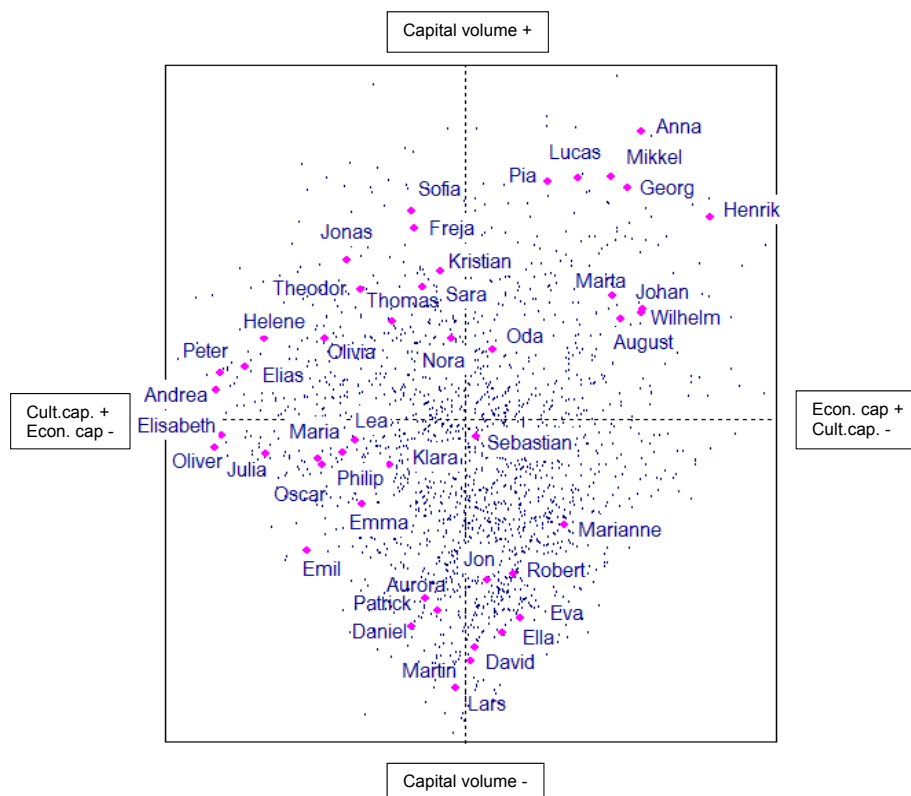
Figure 3: Projection of interviewees onto the cloud of individuals, fac.plane 1-2

To summarise, the sample strategy involves an endeavour to take into account relevant heterogeneity within the population of Stavanger by using theoretical ideas and information attained from previous studies about its class structure. Insofar as it is correct that qualitatively different lifestyles are unevenly distributed according to the structures of the local social space, the selection of cases from all the quadrants of the social space implies a sound basis for the scrutiny of social actor's mode of classificatory practice and its potential pertinence to processes of social stratification. While a sample of forty-six cases cannot by any means represent the totality of such

modes of classificatory practices, it is nevertheless likely that it can tap into at least some important differences in this regard. My main objective is not to provide an accurate picture of the classificatory practices of Stavanger's population; rather, my goal is to examine how classificatory practices are expressed by people located in different positions in the social space. To the extent that the sample include people endowed with different capital portfolios – both in volume and composition of capitals – it is suitable to my objectives.

3.4.2 Procedures

On the basis of the sampling strategy outlined above potential interviewees were chosen on the basis of information attained through Internet search engines and online phone directories. I also used the so-called snowball sampling technique, meaning that already recruited interviewees helped to recruit future interviewees from among their acquaintances. However, in order to avoid tapping into certain subcultures or social cliques, I used this technique with care. Availability and eligibility were determined on the basis of additional information obtained through telephone calls and e-mail correspondences. The response rate was high, except for potential interviewees presumably endowed with high amounts of economic capital. It was notoriously difficult to attain personal contact with CEOs, economists, financiers and real estate agents; phone calls were screened by secretaries and e-mails were left unanswered. Presumably, these people lacked interest and/or were too busy to spare the time for a sociologist and his questions. Eventually I attained contact with a key figure in Stavanger's financial milieu who personally distributed my letter of request. With the aid of this figure several interviewees endowed with high amounts of economic capital were recruited (see Appendix 4 for a full list of interviewees).

I conducted all the interviews myself between September 2009 and May 2010. The interview sessions lasted on average approximately 1.5 hours (the shortest 40 minutes and the longest 2.5 hours) and were recorded using a portable digital MP3 recorder.

The interviews were conducted at a time and place chosen by the interviewees. Most of them were conducted at their homes or at their workplace.[32] The data was collected using the semi-structured interview method (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008), meaning that I deployed an interview schedule which contained a number of basic questions to which all the interviewees were subjected (see Appendix 5). Yet, the schedule was constructed so as to invite the interviewees to classificatory practice in their own terms. Thus, the chronology of the questions and the ways in which they were phrased varied somewhat from interview to interview.

Informed by the theoretical-methodological debates discussed in the previous chapter the interview schedule was constructed so as to tap information according to three main thematics. First, based on the assumption that the ways in which people classify objects in the social world are indicative of the structures of their habitus, I invited the interviewees to classify a variety of goods (both cultural and material) in order to tap their modes of consumption of such goods. More specifically, I probed on the interviewees' expressed likes and dislikes of specific goods in order to attain extended information on their evaluative criteria. In this regard I usually probed on their evaluation of goods already mentioned by the interviewees themselves, but I also brought up names and types of goods myself, especially if the interviewees were less talkative.

Second, based on the assumption that the ways in which people draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and others are indicative of elective affinities and processes of non-formalised closure, I invited the interviewees to classify other people in terms of their cultural tastes and lifestyles; or more generally, their ways of life. In this regard I used a combination of general, abstract questions (e.g. 'What types of people do you like/dislike?') and more specific, concrete questions tied to specific geographical areas, milieus, and enterprises in Stavanger (e.g. 'You

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[32] I always ensured that the interview setting was 'private', in the sense that co-workers, family members or others could not listen in to what was being said.

mentioned that you do avoid going to the theatre because of the people going there; can you describe why you dislike these people?'). This dual mode of phrasing questions was informed by the possibility that moral sentiments (e.g. politeness, modesty and the valorisation of equality as sameness) might influence speech acts, particularly the ways in which interviewees classify other people in negative terms. As previous research has suggested, there prevails a 'code of modesty' among Norwegians (Gullestad, 1992; Daloz, 2007). Insofar as this is the case, one would thus expect that this code of modesty would manifest itself in restricting or modifying interviewees' expressions of antipathies towards others, as this would indirectly entail an elevation of themselves. Thus, I endeavoured to tap boundary drawing and negative classifications of others by phrasing questions in different ways during the course of the interviews. In other words, informed by Gullestad's notion that there exists an 'egalitarian ideology' in the Norwegian society that somewhat paradoxically conceals, and even helps to maintain, social hierarchies, I experimented with different types of questions in order to shed light on possible tensions between egalitarian values on the one hand, and processes of social closure on the other.

Finally, based on the assumption that the ways in which interviewees classify both goods and other people's ways of life can reveal subjective perceptions of hierarchical relations of domination and subordination, I invited the interviewees to recall and to describe incidents and situations in which they had experienced feelings of superiority, aversion, ressentiment, inferiority, deference, awe, and so forth related to their own and others' cultural tastes and lifestyles. On several occasions such matters were brought up by the interviewees themselves, and I thus endeavoured to probe on their perceptions of such situations. Informed by previous research indicating that people are reluctant to explicitly express perceptions of hierarchy due to egalitarian sentiments, especially if they involve feelings of superiority (e.g. Gullestad, 1992; Lien *et al*, 2001; Skarpenes, 2007), I endeavoured to phrase such questions in a somewhat 'discreet' or indirect way, typically as follow-up questions based on something that was mentioned at an earlier stage in the interview (e.g. 'You said that you cannot stand people with a bad taste in music and that you catch

yourself looking down on such people; can you elaborate on what you mean by that?). In this way, I endeavoured to approach the tension alluded to above from a somewhat different angle.

Having completed the interview sessions, the recordings of the interviews were subsequently transcribed in full by me and two assistants using Express Scribe transcription software. All the interviews were conducted and transcribed in Norwegian. The interview quotes used in this thesis is translated into English by me, with assistance from a British language consultant. In the initial phases of the analysis I followed Bourdieu's (1992: 230) advice in constructing square-tables of pertinent properties of the interviewees. More specifically, each time I discovered a property necessary to characterise an interviewee in terms of his or her speech acts, I created a new column and subsequently assessed the presence or absence of this property among the other interviewees. In this way, I gradually constructed categories of interviewees' classificatory practices in an endeavour to group together types of classifications that were as similar as possible, and by the same token, as different as possible from the types of classifications placed in the other categories. At a later stage in the analysis, the interviewees were projected onto the local social space as described above. In this way, a more focused scrutiny of the correspondences between the interviewees' classificatory practice and their positions in the social space was rendered possible.

3.5 Conclusion

Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological rationale for his model of social stratification, I have argued that it is possible to study social actors' classificatory practices in a relational mode of analysis. By employing qualitative, in-depth interviews I shall in the following empirical analysis endeavour to map out possible homologies or structural affinities between the local social space and the space of class habitus in Stavanger. Notwithstanding certain challenges implied in the employment of qualitative interviews and the limited sampling of cases – in particular issues related to generalisability – I hold that that this analytical strategy can help

remedy some of the problems inherent in previous attempts at mapping out lifestyle differentiation on the basis of survey data. However, my point is not that the qualitative interview method can replace or surpass statistically oriented techniques. On the contrary, the current analysis aims to expand on previous quantitatively oriented research on lifestyle differentiation and social stratification. Yet, insofar as the empirical findings call for it, I aim to challenge previously held assumptions about such matters.

CHAPTER 4
MODES OF CONSUMPTION

4.1 Introduction

Since the works of Weber (1946), Simmel (1997a, 1997b) and Veblen (1967), sociologists have attempted to theorise and/or empirically map out the social distribution of differentiated cultural tastes and lifestyles. In contemporary scholarly debates, the work of Bourdieu (1984; see also Bourdieu and de Saint Martin, 1976; Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990; Bourdieu *et al*, 1996) often serves as a point of departure. Bourdieu holds that there are structural affinities, or 'homologies', between the structures of 'the symbolic space' and 'the social space', meaning that qualitatively different tastes and lifestyles are unevenly distributed among different social classes and class fractions. However, this homology thesis has been challenged on both theoretical-methodological and empirical grounds. Scholars have recently been preoccupied with measuring the degree of 'omnivorousness', i.e. the extent to which cultural consumers' tastes are becoming 'broader', and/or the extent to which these broad tastes straddle divides between 'highbrow', 'middlebrow' and 'lowbrow' cultural forms (for overviews, see Peterson, 2005; Warde *et al*, 2007; Ollivier, 2008). Although the champions of the omnivore thesis do differ in their views of the consequences of the supposed 'rise of the cultural omnivore', consensus seems to exist that we are witnessing a process through which traditional cultural hierarchies are becoming increasingly blurred, implying that a classed distribution of distinct tastes and lifestyles has changed and may even be declining. The existence of more hybrid cultural tastes is thus thought to mark an erosion of, or at least a marked reconfiguration of, Bourdieu's (1984) model of taste distribution.

In this chapter I shall critically engage in this debate. The aim is twofold: on the one hand I shall empirically map out taste differentials in Stavanger based on interview data; on the other, I shall base the discussion upon the theoretical-methodological controversy associated with the notion of the cultural omnivore. This stream of research and its attempts to account for the social distribution of tastes lean on several questionable premises. The most serious objection to the usefulness of the notion of omnivorousness is the methodological point that cultural tastes and their symbolic

meanings cannot simply be 'read' from the volume or composition of the cultural goods and leisure activities social agents (dis)like or (do not) participate in. Although attempts to map out distributional patterns of the cultural goods consumed may yield valuable insights, such patterns hardly tell the whole story of cultural tastes, lifestyles and the social distribution thereof. Indeed, several scholars have suggested that the same cultural goods may be perceived, appreciated and appropriated in qualitatively different ways, implying that there ought to be an analytical de-coupling of the 'whats' and 'hows' of cultural consumption (see for instance Fiske, 1989; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2007; Ollivier, 2008; Prieur and Rosenlund, 2010). In other words, there are reasons to view the distribution of what Bourdieu (1984, 1990b) has termed 'modes of consumption' as an analytically separate – though possibly empirically interrelated – dimension that may or may not be related to the distribution of the consumption of cultural goods. While there may be a connection between *what* social actors consume and *how* they consume their cultural products of choice, this is by no means a necessary connection. Thus, the one should not to be confused with the other. The nature of this relationship is, ultimately, an empirical question.

This chapter addresses whether, and if so how, the distribution of taste corresponds to class relations in present day Stavanger. Based on the assumption that the ways in which the interviewees classify various goods are indicative of how they perceive, appreciate and appropriate these goods, I shall first of all map out the main differences in this regard. The bulk of the chapter contains thorough empirical descriptions of four modes of consumption constructed on the basis of the interview data. In the second part I focus on the social distribution of these qualitatively different taste orientations by mapping out the interviewees' localisation in the local social space. I advance my argument to a more abstract level and return to the Bourdieusian theoretical model of social stratification. Close attention will be paid to the notion of homology and I shall accordingly discuss my findings in the light of previous attempts to chart the social distribution of cultural tastes, addressing in particular the omnivore debate.

4.2 Consumption as an end in itself

There is a fundamental difference traceable in the interview data between those who appropriate a given good as a means to an end, and those who appropriate a given good as an end in itself. There are interviewees who appropriate their goods of choice instrumentally, meaning that the sole purpose of consuming them is to achieve something else (e.g. relaxation, self-improvement and practical know-how). By contrast, there are also interviewees whose consumption of goods satisfies no purpose other than the sheer enjoyment of consuming such goods: the goods are appreciated for their own sake. This opposition is apparent in consumers of cultural goods (e.g. books, plays and pieces of music) and material goods (e.g. motor vehicles, sports equipment and clothing). However, non-instrumental consumption of cultural goods seldom coincides with non-instrumental consumption of material goods: interviewees with non-instrumental tastes for cultural goods usually display a marked instrumental orientation towards material goods, shunning 'material excesses' and 'extravagances'. Conversely, interviewees with non-instrumental tastes for material goods tend to have an instrumental orientation towards cultural goods, dis-identifying with all forms of 'intellectual snobbery'. While most of the interviewees report consuming goods of both types, they tend to consume them differently and with different degrees of commitment. In the following I shall thus differentiate between what I call the *intellectual mode of consumption* and the *luxurious mode of consumption*.

4.2.1 The intellectual mode of consumption

This mode is primarily characterised by a non-instrumental orientation towards cultural goods, implying an aestheticising and sober celebration of 'art for art's sake'. Interviewees in this category are the most avid and voracious cultural consumers in the sample, both in terms of the reported volume of items liked (i.e. number of cultural domains, number of genres and sub-genres within each domain, as well as the number of artists and works), and in terms of time spent on cultural consumption (e.g. reading books, watching plays and visiting art galleries). However, this

voraciousness does not imply an 'anything goes' approach to cultural consumption. On the contrary, these interviewees report far more elaborate and specific evaluative criteria compared to the others. While they may express a certain degree of openness to some goods, others are rejected. Having been exposed to a wide range of cultural expressions throughout their lives – and thus presumably endowed with a high degree of familiarity and knowledgeability – they tend to make high demands as to what kinds of cultural goods are worthy of their appreciation. Bored with all that is 'clichéd', 'generic' and 'stale', they crave something 'new', 'experimental' and 'challenging':

> *Vegard: You said earlier on that you have this need to be challenged. What do you mean by that?*
>
> Interviewee: Yeah, or to feel that… For instance, when I read fiction, I really enjoy the feeling… You know, 'Wow, this author really impresses me! How did this person come up with all that and compose it the way she did?' […] Way too often I get the feeling that I've seen it all before. You can walk around, visiting galleries and cafés… You know, checking out the local amateur artists. Sometimes it can be exciting, but most of the time you see stuff that's been produced a thousand times before. So what I really enjoy is when something is original, when something really surprises me. It's the same with music. I often catch myself thinking 'heard it before, seen it before, read it before'.
>
> *V: You also used the term magical. […] Can you describe what makes things magical?*
>
> I: Well, no. And I guess that's exactly the point. You know, that you cannot easily translate the impression you get into words. And that's what makes things magical. If an artist, or an author, or a musician, manages to do just that. I don't know. It brings about a certain kind of feeling. […] For that to happen, my experience is that a work of art has to be original, or at least something I haven't seen before. [...] When it comes to visual art, I like it when artists mix media. Collages… You know, experimental stuff. […] If an artist manages to show me things I haven't seen before, I get this delightful feeling. [Laughs] Maybe it's as simple as that.
>
> (Julia, artist, late 20s)

> I saw Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*[33] at Carte Blanche,[34] the experimental version that lasted for approximately twelve hours. It was amazing! It was sort of an eye-opener. It was like, 'maybe there is something to Norwegian drama after all?' […] The artificial language, the bad realism, the stiffness… That's what has bothered me

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[33] An 1884 play by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

[34] The national contemporary dance theatre in Bergen.

before. It just doesn't interest me. We've got movies for that sort of thing. We do not need that on a stage. [Laughs] But plays like that, it was unbelievable. […] It was totally surprising. In the sense that you didn't know what would happen next. It was mostly improvised. The whole set… It was surreal. And music was an essential part of it. It was a concert-meets-theatre sort of thing, as opposed to the usual recitation of lines. They went beyond that, and that's what made it so interesting. […] I like to be taken by surprise. I like stuff that has a certain degree of distinctiveness. And that goes for all forms of art, all genres.

(Oliver, musician, mid 30s)

In demanding that cultural goods ought to 'surprise' them in an 'original' way, these interviewees crave 'intellectually challenging experiences'. Their preferences for cultural goods do not, however, follow a strict 'high versus low' scheme, i.e. they do not exclusively crave goods usually considered 'highbrow' while shunning the 'lowbrow'. On the contrary, these interviewees report highly eclectic tastes in terms of cultural goods and, perhaps more importantly, they reflexively problematise, historicise and deconstruct what they conceive of as 'outmoded' and 'old-fashioned' ways of classifying and appropriating goods:

My impression is that my generation has managed to combine the high and the low, and that the divide between elite culture and popular culture has been blurred out for most of us. We move rather elegantly between different taste cultures, without difficulty, without being condemned. On the contrary, you are considered weird if you are too strict, you know, if you cannot allow yourself to watch a reality show on telly.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

I guess it's still there, the old-fashioned… You know, the high culture-popular culture divide. […] Yet at the same time I feel that those boundaries are fading. They were much more prominent before. I guess they express themselves differently now. […] There is something about the time we're living in. You know, things change. It's easier today, you know, to surpass those boundaries. You can be a passionate football fan one day and go to an art exhibition the next. […] But then again, there are undoubtedly huge differences between people growing up in different types of homes… The refined homes, as they call them, with huge bookshelves, and music and culturally interested parents… Those people are raised to become interested in culture. They don't just get the usual package at school. So I guess we've still got a system which opens more doors for some. It's still there.

(Olivia, head of cultural enterprise, late 40s)

While they do consider certain cultural goods as 'vulgar', 'poor' and 'shallow', and other goods as 'refined', 'challenging' and 'clever', such classificatory distinctions do not necessarily follow the *a priori* division of cultural goods usually deployed by cultural sociologists (e.g. in the case of music, sociologists often consider a liking for 'classical music' to betoken 'highbrow' taste, and a liking for 'country and western' to betoken 'lowbrow' taste). Yet these interviewees are fully aware that such classifications and their appurtenant social connotations are widespread, both among intellectuals and lay people, and it is their reflexive and somewhat playful way of transgressing these distinctions that is the most distinguishing feature of these interviewees' mode of appropriating cultural goods. However, far from implying a 'meltdown' in cultural distinctions as some proponents of the omnivore thesis would have it, the propensity to straddle 'old' hierarchical divides is instead a rather advanced mode of appropriating goods that requires a fair stock of knowledge, as well as what Bourdieu (1990b: 66) refers to as 'a feel for the game'.

This strategy of aesthetical transgression seems to take two forms: these interviewees like *different* goods than the 'common' cultural consumer; and they like 'common' cultural goods *differently*. As regards the former strategy, there is a marked tendency for these interviewees to reject cultural goods already canonised as 'high culture'. Nowhere is this more evident than when the interviewees express their opinions on *Stavanger2008* and the cultural events arranged by the local European Capital of Culture organisation:

> *V: Stavanger2008… Did you go to any events?*
> I: No, I didn't care for that stuff at all. […] It was… I don't know… A sort of package thing, hyped up for all the wrong reasons.
>
> (Julia, artist, late 20s)

> There was nothing there that caught my interest. It was all about… Things were supposed to look good on paper. You know, a quote-unquote magnificent play out on a beach somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Weak stuff like that. It was just artificial forms of culture. […] It was constructed so as to look good in an application or something.

> It was all a big hype, a big memorial stone erected by initiators who wanted a big project to show the world the kinds of enterprising people they are, and that they were able to think big. It was all a hoax. You know, what did it really mean? Is Stavanger a European capital of culture? Well, I can tell you: it's not. It's just a tiny, shitty town on the edge of the North Sea that merely has a cultural life to speak of, at least compared to other European cities. But, according to these people, if we can label it as such… You know, brand it, call it something nice, and wrap it in foil… We'll get three-hundred million in funding from the state to buy us some shopping mall-like culture, something really nice from foreign countries. […] It all boiled down to the vanity of the political establishment. […] I call it bureaucratic art.
>
> (Oscar, academic, late 30s)

These interviewees, who knowledgeably and critically select their cultural goods, and weed out events that do not rouse their intellectual interest, seem rather perplexed by goods they consider to be 'clichéd', 'stale' or just plain 'boring' being 'hyped up by the establishment'. Accordingly, many 'canonised', 'institutionalised' and 'established' cultural forms are disliked, either because the goods are perceived as not meeting certain aesthetical standards, or because the interviewees have been overexposed to such goods which then cease to stimulate them intellectually. Such goods are not necessarily classified as 'bad', but they are no longer 'exciting'. They are 'too obvious markers of good taste' and they are no longer 'challenging' or worth seeking out:

> *V: You mentioned that you often find artists boring…*
>
> I: Frans Widerberg,[35] for instance… I don't bother seeing his work. It's not that I find his art bad, but I've seen too much of it. I know exactly what his works are like. He makes bad art and he makes good art. But I wouldn't go to an exhibition unless someone told me he had suddenly made something completely new and different.
>
> (Sofia, academic, late 60s)

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[35] Norwegian painter.

V: Is there anything you wouldn't put on your walls at home?

I: Visual art is a very difficult genre. […] What you put on your walls at home is a very social thing. It's sort of like a social game, some kind of statement. And it can often speak too clearly. And I… Well, I don't want to be too obvious in that regard. I want something that does not speak too loudly. Visual art tends to get outdated, vain or just simply wrong very quickly. For instance, when I was a teenager, I loved Edward Hopper.[36] Yeah, this is a very good example. My mum gave me this huge, framed *Nighthawks at the Diner*, which is one of his most well-known pieces. I've still got it. But I cannot bring myself to put it on my wall. It's almost a cliché. […] Yet I love that picture. But there are some barriers in my head which keep me from putting it on my wall. So it stays in the basement. And it's a very strange mechanism. But what you put on your wall defines you in a way. And it's not that I'm afraid of showing the world that I like that picture. It's just that I want something that's less definable, or less obvious. And my experience is that most of the things that have been canonised at some point become kitsch. […] It testifies to a lack of understanding in some way. […] It's the same with Munch.[37] […] It would be too banal, or kitschy in a sense. […] It's very strange, and one could easily catch oneself being extremely vain about these things. But I still believe it's true.

(Jonas, head of local cultural enterprise, mid 30s)

An important aspect of this strategy of transgression seems to be to avoid 'clichéd' cultural goods, particularly if these are mistakenly or undeservedly considered to be 'high culture' by people perceived as not properly endowed with a sense of aesthetics. This does not, however, mean that these interviewees altogether shun goods associated with 'high' or 'legitimate' culture. It means that they select their goods with great care, often in reflexive opposition to what they conceive of as 'the staleness of the establishment'. The flipside of this strategy is seeking out rare goods not (yet) consecrated by the established art world. A fruitful strategy in this regard seems to be seeking out 'quality goods' in genres usually regarded as 'vulgar', such as Bollywood films,[38] crime novels and country music, and appreciate them in an aestheticising manner:

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[36] American painter.

[37] Norwegian painter.

[38] Bollywood is the informal term used for the Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai, India. Bollywood films are not regularly distributed through cinemas in Norway, though there is an annual festival called Bollywood Festival Norway.

V: What kind of music do you listen to?

I: Well, I like… At the moment I listen to a lot of singer-songwriters, you know, in the country vein. Music dating back to The Byrds[39] and up to recent times. You know, Wilco[40] and that kind of stuff. Country with a slight Americana touch. […] But no Nashville country. You know, the Garth Brooks[41] type of thing. I like what is usually referred to as alternative country.

(Elias, high school teacher, early 30s)

I've got this thing about Bollywood films and Indian music. It's kind of peculiar, but it's a little thing I've gradually got into. I've navigated that landscape and picked out the good stuff. And if you're selective and weed out the bad stuff, it's very exciting. I know quite a bit about India from my studies. And I find it exciting to have a special interest, something I know quite a bit about, something that very few other people have the slightest clue about. That's a value in itself. There's a lot of music in India. Much of it is bad, but a small proportion of it is really good. […] It's not that music that has been produced in like fifteen copies is by definition good. But, you know, I like to dig up obscurities. […] That's what I like and find interesting. When it comes to Bollywood… I like the aesthetic. I like the women, the men, the music, the dancing… I mean, it's really stylish. And a lot of those films are extremely aesthetic and well-composed. I guess most people have a bad impression of it. And the '80s were bad. But in the '90s and 2000s… Extremely aesthetic, well-composed, very good… […] It's all about… You know, I know the language, I know the culture… So it's nice to get an update on what's going on over there. And of course, that peculiar feeling of knowing about something that most people don't have the slightest clue about.

(Philip, high school teacher, late 30s)

There is nothing worse than bad crime fiction. And there's a lot of that stuff around. I'd say most of the crime fiction sold in Norway is shit. But that does not, of course, mean that I have something against the genre *per se*, because I really like good crime fiction. […] In general, I like to take popular genres seriously, you know, academically. So I've got this analytical interest in crime fiction. […] The main problem with the genre is that it has become a refuge for writers who haven't mastered a proper literary language. But of course, that's not true of all of them. But I guess it explains why the genre is usually frowned upon. […] But there are good crime writers and there are bad crime writers. And the best crime writers are of course way better than the run-of-the-mill, you know, plain fiction writers. Even if they don't get treated as such. George Pelacanos[42] is one of them. He's got a proper language. And there's a couple of Norwegians…. Jørgen Gunnerud, Vidar Sundsstøl… Jon Michelet's first books…[43] And of course… I've read a lot of *noir*,

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[39] American band.

[40] American band.

[41] American musician.

[42] American author.

[43] Norwegian authors.

you know, the hardcore crime fiction. Of course, Chandler, Hammett, Macdonald, all those guys.[44] Chandler, for instance… His use of language is so extremely… It's almost kitsch. He pushes it so far that it almost falls apart. And that makes for a fun read. And of course, it's got a historical value as well. […] Both sociologically and in terms of cultural history… It's really interesting. […] Well, I guess I'm on the barricades to defend good crime fiction against the bad. In a sense, I want it to be classified in a separate popular cultural category.

(Jonas, head of local cultural enterprise, mid 30s)

However, this aestheticising flirt with 'popular culture' does not imply all forms defined as popular culture are embraced. Although they do report seeking out music, literature and films that are usually referred to as popular culture, they are merciless in their portrayals of 'bad' forms of popular culture. Just as with 'high' culture, they eclectically choose sub-genres, artists and works to weed out the 'good' from the 'bad'. However, unlike those who shun popular culture for *moral* reasons, these interviewees shun such goods for *aesthetic* reasons, pointing out flaws such as 'sentimentality', 'misplaced heartiness' and 'obviousness'. This is apparent in their depictions of goods from a number of cultural domains, for instance festivals, the visual arts and comedy:

I: Here in Stavanger, we've got all these popular events. You know, *Gladmat*,[45] the international volleyball tournament, big concerts in the town square... They don't interest me at all. They just don't appeal to me.

V: Why is that?

I: I guess it's fair to say that these events have an explicit popular profile. I don't want to make myself appear vainer than I really am, but… It just doesn't appeal to me because of their profile. It's popular in the bad sense of the word.

(Elias, high school teacher, late 30s)

V: Are there any types of visual art you steer clear of?

I: Yeah, that happens quite often, actually. And it's not because I want to appear very distinguished or anti-popular or anything like that. But, you know, visual art with a popular appeal… I don't care much for that. […] The immediate kind of art that

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[44] American authors.

[45] Local food festival.

appeals to everyone in the exact same way, I just don't find it interesting. You don't get a personal relationship with the picture. I find that boring. […]

V: More specifically, what kind of art would you not have hanging on your walls at home?

I: Nothing mass-produced. You know, an ultra-popular work of art. […] The kind of art that people buy to decorate their walls, even if they haven't got the slightest interest in art... There is nothing wrong with that, of course. But it's not for me. […] Like the local artist, what's his name? The guy from Klepp… Storm Juliussen. I'm not a big fan, I can tell you that. […] I wouldn't have one of his pictures of sailing ships hanging on my wall. No way.

(Emil, musician and social worker, late 30s)

V: Is there any kind of comedy you dislike?

I: Yeah, I don't find punchline-based comedy funny at all. That's exactly what Monty Python[46] rebelled against in their prime. […] Those obvious hate objects… The Norwegian attempts… I've even forgotten their names. The *Karl & Co* kind of stuff, *Mot i brøstet*…[47] It's nothing but an outdated, Norwegian, revue and farce tradition. A Tore Ryen[48] tradition taken into television format. I dislike it on stage and I dislike it on telly. […] And I don't find Kristian Valen[49] funny. Probably because he's just too much. It gets too loud in a way. And too fucking obvious. And you easily get bored with that stuff. […] It's the same with music. From revue follows *dansband*.[50]

(Jonas, head of local cultural enterprise, mid 30s)

Although these interviewees certainly shun a range of cultural goods perceived as 'popular in the bad sense of the word', some cultural goods are perceived as so bad that they achieve cult status. A second strategy of aesthetical transgression is thus to like 'common' cultural goods *differently* than the 'common' consumer, i.e. in another mode. One distinguishing feature among these interviewees is their inclination to appropriate 'vulgar' and 'popular' cultural goods in a playful and ironic, yet aestheticising, manner. Despite, or perhaps *because of*, the established art world's dismissal of such goods, these interviewees regard them as 'aesthetically interesting':

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[46] British comedy group.

[47] Norwegian situation comedies.

[48] Norwegian director and playwright.

[49] Norwegian comedian and musician.

[50] *Dansband* ('dance band') is a Swedish term for a band that plays *dansbandsmusik* ('dance band music'). The genre has been hugely influential in Scandinavian countries since the seventies.

V: You said earlier that you like bad films. Can you elaborate?

I: Take a film like the Norwegian *Dis*,[51] or a more recent example, the American film *The Room*.[52] It's so bad that it becomes good in a way. You sit there, and it's like: 'Huh-huh, now something funny is about to happen.' And this approach, that you look for funny aspects, or that you are aware of such things… When you have seen a film several times, you start seeing things you haven't noticed before… And that particular film… There is just something about the setting, the things they say, and the way they say it… […] I would definitely say that I watch that film with a different pair of glasses, so to speak. Compared to other films, you know, high-quality work… Then it's the other way around. They are so thought-through and well done that you become fascinated by all the details that are correct. Like the American television series *Mad Men*. So there are two totally different approaches to seeing a film. […] Of course, you've got that ironic twist, that ironic distance, in a sense. But still, with films like *The Room*, and especially that one, when you see it several times you actually start liking it. And you start seeing stuff and start thinking: 'Hey, there's actually something there! There's got to be a reason why people are so obsessed with this film, apart from it being really bad.'

(Emil, musician and social worker, late 30s)

I: I've got a lot of bad records at home. But they have to be bad enough. Or, rather, a record has got to have some kind of personality to it. The personality has to shine through. That goes for good records as well as bad ones. That's what turns me on, the personal expression. If I hear a band that tries to sound like another band, that's not interesting to me at all. But if they fail to do so, then it becomes interesting. […] One of William Shatner's records, for instance.[53] It's called *Transformed Man*. On this record his ego has run amok. It's a mix of Shakespeare and Beatles songs. Beatles songs with Shakespeare's sensitivity, sort of. Because he's a superstar, I guess he thinks he can… I don't know. It's just fascinating. And we have a couple of local ones as well, Anniken Loken and Arvid Sletta.[54] Yeah, there are lots of them.

V: What is it that fails? How do you sort the right kind of bad from the wrong king of bad?

I: That's totally subjective. What I might find entertaining… Someone else might say: 'No, no! This is just bad.' But I might say: 'Yeah, of course it is, but just listen to this.' […] I don't know. I guess it crosses a line somehow. […] For instance, the Arvid Sletta record… The musical expression is so totally beyond everyone's conception of what music is supposed to be, so it ends up being funny and, you know, transgressive somehow.

(Oliver, musician, late 30s)

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[51] A 1996 feature film directed by the Norwegian Aune Sand.

[52] A 2003 feature film directed by the American Tommy Wiseau.

[53] Canadian actor, musician, recording artist, author and film director.

[54] Obscure Norwegian musicians. The interviewee later informs me that both are 'mentally challenged'.

A controlled, distanced and somewhat ironic fascination with goods regarded as 'kitsch'[55] seems to be the hallmark of this strategy. While the ironic appropriation of 'bad' cultural goods might not be distinguishing in itself, this form of subtle irony is quite different from merely consuming goods one does not like in a tongue-in-cheek manner. Rather, these connoisseurs of vulgarity differentiate between and weed out goods not worthy of appreciation on their quest to find 'particularly dated' and 'inappropriately serious' attempts at 'heartfelt artistic expressions'. Though such goods are regarded as flawed according to 'normal' aesthetical standards, these interviewees hold that these goods 'accidently' (i.e. not intended as such by the artist) end up transgressing aesthetical boundaries. Thus, the irony involved in the appropriation of such goods should not be understood as merely poking fun at bad attempts to create art. Although mockery is no doubt involved, the goods are *also* appreciated for their 'aesthetical uniqueness'. There is a certain seriousness attached to the playful manner in which such goods are appreciated. Contemporary artistic attempts to re-create the uniqueness of goods that have already achieved cult status, and/or goods perceived as deliberately designed for ironic appropriation, are thus shunned:

> *V: We were talking about distance and irony and a certain kind of art that is produced tongue-in-cheek. [...] Are there types of irony that you don't appreciate in art?*
>
> I: Yeah, there is a lot of it. [...] It is, for instance, a bad idea to do cover songs of old classics in a humorous way. I can't stand it! [Laughs.] That's a bad form of irony. Like Nouvelle Vague,[56] Señor Coconut,[57] Susanna & the Magical Orchestra,[58] all that stuff. [...] And of course, bands like Turbonegro,[59] that's a good example. They've got this approach that 'everything has been done before, so let's just play watered-down boogie in an ironic way.' [...] Of course, one cannot be a full-on modernist nowadays, but then again, you cannot just give in, if you know what I mean? [...] It's

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[55] The term kitsch usually refers to form of art that is considered an inferior, tasteless copy of an extant style of art or a worthless imitation of art of recognized value (Greenberg, 1961; Elias, 1998; Adorno, 2001). For less condescending depictions of kitsch, see Sontag (1966) and Rolness (1992).

[56] French band.

[57] German composer, musician and producer; also known as Uwe Schmidt.

[58] Norwegian band.

[59] Norwegian band.

the same with the film industry. While I can appreciate a guy like Tarantino,[60] it's the whole… We're now being served up what used to be called B-movies… But now we're getting remakes of such films, with a big budget, and a kind of… A distance, and an intentional kind of irony. Generally, I don't care much for that. […] It's the whole retro thing. Like Death Proof [61] and all that stuff. Perhaps they are entertaining in a way, but it's the whole… Certain film makers fall in love with a certain type of expression, and they attempt to recreate it with a bigger budget. I guess what they're aiming for is a kind of revival of cult films from the seventies. But that's just not possible. They just construct a type of… I don't know. I think it's impossible.

(Oliver, musician, late 30s)

To summarise, the two strategies of transgressing aesthetic boundaries – liking different things and liking things differently – are distinguishing features which demarcate these interviewees from the other ones reporting an interest in cultural goods. Unlike those who somewhat pedantically follow a 'high versus low' scheme in their consumption choices – either by expressing a certain goodwill towards already canonised cultural goods while shunning those that are not, or vice versa – these interviewees reflexively and playfully transgress such boundaries. Following Bourdieu's idea (1984) of viewing the universe of cultural goods as a relationally defined system of signs, a given good always bears with it certain social connotations. However, the act of consuming a given good does not necessarily mean the same thing for everybody. On the contrary, by emphasising the way in which these interviewees subvert existing meanings attached to cultural goods, it might be argued that they have the means both to create new meanings out of these goods, and to decipher and appreciate other people's playful transgressions. Such re-ordering and re-contextualising of objects to communicate new meanings within a system of signs presuppose prior and sedimented meanings attached to the goods, as well as social actors more or less reflexively pursuing the subversion of 'old' meanings. According to semiologist John Clarke, social actors may thus function as 'bricoleurs' in subverting the system of cultural signs:[62]

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[60] American film director, screenwriter, producer, and actor.

[61] A 2007 feature film directed by the American Quentin Tarantino.

[62] Hebdige and Clarke, or more generally, scholars associated with the Birmingham school and its inquiries into 'subcultures' and 'countercultures', have been criticised for an empirically unfounded

> Together, object and meaning constitute a sign, and, within any one culture, such signs are assembled, repeatedly, into characteristic forms of discourse. However, when the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within that discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed. (Clarke, 1975: 177; see also Hebdige, 1979: 103)

This mode of (re)appropriating cultural goods thus constitutes a 'secret language' and a code with which to decipher it, accessible only to those in-the-know.[63] Social differences are not only reflected in the objects consumed, but perhaps more importantly, in the signifying practices which represent those objects and render them meaningful. Far from revealing a 'meltdown' in the differential distribution of cultural tastes, the transgressing practices of these interviewees demarcate them from people who appropriate cultural goods without the playfulness. While not necessarily intended as a pursuit of social distinction, esteem and prestige (on the contrary, several of these interviewees explicitly downplay and dis-identify with such pursuits, the significance of which I shall return to in Chapter 7) their classificatory practices are distinguished from the classificatory practices of other interviewees.

Although these interviewees certainly tend to enjoy 'art for art's sake', their taste for material goods is of a rather different character. Unlike interviewees whose mode of consumption implies that shopping and acquiring expensive material goods are ends in themselves, these interviewees explicitly dis-identify with what they conceive of as a dubious combination of 'materialism', 'squandering' and 'flashiness':

> *V: Do you have any preferences when it comes to furniture, interior design? What do you like? What do you dislike?*

'heroism' implied in their celebration of youthful rebellion (Thornton, 1995; Gelder, 2005). However, my point is not to explore the extent to which the aesthetical transgressions of the interviewees function as counter-forces threatening the political status quo. Rather, I employ the notion of bricoleur to highlight the ways in which some interviewees differ from other interviewees in their classifying practices. The question of whether these practices have political consequences is outside the scope of this inquiry.

[63] Indeed, as we shall see in the following chapters, the interviewees characterised by this mode of consumption not only weed out cultural goods not worthy of appropriation; cultural consumers perceived as lacking the ability to appreciate goods in similar ways are also disfavoured.

I: Yeah, of course I've got preferences. But if you ask me if I actually obey them, that's a whole different story. I like clean and neat furniture. Not strict minimalism, but a clean design. […] But I am not materialistic. It's not a matter of prestige for me. It doesn't define who I am. […] And though I say that I don't define myself by what my living room looks like, my impression is that there are lots of people who do just that. There are lots of people who spend time and energy making it all look perfect. And it's easy to laugh at the expense of every other couple in their thirties who buy PH lamps[64] or Arne Jacobsen chairs.[65] It's not that refined any more. It's almost pathetic. [...] I could never pick the standard markers of good taste and just shove them into my home. That sofa, those chairs, that coffee table, those lamps… You know, stroll down to *Møbelgalleriet*[66] and just pick something from their catalogues. Never.

(Oscar, academic, mid 30s)

In a sense, this shunning of 'standard markers of good taste' is quite similar to the disfavouring of 'already canonised' cultural goods. Endowed with a feel for the game of distinctions, these interviewees shun all that is 'obvious', 'clichéd' and 'outmoded'. But whereas their consumption of cultural goods is marked by a certain commitment and avidity implied in their strategies of aesthetic transgression, their consumption of material goods is better characterised by moderation and asceticism, and in some cases even by abstinence. Apart from food and beverages, which some of these interviewees are highly interested in, material consumption is generally regarded as 'unnecessary', and should thus be avoided:

V: Can you describe what kinds of clothes you wear?

I: I don't like buying clothes. I generally don't like buying stuff. I really hate it, going to shops buying stuff. Except food. I love buying food. […] I can spend a lot of money on food. […] We buy fresh meat at Idsøe.[67] And we buy fresh fish at the market. And vegetables as well. We buy fresh bread at Fredriks bakeri.[68] And then on Saturdays there's Ostehuset øst,[69] the new fancy café. We buy fresh focaccia, ciabatta, croissants and stuff like that. […] Life's too short to eat bad food. […] But generally, I find it terribly boring going shopping. It's horrible! And I find it unnecessary to spend money on unnecessary things. We're at a point in our lives

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[64] A series of light fixtures designed by Danish designer and writer Poul Henningsen.
[65] Chairs designed by Danish architect and designer Arne Emil Jacobsen.
[66] Local furniture shop.
[67] Local butcher.
[68] Local bakery.
[69] Local café.

where we've got all the things we need. Well, most of it anyway. And if we're going to get some more, or something different, we have to throw something out. And that's unnecessary. You know, if what we've already got still works. So I don't buy clothes unless I have to, or if I am somewhere really cheap. And that means that you probably won't find me in a clothes shop.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

Consuming material goods is conditioned by purchasing power, and several interviewees point out that a lack of money limits their consumption of desired goods. However, purchasing power alone cannot explain the variations in material consumption, as some interviewees with high amounts of economic capital report quite modest consumption budgets compared to other interviewees who have considerably fewer economic resources. Moreover, the types of goods the money is spent on vary considerably. As is evident from the quotes above, Oscar and Thomas report shunning 'unnecessaries' such as designer furniture and expensive garments, yet report indulging in the consumption of types of food and drinks which other interviewees might consider to be 'squandering' money. Thus, in addition to purchasing power, different modes of consuming material goods are structured by a social factor. Indeed, some interviewees even report that perceived peer-pressure is taken into account when purchasing goods. This is the case with Philip, who reports having spent considerable time pondering the acquisition of a fifty-inch television screen:

We had a regular telly up until recently. It was like seventeen years old. […] But now that we've rebuilt our house, and as the living room is so narrow, the only solution was to put the telly far away from the sofa. And eventually, after measuring distances and talking to people who know about such things, we found out we needed a fifty-inch screen. And I actually like it, because, like I said, I watch quite a lot of films. It's a whole different experience now. […] But of course, I was a bit ambivalent at first. You know, in the milieu, when you've got friends working at the university, it's a bit… You get treated like a leper if you mention that you've bought a fifty-inch telly. Because you're not supposed to have a telly at all, and definitely not an interest in such matters. But like I said, the reason why we bought it was because we had to put it far away from the sofa.

(Philip, high school teacher, mid 30s)

These interviewees do not necessarily shun material goods completely; some report being 'style-conscious' about clothing, furniture and gadgets such as computers, stereos and television screens. However, they explicitly point out that they do not wish to distinguish themselves on the basis of material consumption, and compared to interviewees who report higher consumption budgets, they are far more sober in their material tastes. Their rejection of 'squandering' money might thus be characterised by what Hebdige (1979: 103) has referred to as 'conspicuous refusals', meaning that the absence of a certain type of consumption is reflexively intended and thus socially loaded. Accordingly, interviewees characterised by an intellectual mode of consumption, implying that cultural goods are appreciated in an aestheticising and playful manner, tend to be much more moderate in their attitude to material goods, shunning the 'extravagances' and 'excesses' associated with expensive lifestyles.

4.2.2 The luxurious mode of consumption

Whereas the intellectual mode of consumption is characterised by an inclination to appropriate *cultural* goods as an end in themselves, the luxurious mode of consumption demonstrates an inclination to appropriate expensive *material* goods in a similar fashion. Reporting spending considerably more money on goods such as motor vehicles, boats, summer holidays, jewellery, sports equipment, clothing, food and beverages than the other interviewees in the sample, interviewees in this category are by far the most voracious consumers of expensive luxury goods.[70] While they certainly have the economic means to fulfil their worldly desires, their taste for luxury does not seem to ensue directly from their endowment with economic capital,

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[70] The notion of luxury goods is ambiguous. As noted by Daloz (2010: 61ff), 'luxury' is often contrasted to 'real human needs', which implies a complicated – and perhaps irresolvable – philosophical debate on the nature of 'human needs'. From a less normative standpoint one could, alternatively, establish a distinction between 'subsistence goods' and 'prestige goods', but this distinction also entails an unfortunate essentialising of cultural goods, as what is considered prestigious might be contested and highly variable depending on context. Nevertheless, as is evident in the interview data, certain material goods are considered 'excessive' and thus to be avoided by some interviewees, while others find these goods attractive and worthwhile. Thus, the deployment of the term in this analysis is not so much intended as an endeavour to arrive at a definition of luxury, as much as a shorthand device with which to highlight the opposition between different modes of appropriating material goods.

as there are several other interviewees highly endowed with economic capital who do not report the same interest in expensive material goods. Indeed, what sets these interviewees apart from other consumers of such goods is first and foremost their *willingness* to spend money, as well as the 'pleasure' they report deriving from acquiring exclusive goods:

> I am privileged. I have an income that's way beyond the average. I've got lots of investments in stocks and real estate. And I have the opportunity to do whatever I want. When it comes to leisure and my spare time, I never consider the cost. And that's a privilege. If I feel like going to a concert, eating dinner at Café de France,[71] or if I didn't have plans for the weekend and felt like going somewhere, I could do that. I don't have to think about it. And that's a privilege in itself. The cost of things is not a criterion for me leisure-wise. I do what I want. I think. [...] I've got one goal in life, and that's to spend all my money so that my children won't find a lot of unspent money when I die. Instead, they should find objects and stuff that I've found pleasure in. And if they do find money, I have in a sense failed. Because money is just a means to do things you want and can find pleasure in.
>
> (Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

> I've got this feminine side, and that's shopping. I am quite a shopper. It could be food, or clothes, or shoes. You name it. All kinds of stuff. When it comes to food, I don't care much for shops like REMA 1000.[72] I don't go to stores like that. I find that boring. There's got to be fresh produce. You know, not just the usual stuff. I'd rather go to shops like Helgø.[73] [...] I buy a lot of clothes, and a lot of shoes. Well, not out of proportion. And I spend money on sports equipment. Bikes, cars, boats and stuff like that. [...] I am quite conscious about what I want. And if I have decided on something, I spend quite a bit of time searching for what I want. [...] When it comes to clothes and shoes, I go to Rolfsen and Geddon.[74] I am materialistic. I am conscious about brands. I know what I want. There are some expensive brands that don't interest me, because I don't like them. But usually, I like the expensive brands. That's what I end up buying anyway. [...] I usually go to stores that are classed as expensive stores. [...] I could never buy my trousers at Cubus, H&M and all those places.[75]
>
> (Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)

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[71] Local restaurant.
[72] Norwegian grocery store chain.
[73] Local grocery store.
[74] Local clothing stores.
[75] Clothing stores.

In seeking pleasure and happiness by acquiring material goods, these interviewees are adhering to a morality of hedonism. Unlike other interviewees in the sample – who report either completely shunning 'material excesses', or moderation in their material consumption, for instance due to a lack of purchasing power or due to moral convictions – these interviewees are endowed with both the objective possibilities and the subjective willingness to indulge in luxury. Despite their awareness that most people cannot afford their expensive lifestyles, they see no point in being 'stingy'. Indeed, they repeatedly distance themselves from those whom they conceive of as 'cheapskates', and they dismiss people who are perceived as criticising their lifestyles as 'envious'.

While all the interviewees in the sample report consuming material goods, many of them consider acquiring such goods to be a 'necessary evil', and often point out that they choose 'reasonably priced' and 'simple' alternatives. By contrast, interviewees with a taste for luxury have a qualitatively different commitment to material goods, emphasising qualities such as 'exclusiveness', 'patina' and 'charm', while disparaging what is considered 'cheap', 'inauthentic' and 'undistinguished':

> I hate everything associated with Norway. I hate the Norwegian aesthetic. […] Pinewood furniture, dried flowers and national romanticism. At my place you won't find anything that resembles Norwegianness. I don't like it. As simple as that. […] The first thing I bought when I moved in here was some crystal decanters from the sixties. You know, for whisky. […] The problem is that Norwegian stores usually have very limited selections, especially when it comes to furniture. I guess the demand for good stuff is low anyway. Most people haven't found out about it, either by travelling or by reading foreign magazines and books, or by watching films. You know, to broaden their perspective. They don't understand that they can order stuff from abroad, or actually going there to buy it. They just end up going to IKEA, Living and Bohus[76] and buy all that cheap crap that has neither character nor beauty. People choose to buy a cheap replica of a grandfather clock for a thousand kroner instead of waiting for an auction and buying the real deal for ten thousand. If it resembles the original a little, they'll buy it. But I would rather wait it out until I find something that's got an inner quality, either because of good craftsmanship, or because it's got patina, a charming design which makes it worth acquiring.

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[76] Chain-stores selling furniture and home products.

<div align="right">(Lucas, lawyer, mid 30s)</div>

> I'm not necessarily preoccupied with the modern and trendy, but I guess it's important for me to have something that not everybody else has. Clothes, for instance. I've got some favourite brands that are quite unusual. […] I guess it's not the end of the world if I see someone in a similar jacket, it's not like that. It's just that some people think it's really important to be just like everybody else. But I think, when you grow up, you become more… It's more important to become oneself in a way. […] Well, I guess I would be quite perplexed if I got to a party and there was someone there with a similar dress.

<div align="right">(Anna, manager, oil company, early 50s)</div>

Blindly following the dictates of 'fashions and fads' and acquiring 'what everybody else has' seem to be considered the ultimate sign of the undistinguished. Conforming to the tastes of 'common' people is thus to be avoided at (almost) any cost. Concerned with exclusivity and individuality, these interviewees typically report avoiding big chain stores and their 'mass-produced' goods. Even local niche stores providing goods within their area of interest are avoided due to the danger of losing one's individuality. As far as possible, they prefer buying their goods of choice while abroad or online. Moreover, these interviewees are far more concerned about brands than the others in the sample, and they typically shun brands that have connotations with the 'generic' and 'cheap'. This is particularly evident in their depiction of cars:

> *V: What kinds of cars do you like?*
>
> I: Well, it's got to be an Audi. Yes. Acceptable luxury, as they call it. […] There are certain mechanisms, of course. I've got certain preferences, certain brands that I like. You know, you associate things with certain brands. And then you classify them in your head. And there are brands that appeal to me, and there are brands that don't […] Like Skoda. I guess it boils down to psychology. Because the Volkswagen company produces both Skoda and Audi. So there are a lot of similar parts. But I would never drive a Skoda.

<div align="right">(Georg, banker, late 40s)</div>

> You know, I still have a problem with cars like KIA, the whole concept. I cannot identify with it. And Skoda… The cars are fantastic, but there's one thing I don't like about them. And that says it all. It's the logo. It's so fucking ugly! They have even put it on the steering wheel, so you have to look at it all the time. That green lion. This friend of mine, he's got a new… What's its name? The top model…. It's called Superb. Brand new. Beautiful. Great interior and all. And that's what I told him when

I tried it: 'Everything's perfect, except for one little thing. I would ask the salesman to change the steering wheel. Or paint it black… So you don't have to look at that green, ugly logo.' But Skoda is not a bad car. […] I also had a Hyundai once, as a rental car. That was a rattletrap, I can tell you that. All plastic and it didn't give that… [Makes a kissing sound] That solid feeling. […] I guess I have a problem with the Korean mentality.

(Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

This concern with brands seems twofold. First, it is linked to the perceived quality of goods. Disliking 'low quality', 'bad design' and 'fragility', these interviewees often have their own favourite brands of choice and seem to assume these brands will guarantee the desired quality. Second, it is linked to what Baudrillard (1981) refers to as 'sign value', meaning the value and emotional attachment accorded to an object due to the prestige it bestows upon the possessor, rather than the actual material value and utility derived from the function and the primary use of the object. In reporting that the consumption of a certain brand provides 'the right feeling', these interviewees typically shun goods failing to provide such feelings. Some even report brand loyalty, buying only Jaguar cars, Apple computers, Chanel cosmetics, etc. By the same token, some brands are resolutely shunned, especially if they are regarded as 'inauthentic', 'generic' or 'cheap imitations of the real deal'. While such brands may represent goods of the desired quality, they are nevertheless rejected as they give the consumers the wrong kinds of associations. Thus, the quality of goods seems to be a necessary, but far from sufficient, requirement when these interviewees acquire material goods. Adhering to certain brands that connote both quality and exclusivity is the hallmark of this mode of consuming material goods.

By contrast, these interviewees demonstrate a quite different inclination in their consumption of cultural goods. Unlike the previous category of interviewees, they typically report limited interest in such matters. Although they do report spending time reading books, visiting art galleries and attending plays and concerts, they do not enjoy cultural goods as an end in themselves. On the contrary, their cultural consumption is much more pragmatic and instrumental, and they typically report

consuming such goods in order to 'relax' or 'be entertained'. Goods that are considered 'too heavy' are thus avoided:

> *V: Books and literature… Do you like to read?*
>
> I: Usually during holidays. I can't bring myself to read in the week. But if I do read, I grab what's lying around. Nothing too heavy. […] I don't seek out particular authors to read their acclaimed books. I don't have time for that. […] I steer clear of heavy, Russian authors. I can't stand that type of thing. I don't need sentences that stretch a whole page. It's got to be an easy-read.
>
> (Kristian, dentist, late 30s)

> *V: You said that you don't read certain kinds of books. Why is that?*
>
> I: I don't see any reason to, I guess. It doesn't give me anything. Just look at my background. I mean, I'm a realist. […] I am a person who likes facts. To analyse a text… To me, that's… I cannot bring myself to sit down and do that. I don't need that. I guess there are people who do, and that's… I can understand why. When people sit down and find this particular sentence, this one line. I can understand that it gives them something. But to me… […] It's unthinkable. To me, a book is a matter of entertainment. I don't seek out books to achieve a cultural understanding, or because it's got a particularly good plot, or because it's well-written. That's not important to me. I guess some people can just freeze at one sentence, sitting there pondering it, because it's so good. I'm not like that. I plough on through. I play the film in my head while I read the book. I'm an entertainment junkie. It's the excitement that draws me to it.
>
> (Mikkel, manager, oil company, early 40s)

Moreover, these interviewees report frequently attending plays and classical music concerts, and some of them seem to be voracious consumers of what sociologists usually depict as 'highbrow culture'. However, their attendance is not necessarily motivated by a love of art, but by a pragmatic social inclination, such as 'socialising' or 'entertaining clients':

> *V: Do you go to concerts? For instance classical concerts at Stavanger Konserthus?*[77]
>
> I: Yes, quite often actually. But when I do, it's because of my job. I do it because it's important to my clients. I do it because of them. Definitely not for myself. I am tormented by it. Well, it's not that I get grumpy or hateful or anything. I am able to

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[77] Local concert hall.

sit there and listen. And I guess some pieces are good. But nothing is good enough to make me want to do it again. […] I choose to believe that it's unreasonable to spend time on it.

<div align="right">(Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)</div>

V: Music… You mentioned classical music and jazz earlier on.

I: I never listen to that kind of music at home. […] I want it live, at a concert. At home I listen to a kind of light… Call it background music. It's mostly pop music of some kind. Rock or ballads. Not jazz. And I use music differently at home or in my car compared to going out. If I'm travelling, and if I've been out eating or something, I really enjoy going to a jazz club afterwards. Have a couple of beers. That's really nice.

V: Have you thought of why you never play jazz at home?

I: I have no idea. But I guess it has something to do with the social aspect. […] If I'm listening to music at home, it's to relax. Often in combination with work, or while reading the paper. […] But when I go out with friends… […] It's because of the social aspect. And I guess there are a lot of people like me. I'm not alone in thinking like this. The keenest music lovers acquire all sorts of CDs, narrow genres… And play them at home. I'm not like that at all. That doesn't mean that I don't have a lot of jazz CDs, because I do. But I very seldom listen to them. I've got lots of CDs and a bunch of tracks on my iPod. I might play a track or two, and then tune in to something lighter afterwards.

<div align="right">(Johan, CEO, mid 50s)</div>

The luxurious mode of consumption seems thus to be the intellectual mode reversed; an inclination to appreciate material goods as an end in themselves, accompanied by an inclination to appreciate cultural goods as a means to an end. While they do, at least to some degree, report consuming similar cultural goods as interviewees in the previous category, the mode of appropriating them is of a rather different character. Indeed, these interviewees explicitly contrast their own tastes and practices with those of people whom they perceive as more avidly interested in consuming cultural goods. However, notwithstanding the internal differences in the types of goods the interviewees in the two categories derive pleasure from, they share the propensity to enjoy goods as an end in itself. This propensity clearly demarcates them from interviewees whose consumption of goods functions as a means to an end.

4.3 Consumption as a means to an end

A number of interviewees in the sample do not consume their art for art's sake, nor do they find pleasure in acquiring expensive material goods. These interviewees, by contrast, demand something *more* from their cultural consumption than merely the pleasure derived from it. They are in a sense more *instrumental* in their orientations towards cultural goods than their counterparts. If there is nothing 'comprehensible' or immediately 'useful' to be derived from the consumption of goods, these interviewees simply see no point in consuming them. There are, however, important differences within the group of interviewees characterised by such taste orientations. As with the non-instrumental consumption of goods, there is an inversely related opposition between preferences for cultural and material goods, meaning that a given interviewee reporting a high degree of interest in cultural goods tends to be accompanied by a low degree of interest in material goods, and vice versa. Thus, in the following I shall differentiate between what I call the *educational mode of consumption* and the *practical mode of consumption*.

4.3.1 The educational mode of consumption

Similar to the interviewees characterised by an intellectual mode of consumption, those who appropriate goods in an educational mode typically report an avid interest in cultural goods and a corresponding indifference to material goods. However, unlike their intellectual counterparts, this category is comprised of interviewees somewhat less familiar with cultural goods, typically reporting an urge to 'learn more' and to 'educate themselves' by exposure to cultural forms not previously encountered. Indeed, these interviewees report a remarkable degree of curiosity and an extraordinary willingness to understand 'the meaning' of cultural goods:

> V: Are there any types of plays that are more interesting that others?
>
> I: No, not really. I like it all. Well, of course I find myself thinking 'this was difficult to comprehend', or 'what happened there?' My son recently came home from school.

They had been to a play at the theatre, it was called *Borkman*.[78] And he said: 'Mum, I didn't understand any of it.' I haven't got round to seeing it yet. But generally I find plays very demanding, and you have to sit down to prepare yourself before you go to see it. You know, 'What is this really about?' You have to understand the art form and what it's supposed to give you. […] But you don't necessarily have to understand everything. Some things are just too incomprehensible. I often catch myself thinking 'What did they mean by this?' But in a way, that's the way it's supposed to be. You are supposed to go away pondering the meaning of it afterwards. […] I remember one time, we had been to a Jon Fosse[79] play and my husband said: 'Oh my god, what is this crap? I didn't get it all!' And of course, it was really incomprehensible. […] Many of the things they showcase here in Stavanger, they are too… They are very demanding. And common people haven't got the big visions and the proper knowledge about such stuff. They just don't get it. And there's been a lot of criticism in that regard. […] In my view, there is too much of the demanding stuff. But then again, I like it too. It's so different from what I'm used to. […] And I think it's important that there are people you can reach towards, who can make you curious about such matters. You know, 'Why have they done it like that? What was that play about? Who were the authors? Why did they say that?' I sort of like it when things get a bit abstract.

(Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s)

In reporting a lack of knowledge of and familiarity with cultural goods, these interviewees demonstrate a remarkable degree of trust in people perceived as experts, and they often seek guidance through a variety of sources, such as book clubs, the cultural sections in newspapers, reviews, art critics, etc. Thus, these interviewees seem to betray a certain 'goodwill' towards the taste of others, implying a somewhat alienated, yet highly eager and enthusiastic relationship, to certain cultural forms. Unlike the interviewees who knowledgeably and critically weed out goods that do not interest them intellectually, these interviewees are instead characterised by what Bourdieu (1984: 323ff) refers to as a state of 'allodoxia', meaning the indiscriminate reverence and the somewhat misplaced beliefs typical among cultural consumers less familiar with 'legitimate culture'. Arguably betraying a gap between acknowledgement and knowledge, these interviewees report engaging in autodidactic projects to 'educate themselves':

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[78] An 1866 play by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.
[79] Norwegian author and playwright.

V: What types of books do you like to read?

I: […] Well, I've got this project, this plan… I'm supposed to read all the Norwegian literary classics that we have all heard of but never read. But as of now the project is going sort of badly. I started with this Amalie Skram[80] stuff, but the language was too difficult. But I still have this plan to read more. Lately I've read *My Struggle*.[81] […] The main problem with the reading project is that no-one wants to join me. I wanted to do this kind of reading circle with my friends. You know, each reading their own book, and then we were supposed to tell each other about it afterwards. But they all thought it was boring. You know, 'These books aren't relevant anymore.' But then I said: 'Of course they are. And it's because they're relevant that they still live on, that's because they are that well-known.' But it didn't matter. They all left. And now I've sort of lost the momentum. No-one wants to play with me. [Laughs.]

V: Why did you decide to look up those classics in the first place?

I: Well, it's our cultural heritage, and it's a bit embarrassing not to have read those books. You should have at least read a couple of them. And if they have survived that long, it must be fun. It probably is. I hope. I don't know. But like I said, the project has not really come into being… Yet.

(Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

V: Do you like plays?

I: Plays, plays, plays… No, I've seen way too few. But I intend to see more. This autumn me and this friend of mine have initiated what we call project play. She has grown up in an actor's home. You know, she's the artsy type. […] And she has seen lots of plays and now she's supposed to take me. She sort of takes me into another world. This is all new to me, because I've never really cared for plays. But it's really fascinating. […] I guess I will be doing it a lot more in the future. Less beer, more plays. That's the way things are going.

V: Do you have an idea of what types of plays you like?

I: Not really. Right now I'm trying to get to grips with the classics. All the things I haven't seen. […] I have to start somewhere. I have seen some of them when I was younger, but I feel I have to know these big, important, Norwegian classics. That's my focus right now. […] But I guess I'm a *tabula rasa*, I'm open to anything new. […] As of now we buy tickets to everything they showcase. Eventually, I'll develop a taste and be able to say what I like and what I don't like. Right now everything is fun.

(Andrea, public sector consultant, early 30s)

Whereas the interviewees who appropriate their cultural goods of choice in an intellectual mode typically shun 'clichéd' and 'already canonised' goods, these

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[80] Norwegian author.

[81] A 2009-2011 six volume novel by the Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgård.

interviewees betray a strikingly docile reverence towards such goods; they attend plays and read books in order to 'learn' and to 'understand' what they are all about, precisely *because* they are classified as 'high culture', 'classics' and 'must-sees' by others. Thus, they are in a sense much more compliant and credulous than their non-conformist counterparts. But there are limits to their cultural goodwill: if nothing 'comprehensible' and 'useful' can be extracted from the consumption of cultural goods, such goods tend to be disregarded, particularly if they are considered 'too experimental', 'unpleasant' or 'offensive':

V: Do you like plays?

I: Yes I do, but I was more into it before, when I studied abroad. But there are some things going on here in Norway too, I guess. For instance in Oslo. They've got Black Box[82] and stuff like that. I've got a sister who is rather involved. When I visit her, she makes me go to all sorts of weird plays. Black Box is very alternative. You're supposed to get confronted with your own… You're supposed to feel and reflect on what you see. It's supposed to awaken your senses to a greater extent than it's supposed to in classical plays. […] It's supposed to stimulate unpleasant feelings, if you know what I mean? War, violence, rape and God knows what. […] And it often ends up with me and my sister arguing afterwards, because she maintains that it's supposed to be like that. […] And I guess that's true. But my view is that when you're going to plays as little as I do, and don't see plays three times a week, you should enjoy yourself a little. I like it when it's neat and cosy. […] At Black Box it's all… I feel physically bad. I remember one play she took me to… I had to go before the performance was over because I was nauseated. My stomach hurt. My sister also found it rather unpleasant, but she stayed in her seat until the end. She is probably more curious than I am. It was all… It was almost disgusting. Violence and blood… I felt really bad.

(Lea, medical doctor, mid 30s)

I'm not too good at enjoying drama. I can enjoy plays. You know, regular, almost conservative plays. I'm not too fond of Black Box type of plays. […] I guess I'm not deep enough. I don't get it. I don't understand what they're trying to accomplish. I don't get in the right mood, I guess. I can't get a grip on it. I'm just sitting there trying to concentrate. I can't let myself go. You know, plays where it's all improvised, and it takes three hours because the actors just felt like it. No. It doesn't appeal to me. I guess there's an artistic gene that's missing inside of me. It fell out. [Laughs.]

(Marta, manager, small firm, mid 30s)

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[82] Theatre in Oslo, primarily showcasing contemporary dramatic art.

Moral criteria thus seem to be the hallmark of their judgements; goods are supposed to be 'good' in the sense that they should not rouse 'unpleasant' or 'bad' feelings. Unlike the previous category of interviewees, characterised by a morally agnostic aesthetic, these interviewees shun what is perceived as 'immoral'. They seek out goods that can give them 'insights' in order to become a 'better person', both morally and politically:

V: You were referring to 'quiet books'. What do you mean by that? What distinguishes such books from other books?

I: They're all about the big questions in life. The essential questions. […] You're easily through with books by Jo Nesbø[83] and Stieg Larsson.[84] But writers like Shantaram[85] and books like *The Hunger*[86] and *Let me sing you gentle songs,*[87] and what's its name… The one everyone has read… Oh, it's so good… *The Alchemist.*[88] That's a different kind of books. They never leave you. They enter your mind long after you've finished reading. They do something to you. Maybe you become a better person? Maybe you understand a little bit more? Yeah, those are good books.

(Maria, elementary school teacher, early 40s)

V: You say you like the historical aspects when you read fiction, things you can learn from. Can you elaborate on what you expect of a good book?

I: Well, new pieces of information. I really enjoy… For instance, I'm really into feminism. And in a sense… You cannot get the right answer, you know, a hundred per cent correctly. But what you can do is develop your point of view, and have internal discussions with yourself about what you really think about stuff. So I like to read what others' points of view are. […] But as for history, it's really important to understand what has happened before, so that history doesn't repeat itself. And to learn where things originate from, what life is like in other societies. But it doesn't have to be history *per se*. Like the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns,*[89] it's about what it's like to be a woman in Afghanistan. You know, I think it's really important to understand that cultures exist that are very different from ours. So I don't know… A good book for me… it gives me knowledge that I didn't have before. […] It opens up new points of view for me, in a way.

(Ella, shopkeeper, mid 20s)

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[83] Norwegian author.

[84] Swedish author.

[85] A 2003 novel by the Australian author Gregory David Roberts.

[86] An 1890 novel by the Norwegian author Knut Hamsun.

[87] A 2005 novel by the Swedish author Linda Olsson.

[88] A 1998 novel by the Brazilian author Paulo Coelho.

[89] A 2007 novel by the Afghan-born American author Khaled Hosseini.

Concerned with not 'wasting their time' on 'meaningless' goods without a 'proper message', or 'hurtful' and 'evil' goods, these interviewees are quite strict in their views of goods which do not meet certain moral standards. Condemning all things 'stupefying' and 'messed up', some of these interviewees even maintain that certain forms of popular culture should be banned by the government. Such goods include 'reality shows' and 'gossip magazines':

V: Is there anything you dislike on telly?

I: Well, reality shows. I never watch that. It's contributing to stupidity, plain and simple. […] The whole concept… I don't like it when people on the telly argue about this and that. It all started with this show… *Big Brother*. It should have been banned! It really contributes to stupidity. And it says a whole lot about the kinds of people participating in these shows. […] There's something about those people that does not appeal to me. […] I guess it's people who desperately want to be in the spotlight. And I don't like the way the whole thing is produced. […] It's a bad form of entertainment. I'd rather read a book, if you catch my drift. […] But there's a lot of literature and reading matter I never read. I never read *Se&Hør*.[90] There's so much nauseating stuff around… For example, Egil 'Drillo' Olsen,[91] I sort of liked him, I still do. But, you know, they printed this picture of him in the bath tub, naked, with just a pair of green Wellingtons on. A double-page in Se&Hør… And he's supposed to be a football manager and a communist and all. And then he sells out like that. It's downright nauseating. The way these people, these so-called journalists, angle their articles and fabricate stories… Such magazines should be banned! It's a desecration of human beings!

(Daniel, pre-school teacher, late 50s)

V: These reality shows, what is it about them that you find troublesome?

I: I'm not sure about the name of this particular show, but there's this house where people live, and it's supposed to be some kind of love affair. Everybody is supposed to propose or something. […] It's really depressing. I think it's harmful. These people are obviously not quite right, and the people who watch these shows, they just sit there and make fun of them.

V: Harmful? In what way?

I: First of all, it's depressing. I just sit there and feel sorry for them. […] And there are lots of self-centred girls talking about all kinds of stuff. […] It's just unbelievable. Well, I just hope they're all right.

(Helene, medical doctor, late 20s)

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[90] Magazine published in the Nordic countries.

[91] Manager of the Norwegian national football team.

The opposition between an aesthetic and a moral way of appropriating cultural goods is perhaps most evident in the significance interviewees attribute to the perceived *intentions* of the cultural producers behind the goods in question. Unlike those who adhere to the doctrine of aesthetic autonomy by explicitly refusing to assimilate, and in their view reduce, their reading of goods to the perceived moral-political attitudes of cultural producers, the interviewees characterised by the educational mode of consumption do not recognise or acknowledge such distinctions. Indeed, the perceived morality of the 'message' in goods such as novels and feature films seems to be the most important, and perhaps the only, parameter for cultural judgement:

> *V: Is there any type of literature you steer clear of?*
>
> I: Well, there are a lot of meaningless novels out there, novels without a proper message. They don't really speak to me. I guess I've read a couple, but they don't appeal to me. And comics, I never read that. There might be something there, but I haven't found it.
>
> (Emma, nurse, early 60s)

> *V: Are there any types of films you never watch?*
>
> I: I recently saw *Naboer*,[92] the Norwegian film with Kristoffer Joner.[93] It was extremely disgusting. It was so unnecessary… Well, the plot was not bad, but there was way too much blood and violence. I mean, 'Get you point across in a different way!' Again, it's all about appealing to unpleasant feelings. It makes you want to get up and leave the cinema. I'll never see that film again!
>
> (Lea, medical doctor, mid 30s)

> I skip everything violent. There's no point in reading it. If somebody is in pain, I don't need to read about it. Because if I do, I feel it all over. So I just skip it. It's the same if I'm at the cinema. I don't want to see people in pain. And that's why my husband has a hard time going to the pictures with me. […] But now I've got stuff to put in my ears and a scarf to cover my eyes. So now it's fine. But I guess I look a real sight sitting there. [Laughs.]
>
> (Maria, elementary school teacher, early 40s)

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[92] A 2005 Norwegian film directed by Pål Sletaune.
[93] Norwegian actor.

While these interviewees are generally quite strict in their adherence to previously established distinctions between 'high culture' and 'popular culture' – typically reporting a certain reverence for the former and a corresponding scepticism of the latter – they do not necessarily shun all forms of 'popular culture' and 'entertainment'. Provided that goods classified as such are of an 'educational' and 'edifying' character, they may allow themselves exposure to certain subtypes of such goods, such as the television programme *71 Degrees North*:[94]

> V: You mentioned *71 Degrees North* … If you compare that particular programme to other programmes… Do you have any criteria in that regard? Or do you watch anything?
>
> I: No, the contestants have to achieve something. I don't like it when they get into arguments, when you get a feeling that the producers of such programmes edit the whole thing so as to give an impression of serious conflicts between the contestants. But when the contestants achieve something, when they are put to the test, and when they push themselves and do things you couldn't imagine possible… That fascinates me. […]
>
> *V: When such conflicts appear in such programmes… How come you don't like them?*
>
> I: It's a waste of time. I cling to the view that we should all be kind, generous and good to each other, as far as it's possible, without annihilating ourselves, of course.
>
> (Maria, elementary school teacher, early 40s)

> There's a lot of different reality shows. Most of them are all about mocking other people, exclusion, bad mouthing, making fun of others, strategies to get you to the top… And the foul language is beyond my belief in many of these shows. You had *Big Brother* for some time. But then there's something like *71 Degrees North*, a programme that can teach you stuff. […] We were hiking on Hardangervidda,[95] and my son was helping the rest of us cross a river, and suddenly he turned around: 'Mum! Am I that guy from *71 Degrees North*, or what?' He had obviously learned something of value watching TV. You know, they interview the contestants… 'How did you relate to the other contestants?' Stuff like that. You can actually learn something good by watching such programmes.
>
> (Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s)

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[94] Television series.

[95] Mountain plateau in the Hardanger region of western Norway.

These interviewees thus seem drawn towards goods perceived as edifying and morally good, and by the same token they avoid goods that are perceived as not providing them with this. Their concerns about edification also manifest themselves in their mode of appropriating material goods. Similar to those characterised by the intellectual mode of consumption, these interviewees typically report moderation in their consumption of goods such as furniture, clothing, motor vehicles and sports equipment. While some of these interviewees have the economic means to acquire expensive luxury goods, they nevertheless report a certain moderation in this regard, typically pointing to the unfavourable effects of 'material squandering':

> These acquaintances of ours, they buy two or three pairs of skis for their kids every year. And they've got the newest, coolest gadgets. And my view is this: it's good that they're out skiing, and that they're outdoors. I mean, that's really positive. But what I cannot understand is why they always get the coolest and newest equipment. Sometimes it's good to wait for things, to be patient. […] I know quite a few people with lots of money. And some are discreet about it, but others… We know this couple, they have lots of money, and it's obviously important to them. And you can really tell. The earrings, their jewellery, their shoes, everything… It's all fancy and expensive. Even though I know nothing about that stuff, I can tell it's expensive. And my view is this: 'If it's that important to you, go ahead!' But I have to say, it looks kind of stupid. And especially when you're drunk and say: 'I made ten million last year'. I mean, you cannot say stuff like that.
>
> (Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

While their material asceticism is quite similar to that of their intellectual counterparts, these interviewees seem more concerned with the moral aspects of material consumption. The instrumental inclination and the cultural goodwill alluded to above are even manifested in their preferences for holidays and travel destinations. Typically disfavouring 'pointless' activities like sunbathing, or more generally, destinations associated with 'a life of leisure', they instead seek out destinations and activities 'with a point':

> *V: What kinds of travel destinations do you steer clear of?*
>
> I: I easily grow tired of big cities. A weekend in such places is enough. And then there's this all-inclusive type of thing where you stay at a hotel for three weeks and there's a children's club, and you hang out at the beach during the day and attend the show in the bar at night. That's not for me, not at all.

V: How come?

I: Because you're not meeting the locals. I want to go places where I can experience the real, authentic, everyday life. Even though everything is getting commercialised, there are still places you can go and decide for yourself what to do. […] I was recently in Thailand, and the loveliest thing I experienced was meeting the local fishermen. They didn't know a word in English. But they still let me help them mend their nets. And meeting the local grocer, and helping him cut the vegetables and fruit, and learning something from him. That's the sweetest thing!

(Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s)

I don't care much for all-inclusive types of holidays. I went on one once, when I was young. I can't say I would go back […]. I have to go somewhere where I can be active, where I have a purpose. […] Being in a city and experiencing new things and gaining knowledge. Not going to some beach and sunbathing, first your front, then your back. No, there's nothing exciting about that.

(Emma, nurse, early 60s)

Although the educational mode of consumption seems characterised by goodwill, reverence and docility, these interviewees' classifications of goods can be quite strict in terms of the ones they do not like, implying that their taste for cultural goods is far from indiscriminate and uncritical. However, unlike the playfulness associated with the intellectual mode of consumption, these interviewees adopt a much more serious tone in their classifications. Whether they are praising or rejecting cultural goods, their judgements are typically of a moral and edifying character. Books, films, television programmes, plays, pieces of music, even summer holidays, are expected to provide a 'recharge of one's batteries', 'expanded knowledge', 'self-improvement', 'the truth' and the like. As these interviewees demand that cultural goods ought to provide them with something *more* than the sheer pleasure of consumption itself, the educational mode of consumption is characterised by a striking instrumental taste orientation. Typically, moral values are used as yardsticks against which both cultural and material goods are judged, demarcating these interviewees from their morally agnostic counterparts in the two previous categories of interviewees who refuse to let moral concerns influence their cultural tastes. Such educational and edifying concerns also demarcate them from another category of interviewees, whose instrumental orientation is of a more practical kind.

4.3.2 The practical mode of consumption

The practical mode of consumption is primarily characterised by an orientation towards the practical or technical domains. Shunning what is regarded as 'unnecessary' and 'incomprehensible', these interviewees explicitly dis-identify with lifestyles associated with 'social climbers' who supposedly make dubious attempts to 'stand out from the crowd'. By contrast, these interviewees somewhat jokingly identify themselves as the 'grey mass', 'the average guys', 'the common people' and so forth. Typically, they report spending their spare time making things 'cosy' for their families, or enjoying activities such as gardening, decorating, car repairs and carpentry. Compared to the other interviewees, they are the most moderate consumers of both material and cultural goods, typically pointing out that indulging in such activities is a 'waste' of both time and money. They do not, however, wholly refrain from cultural or material goods, as they report listening to music, watching films, and reading books, and buying clothes, cars and sports equipment. Nevertheless, they spend considerably less time and money on both cultural and material consumption, and perhaps more importantly, they report considerably fewer specific preferences as regards such goods:

> *V: You mentioned bad films earlier, and that such films are a waste of time. What makes a film bad?*
>
> I: Uh, where do I start? I don't know. It's difficult to say, because when you see a bad film, you really don't get much of an impression. You're just like… You see it and then you forget all about it. That's my impression. I only remember the good ones. […] I guess I'm bad at explaining why I don't like things. When you ask me about what I don't like, it's difficult to recall it in my head. […] Maybe it's because I don't focus so much on it. Maybe then and there, but I easily forget about it. It doesn't mean that much to me, I guess.
>
> (David, technician, mid 20s)

> *V: What types of films do you like?*
>
> I: Most of them.
>
> *V: Everything is equally good?*
>
> I: Uh, well… I'm not that critical when I go to the cinema or watch films at home. You know, 'what's it all about?' and this and that. I go there to be entertained. It

doesn't have to be a good story or anything. I just sit there and relax, plain and simple.

(Eva, secretary, mid 40s)

V: What kind of books do you like?

I: I don't read that much. I read to relax. […] It's difficult to come up with a particular category.

V: If you look back on the last five years… Is there anything you have read that you would recommend?

I: Not that I can think of, no.

(Elisabeth, nurse, late 20s)

Though in qualitatively different ways, the interviewees in the three previous categories can provide quite elaborate explanations for their tastes in cultural and/or material goods. The practical mode of consumption is, however, characterised by interviewees who are much less committed to their consumption choices. Indeed, they explicitly dis-identify with people whom they perceive as being 'opinionated' about such matters, and they repeatedly classify themselves as rather 'indifferent':

The thing is, I don't spend my time criticising, evaluating, or having strong opinions about something other people have spent their time making. I can't just sit there and pass an opinion on something without having the slightest clue about what it's all about. I don't want to waste my time doing that. [Laughs.] If anyone has strong opinions about such matters, be my guest. But I don't care.

(Aurora, pre-school assistant, mid 30s)

Their consumption of cultural goods is in a sense much more random, as they report 'tuning into some radio station or other while working in the garage', 'picking up some book or other at the airport while travelling' or 'watching some film on telly while half asleep'. But when probed, some of them do report certain preferences. Emphasising that goods such as films, books and pieces of music ought to be 'entertaining' and 'fun', these interviewees particularly disfavour that which reminds them of the 'dreariness' and 'pointlessness' of the time they spent at school. In sharp contrast to interviewees characterised by a docile and reverent goodwill towards

cultural goods they do not fully master, these interviewees not only report a low interest in such things, they reject them outright as 'boring', 'daft' and 'ridiculous':

> *V: Are there any types of books you steer clear of?*
>
> I: That would be collections of poetry and stuff like that. This friend of mine, his mother teaches Norwegian. And from time to time, I ride with them in their car. And just to spite her, you know, to piss her off, he jokingly takes out this Tarjei Vesaas[96] best of poetry kind of stuff and starts to read. And we both laugh our heads off. You know, I can't take it. [Laughs.] But seriously, I don't think I've ever read a poem that applies to me and my life. When I read, something has got to happen. You know, some kind of action. But that stuff, no. Never. I don't bother even opening the book, if you catch my drift? It's got nothing to offer me.
>
> (David, technician, mid 20s)

> *V: Plays and drama… Is that something that interests you?*
>
> I: Well, I like musicals. But all those plays we were forced to read at school… I resent them. It might be that I'd like them now, but I'm not sure if I'm willing to try. [Laughs.] Like the play *The Wild Duck*[97] and all those weird… Bah! I really developed a bad relationship to plays through school. […] I don't know why exactly. When there's no music, no dancing, no fun… Just an old couch and a man… Well, I don't know. […] I never really liked school. I don't know the reason for that either. To be forced to do things one doesn't really enjoy, I've never liked that. […] So if something does not appeal to me, I can't read it. I have to wait for the right mood, of you know what I mean? And I never had that choice at school. There was a lot of reading matter that did not appeal to me.
>
> (Aurora, pre-school assistant, mid 30s)

If goods such as paintings, sculptures and art installations are not perceived as immediately 'comprehensible' and 'meaningful', they are rejected as 'fraudulent'. Highly suspicious of 'red-wine soaked artists' and their 'meaningless gibberish', these interviewees wittingly or not adhere to a doctrine of strict realism. These interviewees demand that art represent 'something real', and they wholly shun anything perceived as an invitation to individual interpretation:

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[96] Norwegian author.

[97] An 1884 play by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

V: Visual art, pictures… Do you find that interesting?

I: Well, I guess I'm a bit odd in that regard. There's got to be motifs that represent something. I don't like the abstract stuff. That's not for me. All this art that is made just for the sake of being art, that's not something I'd put on my walls at home. […] I guess I'm not that creative. I'd rather look at a nice boat than all these splashes of colour. Because all these splashes… Like they say, and like I say… I could easily have made such splashes myself. But I guess there are people who can see something more in a picture than just these splashes of colour. I guess I'm not an artsy type. […] I would never go to an exhibition to look at some random abstract stuff. I have to know what I'm looking at. There's got to be some bodies, some figures, or at least something that remotely resembles something real.

(Martin, carpenter, late 40s)

My husband's a member of an art club at work. And we have actually won quite a few pictures on these lotteries they arrange. So we've got some pictures hanging on our walls. […] But there are limits to what I allow him to put up. Once he came home with this picture… There were just these squiggles and some splashes of colour. And then I asked him: 'Where on earth are you supposed to put that one?' Because it was totally ugly.

(Eva, secretary, mid 40s)

In a sense, these interviewees adhere to a form of 'anti-intellectualism' (Skirbekk, 2002), evident in their refusal to partake in certain forms of cultural practices, in their rejections of 'meaningless' cultural goods, as well as in their suspiciousness towards people who are perceived as pursuing intellectual interests. Indeed, cultural activities and goods which have no immediately comprehensible 'purpose' are viewed with undisguised suspicion. Goods and activities perceived as 'meaningful' and 'useful' are, by contrast, much more welcomed by these interviewees. If the perceived 'message' of a painting, a film or a book can be related directly to their lives in a specific and matter-of-fact way, they report enthusiastic adherence, particularly if such goods provide 'facts' and practical 'know-how'. The quintessential example of this practical instrumentalism is their taste for documentary films:

V: Do you like watching telly?

I: There are lots of things on telly… And like I say, it's mostly crap. But then there are documentaries! They've got some meaning, something you can learn from. There should be more of that stuff on telly. Whatever kind.

(Martin, carpenter, late 40s)

V: You mentioned films earlier. Can you elaborate on what kinds of films you prefer?

I: I like documentaries, because they deal with something real, something that has actually happened. You know, there is so much rubbish out there. […] That's why I like documentaries. That's pretty cool. You get to know about some war, or something that has actually taken place in the past. […] It's real in a sense. And you know it's true. And most of the times you're told a good story too. […] It's kind of hard to explain. In other types of films, there's this emptiness. It doesn't lead you anywhere, it doesn't give you anything. […] In a documentary you at least get a real story, a story you can tell to others. And that's kind of cool.

(Robert, electrician, mid 20s)

As regards feature films, they do not care much for 'plot', 'character development' or other aspects so dear to their intellectual counterparts. Rather, technical aspects such as the use of special effects, sound quality, the size of the cinema screen and comfortable seats are emphasised:

V: What kinds of films do you prefer?

I: I'm a boy. I like crash-bang-bang! You know, there has got to be some action. I like to go to the cinema to watch films. Cool special effects and stuff like that. […] But the cinema here in Stavanger is crap. Most of the people I know go to the cinema in Sandnes.[98] […] It's much better there. The premises are much better. And the sound quality. There's no digital sound at the cinema in Stavanger. But in Sandnes everything's digitalised. So the sound is better, and the seats. All the seats can be tilted backwards. So all my buddies haven't been to the cinema in Stavanger for ages. […]

V: What about films at home?

I: The TV screen is very important. […] Because I use it all the time. The size is important. It has to fit the living room. Right now I've got a forty-two inch screen. And a Blue-Ray player. You know, HD quality.

(Jon, electrician, mid 20s)

I don't really watch that many films. But if I do, I have to go to the cinema. I'm that kind of guy. If you're going to see a good movie, you have to go to the cinema. It's much better than watching it at home. I'm thinking sound quality, the size of the screen… I guess it sounds strange, but that's just the way it is.

(Martin, carpenter, late 40s)

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[98] Stavanger's neighbouring town.

The practical orientation also manifests itself in their accounts of the consumption of material goods. Although they do not reject the idea that pleasure can be derived from acquiring such goods, they are nevertheless much more pragmatic and instrumental in their material tastes than their luxurious counterparts. Unlike the brand-conscious interviewees who emphasise preferential criteria such as 'exclusivity', 'individuality' and 'authenticity', these interviewees explicitly reject such criteria as 'vanity' and as dubious attempts to 'show off'. They report choosing 'reasonably priced' alternatives, emphasising qualities such as 'durability', 'reliability' and 'functionality'. Such criteria are particularly prevalent in their depictions of motor vehicles:

> I: *Cars… Do you have an interest in cars?*
>
> R: Well, I guess many will think I am weird or strange because of this, because I know many people have this interest in cars. Well, in one sense I've got an interest in cars too, but my interest is this: it has to cost as little as possible per kilometre. For me, a car is a necessary evil, something you have got to rely on, something that will always work, no matter what. But it has to cost as little as possible. I'm forty-four years old and I'm driving my third car. I guess that says it all.
>
> I: *What kind of car is it?*
>
> R: It's a Toyota Avensis. When I buy a car, I spend a lot of time looking. It has to be around ten years old and in good condition. Then you can use it for another ten years. That way you'll have a minimum decrease in value. And if there's any minor damage, I'll repair it myself.
>
> I: *Is there any type of car you would never buy?*
>
> R: Yeah, British cars. You know, Rover or Mini and stuff like that. Just watch the statistics! If you look in the car magazines, you'll see what's best in terms of fewest technical flaws. I want a car that keeps running for as long as possible. And Toyota usually comes out well in these kinds of statistics. […] For me, personally, if it takes me from A to B, I don't need anything else.
>
> (Patrick, construction worker, mid 40s)

A practical orientation coupled with a distaste for 'extravagance' and 'excesses' is also apparent in other domains, such as in terms of furniture and interior design, food and beverages and clothing. Such goods should be 'simple', 'inconspicuous', 'ordinary' and 'reasonably priced'. The interviewees also explicitly contrast their consumption choices with those of people whom they consider 'posh':

V: Do you like wine?

I: Uh… Well, I actually I do. I drink it at home, but not at bars. It's because of the danger of being labelled posh, or a member of high society. So I stick to beer. At parties I might drink liquor. You know, mixed with something. […] But it's mostly beer. Wine… that's for the posh people. The refined, as they say. So I prefer beer.

(Lars, security guard, mid 20s)

V: Where do you buy your clothes?

I: I usually go to these standard, regular shops, like Cubus or H&M. To me, a pair of jeans is a pair of jeans. If it fits, it doesn't matter what brand it is. […] The only trend I'm influenced by is the one that my daughters dictate: 'Dad, you cannot wear that shirt anymore!' So that's the only relationship I have to fashion and trends. […] I guess I'm member of the grey mass and I don't need to distinguish myself, at least not in that way. I'd rather… If people want to make up their mind about me, then they have to base their opinions on what I say or what I do, not on how I look. […] I cannot see why people are so preoccupied with looks. I cannot understand that mentality. Well, I guess I understand that people have a certain need to stand out, or a wish to do so… But why? That I cannot comprehend. Because I'm at the other end of the scale, I don't have such needs.

V: Why do you think people do that?

I: I guess they have certain thoughts that I don't have. Like 'I want to show off'. But I cannot see why. […] I don't understand that way of thinking. Because if they had dressed me in such fancy clothes, I don't know if I'd dare show my face outside my door.

(Patrick, construction worker, mid 40s)

Arguably one may infer from the low degree of elaboration and specificity in their classificatory practices, as well as the high occurrence of explicit dis-identifications with people perceived as dubiously preoccupied with 'squandering' money and 'showing off', that these interviewees' orientation towards material goods is quite similar to their instrumental and pragmatic orientation towards cultural goods. Unless cultural goods endow them with immediate satisfaction in terms of entertainment, comfort or practical know-how, these interviewees simply do not see any point in craving them. The instrumentality implied in the practical mode of consumption is, however, of a rather different sort than in the educational mode of consumption. While they do seek to gain knowledge through consumption, they are more concerned with learning something of practical or technical value, rather than becoming 'a better person', 'more cultivated' or suchlike.

4.4 The classed distribution of cultural tastes

Based on the assumption that the ways in which social actors classify cultural goods are indicative of their modes of appropriating them, I have constructed four main categories. Each category is marked by a common code, a shared belief, regarding what is considered good and bad taste. The fundamental line of division may be found between appropriating cultural goods as a means to an end, as opposed to appropriating cultural goods as an end in itself. Moreover, this fundamental opposition manifests itself somewhat differently in the material and cultural domains, meaning that the interviewees' tastes for material goods and cultural goods do not necessarily follow the same logic.

Although the categories constitute a typology of cultural tastes, they may also be read as a typology of social actors, as the differentiated classificatory practices represented by the four modes of consumption tend to originate from the same group of interviewees (see Table 1). This does not, however, mean that each interviewee in a given category shares all the traits emphasised in the analysis; rather, it means that they share most of them. The typology employed is to be read as abstractions, and thus inevitably as certain simplifications, of empirical patterns traceable in the interview data. As regards the ways in which interviewees classify cultural goods and their own relation to them, I maintain that these four categories represent the most important differences in the empirical data.

The intellectual mode of consumption	**The luxurious mode of consumption**
Elias, secondary school teacher, early 30s Emil, musician/social worker, late 30s Freja, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s Jonas, head of cultural enterprise, mid 30s Julia, artist/illustrator, late 20s Oscar, academic, mid 30s Oliver, musician, mid 30s Olivia, head of cultural enterprise, late 40s Peter, cultural worker, mid 30s Philip, secondary school teacher, mid 30s Sara, journalist, mid 40s Sofia, academic, mid 60s Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s Thomas, journalist, early 40s	Anna, manager, oil company, early 50s Georg, banker, late 40s Henrik, economist, early 60s Johan, CEO, mid 50s Kristian, dentist, late 30s Lucas, lawyer, early 30s Mikkel, manager, oil company, early 40s Pia, lawyer, late 40s Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s
The educational mode of consumption	**The practical mode of consumption**
August, economist, late 50's Andrea, public sector consultant, early 30s Daniel, pre-school teacher, late 50s Ella, shop-keeper, mid 30s Emma, nurse, early 60s Helene, medical doctor, late 20s Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s Lea, medical doctor, mid 30s Maria, primary school teacher, early 40s Marianne, manager, small firm, late 40s Marta, manager, small firm, mid 30s Nora, lawyer, mid 30s Oda, manager, small firm, late 30s Sebastian, politician, late 30s	Aurora, pre-school assistant, mid 30s David, technician, mid 20s Elisabeth, nurse, late 20s Eva, secretary, mid 40s Jon, electrician, mid 20s Lars, security guard, mid 20s Martin, carpenter, late 40s Patrick, construction worker, mid 40s Robert, electrician, mid 20s

Table 1: Modes of consumption

Having established these differences, I shall now turn to the question of the social distribution of cultural tastes. In the following the question of homology will be scrutinised. Two focal points will be discussed: first, the nature of the relationship between the social space and the symbolic space; and second, the notion of class habitus and the genesis of socially differentiated tastes.

4.4.1 The social space and the symbolic space

In Chapter 3 the interviewees were projected onto the local social space by means of MCA. Based on their capital profiles, i.e. the values of the variables used when constructing the space, their coordinates within the space could be located. The interviewees are dispersed across the topography of differentiated class positions, i.e. according both to the capital volume and the capital composition principles of social differentiation. Expanding on this construction, convex hulls[99] have been drawn to represent the relative distribution of the four modes of consumption according to the structures of the social space (see Figure 4).

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[99] The 'convex hull' (or 'convex envelope') of a set X of points in the Euclidean space is the smallest convex set that contains X. For instance, when X is a bounded subset of the plane, the convex hull may be visualized as the shape formed by a rubber band stretched around X (De Berg *et al*, 2008: 2ff).
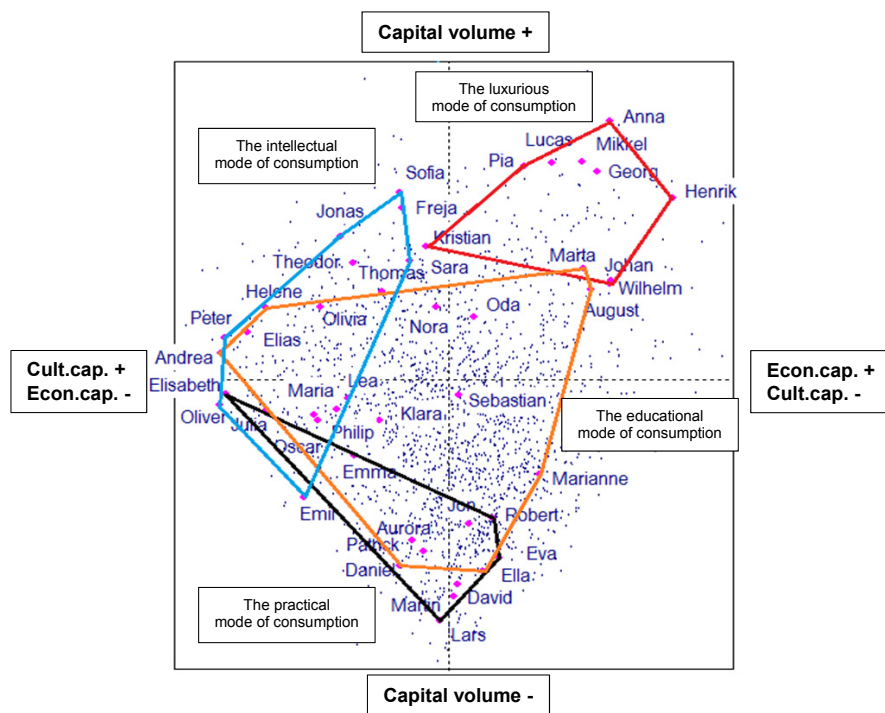
Figure 4: The classed distribution of tastes, fac.plane 1-2

As we can see, interviewees characterised by the intellectual mode of consumption are rather homogenous in their capital profiles, clustering in the upper left quadrant of the social space, implying that they are endowed with a high volume of overall capital, with relatively more cultural than economic capital. These interviewees are by far the most endowed with educational qualifications, and typically have MAs in the arts and humanities, some even PhDs. They also come from more 'educated' backgrounds, as their parents possess more educational qualifications than the parents of the other interviewees. They do, however, earn relatively less than the top earners in the sample, and they also own fewer economic assets. Comprised of academics, secondary school teachers, cultural producers, journalists and heads of local cultural enterprises, they are mostly employed in the public sector.

By contrast, interviewees characterised by the luxurious mode of consumption are typically located in the upper right quadrant of the social space, implying that they are endowed with a high volume of mostly economic capital. They are by far the highest income earners in the sample, and they typically have economic assets in the form of real estate, stocks, second homes, boats and cars. While most of them are educated, none of them are educated in the arts and humanities. Typically, they have educational qualifications equivalent to BA level. Their backgrounds are fairly mixed. Comprised of CEOs, managers, lawyers, dentists and economists, this category of interviewees are almost exclusively employed in the private sector.

More dispersed across the social space than the previous two categories, the interviewees characterised by the educational mode of consumption are rather heterogeneous in their capital profiles. Most of them have educational qualifications equivalent to BA degrees or slightly lower. Relative to the other interviewees, they typically earn medium wages, and they rarely have other economic assets. Their backgrounds are mixed. Comprised of primary school teachers, pre-school teachers, medical doctors and nurses, but also managers of oil firms, bankers, consultants and shopkeepers, this category of interviewees is fairly evenly dispersed between the public and private sector.

Finally, interviewees characterised by the practical mode of consumption are rather homogenous in their capital profiles, typically located in the lower quadrants of the social space, implying low volumes of overall capital. As only one of them has higher educational qualifications, they are by far the least educated in the sample. As regards economic capital, they are on average the lowest earning category of interviewees. Comprised of carpenters, machinists, electricians, secretaries, engineers and security guards, this category of interviewees are mostly employed in the private sector.

Given these marked differences in the interviewees' positions in the social space, this would indicate that different modes of consumption are differentially distributed

according to the structures of the social space, i.e. both according to the capital volume and capital composition principles of social differentiation. While the composition principle may not differentiate in the lower quadrants of the social space, quite the opposite is true of the upper quadrants. As there is a marked difference between the tastes of those endowed with high volumes of cultural capital (represented by the intellectual mode of consumption) and those endowed with high volumes of economic capital (represented by the luxurious mode of consumption), the composition principle of differentiation is, indeed, pivotal. This point is important to highlight, as social differentiation in terms of capital composition is rarely discussed in the contemporary literature on the relationship between cultural differentiation and social stratification. While Stavanger may, of course, be an exceptional empirical case in this regard, it is my contention that the theoretical-methodological approach employed in this analysis has unearthed important structural oppositions that might otherwise have been left unnoticed. The capital composition principle of social differentiation may be more pivotal than previously presumed.

Moreover, as both the capital volume and compositional principles of social differentiation seem to be so prominent, the patterns found have important affinities with Rosenlund's (2000c, 2002a, 2009a) statistical analyses of cultural consumption in Stavanger. Although the nature of the interview data employed in the present analysis does not allow for testing the 'significance' of the patterns found in a statistical sense, much less for empirical generalisation to a wider population (e.g. all the inhabitants in Stavanger), the fact that these findings are tangent to Rosenlund's analyses of survey data lends support to the claim that both *what* the people of Stavanger consume, as well as *how* they perceive, appreciate and appropriate their cultural products of choice, follow class lines. Viewed together, these analyses suggest that there are homologies between the symbolic space and the social space, and that these correspondences are reflected in the classificatory practices of social actors. The social distribution of tastes is, indeed, classed.

It remains, however, to discuss the social genesis of these socially differentiated classificatory practices. So far I have merely superimposed a phenomenology on a social topology, as it were. True, we have seen important structural affinities between the interviewees' positions in the social space and their classificatory practices, but how do the mental structures relate to the external structures of society? In what ways can the former be said to structure the latter, as the Bourdieusian homology argument suggests?

4.4.2 Class habitus

One of the key building blocks in Bourdieu's theory of practice is habitus. Following his Durkheimian heritage, Bourdieu (1996b: 1) holds that there exists a correspondence between social structures and mental structures, i.e. between the objective divisions of the social world and the subjective principles of 'vision and divisions' that social actors apply to it. Moreover, he holds that the two are structurally homologous because they are *genetically linked*, implying that the latter is an 'embodiment' of the former. However, the notion of habitus is disputed (e.g. Alexander, 1995; Lahire, 2003, 2004; Bennett *et al*, 2009). The most serious objection to the usefulness of the term is its 'deterministic' and 'tautological' implications. However, it might be fruitful to analytically distinguish between *individual* habitus and *class* habitus, and thus derive separate empirical questions from each theoretical construct (Flemmen, 2010). One might ask whether there is an internal coherence within a given actor's schemes of perception and appreciation, and whether social actors located closely in the social space tend to be endowed with similar dispositions. In short, the former has to do with *intra-individual coherence* within a social actor's schemes of perception and appreciation, and the latter has to do with the *inter-individual coherence* between groups of social actors located in proximity in the social space.

As regards the question of intra-individual coherence, Lahire (2008; see also Bennett *et al*, 2009) holds that individual cultural taste profiles are often composed of

'dissonant' or heterogeneous elements, meaning, for instance, that a given social actor may have one way of appreciating one form of cultural goods (say, television), a second way of appreciating a second form (say, literature), and so on. Thus, Lahire calls into question the usefulness of the notion of habitus and its depiction of dispositions as unitarily transposable and durable. However, while Lahire should be credited for highlighting the danger of taking intra-individual homogeneity as given and thus employing Bourdieusian notions such as habitus in uncritical ways, such 'dissonance' is hardly detectable in the present empirical case. On the contrary, the interviewees are strikingly coherent in their classifications of a wide variety of goods, even types of goods they are less familiar with. For example, the interviewees characterised by the intellectual mode of consumption are on the lookout for 'challenging' and 'new' experiences through their cultural consumption, whether this is through books, movies, plays or the visual arts. And even if a given interviewee in this category may be less familiar with one field of consumption – say, the visual arts – s/he does not, however, relate to such cultural goods in a completely different manner, but continues to seek intellectual challenges when s/he encounters paintings, installations or other visual works of art. This is not to say that the interviewee appreciates the visual arts in exactly the *same* way as s/he appreciates literature, but it does mean that there are important affinities in the ways in which s/he relates to the two. In other words, the empirical data supports the idea that classificatory schemes are *transposable* from one field of consumption to another.[100]

Related to the discussion about the 'whats' and 'hows' of cultural consumption, I would thus argue that what may seem like heterogeneous 'dissonance' at the level of *opus operatum* due to a given interviewee's 'eclectic' taste for a wide range of goods (both between and within cultural domains and genres) is revealed as highly

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[100] According to Bourdieu (1990b: 53), the habitus is also 'durable', meaning that the schemes of perception and appreciation tend to be similar throughout a given social agent's trajectory. In other words, the ways in which a given social agent perceive, appreciate and appropriate cultural products is likely to be similar as time goes by. As the nature of the empirical data does not allow for a diachronic analysis, this empirical question is outside the scope of this thesis.

homogenous and coherent at the level of *modus operandi,* as these goods – notwithstanding their difference in form and content – are appropriated in a similar manner. In other words, eclecticism and hybridisation are at the heart of the modus operandi of certain social actors, which, far from revealing 'dissonance', instead suggests that an inclination for aesthetical transgression is itself inscribed in the habitus of these actors. Thus, there is nothing contradictory in the idea that people's preferences and tastes are structured by their socially constituted habitus, while exhibiting preferences for a variety of cultural goods.

As regards inter-individual coherence, we have seen that the categories are distributed systematically according to the structures of the social space. Each category of interviewees is characterised by a distinct mode of appropriating goods which marks them off from interviewees in the other categories. Moreover, as the interviewees within each of the four categories are located in proximity in the social space – which implies that there are affinities between the interviewees' classificatory practices and their class positions – this lends support to the idea of class habitus. This does not, however, mean that the interviewees are endowed with the *exact same* schemes of perception and appreciation, but rather that each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others in the category, expressing the uniqueness of its position within a sector of the social space. According to Bourdieu (1984: 170), the social space represents the social and economic conditions under which the capacity to differentiate between and appreciate cultural goods is constituted. This does not necessarily imply that the interviewees have consciously adjusted their aspirations according to their chances of obtaining certain cultural goods, nor that they would have craved something else if they had had the means to acquire and/or appreciate them (cf. Elster, 1981, 1985). Rather, it suggests that the possibilities and impossibilities are already inscribed in the objective social and economic conditions associated with different positions in the social space. Thus, social actors do not *directly* react to objective conditions of existence; rather they react to these conditions as apprehended through the socially constituted schemes that organise their

perceptions. Social actors are, in other words, predisposed to certain modes of practice due to prior and on-going conditioning.

The propensity to distinguish, classify and allow these conceptual distinctions to influence one's consumption choices is, indeed, more prominent among the capital-rich interviewees in the sample. Notwithstanding their differences in the types of goods to which they are drawn, they share the *capacity* and the *willingness* to classify, which clearly sets them apart from the other interviewees. Moreover, these interviewees have a propensity to appreciate a given good as an end in itself, i.e. non-instrumentally, which resembles Bourdieu's description of the 'pure gaze' and the 'aesthetic disposition', meaning

> the capacity to consider, in and for themselves, as form rather than function, not only the works designated for such appreciation, i.e., legitimate works of art, but everything in the world, including cultural objects which are not yet consecrated – such as, at one time primitive arts, or, nowadays, popular photography or kitsch – and natural objects. (Bourdieu, 1984: 3)

Inclined to move towards goods which do not (yet) bear the label of 'commonness', these interviewees are endowed with a 'sense of distinction' and a 'feel for the game'. While there are variations in the extent to which they subjectively acknowledge taking part in such a 'game' (some playfully and reflexively self-analyse their competitive distinguishing strategies, while others resolutely refuse to take part in such games), the capital-rich interviewees share the capacity and propensity to seek out goods which they perceive as 'rare', 'challenging' and 'refined'.

Due to a synchronic research design, this analysis cannot directly point to changes in preferences for goods over time. Yet the ways in which these interviewees classify goods indicate that goods once valorised may cease to attract their interest as time goes by. For instance, if a rare good becomes accessible to a wider group of people, the specialness and individuality of this will decrease accordingly, and it thus loses its value as a mark of social distinction. The 'popular' and the 'common' are often

frowned upon by interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space, if not shunned completely. Moreover, if these people perceive that 'the wrong kinds of people' are adopting their cultural styles, they are quick to move away; the Hopper painting is hidden in the basement and PH lamps and Arne Jacobsen chairs will definitely not be bought. While such goods might once have functioned as marks of social distinction, inflationary processes have rendered them 'too obvious' in the minds of interviewees endowed with a feel for the game. This process, referred to by Bourdieu (1984: 481) as a competitive 'paperchase', in effect implies a steady inflation in the symbolic value of goods. Thus, for social actors to ensure distinctive stylistic gaps between themselves and others, new goods and new practices must be appropriated. It is, however, important to highlight that changing preferences for goods over time do not imply that consumption choices are *subjectively intended* as the pursuit of social distinction. On the contrary, those endowed with a feel for the game are drawn, as if by instinct, towards goods that interest them and, by the same token, away from those that do not.

Conversely, interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space, i.e. those poorly endowed with capital of either form, not only betray a strikingly lower ability and/or willingness to distinguish between goods, some of them even explicitly reject such classificatory practices and dis-identify with people perceived as preoccupied with such matters. They want no part in the game of cultural distinctions. The ways in which these interviewees classify goods do, as opposed to those located in the upper sectors of the social space, indicate a strikingly instrumental orientation towards both cultural and material goods. The goods are appropriated as a means to an end. Their taste orientations resemble what Bourdieu (1984: 4) refers to as a 'popular aesthetic', meaning 'the affirmation of a continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function.' Insofar as the different modes of consumption can be analysed in terms of position-takings within a field of cultural consumption, and that the capacity to differentiate and classify is differentially distributed according to the structures of this field, one could argue that those who refuse to take part in the game deny themselves what is already denied to them. As noted by Bourdieu,

> The most improbable practices are […] excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to the order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable. (Bourdieu, 1990b: 54)

While this version of a 'sour grapes' argument admittedly remains speculative at this point in the analysis, it will be further discussed in the two subsequent chapters, where the interviewees' classifications of other people's tastes will be scrutinised.

4.5 Conclusion

There are rather clear differences between qualitatively different modes of appropriating cultural goods to be found in the interview data, and these seem linked to the interviewees' positions in the local social space, i.e. in the relative distribution of different species of capital. Coupled with Rosenlund's (2000c, 2002a, 2009a) statistical analyses of cultural practices and tastes in Stavanger, these findings indicate that both *what* social actors consume and participate in, as well as *how* they appropriate and appreciate goods, follow systematic patterns. Different tastes and lifestyles are clearly linked to the relation between social actors' volume of and composition of different species of capital. I have argued that these findings lend support to the general sociological idea that social actors located in similar positions in the social space tend to be endowed with similar dispositions and embodied practical senses, or what one might call class habitus, which, in turn, generate similar practices and tastes which differ systematically from those of social actors located elsewhere in the social space. The analysis lends support to the argument that the further away from 'necessity' social actors are situated (i.e. the more capital they are endowed with), the more likely they are to exhibit a 'feel for the game' of cultural distinctions.

While these findings are tangent to those of Rosenlund, they also expand on and in a sense move beyond them. Based on the assumption that there might be discrepancies between cultural practices at the level of *opus operatum* and those at the level of

modus operandi, Rosenlund's analyses may thus be problematized. While there may be a connection between *what* social actors consume and *how* they consume their cultural products of choice, this is not necessarily so. A given object may be apprehended in several different ways, and conversely, different objects may be apprehended in similar ways. Treating the symbolic meaning of a given cultural good as fixed is thus highly problematical. Accordingly, the patterns found in Rosenlund's analyses may not be as clear-cut symbolically as they appear in the results of the MCA. On the one hand, cultural goods shown to be differentially distributed may not be perceived as such by social actors, and statistical oppositions may not necessarily constitute antagonistic tastes that are held with any notable commitment by the cultural consumers themselves. On the other hand, cultural goods shown to be statistically 'common' may nevertheless be perceived differently by social actors located in different sectors of the social space, implying differences not easily captured by survey data.

Given the systematic differences represented by the four categories of taste orientations constructed above, it would seem reasonable to claim that the analytical decoupling of the 'whats' and 'hows' of cultural consumption has revealed the two are not directly related. Goods are apprehended in qualitatively different manners by interviewees located in different sectors of the social space, practices that may be shown to be 'common' in a statistical sense may not be that common after all. What at first sight may seem like a cultural 'common ground' is – when the ways in which the cultural goods are appropriated are taken into account – revealed as highly differentiated. For instance, the act of attending a performance of the play *The Wild Duck* might not, in itself, have a fixed meaning attached to it, as person A might appreciate it in a qualitatively different manner than person B. Thus, differences at the level of *modus operandi* might imply that the symbolic space is even *more* differentiated than an analysis at the level of *opus operatum* might suggest. Echoing scholars such as Clarke (1975), Hebdige (1979), Bourdieu (1984), Fiske (1989), and Holt (1997), this analysis has thus highlighted the importance of taking the ways in which cultural products are appropriated into account.

While the arguments here do not contradict those of Rosenlund, this point is nevertheless important, as other researchers – in particular adherents of the omnivore thesis – tend to pitch empirical evidence of a seemingly increasing cultural common ground against the Bourdieusian homology argument. A fundamental premise in the omnivore thesis is that the more social actors located in the upper sectors of the social space tend to like or do the same things as people located elsewhere, the less distinctive their lifestyles and tastes. But, as we have seen, liking the same things does *not* necessarily indicate similar tastes. On the contrary, when common cultural goods are appropriated in a different manner, this can even make a given practice *more* distinctive. The present empirical findings thus cast serious doubt upon the validity of the claims of Chan and Goldthorpe (2005, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d), as it would be highly misleading to assume that univorousness (i.e. the propensity to like/participate in strictly 'high-brow' cultural forms) equals distinctive tastes, and that omnivorousness (i.e. the propensity to straddle the divide between 'highbrow', 'middlebrow' and 'lowbrow' cultural forms) equals somewhat indistinctive or 'blurred' tastes. Thus, claims about the declining significance of a classed distribution of lifestyles and tastes would, in this empirical case, be virtually ungrounded.

There are, however, different stances among the proponents of the omnivore thesis, and not everyone depicts omnivorousness as tantamount to indistinct cultural tastes. In Peterson and Kern's article from 1996, it is noted that:

> As we understand the meaning of omnivorous taste, it does not signify that the omnivore likes everything indiscriminately. Rather, it signifies an openness to appreciating everything. In this sense it is antithetical to snobbishness, which is based fundamentally on rigid rules of exclusion. […] While by definition hostile to snobbish closure […], omnivorousness does not imply an indifference to distinctions. Rather its emergence may suggest the formulation of new rules governing symbolic boundaries. (Peterson and Kern, 1996: 904)

Thus, Peterson and Kern (see also Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Bryson, 1996; Tampubolon, 2008; Warde *et al*, 2007) suggest that the eclecticism associated with the omnivore figure is a *new* embodiment of class domination in that

it implies a capacity to reflect and absorb previously opposed elements of cultural taste. However, such claims are still caught up in the erroneous idea that the socially distinguished cultural consumer in the Bourdieusian sense is an exclusive 'snob' who shuns everything popular. Thus, cultural eclecticism is depicted as something fundamentally new and mistakenly contrast it to the practice of the 'cultural avant-garde', whose eclecticism and cultural jamming were, in fact, held to be part of its distinguishing characteristics (Bourdieu, 1984: 282ff). The main problem with this kind of reasoning is that cultural eclecticism is depicted as something that reconfigures and challenges 'old' principles of taste distribution. Though eclecticism may have become increasingly prominent recently, there is nothing about it that contradicts the homology argument, as long as the ways in which cultural goods are perceived, appreciated and appropriated are distributed according to the structures of the social space. Given the empirical findings in this analysis, the opposition between the omnivore argument and the homology argument would, in this case at least, be false. Thus, to exclusively focus on the fact that social actors located in the upper sector of the social space exhibit 'broad' tastes that tend to straddle the divide between the sociologist's pre-constructed categories of taste cultures, would indeed result in a reductive view which would draw attention away from important differentiating processes.

While cultural eclecticism deserves empirical scrutiny, my contention – in line with the arguments forwarded by Savage and Gayo (2011), Atkinson (2011) and Rimmer (2012) – is that this would best be performed without the notion of omnivorousness. And while social actors' pursuit of exclusiveness in one sense maintains a permanent revolution in tastes (evident, for instance, in the ever-changing tides of fashion), the underlying structural oppositions between different cultural tastes may remain intact, as this implies a securing of a steadfast difference vis-à-vis social actors less successful in such pursuits. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The crucial question regarding the social distribution of tastes should thus not be whether taste differentials take on the exact same forms across contexts, but whether there are affinities in the ways these are structured. So though goods sociologists usually depict

as 'highbrow culture' may be less consumed and/or less valorised in present day Stavanger than in Bourdieu's France in the 1960s and 1970s, the social distribution of tastes is still highly classed. And though it may be interesting to scrutinise the social trajectories of certain cultural goods in different social contexts, this would imply a highly reductive view if the litmus test for assessing the homology thesis was whether or not cultural goods once predominantly distributed in certain sectors of the social space, in a certain country, at a certain point in time, still function as markers of social distinction.

However, as regards the overarching discussion of class, status and closure outlined in Chapter 1, the empirical findings pointing to a systematic and 'classed' distribution of cultural tastes are not in themselves sufficient to make claims about group formation and power differentials. Cultural differentiation does not necessarily imply social closure, let alone relations of domination between groups of social actors located in different sectors of the social space. As the divisions drawn in this chapter are primarily based on patterns of cultural consumption – and not social estimations of honour and prestige associated with specific lifestyles and tastes – the categories employed are, at this stage in the analysis, to be considered only as distributive groupings. True, social actors like different things and they like the same things differently, but this does not necessarily mean that such differences serve as the basis for social exclusion and the formation of more or less esteemed social collectives.

CHAPTER 5
HORIZONTAL
BOUNDARY DRAWING

5.1 Introduction

Previous research on social stratification in Stavanger and other Norwegian cities has suggested that a classed marital endogamy and tendencies for residential segregation facilitate a demographic clustering of individuals into more or less amorphous communal groups (e.g. Hansen, 1995; Rosenlund, 2000c, 2009a, 2011; Ljunggren, 2010; Ljunggren and Andersen, 2012). Although there are reasons to suspect that a classed distribution of cultural tastes and lifestyles is an important factor in the structuring of how such social relationships coincide, there have been relatively few attempts to empirically assess how such processes develop. As previously noted, the assumption that lifestyle *differentiation* will inevitably lead to social *closure* is problematical. So even though the previous chapter has shown that the interviewees express explicit and at times quite harsh and condescending descriptions of certain lifestyles and cultural practices, this does not necessarily mean that they will avoid interaction with the bearers of such cultural tastes. As Lahire has pointed out: 'there is nothing contradictory in the idea that someone might dislike something whilst believing that others are perfectly within their rights to like it' (Lahire, 2008: 183). In the following two chapters the question of social closure and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups on the basis of subjective evaluations of other people's lifestyles will be addressed.

As accounted for in Chapter 2, social closure may result from both formalised and non-formalised social relationships. Viewed as ideal types, formalised closure is comprised of objective boundaries in terms of property, credentials and certificates legally sanctioned by the state (see for instance Parkin, 1979; Collins, 1979); meanwhile, non-formalised closure is comprised of crystallised boundaries created by social actors' choice of friends and partners, exclusive social networks, residential segregation, preferences as regards leisure activities and so forth (see for instance Bourdieu, 1984; Lamont, 1992; Hansen, 1995; Bottero, 2005). While the latter type of closure may be no less 'real' than the former, it is not secured to the same extent by legal and institutional backing. Whereas the exclusiveness of, say, medical doctors

or other members of *numerus clausus* professions is legally secured by educational qualifications, the exclusiveness of bearers of certain cultural tastes and lifestyles is, by contrast, not formalised in the same way: hence it is far more dependent on *subjective* evaluations of esteem, honour and prestige. Moreover, as the exclusiveness of certain lifestyles is potentially kept under the continuous threat of inflation due to outsiders' adopting these lifestyles, it is all the more dependent on social actors' subjective boundary drawing and closure strategies. While these two types of social closure may be empirically entwined, they nevertheless represent an important *analytical* distinction. Indeed, if an argument concerning the exclusionary effects of lifestyle differentials is to be plausible, it needs to be demonstrated that these differentials bring about social closure in their own right, meaning that they are not merely epiphenomena of other stratifying processes. It is thus an important empirical endeavour to map out the ways in which social actors actually classify, evaluate and estimate others people's tastes and lifestyles.

Based on the assumption that the ways in which people classify, evaluate and estimate other people's lifestyles are indicative of elective affinities and processes of group inclusion and exclusion, I ask whether, and if so how, such symbolic boundary drawing amounts to social closure. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, different cultural tastes are distributed both according to the capital volume principle and the capital composition principle of social differentiation. The composition principle was particularly prevalent in the upper sectors of the social space, i.e. among the capital-rich interviewees in the sample. This line of division is by far the most prominent when it comes to explicit classifications of other people in derogatory or condescending terms. The kind of boundary drawing directed 'vertically' in the social space will be treated in Chapter 6. This chapter, however, is concerned with the kind of boundary work directed 'horizontally' in the social space, i.e. dis-identifications and mutual classifications of disapproval among people located in the cultural and economic fractions of the upper sectors of the social space.

First of all, I map out mutual antipathies between the class fractions and discuss the ways in which aesthetical and moral criteria of evaluation are manifested in the interviewees' evaluations of other people's lifestyles. I then chart the interviewees' 'sense of their place' in Stavanger's urban areas. Finally, the significance of the capital composition principle of social differentiation will be discussed in relation to strategies of social closure.

5.2 Mutual antagonism

Echoing previous research on symbolic boundary drawing in Norway (Skarpenes, 2007; Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010; Fagerheim, 2008; Hansen, 2012) the interviewees in the present empirical case are generally somewhat reluctant to talk condescendingly about other people's tastes and lifestyles perceived as different from their own. While they certainly express an awareness of difference, they typically express certain reservations before or after uttering their antipathies ('I'm not saying that my taste is better than theirs, but…'; 'Oh, that was an awful thing to say'). However, there is an important exception to this general picture. While the interviewees are typically reluctant to talk condescendingly about people perceived as somewhat unsuccessfully adopting, or erroneously practising, lifestyles similar to their own – exemplified by the CEO cautiously talking about the 'cheap' holiday habits of the less economically fortunate, or the art professor prudently expressing a certain distance to the 'vulgar' reading habits of the less educated – it seems they are much less cautious when it comes to expressing antipathies towards lifestyles and practices perceived as alien to their own, especially when such practices are associated with types of people perceived as representatives of 'the elite'.

Put in somewhat simplified terms, those richly endowed with cultural capital express an aversion to the lifestyles and practices of those richly endowed with economic capital, and vice versa. Indeed, it is striking how the capital composition principle is manifested in the interviewees' derogatory classifications and evaluations of other people's tastes. Among those endowed with relatively more cultural than economic

capital, those depicted as 'the others' usually means 'the economic elite', 'the privileged', 'the upper class' and the like; whereas those endowed with relatively more economic than cultural capital depict 'the others' as 'the cultural elite', 'the cultured people', 'the intellectual snobs' and so forth. While they draw on remarkably similar classificatory repertoires in depicting 'the others' as representatives of 'the elite', they typically have different conceptions of what constitutes such elites.

5.2.1 The cultural fraction versus the economic fraction

The most explicitly expressed aversions to other peoples' lifestyles and tastes are found among the interviewees located in the cultural fraction of the upper sectors of the social space. We have already seen how the academics, teachers and cultural producers elaborately expressed their likes and dislikes of cultural *goods* in the previous chapter, and they express their aversions to other cultural *consumers* in a similar vein. The ultimate target for their aversions is those who lead expensive lifestyles rendered possible by the booming oil industry:

> V: How would you compare your way of life to other people in Stavanger?
>
> I: This is a crude generalisation, because everyone's not like this… But there is a certain tendency here in Stavanger… Stavanger is very *nouveau riche* because of the oil industry. And I get this feeling that many people are very preoccupied with money. […] Money is the main driving force, in a sense. You can tell by all the status symbols you see popping up everywhere. You're supposed to have the coolest car, the latest gadgets and the most expensive furniture. And it all adds up to these dreadful, empty apartments where everything is painted white. You know, with the most expensive stereos, the most expensive sofas… But they're totally devoid of substance. […] So I guess I'm sort of on the outside of the sphere of all the Stavangerians who are driven by money. You know, the urge to earn money, at any expense, and show it off too.
>
> (Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

Endowed with a self-conscious perception of themselves as 'intellectuals', 'artists' and 'cultural producers', several interviewees report feeling marginalised in an environment perceived as inhabited and dominated by cultural consumers conspicuously displaying lifestyles, tastes and values alien to their own:

> Well, being an out-of-towner originally, the biggest culture-shock that hit me when I moved here was all the private wealth. […] You get the impression that there is a big divide between those who fall through and those who strive for bigger gardens, houses and cars. Period. There's nothing in between.
>
> (Jonas, head of cultural enterprise, mid 30s)

> This town is characterised by this individualised attitude that reveals itself first and foremost through the ballot box. It's very blue and conservative. And that symbolises what people want for this town and the region. I guess it's because of the huge business community here. It's overflowing with money. The wealth is just enormous. […] People are getting more and more vain. There are less limits to showing off your riches than elsewhere. It can be seen in the fleets of cars and all the huge villas. People want it big.
>
> (Elias, high school teacher, early 30s)

The interviewees regard Stavanger as pervaded by 'egoistic' and 'individualistic' values, represented by right-wing political attitudes, a striving for material luxury and a conspicuous display of expensive status symbols. Apparently, the practitioners of such lifestyles are viewed as somewhat dubious types of people who make an inappropriate mark on their surroundings. Moreover, several interviewees report that the city lacks a 'proper intelligentsia', and those identifying as 'intellectuals' feel alienated in what is perceived as a rather hostile and cold environment. What is missing, they would say, is people endowed with 'sufficient cultural competence':

> From my point of view, there are very few people who are endowed with sufficient cultural competence. There's more money than cultural competence in this town. […] In the old days, we had people like Kjølv Egeland.[101] We had people who were well-informed and well-versed in all cultural fields. They were all-rounders, so to speak. And they were endowed with proper cultural judgement. Now there are very few people of that type.
>
> (Sofia, academic, mid 60s)

> We live in the oil capital of Norway, as they say. And that has made Stavanger awfully rich. The housing expenses are enormous. I mean, it's really expensive to live. And the population is affected in several ways by the oil business and the development in that regard. First of all, there are lots of practical people here, people who either work out in the oil fields, or people who make a living by producing

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[101] Norwegian politician representing the Labour Party. Egeland served as Minister of Education and Church Affairs in the years 1976-1979.

something for the oil industry. It's all very practical. That's the main focus here, and it affects politics and the ways things are done. You know, 'How can we fix this? How do we arrange it all in a practical way?' And people demand to see concrete results. It's all dominated by the engineering spirit, economists and that sort of competence. 'How do we extract the oil in the best possible way? And how do we distribute the wealth in the best possible way?'[…] What Stavanger lacks, are those who complicate matters, who resist and throw spanners into the works, so to speak. People who prevent everything from being oiled and clean. There are hardly any philosophers, social scientists or humanists here. Well, there are some, of course. But, generally, the population is too homogenous and too characterized by clean-cut, sporty types of people.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

While Thomas is quick to point out that he is a 'supporter of diversity' and that the people working in oil-related businesses perform a function in the local environment, the problem is that the philosophers, humanists and social scientists are somewhat suppressed by the homogeneity of the economists and engineers of the oil industry. Moreover, one of the most troublesome repercussions of the oil industry which is expressed is the expensive consumer culture it has introduced:

V: We were talking about private wealth and consumption… Are there any consumption styles you disapprove of?
I: Yes, indeed! We talked about clothes earlier, and my impression is that there are lots of people in this town who… I mean, there are clothing stores in this town that couldn't have been located elsewhere. The prices are beyond imagination. And there are circles where stuff like that is valued, appreciated and recognised. It gives status. And that's why stores like that are viable. They have lots of customers. And it's all because people can afford it. There are insane amounts of money floating around, and there are hardly any barriers for going out flashing your new 18 000 kroner fur coat. You can do it and people will admire you for it. You stand out from the crowd you'll get recognised. And obviously it's important for some. […] There's a lot of money here, and people want to show it.

(Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

While few, if any, problematise private economic wealth in itself, there are certainly many opinions about how 'the rich' spend their money. 'Flashy', 'vain', 'vulgar' and 'shallow' are the terms commonly used to classify the lifestyles of the rich:

There is obviously a flourishing of private wealth in this region. And it's very flashy. These people want to show their riches off. […] Why do people have to drive around

in these big cars, these SUVs? It's just a status marker. It's just to show off. Bah! All these nice houses with the right furniture, the right lamps and God knows what…

(Oscar, academic, mid 30s)

V: You mentioned something earlier about vulgar behaviour. What did you mean by that?

I: Well, like I said earlier, it's all about the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie, or, rather, the lack of it. You know, a type of rowdy and conspicuous display of wealth that you see a lot of in this town. For instance, I don't like the boat race they arrange here every year. That Formula 1 boat race in Vågen. That's just tacky. […] People with styled, greasy hair, gold VISA cards and loud personalities, ploughing their way through crowds. It's not a pretty sight.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

Wittily referring to the Luis Buñuel 1972 film *Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie*, Thomas conceives of the 'loudness of the bourgeoisie' – the exact opposite of a 'discreet charm' – as representing a lack of character. Indeed, Stavanger's economically privileged are repeatedly depicted as 'indiscreet', 'flashy', 'rowdy', 'loud' and the like. Moreover, they are thought to live 'superficial', 'inauthentic' and 'empty' lives. Such perceived inauthenticity is especially linked to the consumption of material goods considered to be 'unnecessary', an expression of 'superficiality':

I: There are lots of people here in Stavanger with lots of money, and they build houses, and these houses are so trendy, you cannot believe it. […] The latest fad is to build architect designed houses. And there's this particular firm called Husgalleriet,[102] they've got these packages. They'll draw your house, build it, everything… […] And this architect who draws for them, Tommie Wilhelmsen, his credo is that houses are supposed to be entertaining. That's his word, 'entertaining'. You know, it's supposed to be fun to live in a house. And it's all so incredibly shallow, a very superficial idea of what a home is supposed to be. Because for me, a home is a place where you live with your husband and your children, and you try to accomplish a worthy life together. But this firm and this architect… It's all about superficial stuff, you know, lots of glass so that people can see what's going on from the outside. And a single orchid in the window, if you catch my drift? Very shallow. It's like 'Look at us! This is where we live!'

V: What kinds of people live in such houses?

I: I don't know such people.

V: But do you have an idea of what kinds of people they are?

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[102] Local real estate developers.

I: Well, I guess they're the kind of people that like things that I don't like. People who build huge cabins up in the mountains, and who barely visit them. And when they do, they drive their fancy snowmobiles… Or they go to fancy beaches for their summer holidays. Or maybe that's untrendy now? Well, I guess they attend safaris in Africa. Or whatever destination fashion dictates. I read somewhere that safaris were the hottest thing right now. [Laughs.]

(Sofia, academic, mid 60s)

Despite her own enthusiasm for 'minimalism' and 'functionalism' in architecture and interior design, Sofia sarcastically utters her contempt for the appropriation by the 'rich' of such styles. Apparently, such people are viewed as appreciating their wealth in the wrong manner. This suggests that she is aware of different modes of appreciating goods, and that 'wrong' ways of appreciating the 'right' goods elicit feelings of resentment and contempt. This point is also evident in the way in which Theodor talks about 'spoiled brats' appropriating his clothing brand of choice, Fred Perry:

V: We were talking about this particular brand you like, Fred Perry, and that it once was associated with the mod culture[103] that you had affiliations with in your youth… But now that it's been popularised… Can you elaborate on your thoughts in that regard?

I: It used to really bother me. […] You know, there's a certain logic to it. If a group of people have their own clothing style, their own little secret codes that they are all share and recognise… Their own identity, in a way… And if it suddenly becomes commercialised, then it's extremely annoying. This is how I used to think, anyway. It doesn't bother me that much anymore. Well... In some respects it still does, I guess. There's this certain type of people… […] Extremely annoying kind of people… Uh, this is probably very prejudiced and generalising, but there are these daddy's boys, you know, with their bandanas, dyed hair, rowdy, all over the place… Rich, spoiled little brats, full of daddy's cash… Taking up space… And they're wearing Fred Perry shirts. When I see that, I have to admit, it hurts a little. […] But of course, the Fred Perry company just wants to make money like all companies, and I've just found a shirt that I like. And it's like that with all trends and fads, they move like waves. So even if there's a certain Fred Perry fad going on right now, I know it will disappear again someday, and then we can have this for ourselves. [Laughs.] Sometimes, when I see strangers on the street, you know, people of my generation wearing the same uniform… We still give a friendly nod when we pass each other. [Laughs.] We know what it's all about.

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[103] Mod (from 'modernist') is a subculture that originated in London in the late 1950s (see for instance Hebdige, 1979).

(Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

While this type of boundary work is related to specific stylistic codes within certain subcultures in which this particular interviewee was involved in his youth – and thus perhaps constitutes what Thornton (1995) has dubbed 'subcultural capital' – the classificatory practice nevertheless implies an aversion to 'wrong' people adopting the 'right' styles. Again, the 'rich' seem to spoil things by appropriating 'his' brand of choice in combination with a type of obvious loudness alien to those who more discreetly display a familiarity with the history, and the right appropriation, of the styles in question. Apparently, these people share an understanding of similar stylistic codes and know each other by 'the look', and they can clearly spot 'phoneys a mile off'. Although there are quite a few examples of boundary work linked to 'wrong' ways of appreciating material goods, this is also salient in terms of cultural goods such as music:

> On Thursdays, when the local symphony orchestra do their weekly performances, the concert hall is packed. And the reason for this, I believe, is that it functions as a scene for those who want to be in the know. And I'm pretty sure that most of the people going there don't actually love Mahler, but they still go there. […] I think it's a little pathetic. But then again, if it means that Stavanger Symphony Orchestra gets the income they need, and in that way can make music that I enjoy, and do performances I 'd like to attend, then it's fine by me, I guess. […] But of course, I find those people rather ridiculous. But, you know, who am I to judge?
>
> (Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

The recurring theme is that 'the rich' do not *really* like this sort of culture; they attend concerts, exhibitions and the like 'just to be seen with the right crowd'. What may be inferred from the excerpts above is that discreetness and subtleness – the very opposite of loudness and flashiness – are considered a virtue. Lifestyles perceived as conspicuous displays of wealth are thus deemed 'not a pretty sight', connoting aesthetical flaws, inauthenticity and pretentiousness by the economically fortunate. Indeed, this lends further support to the claim made earlier about the importance of mapping out different modes of consumption. In the previous chapter I pointed out that scholars associated with the omnivore thesis erroneously presuppose that the

consumption of similar cultural goods conveys similar tastes. However, different modes of consumption are related, but not reducible, to the consumption of the goods themselves. The important thing is the manners in which the goods are perceived, appreciated and appropriated. Indeed, the fact that such perceived differences are salient in the evaluative repertoires of the interviewees casts further doubt on the soundness of the notion of the cultural omnivore.

The boundary work directed against the lifestyles of conspicuous consumers is not only conducted on *aesthetical* grounds, but it is also tightly connected to *moral* criteria of evaluation. The loudness and flashiness of wealthy consumers are often linked to character flaws such as 'vanity', exhibiting a 'shallow inner life', or more generally, a 'lack of values':

> When I visit someone's home for the first time, I'm a bit cheeky. Because as soon as I get the chance, I check their music collection, I look at their bookshelves, I look at the pictures on their walls. Things like that. And my impression is that it says a lot about the people living there. And sometimes I'm shocked. For instance, I read this column in *Dagens Næringsliv*[104] where they ask people from the business community about the books they read. And I find it unbelievable that many of these people say stuff like 'No, I haven't read a book in twenty years.' How is that possible? I just cannot understand people like that. And football players saying they've never read a book in their life. You know, what are their lives all about? I mean, you cannot play football all your life. You've got to have certain values in your life. And I believe culture and art can help provide people with values in life. It gives you perspectives, points of view, something to think about, something to challenge you. […] If you haven't got a single picture on your wall, if you don't own a single book, if you've hardly got a record collection… But you've got the most expensive furniture, the newest car, and you treat yourself to the most expensive holidays… Then maybe you're so preoccupied with making money that it sort of becomes your only value in life. […] Some of these people even pass this on to their children. I've seen children in kindergarten wearing the most expensive clothes the market can offer. That's sheer stupidity! I guess I can understand why people stay clear of H&M, because they produce clothes that don't last. But children grow out of their clothes in like half a year, anyway. Then why do these people buy a 3000 kroner dress for a three year old girl? It's foolish. It's as if the parents attempt to mirror themselves in the children. You know, 'Look at how successful we are!' I find that really disturbing. […] It's important to have values in life. Values, that's a key word.
>
> (Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

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[104] Norwegian newspaper.

There is a striking entwinement of moral and aesthetical criteria of evaluation in this quote. Being interested in literature, music and the fine arts himself, Theodor is quick to evaluate people based on their cultural tastes. Moreover, people who do not share his enthusiasm for certain cultural forms – exemplified by CEOs and football players who never read – are not only perceived as lacking important values in life; they are also perceived as bearers of lifestyles representing immorality. As we can see, the values associated with excessive luxury – exemplified by buying a 3000 kroner dress for a three year old girl – are deemed to be 'sheer stupidity'. Indeed, a perceived link between vanity and a dubious morality is a recurring theme whenever the interviewees located in the cultural fraction classify the clothing styles of the rich:

V: You say that your clothing style is discreet and that you despise vanity. What is a vain clothing style?

I: Well, I'd say clothes that draw attention… That would be classified as vain. […] A vain clothing style, that's associated with people who scream for attention through their clothes. […] But not only clothes, it's the whole character… Hairstyle, colours, the superficial… […] Primarily it has something to do with personality. People who crave attention, yearn to be seen to a much greater extent that I do personally. And they allow themselves to dress in a loud kind of way. […] And I don't particularly like that kind of people. For instance, I don't like women who dress in a loud, conspicuous way. Either whether it's the expensive type, or whether it's the cheap type. I guess they're meant to draw attention. And I don't find that attractive. […] It betrays a certain character, a certain type.

V: If you meet a person dressed like that, what sort of associations do you get?

I: Well, my first thought would be that this person is self-absorbed. This is a person who begs for attention. And I guess there will come a nagging feeling that this person is covering up a superficial inner life.

(Elias, high school teacher, early 30s)

I don't like that kind of flashy clothing style, especially if it is the expensive type. I don't care for that. What I don't understand is why it has to be so expensive. […] I catch myself thinking 'Are you compensating for something?' I mean, their attempts to dress to impress don't impress me. Because, deep down, I think these people are trying to impress others. And there are lots of girls and women in Stavanger who spend insane amounts of money on clothes. And I get a bit annoyed by it all. […] To be honest, I don't like people who are vain, even though I'm a bit vain myself. But you shouldn't be vain in an obvious kind of way. You have to be discreet about it. [Laughs.]

(Sara, journalist, mid 50s)

Although Sara jokingly admits that she is somewhat vain herself, this quote nevertheless indicates that virtues such as modesty, decency and propriety, or rather peoples' lack thereof, are decisive in the boundary work directed against the economically privileged. Notwithstanding the importance of aesthetics in the evaluations of other people's cultural consumption, there is also apparently an important moral distinction between being 'stylish' and simply being 'vain'. As soon as attempts to 'stand out' are perceived as exaggerated and/or too expensive, they are clearly frowned upon and associated with a certain dubious morality.

The interviewees in the cultural fraction thus cultivate a rather clear depiction of the 'rich' as people endowed with both aesthetical and moral character flaws. People perceived as such are considered to be types with whom they would rather not associate.

5.2.2 The economic fraction versus the cultural fraction

Those endowed with relatively more economic than cultural capital also demonstrate contempt for the 'pretentious' lifestyles of those whom they conceive of as 'the cultural elite'. The lifestyles of the cultural elite are also considered to make a mark on their surroundings in Stavanger. In recent years, the term 'the cultural elite' has been widely used in Norwegian popular language and public debates, and its connotations might be peculiarly 'Norwegian' compared to other national contexts. Based on a study of how the term has been used in Norwegian newspapers in the last three decades, Haarr and Krogstad (2011) argue that the meaning has changed over time; it has been increasingly deployed to denote something negative, unpleasant and undesirable. Moreover, they argue that in contrast to France – a country where 'elevated' cultural tastes are traditionally admired – there is little or no respect for the

cultural elite in Norway. While this claim may be overstated,[105] there are quite a few examples of derogatory uses of the term to be found in the interview data:

> *V: You used the term cultural elite earlier. What do you mean by that?*
> I: The cultural elite is characterised by a formal cultural education. And they take pride and ascribe status to it. And they've got a relatively high influence on politics and those who are in charge of granting funds to cultural projects, projects which appeal more to their narrow taste, and not to the taste of the majority. But that's just an objective description. If I allow myself to judge… […] Well, they represent a certain kind of taste in music and film, and they represent a certain kind of manner.[…] But they also represent power, in a sense. They like to convey this image of underground culture, and of being oppressed, so they can attend these protest marches and torchlight processions, and all sorts of… I guess they're attracted to this '68 Che Guevara kind of romanticism. The political engagement is long gone, but the whole image is still there. […] But the thing is, they represent mainstream culture and the established cultural life in ways they don't dare to admit.
>
> (Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

The lifestyles of the cultural elite seem associated with a somewhat obsolete left-wing counter-culture, while the cultural elite itself is assumed to represent 'power' and 'the established cultural life'. What seems to elicit most resentment is the fact that both cultural producers and the consumers of certain cultural forms receive state funding. For those unfamiliar with and/or uninterested in such culture, it is simply incomprehensible why the state hands out money to artists and their 'faithful acolytes'. The term 'cultural elite' does not, however, always refer to the same group of people. Sometimes it refers to practitioners of 'high culture', sometimes to 'snobbish' people in general, sometimes to cultural producers, sometimes to people possessing influence in the political sphere and sometimes to politicians themselves:

> The cultural elite, that's the people who run this town. The political authority, and people employed by the local government. That's the cultural elite. They run the show. I guess the private sector can have its say to a certain degree. But they're… Usually, cultural events need financial funding. And the narrower they are, the more funding they need. And then there's the political system that funds it. Normally. There are some private contributors, but there are very few events that base their

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[105] As we will see in Chapter 7, there are several signs of admiration of the tastes and lifestyles of what the interviewees conceive of as the cultural elite.

funding on sponsorship. So the cultural elite, that's the political authorities. They set the agenda. They decide who will get funding and who will not.

(Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)

Notwithstanding the various connotations the term 'cultural elite' may have for different people, the feelings of resentment for those who are conceived of as consumers or producers of 'elevated' or 'high' culture belonging to certain social cliques are fairly widespread, especially among those located in the economic fractions of the social space. Interestingly, the boundary work directed against what is perceived as the 'snobbish' lifestyles of the cultural elite is entwined with morality in similar ways as the boundary work directed against 'the rich':

V: You used the term snobbish earlier on. Do you meet people you consider to be snobbish here in Stavanger?

I: Oh yes, I do. And I totally resent it. You know, especially if they've got this attitude that their taste is superior to that of others. […] I totally disagree with that type of thinking. When it comes to snobbery… I guess it has something to do with a need to show off based on buying art objects, and the ways people relate to art. […] For me, it's more important to be honest about your taste than trying to fit into this or that social circle, you know, because it's only acceptable to put these particular paintings on your wall, or to attend these particular classical music concerts, just because they're supposed to be more refined or something. I think that's stupid. […] So I guess there's a lot of that attitude around. […] But for me, that's wrong.

(Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

It is, however, not always clear whether 'cultural snobbery' refers to specific 'elevated' cultural preferences and tastes, or to a perceived 'better-than-you' attitude among the cultural consumers displaying such preferences. It nevertheless seems as though the latter is often inferred from the former, and what is perceived as 'strange' or 'weird' is interpreted as a pretentious and dubious search for 'specialness' by the cultural elite:

I: I attended this play once. I can't even remember the name of it. It was really hopeless. […] And when it was all over, some people thought it was absolutely fabulous, but the rest of the crowd thought it was horrible.

V: And you were in the second category?

I: Yes, indeed I was. I guess twenty per cent thought it was amazing. It was like…. It was so peculiar and strange that there were, of course, some people who had to find it interesting. But common, simple men like myself, found it totally meaningless.

V: What about the other twenty per cent, those who liked it? What are your thoughts on them?

I: Well, I'm not really sure whether they liked it because they were obliged to like it. You know, because they are supposed to be refined, and if not, they'd lose their differentness. Either that, or it was because they actually are different from people like me, you know, that they are built differently than I am. Either way, I don't get it. But, you know, luckily there are different opinions on everything. But still…. I mean, that play was so weird. Way too weird. I guess I'm more of this average, simple guy who doesn't need such high society entertainment. And it really puzzles me… You know, why people don't like the same things as I do. [Laughs.] That people don't like watching sports on telly. I don't get it!

(Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)

Implicitly, the ordinariness of 'the average guy' is held to be more honourable than the pretentious efforts of the cultural consumer who seeks out 'high-society entertainment' for the sake of standing out from the crowd. Just as we saw how interviewees in the cultural fraction perceived the 'rich' as flashy and pretentious, the interviewees in the economic fraction perceive the 'cultural elite' as endowed with equally dubious motives; their cultural consumption is associated with 'trying too hard' or spending too much time 'being cultivated'.

As we have seen, there is indeed mutual antagonism between two qualitatively different taste cultures in the interview data. The differences found along the capital composition axis of the social space in the previous chapter are reflected in the interviewees' classifications of other people's lifestyles and tastes. Moreover, regardless of the targets of such distaste, the perception of 'the others' seems to be linked to a lack of moral character. Morality is clearly entwined in the evaluation of the aesthetic aspects of lifestyles and consumption preferences. The fact that morality seems to be prominent in the evaluative repertoires of the interviewees does not, however, indicate that it renders the aesthetic aspects somewhat less relevant, or less 'salient', as suggested by Lamont (1992) in her analysis of boundary drawing by French and American upper-middle class men. On the contrary, in this case at least, it seems a more reasonable interpretation that aesthetical aversions are *reinforced* by

moral ones. Although it might be fruitful for analytical purposes to distinguish between different ideal types of evaluative repertoires, this would arguably result in a flawed analysis if these were taken *a priori* to be competing or mutually exclusive, rather than complementary components of the interviewees' repertoires of evaluation. While the interview schedule was not constructed to generate data on moral issues *per se*, questions about cultural consumption often led to conversations about moral matters. As we have seen, lifestyles and tastes are often perceived as linked to moral stances and/or political convictions. Moreover, as indicated by Rosenlund (2000c, 2009a), moral-political stances are differentially distributed in tandem with cultural tastes, which would suggest additional support to the claim that morality and aesthetics are mutually entwined in the constitution of different lifestyles and the perceptions thereof.

In the previous chapter I applied the notion of habitus to analyse the interviewees' classificatory practices. In line with Bourdieu's (1984, 1990b) homology argument, I argued that a correspondence exists between social structures and mental structures; i.e. a correspondence between the interviewees' positions in the social space and the subjective principles of vision and divisions that social actors apply in their comprehension of different cultural goods. More specifically, I argued that people are endowed with socially structured schemes of perception and appreciation, which generate rather coherent classificatory practices. In this chapter we have seen the ways in which interviewees located in two fractions of the upper sectors of the social space classify each other in equally derogatory terms. As summarised in Table 2, the interviewees' classifications of other people's tastes follow a similar pattern.

	The cultural fraction (as classified by the economic fraction)	The economic fraction (as classified by the cultural fraction)
Referred to as	The cultural elite, the cultivated people, the cultural snobs, the intellectual snobs, the artsy types	The rich people, the filthy rich, the economic elite, the bourgeoisie, the people with money, high society, the oil people
Lifestyles of distaste	Preferences for cultural goods perceived as 'weird', cultivating esoteric knowledge	Spending too much money on material goods, appreciating cultural goods in a manner perceived as 'inauthentic'
Ascribed characteristics	Conspicuous, trying too hard to stand out from the crowd, pretentious, elitist	Vain, conspicuous, shallow, leading empty lives, self-centred, vulgar, loud, a lack of taste

Table 2: Mutual antagonism

Focusing here on the upper sector of the social space, there is a rather clear division between the two fractions in terms of subjective evaluations of social esteem. Although there are interesting similarities as regards morality, there are evidently two different taste cultures prevalent in the two fractions; one in which the conspicuous consumption of *cultural* goods is deemed dubious, and one in which the conspicuous consumption of *material* goods is judged in equally derogatory terms. Each fraction cultivates a shared belief, a common code, for what is considered good and bad taste, and these beliefs are quite distinctive from those common in the other fraction. As there are striking inter-individual coherences within the fractions, this lends further support to the idea of class habitus, meaning that each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the dispositions of other social actors located in similar social positions. As we shall see in the next section, the divisions in the social space also translate into divisions in physical space.

5.3 A sense of one's place

The mutual antagonism mapped out above indicates that the interviewees are very much aware of the differences between the tastes and lifestyles of 'their kinds of people' and the lifestyles of 'others'. They seem endowed with a social 'sense of

one's place', as well as a 'sense of other people's place' (Goffman, 1959; Bourdieu, 1984: 471; 1990a: 128), i.e. they are endowed with a sense of belonging to certain social groups, and by the same token, a sense of *not* belonging to other social groups. Moreover, the antipathies and sympathies towards practitioners of certain lifestyles and tastes are also expressed in a highly specific, geographical sense. As shown by Rosenlund (2011) and Ljunggren and Andersen (2012) in their studies of residential segregation in the Stavanger area, the capital composition principle of social differentiation is pivotal in understanding the residential patterns of the population, as those class fractions endowed with relatively more cultural than economic capital tend to reside in different parts of town than their counterparts endowed with diametrically opposed capital portfolios.

When asked where they feel comfortable, and which places they would rather avoid, the interviewees' responses in the present empirical case follow a similar pattern. Expressing an explicit aversion to settling down and moving around in certain neighbourhoods in Stavanger is especially prevalent among the interviewees in the cultural fraction. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they express a clear aversion to places associated with the 'flashy' lifestyles of the materially privileged:

> I've noticed that the rich people are influenced by the functionalist trend when they build their houses nowadays. But you can also see these ugly, oversized houses, which I believe is an expression of too much money and too little taste. It's grotesque! You know, just outside of town… […] They've built these houses down by the shoreline. Unbelievably ugly, blown out of proportions… Conspicuous quasi-castles with towers… It looks terrible! And that's what I mean by too little taste and too much money. I could never live among such people.
>
> (Philip, high school teacher, early 40s)

Echoing the point made above about the entwinement of aesthetic and moral criteria of evaluation, such entwinement is also reflected in the ways in which the interviewees classify certain areas of Stavanger. Some of these areas are not only associated with bad taste, but also with inhabitants of an unpleasant and sinister type:

V: Are there places in Stavanger where you wouldn't want to live?

I: There are some parts of the city that I am prejudiced against, of course. Like Eiganes, especially the upper part. I wouldn't be comfortable there. I guess I couldn't afford to live there anyway, because it's ridiculously expensive. It's been like that for ages. Eiganes was the refined, posh place to live. And it's still like that. But I'm convinced that you can find just as nice villas, and just as nice gardens, elsewhere in Stavanger. And it's cheaper too. […] I'm also quite charmed by Old Stavanger. […] But I've heard so many horrible stories about the people living there and how they treat each other. Extremely uptight people… If you happen to put a nail in your wall the wrong way, your neighbour will complain to the residents' association. Stuff like that. Neighbours glaring at each other, complaining… You know, really competitive. You're supposed to be better than others… Bah! […] So I guess Old Stavanger is out of the question too.

(Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, early 40s)

Certain areas seem associated with a type of person with whom the cultural fraction does not feel at ease. Eiganes is often cited as eliciting distaste; historically, this area was the domicile of the commercial bourgeoisie, and today it still has Stavanger's most expensive housing prices. However, while some places are classified as unsuitable for habitation due to the presence of 'flashy rich people', other places are desirable, yet out of reach because of the housing prices:

Våland looks really nice. Beautiful detached houses and nice, quiet streets. But of course, I could never move there. It's too expensive. Plain and simple. It's more or less reserved for the oil people.

(Andrea, consultant, public sector, early 30s)

Arguably this aversion to certain areas is sometimes a case of 'sour grapes', and it may say more about what people can afford than an actual aversion to the people living there. Evidently, however, the interviewees associate specific places with certain kinds of people. These associations seem to be decisive in terms of the ways in which they navigate Stavanger's urban areas. Indeed, explicit boundary drawing is clearly evident when the interviewees talk about cafés, restaurants, bars and other public places in or near the town centre. The interviewees report seeking out places where they can find 'their own kinds of people', while avoiding places associated with 'the others'. Among the cultural fraction the places where they feel 'comfortable' or 'at home' are bars and cafés such as Cementen, Bøker og Børst,

Sting, Gnu and Tau Scene. The places where they do not feel at ease are those associated with the flashiness of 'the rich', such as Taket, Javel and Hall Toll:

> *V: Where would you never go?*
> I: I never go to these places where people go out to dance. […] Hall Toll, Javel. Night clubs like that. […] If I was going to be a bit prejudiced, I'd say the people going there are interested in stuff that I care nothing about.
> *V: What kinds of people go to Hall Toll?*
> I: Real estate agents. People like that.
> *V: Why are they not your kind of people?*
> I: They don't share my cultural preferences. They've got different views of things. […] They're interested in posh addresses, clothes, cars… [Laughs.] I could just go on with these prejudices.
>
> (Elias, high school teacher, early 30s)

> *V: Are there places you'd never go to?*
> I: Yes, there are. I look at the clientele, the people who work there, how they look, what kind of music they play there. And places like Hall Toll… That's the place for people who want to be seen, where people are on stage. […] And I don't like that kind of stuff. I mean, if I want a night out, I want to feel comfortable. I want to get along with people and listen to good music. I'd never go to a place where I know I wouldn't enjoy myself. […] It's the whole setting. You know, the glasses of champagne, people goggling. It's like: 'Who is that? Did she see me? Look at those people over there! Should we move closer?' You know what I mean? That way of socialising, it's alien to me. I'd feel like a stranger in such places. It has got to be a comfortable atmosphere. […] And I can easily tell whether or not I'd feel comfortable. And it all boils down to the clientele.
>
> (Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, early 40s)

These interviewees seem to avoid certain places to avoid being exposed to the kinds of people with whom they do not want to associate. Even places that it might seem logical to seek out because of cultural interests are avoided because they are regarded as ruined by the presence of the wrong kinds of people:

> I'd never go to a performance by the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra at the concert hall, mostly because of the clientele. It's typically high society, people from Eiganes, you know, the gentleman's club type of thing. The few times I've been there it's all about… They sit there dozing off while their wives watch the show. And then the gentlemen discuss the shipping rates during the breaks. This high-society type of stuff. […] But that doesn't mean that I don't like classical music. If I'm in Berlin or somewhere like that, I can attend performances of classical works. I really enjoy that. […] But here [in Stavanger] there are too many people who go there just because

they are obliged to, just to show people that they belong to the right kind of group. […] Usually, when I attend concerts, there are predominantly people who aren't interested in what's going on on the stage at all. The last concert I attended was Farmers Market[106] at the opening night of MaiJazz.[107] And I reckon five per cent were there to listen to the band and actually found it interesting. The rest attended because it took place at Stavanger Konserthus.

(Oscar, academic, mid 30s)

We can thus clearly see how taste-related criteria are linked to the ways in which these people navigate their environment. But to every rule there is an exception, and the interviewees in the cultural fraction do not always avoid places associated with unpleasant rich people. There are also those who seek out places ironically, somewhat facetiously playing at anthropologists studying alien tribes:

I: Sometimes it's fun to go out on these excursions. Just to observe, a bit like anthropologists. And it can be quite fun to observe what kinds of people exist out there. Because one can grow tired of going to the same places and meeting the same people all the time. […] And there's a bar here in Stavanger. It's called Broremann Bar. I went there a couple of times with two friends of mine. It was all right at first, but after a while we noticed that the people there were a bit different from us. And I had brought a friend of mine from out of town. He had made some smart investments lately. […] And he knows these financial types. Anyway, he took us to this bar... And he said: 'Yeah, this is that kind of place... It's for the filthy rich.' […] And then suddenly all these women started hitting on him. You know, flirting. Then he said: 'These are all gold diggers. These are the kinds of girls who only hit on people with lots of money.' Anyway, we sat down with them and they said: 'So what do you do for a living?' At the time I worked for this youth organization. My other friend is a teacher. And they went: 'What the hell are you doing here?!' But for my friend from out of town it was the other way around. They were really flirting with him. I guess this has a lot to do with the oil business here.

V: What do you think of this?

I: Well, in hindsight… […] At the time I was just blown way. But now I think it's stupid. At the time I didn't really know that this was a place like that. But I remember we didn't feel at home. Anyway, we went there one more time. We thought: 'Well, we're totally out of place, so let's make fools out of ourselves.' You know, we were a bit drunk and wanted to make a point. And we said to the bartender: 'We want that Mojaito stuff.' Then he said: "What?! Do you mean Mojito?' And we were like: 'Yeah, yeah. Give us some of that Mosquito!' And then we sat there grinning and got lots of herbs from the drink on our teeth on purpose. [Laughs.]

(Philip, high school teacher, early 40s)

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[106] Norwegian jazz/folk band.
[107] Annual jazz festival.

The playful mode of appropriation discussed earlier seems at work here, and the distanced and somewhat ironic manner in which this interviewee visits the hostile territory of 'the others' is evident. While in one sense he seems to be seeking out interaction with such people, this does not indicate reconciliation. On the contrary, being exposed to the clientele at Broremann Bar seems to reinforce his perception of difference and strengthen his aversion to them. However, while this interviewee clearly does not approve of the bar and the people there, the irony and playfulness might not necessarily reveal feelings of superiority. Arguably, there are some feelings of deference and a sense of inferiority to be found. I shall return to this point in Chapter 7.

The interviewees in the economic fraction express a similar aversion to areas perceived as inhabited and frequented by the cultural fraction. But they are not as specific in their expressed aversion to living in certain areas inhabited by the 'cultural elite', perhaps because there are few residential areas regarded as dominated by such people. In navigating the centre of town, however, the aversion is equally harsh. In accordance with the mutual antagonism discussed above, the economic fraction seeks out the very places which the cultural fraction deems undesirable, while avoiding places frequented by people perceived as not their kind:

> *V: What kind of places do you steer clear of?*
> I: I never go to Cementen.
> *V: How come?*
> I: It's the same mechanism I told you about earlier, about the choice of cars… These same mechanisms apply to my choice of bars. When I go out, I go to places where it's likely I'll find my kind of people, people that I know. Because that's why one goes to bars, right? To socialise. Besides, I know no one at Cementen.
> *V: Like you said earlier… You associate things… What kinds of people go to Cementen?*
> I: Uh, people interested in literature? Definitely not bankers. I guess I'm too conservative. I go to places where people wear blue suits. [Laughs.]

> (Georg, banker, late 40s)

Typical places eliciting distaste include bars and cafés such as Tau scene, Checkpoint Charlie, Folken, Cementen and Bøker og Børst, the very same places where the cultural fraction report feeling at home. Indeed, it is the distinct presence of 'quasi-intellectuals', 'artists', 'socialists' and rather 'scruffy' people that makes the economic fraction feel uncomfortable:

> I'm not comfortable at places like Cementen and the crowd that hangs around there, if you know what I mean? They represent this kind of coarse, socialist kind of mentality. […] They've got their own taste in music, they've got their own manners, their own political affiliation. And it adds up to a concept, or an image, that doesn't appeal to me. […] But it's not just Cementen. You find such people at Folken, don't you? And at Tau Scene, I guess. […] It's the whole… Dirty and shabby premises, dirty and shabby people. [Laughs.] That's not my cup of tea. I want it orderly and glamorous. More Sinatra and cocktails, if you catch my drift? […] I like kitsch, but I like my kitsch glamorous. At Cementen you get this kind of working class kitsch. Lamps from the Salvation Army, pictures of gypsy women. It's all too Norwegian, a type of worn-out Norwegian social realism. The kind of kitsch I like is glamorous. You know, James Bond, Frank Sinatra. It represents the upper class and a glamorous life. Not a filthy Cementen life where people smell of sweat and cheap red wine. It's totally… I resent it. And this ideal of looking scruffy… No, I guess I'm at the other end of the scale.
>
> (Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

Furthering the argument about the importance of mapping out different modes of consumption, we can see how the appropriation of 'kitsch' by the clientele at Cementen is deemed inappropriate. It is not the proper, 'glamorous upper-class kitsch' associated with Sinatra and Bond, but rather a 'scruffy working-class kitsch' associated with body odour and cheap red wine. Clearly, it is judged to be entirely wrong and the interviewee stays away from it. Moreover, the purportedly obsolete left-wing counterculture and the intellectual snobbery associated with places like Cementen, Gnu and Bøker og Børst also make some of the interviewees feel uncomfortable:

> V: *Are there places you'd never go? Where you'd never find your kind of people?*
> I: I've been a couple of times to this place called Cementen and the other place next to it. It's horrible! I can tell you, not a single person of my type would go there. I guess that's the place where I'd be least comfortable in the whole of Stavanger.
> V: *What makes it horrible?*

I: There's a type of clientele that I don't relate to. […] I might be wrong, but these people… That's the type of people who went to Kongsgård[108] when they were young, which means that they have strong opinions on everything in life. […] And it's not the kind of people I'd have a chat with. It's not the kind of people that sit next to me at football matches at Viking stadion,[109] if you catch my drift?

V: Who are those people you sit next to there? In what ways do they differ from the people at Cementen?

I: […] The people at Cementen, they think they know all there is to know about life. It's obviously important to them to have strong opinions, to tell people about them, and, you know, show them off. When I chat with people… I don't go out to talk about politics, global warming and that kind of stuff. I go out to meet friends and talk about the old days, yesterday's football match… You know, the ordinary, everyday type of things. […] And these people… I remember from my school days… Those who went to Kongsgård, they were different. They were sort of put together differently. And people like me, who went to Svithun…[110] We weren't these protesters… You know, this anti-nuclear weapons type of people […] You know what I mean, right? In my youth they all wore these scarfs to show solidarity with Palestine, and thought they knew everything, which they might, of course, actually do. By all means. But I don't want to hear it. I don't bother discussing such matters with them.

(Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)

Trying to avoid interaction with 'intellectual snobs' is not restricted to bars, cafés and restaurants; it is also evident at other public places, such as art centres and galleries. While some of the economic fraction report occasionally visiting establishments such as Stavanger Konserthus and Rogaland Teater,[111] they report feeling uncomfortable among the clientele there:

V: Do you attend performances at Rogaland Teater?

I: I haven't so for years. […] The whole concept of plays bores me. The few times I've been to a play, I've been really bored. […] I guess it has something to do with the clientele there too. There are all these women and their husbands that sort of tag along after them. And they've got their glasses of wine and a self-image of being really refined. […] You know, in their Uno of Denmark dresses, this big earring in one ear, asymmetrical haircut and designer glasses. […] As you can tell, I'm full of prejudices. […] These people help sustain a type of culture that I despise. […] Bah! They're repulsive!

(Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

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[108] Local upper secondary school, also known as Stavanger Katedralskole.
[109] Local football stadium, home of the football club Viking.
[110] Local upper secondary school, also known as St. Svithun skole.
[111] Local residence showcasing performing arts.

It is evident from all these quotes that sympathies and antipathies towards the presence of certain kinds of people are of decisive importance in determining where the interviewees feel 'at home', or by the same token, 'out of place'. Although these processes may be more or less intuitive and pre-reflexive, some degree of *choice* is nonetheless involved. Insofar as there are objective possibilities for settling down in certain areas, or entering certain establishments in the local milieu, it seems the interviewees subjectively choose their movements in the Stavanger area with great care.

Informed by a Bourdieusian theoretical framework, Savage *et al* (2005a) view 'elective belonging' as a core feature of contemporary attachment to place. The notion of elective belonging involves choosing a place to live and moving among people of one's own kind, with the result that having local friends becomes an endorsement of one's place of residence. This does not necessarily imply an attachment to a fixed community rooted in specific places, but rather belonging in the sense that the place becomes valuable to the individual:

> [E]lective belonging is critically dependent on people's relational sense of place, their ability to relate their area of residence against other possible areas, so that the meaning of place is critically judged in terms of its relational meanings. (Savage *et al*, 2005a: 29)

Moreover, Savage *et al* (2005a: 80) argue that those who have an account of why they live in a place, and can relate their residency to their choices and circumstances, are those who feel most 'at home'. As the boundary drawing scrutinised in this chapter is performed by interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space, i.e. those endowed with high overall volumes of capitals, this might explain why they express the most specific and elaborate sympathies and antipathies towards certain places. Compared to those interviewees less endowed with resources of various kinds, these people have greater opportunities to choose their place of residence, or more generally, their movements in physical space. Indeed, the notion of elective belonging presupposes the ability to choose, and there are thus reasons to believe that

this ability increases proportionally with the endowment of resources, especially economic capital. Given the tremendous rise in the economic wealth of the top echelons of Norwegian society lately (Hansen, 2011), there are reasons to believe that the differential distribution of such abilities will increasingly make its mark on elective belonging. This may have several effects. As the purchasing power of the top echelons increases, housing prices in certain areas tend to increase proportionally, thus excluding those who cannot afford them. Moreover, insofar as the increased wealth is spent in ways perceived as 'flashy' by others, it will – judging from the interviewees' classificatory practices – increase the feelings of resentment in groups for whom expensive lifestyles are alien, and thus reinforce the symbolic boundaries between groups. Thus, cultural factors (i.e. socially conditioned modes of perception) may help reinforce social divisions that are already structured by economic factors.

	The cultural fraction (as classified by the economic fraction)	The economic fraction (as classified by the economic fraction)
Associated living areas of distaste	Storhaug, downtown area	Eiganes, Gamle Stavanger, Madla, Stokka, Våland
Associated establishments of distaste	Cementen, Tau Scene, Checkpoint Charlie, Folken, Rogaland Teater	Hall Toll, Broremann Bar, Javel, Taket, Tango, Stavanger Konserthus

Table 3: Places of distaste

As summarised in Table 3, the mutual antagonism between the cultural and the economic fraction manifests itself in both a social and geographical 'sense of one's place', as people navigate the local milieu by seeking out interaction with their peers while avoiding interaction with 'the others' due to taste-related criteria. As noted by Bourdieu (1996a: 12) social space tends to retranslate itself into physical space. In the case of residential areas in Stavanger, Rosenlund (2011) and Ljunggren and Andersen (2012) have shown that different class fractions tend to reside in different areas of town. While the geographical divisions do not follow a clear-cut pattern between, for instance, the east and west sides of town – as for instance demonstrated by Ljunggren

(2010) in the case of Oslo – there are nevertheless clear signs of residential segregation corresponding to the structures of the social space. Moreover, as we have seen in this analysis, people choose their movements in Stavanger with great care, seeking out places where they feel at home, while avoiding places where they feel 'out of place'. However, these patterns should not be overemphasised, as there are several 'mixed' neighbourhoods in Stavanger, and as is evident in the interviews, the interviewees do occasionally seek out places that are not frequented only by their own kind. The divisions in physical space are far from absolute. But then again, even though the two fractions may occasionally rub shoulders, the empirical findings suggest that an awareness of difference remains intact and that encounters between the fractions may even reinforce their feelings of contempt.

5.4 Usurpationary closure strategies

At the beginning of this chapter I addressed the question of whether the structured differences in tastes and lifestyles mapped out in the previous chapter are involved in processes of social closure and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups. Though social closure may take *formalised* forms through the workings for instance of private property and educational credentials, I have argued that it may also take *non-formalised* forms through the workings of perceived lifestyle differentials which may give rise to feelings of resentment and contempt, leading social actors to avoid social interaction. By the same token, similarity breeds connection, and the judgement of other people's tastes may thus lead to elective affinities in structuring patterns of marriage, friendship, co-membership and other types of relationships. In this chapter we have seen that a lifestyle-related antagonism is very much present in the ways in which interviewees classify other peoples' practices and tastes. On the one hand, those endowed with a preponderance of cultural capital express antipathies towards what is perceived as the 'conspicuous' lifestyles of the 'rich', and on the other hand, those endowed with a preponderance of economic capital express antipathies towards what is perceived as 'snobbish' cultural consumption by the 'the cultural elite'. Notwithstanding their similar moral distaste for conspicuousness and

snobbism, it is apparent that the two fractions have opposing views of 'honourable' styles of life. As noted by Bourdieu, tastes are often constituted in opposition to the choices of the groups closest in the social space:

> [T]he different fractions of the dominant class distinguish themselves precisely through that which makes them members of the class as a whole, namely the type of capital which is the source of their privilege and the different manners of asserting their distinction which are linked to it. (Bourdieu, 1984: 258)

Thus, the empirical findings presented in this chapter lend additional support to the argument made in the previous chapter: the capital composition principle of social differentiation is pivotal in understanding the differential distribution of lifestyles in Stavanger, especially in the upper sectors of the social space. Indeed, as the two fractions classify each other in equally derogatory terms, the empirical findings suggest that lifestyle differences are perceived as significant as regards who they would and would not want to associate with.

According to Parkin (1979: 45, 74) there are basically two strategies to ensure social closure. 'Exclusionary closure' is the use of power in a 'downward' direction by groups of privileged social actors in order to exclude other groups from access to rewards. 'Usurpationary closure' on the other hand is the use of power in an 'upward' direction by groups of non-privileged and subordinate social actors with the aim of biting into the resources and benefits accruing to the dominant groups. In fact, Weber (1946: 188) depicted usurpation as the 'normal origin of almost all status honour.' At the heart of usurpationary closure strategies, then, is the endeavour to impose different criteria of evaluation in opposition to a perceived presence of an 'unjust' distribution of social esteem. In this sense, the 'horizontal' boundary work scrutinised in this chapter – mutual classifications of disapproval between interviewees located in different fractions of the upper sectors of the social space – can be viewed as such usurpationary closure strategies.

However, the interviewees themselves do not necessarily perceive their antipathies and disapproval as closure strategies or as efforts to bite into the benefits accruing to others. On the contrary, the ways in which the interviewees classify 'the others' indicate that they instead attempt to avoid and distance themselves from what is perceived as an undesired arms-race for status and prestige among types of people with whom they would rather not associate. Although crystal clear about their demarcation against people practising lifestyles perceived as alien to their own, they do not perceive themselves as fighting a war, as it were. In their view, they are just minding their own business; 'unpretentious', 'down-to-earth', 'just like the next guy'. This self-perception is fairly widespread *across* the divide between the two fractions. However, the fact that social actors do not view themselves and their peers as elevated or 'better than the next guy' is not by any means an indicator of an absence of social closure. On the contrary, social actors may not necessarily consciously aim at revolutionising the differential distribution of social esteem, but the effects of their boundary work manifested in their day-to-day activities may still result in a modification of it. Insofar as social actors choose friends, spouses and partners with similar lifestyles while avoiding those who practise lifestyles alien to their own – as the classificatory practices of the interviewees indicate – 'real' groups will be formed on the basis of such choices. Indeed, empirical studies of marital endogamy (Hansen, 1995) and residential segregation (Rosenlund, 2000c, 2009a, 2011; Ljunggren, 2010; Ljunggren and Andersen, 2012) in Norway have suggested that the capital composition principle of social differentiation is pivotal in understanding such processes. In other words, status evaluations express themselves indirectly thorough elective affinities. Regardless of how 'amorphous' such status groups may be, the empirical findings nevertheless indicate that the mutual horizontal boundary drawing manifested in the upper sectors of the social space has 'real' effects in terms of social closure. The structural oppositions manifested in the correspondences between the social space and the symbolic space do not exist only 'on paper', but seem to translate into 'real' perceptions of difference, which in turn translate into 'real' boundaries between groups of social actors.

This finding resembles Savage *et al*'s (2005a; see also Devine, 1992; Erickson, 1996; Longhurst *et al*, 2001) description of Britons emphasizing their 'ordinariness' in constructing their social identities: 'we' are the ordinary people, whereas 'they' are pretentious social climbers shamelessly trying to stand out from the crowd. But the fact remains that *what* is conceived of as 'normal', 'natural' and 'ordinary' is not at all widespread. On the contrary, different conceptions of ordinariness seem to be differentially distributed according to the structures of the social space, in tandem with the distribution of different lifestyles and tastes. According to Bourdieu's argument about the functioning of the habitus, 'each taste feels itself to be natural – and so it almost is, being a habitus – which amounts to rejecting others as unnatural and therefore vicious' (Bourdieu, 1984: 56). In this way, the interviewees seem to take the naturalness of their own tastes for granted. This naturalness is then used as a yardstick against which 'the others' are judged. Expanding on the argument in the previous chapter, different conditions of existence – represented by different sectors in the social space – structure different sets of pre-reflexive schemes of perception, or habitus, through which people view themselves and others. And as the perceptions of similarities and differences seem to be tightly linked to whom they want to/do not want to associate with, processes of social closure may take place without social actors' acknowledgement of taking part in a struggle for recognition and social esteem.

5.5 Conclusion

In line with the spatial metaphor of social stratification, this chapter has been devoted to scrutinising the horizontal boundary drawing between interviewees located in two fractions of the upper sector of the local social space in Stavanger. In line with the significance of the capital composition principle of social differentiation pointed out in Chapter 4, I have discussed the ways in which differences in lifestyles and tastes amount to social closure and the formation of status groups. The argument put forward in this chapter can be summarised as follows. First, the ways in which the interviewees classify and evaluate the cultural tastes and lifestyles of others indicate

that there is a mutual lifestyle-related antagonism between the cultural and the economic fraction. Second, the ways in which these fractions classify each other are related to both aesthetic and moral criteria of evaluation, and I have argued that these criteria work in tandem and mutually reinforce one another in constituting aversions to what is perceived as 'dishonourable' lifestyles in other groups. Third, this mutual antagonism is manifested in both an abstract and a concrete 'sense of one's place', as people navigate physical space by seeking out interaction with their peers while avoiding interaction with 'the others' due to taste-related criteria. Finally, I have argued that the process whereby people seek out interaction with those perceived as similar to themselves, while avoiding interaction with those who are dissimilar, leads to social closure. As people form more or less amorphous groups based on moral-aesthetical criteria of evaluation, they wittingly or not contribute to an imposition of different criteria of evaluation in opposition to a perceived presence of an unjust distribution of social esteem. Thus, the structural oppositions existing 'on paper' translate into 'real' social boundaries.

In sum, the findings reported in this chapter hint at the co-existence of two main taste hierarchies: one tied to consumption of cultural goods and the other to consumption of material goods. However, at this stage in the analysis we have only viewed social estimation of lifestyles *indirectly*, i.e. thorough focusing on the interviewees' negative depictions of practices and attitudes alien to their own. Thus, we have yet to see how the interviewees evaluate practices which resemble to their own. It is to the 'vertical' dimension of boundary drawing we now turn.

CHAPTER 6
VERTICAL BOUNDARY DRAWING

6.1 Introduction

By combining and expanding on Lamont's (1992) notion of symbolic boundaries and Parkin's (1979) distinction between different types of closure strategies, the formation of status groups can be viewed as the result of boundary drawing in both usurpationary and exclusionary terms. While the two ideal types of closure strategies may be entwined on an empirical level, they nevertheless represent an important analytical distinction, as boundary drawing in usurpationary terms does not necessarily imply monopolisation of social esteem. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, the analysis pointed to attempts to impose alternative criteria of evaluation in opposition to the perceived presence of an unjust distribution of esteem in other groups. Interviewees perceive themselves as 'normal' or 'average', and the aversions they express, according to their own subjective sense of their place in the social world, are directed against those conceived of as 'the elite', 'the powerful' and so forth. The form of boundary drawing analysed in the previous chapter can – if viewed isolated – be read as endeavours fuelled by egalitarian sentiments to eradicate or compress existing status hierarchies – a *de*-monopolisation of social esteem, as it were. As Lamont's (1992) analytical strategies imply, and as explicitly advanced by Skarpenes (2007; see also Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010), the mobilisation of moral sentiments against a perceived snobbishness in other groups has 'modifying' implications for the stratifying impact of lifestyle differentials.

However, while boundary drawing in usurpationary terms against perceived 'elitism' and 'snobbery' in other groups may be the most salient form in the interview data, it is not the only one. In this chapter I shall scrutinise exclusionary boundary drawing. In this regard I shall particularly focus on boundary work directed 'downwards'; i.e. derogatory classifications expressed by interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space. These classifications pertain to the supposedly 'vulgar' lifestyles of 'lower-class' people. I ask whether, and if so in what ways, such boundary drawing amounts to processes of monopolisation and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups.

First of all, I map out the ways in which the interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space classify those perceived as less fortunate and/or practitioners of lifestyles alien to their own. I focus on boundary drawing related to the consumption of both cultural and material goods. Second, I scrutinise the ways in which the interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space classify people perceived as more resourceful and practising lifestyles that are out-of-reach and/or conceived of as unthinkable to engage in. I focus on how the interviewees react to the denigration of their evaluators and I discuss how the mobilisation of moral sentiments may function as a form of usurpatory closure strategies and as a form of self-exclusion.

6.2 Boundary drawing 'from above'

6.2.1 Education, knowledgeability and cultural consumption

The relationship between educational achievement and class background is well-documented. Even in social democratic countries such as Norway these patterns prevail, despite extensive democratic reforms implemented to provide broad access to the school system, including higher education (Andersen and Hansen, 2012). Insofar as the education system values and awards certain forms of knowledge and modes of scholastic practices at the expense of others, pupils and students attuned to the explicit and implicit criteria of this system will enjoy success at the expense of those less attuned. It thus makes sense to conceptualise this process in terms of an unequal distribution of 'embodied cultural capital' which facilitates the accumulation of 'institutionalised cultural capital', which in turn affects the life-chances of possessors vis-à-vis non-possessors of such resources (see Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). In other words, the differential distribution of educational success and, hence, the attainment of educational qualifications, amount to processes of *formalised* closure in the sense that the value of such qualifications are institutionally secured by the state.

Moreover, studies of friendship and marriage patterns have shown that Norwegians – like people in most Western countries – tend to rub shoulders, reside and marry

within social circles endowed with similar types and amounts of educational qualifications as themselves (Hansen, 1995; Ljunggren, 2010; Ljunggren and Andersen, 2012), which may be interpreted as signs of processes amounting to *non-formalised* closure. There are reasons to suspect that the formation of more or less exclusive status groups is related to the unequal distribution of educational qualifications. However, such processes are not necessarily based on subjective evaluations of attributes related to education and/or knowledgeability, nor do the highly educated necessarily employ certain standards against which other people are judged as more or less eligible for social interaction. Indeed, Norwegian scholars have emphasised that egalitarian values, anti-intellectualist sentiments and democratic institutions have important 'modifying' implications for the stratifying effects of education and knowledge (Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010; see also Lauglo, 1995; Skirbekk, 2002; Telhaug *et al*, 2006). As highly educated Norwegians are found to be reluctant to explicitly demarcate themselves from others based on educational and knowledge-related criteria, it is argued that Norway is quite different from other countries, in the sense that egalitarian values 'modify other forms of evaluation and judgement', which, in turn, render the notion of social status rather different in a Norwegian context (Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010: 237).

Contrary to these findings, however, quite a few interviewees – especially among the highly educated interviewees in the sample – not only report that they valorise scholastic knowledge and education as virtues in themselves; they also explicitly demarcate themselves from people whom they perceive as 'less educated', 'less intelligent' and even as 'dumber' than themselves and the people with whom they associate:

> *V: Can you describe what kinds of people you like, or what kinds of qualities you appreciate when meeting other people?*
> I: People have to be intelligent, interesting and entertaining. Oh my God, there are so many boring people out there. […] When I'm at dinner parties, for instance, I'm very careful about where I sit down. I don't want to be bored to death by unintelligent and dumb people. […] I want to be surrounded by people who are smart and knowledgeable. […]

V: Would you say that it's important for you for people to be interested in cultural matters?

I: Well, of course. […] It would be horrible to be stranded on a desert island with a welder who only cares about smoking roll-ups and talking about the latest titty mail he has received from his friends […] There's got to be some kind of substance to people's interests. […] That's why I hate the real-estate agent type. Such people lack substance too. […] They've always wanted a nice car and a high income and to wear a suit at work, but they've never had the ambition or the ability to get a proper education. […] So they study a bit at BI,[112] mistakenly believing that sort of education represents a substance that entitles their image. I guess you can tell by the way I talk that I'm a university educated arrogant prick. But I still believe it's true. If you look behind my snobbery, you'll see that I'm right. They lack the ability to think logically. And the ability to do that… I value that. And you won't find that among these uppish real estate agents.

(Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

V: You mentioned earlier something about boyfriends and education. Can you elaborate on that?

I: Well, I could never have a boyfriend that didn't have a proper education. There was this guy, he was a carpenter. Apparently, he was in love with me. I guess he was sweet, but I mean, he had tattoos all over his body, and this Pantera[113] shirt… Obviously, it didn't work out. […] And then there was this other guy. […] I'd be embarrassed to be seen with him. I guess he had some form of education. Well, not really an education. I mean, he studied in Australia. […] But he somehow managed to get some qualifications, a bachelor's degree from what I call a summer university in Australia. […] And he was like… He talked about reggae music and he had this notion that if more people would listen to reggae and smoke marijuana, the world wound be a better place. Oh, my God! […] Then he went through these phases… You know, 'What's the meaning of life? Let's do a little research on that.' […] I mean, people who try to be very intellectual, but who are not, and just talk some mumbo-jumbo because they've smoked too much weed… That's just embarrassing. […] I'd be embarrassed if that was my boyfriend.

(Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

As university-educated lawyers, both Lucas and Nora identify with people whom they consider 'intelligent' and 'knowledgeable'. They also explicitly dis-identify with people regarded as 'boring', or just plain 'dumb'. The boundary drawing expressed in these quotes implies that it is not only those lacking a formal education who are disfavoured. Both the degree studied for at BI, and the degree studied for at a

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[112] BI Norwegian Business School is the largest business school in Norway.
[113] American heavy metal band.

'summer university' in Australia, are clearly frowned upon. In other words, the intellectual abilities of people employed in manual occupations, as well as those of more adjacent groups in terms of objective positions in the social space, are questioned.

As the quotes above indicate, the interviewees seem to value rational modes of thinking. Indeed, the ability to reason 'critically' and 'independently' is cherished by many interviewees, and lacking such abilities is often perceived as undesirable. In many cases this implies that the 'religiously minded' and those 'pandering to religion' are considered to have dubious mind-sets. This is not, however, the case with Philip who, despite his university degree, reports an interest in religious matters. Nevertheless, knowledgeability and critically reflecting on one's own spirituality are emphasised:

> *V: What types of qualities do you value in others, and what types of qualities do you find less attractive?*
> I: […] I guess it's all about getting along, to be on the same page, so to speak. And a lot of it has to with humour. If people have a good sense of humour, that's a good sign. […] I guess, in the end, one ends up relating to people who are very much like oneself. But in my experience, people don't necessarily have to have the same set of opinions. For instance, I've got this interest in religion. […] But this new age type of mumbo jumbo… It's kind of easy to make fun of, because there's a lot of foolish stuff going on in such circles. […] Their thoughts are unclear, in a sense. And there's way too little humour in such circles. And it can get too moralistic and way too serious. I mean, it's unheard of to joke about spiritual matters. […] And they lack knowledge when it comes to science. They've got this enemy image of both science and Christianity, even though they haven't got the slightest clue what either are really about. I know this, because I frequented such circles when I was young. But I gradually left, because we didn't really get along. […] So now I'd rather hang out with types of people that haven't got a slightest interest in religious matters. […] That's not how I choose my friends. […] The kind of people I get along with… There has got to be a certain amount of knowledge, intelligence and humour.
>
> (Philip, secondary school teacher, early 40s)

In addition to Philip's valorisation of knowledge and intelligence, he emphasises people's sense of humour. Indeed, lacking the ability to relate to religious issues somewhat humorously is partly why Philip has drifted away from the 'new age'

milieu he once frequented. Thus, religiosity or spirituality *per se* are not deemed 'unintelligent'; rather, it is the ways in which people relate to such matters that is important. More generally, the connection between knowledge, intelligence and a good sense of humour is emphasised by several highly educated interviewees. As they themselves prefer 'intelligent comedy', they deem people who prefer more 'immediate' forms of comedy as having a 'bad sense of humour'. Indeed, encountering such people is depicted as a 'horrible' experience:

> *V: If I understand you correctly, you appreciate people who have a sense of humour, who get irony and can appreciate that form of humour. Do you ever meet people who haven't got this way of relating to things, who don't master the art of irony, so to speak?*
>
> I: Yeah, that happens all the time. This feeling of not being connected, in a sense. When I meet new people, I can tell within a couple of minutes whether we can connect or not. If they get the references I hint at. For instance, I'll say this or that, and you'll immediately understand whether it was meant ironically or not. And I'm really taken aback by people are not able to do that at all. […] The kind of people I can relate to… We have this frame of reference, we're used to relating to irony… We're similar in that regard. And I find it really hard to communicate with people who aren't able to do that, and who haven't got a slightest clue about what I'm saying.
>
> *V: What kinds of people is that?*
>
> I: […] It's a type of people who are very earnest and heartfelt in a way. […] Which in a sense is the opposite of relating to things in a distanced and, if you like, ironic way. […]
>
> *V: How do you relate to…*
>
> I: …people with a bad sense of humour? Well, to be around those kinds of people is of course horrible. No doubt about it. [Laughs.] I guess the people that I perceive as having a bad sense of humour are the people who think they've got a good sense of humour themselves. […] I reckon the worst nightmare would be to deal with Kristian Valen[114] twenty-four hours a day. You know, people who too obviously try to be funny all the time. I don't like it when I watch comedy on TV, and I don't like it when I meet people face to face.
>
> (Jonas, head of cultural enterprise, mid 30s)

> *V: The type of sexualised humour you talked about earlier… […] What's your opinion about the types of people that find that kind of humour funny?*

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[114] Norwegian comedian.

> I: Well, it's obviously a type of people who doesn't share my preferences. But I guess I don't know that many people of that sort. […] I guess such preferences reflect what you're like deep inside. For instance what people joke about at parties. People can be so daft. […] I like my comedy a bit more intelligent. It shouldn't be so obviously funny. It has to be subtle and clever. That's far more interesting.
>
> (Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

What I have referred to earlier as an intellectual mode of consumption implies a distanced and sober celebration of 'art for art's sake' and a distinct intellectualised and aesthetical orientation in all of one's choices, from the fine arts and literature, to the more quotidian choices of clothing, food and furniture. Such interviewees seek 'new experiences' through their cultural consumption, and they typically demand that cultural goods 'challenge' them intellectually. As we can see from these quotes, cultural consumers who are perceived as complacent and who even cherish 'bad' forms of comedy are deemed to be people with whom these interviewees would rather not associate. This finding resonates well with Friedman and Kuipers' (2011) inquiry into comedy preferences in the Netherlands and the UK: they concluded that 'there is something fundamental about what makes people laugh.'

So far we have seen that education and knowledgeability are important evaluative criteria in themselves. Moreover, lacking scholastic abilities is associated with 'vices' such as being unintelligent, the exaggerated use of illegal drugs, pandering to religion, a bad sense of humour and so forth. Evaluative criteria related to education and knowledgeability are, however, especially salient concerning politics and the ability to critically reflect on societal processes:

> I've got no problem meeting people who are different from me. But if I am to spend my 'valuable time', I'd rather seek out people who are a bit like me. Or people who are interesting, people who want to talk about what interests me and people who can teach me something new. Say, if I meet this person, and I realise that I'd have to spend two hours explaining my views… […] You know, because we're so different, either politically or… Then it wouldn't be much fun. I'd just stand there biting my lip trying not to start bawling. I mean, that's not interesting to me.
>
> (Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

V: You mentioned elitism earlier?

I: I'm elitist.

V: Yeah?

I: And a snob. […] I'm marked by having spent considerable time at the university and frequenting what the Progress Party[115] would classify as the cultural elite. […] I demand that the people I'm surrounded by are conscious about themselves, their surroundings and society at large. I expect them to be able to discuss politics, and Bob Dylan's discography, for that matter. […] If people aren't interested in such matters… I mean, what's the classical definition of an idiot? It's people who don't care about politics. And it doesn't have to be… I mean, I don't follow election campaigns that closely myself. […] But I'm socially minded in general. And if I am supposed to communicate with others, I expect to talk about more interesting stuff than gardening, doing up houses, and what the kids said at the kindergarten yesterday. I mean, I want to talk about more than just private stuff.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

As we can see from these quotes, people who are perceived as exclusively preoccupied with commonplace activities such as gardening and doing up their houses are deemed rather uninteresting. Indeed, if it proves to be the case that these people do not care about politics and/or lack the ability to reflect on what is going on in their surroundings, they are deemed 'idiots'. Apparently assuming that such people will shun him for his interest in political and aesthetical issues, Thomas rather self-ironically identifies with the 'cultural elite'. As noted in the previous chapter, this term is widely used both in popular language and public debates, and it has been increasingly deployed to denote something negative, unpleasant and undesirable (Haarr and Krogstad, 2011). Another interesting point is that Thomas links such anti-elitist sentiments with the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), currently the second-largest political party in the Norwegian Parliament. As the highly educated interviewees mostly adhere to left-wing politics, the Progress Party often elicits their distaste.[116] Its politics is depicted as 'right-wing' or 'populist' by these interviewees, and judging from the ways in which they classify people adhering to its politics, the

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[115] Norwegian political party which identifies as 'conservative liberal' and 'libertarian' (http://www.frp.no/filestore/Introduction_To_The_Progress_Party.pdf).

[116] This finding resonates well with Flemmen's (2012a) analysis of a systematic heterogeneity with regards to political attitudes and party adherence within the Norwegian service class: respondents in the cultural fractions tend to exhibit leftist political adherence, while respondents in the economic fractions tend to exhibit rightist adherence.

Progress Party rouses rather strong antipathies. Some interviewees even report that they try to prevent their children from affiliating with the Progress Party's politics:

> I want my children to become socially minded, and not egoists that dream of fat salaries and expensive cars. And I have forbidden my children to ever vote for the Progress Party. [Laughs.] […] So there are limitations to the democracy in my family. I mean, they can do whatever they want. But they're going to have to justify and give good reasons for their choices. But voting for the Progress Party, there's no way you can justify that. If that happens, the family will fall apart. Then they can just kiss their mother goodbye.
>
> (Freja, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

Being accused of a dubious morality (e.g. 'racism', 'homophobia', 'egoism'), as well as aesthetical flaws (e.g. 'vulgarity', 'gaudiness'), people adhering to the politics of the Progress Party are often deemed 'unintelligent', 'feeble-minded' and 'dumb'. Furthering the discussion in the previous chapter about the importance of analysing the entwinement of different repertoires of evaluation as mutually constituting or reinforcing, rather than mutually exclusive or competing, the depiction of people adhering to the politics of the Progress Party perhaps represents the entwinement of evaluative repertoires *par excellence*. The link between ignorance and a dubious morality is particularly clear:

> I'm so sick of stupid people. And now I'm going generalise a bit… This boastful Progress Party style… You know, most of the people supporting their politics… […] They throw out hopeless statements like 'that bloody socialist government'. And I'm like: 'What?! What does that even mean?' Some people are so hopelessly ignorant. And I find that really disturbing. When people make such bold statements without the slightest clue about what they're talking about, I get provoked. Usually I manage to bite my lip, but when such statements become racist, as they tend to do, I feel it's my responsibility to speak out against it. Because if we don't, it'll never end.
>
> (Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

However, while the Progress Party's voters are negatively depicted by many of the highly educated interviewees in the sample, not all of them do so. Lucas maintains that as long as people are knowledgeable and can discuss political issues, it does not matter which stances they have. Nevertheless, this underscores the point that

intelligence and knowledgeability are important yardsticks against which others are judged:

> I like knowledgeable and intelligent people. I don't care if they adhere to the left or to the right in politics. I've had the most exciting conversations with communists and all sorts of riff-raff. But my conversation partners have to be intelligent and knowledgeable. I really like to discuss. I come from a family that always had these political discussions, for instance at family dinners. There was a nice balance between discussing and quarrelling.
>
> (Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

Evaluative criteria related to education and knowledgeability are also linked to aesthetics and the ability to appreciate works of art, literature, music and so forth. As established in the previous chapter, interviewees located in the cultural fraction of the upper sector of the social space draw sharp symbolic boundaries between their peers and people practising what they conceive of as a dubious combination of 'too much money and too little taste'. While derogatory classifications of people perceived as having fewer monetary resources are somewhat less frequent, in the interview data there are nevertheless several demarcations against the ways in which 'common people' embrace 'popular' entertainment forms. A recurring phrase is that the average Stavangerian has 'no idea' of aesthetics. Indeed, if such people do happen to attend a cultural event or gathering, they are presumed to be 'lost' and there only 'for the sake of being there':

> I: I think it's great that people like Jon Fosse[117] come to town. But I guess ninety-nine per cent of the people attending his plays have no idea about what it's all about. They just tag along because there's something happening. It's the same people who attend the international volleyball tournament. 'Wow, something's happening. We've got to be a part of this big thing.' […]
>
> V: What kinds of people go to events with that sort of approach?
>
> I: Uh, I guess they're all local patriots. People who define themselves as… It's the same people who attend the *Gladmat* festival[118] and think it's all marvellous.
>
> (Oscar, academic, mid 30s)

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[117] Norwegian author and playwright.

[118] Local food festival.

> Here in Stavanger, there's this consumer culture that I find problematic. […] The funniest example I can think of is these big rock concerts that take place at the stadium from time to time. And this one time REM[119] played, and it's remarkable how many people gathered to see this band. It was pretty obvious that most of them didn't really have a relationship to this band, much less followed their career from the late eighties and onwards. Anyway, this friend of mine overheard this conversation between some people. I guess it was some old friends or neighbours or something… And when the show was over, they said something like this: 'See you all next year!' You know, regardless of who's on stage. It's more like 'Oh, there's a concert at the stadium, I guess we'll have to go'. While this is just a small example, I believe it's an expression of an extremely homogenous, consensus oriented and very provincial approach to culture. 'We'll tag along as long as there's something happening, regardless of the content of it.'

<div align="right">(Jonas, head of cultural enterprise, mid 30s)</div>

As most of the highly educated interviewees report a distinct commitment to their consumption of cultural goods, people who do not share their enthusiasm are often regarded as rather 'dull'. While some interviewees point out that shared cultural tastes are not mandatory criteria in order to befriend other people, too great a distance from their own preferences is viewed with suspicion. This is the case with Sara, who simply cannot understand how people can stand 'mass-produced, generic music', such as Swedish *dansband*:

> *V: You say that you get provoked by certain kinds of popular music… Or by people who blindly buy into it. Can you elaborate?*
>
> I: Yeah, I get a little provoked by the fact that it's so easy to sell things, you know, garbage that is so easy to make. And the reason I get provoked, I guess, is that people don't really demand enough from the producers. I guess it says a lot that ten years ago Sputnik[120] was the most popular artist in Norway. But I guess we just have to reconcile ourselves with the fact that that's how it is. Even today, we've got this *dansband* crap. It's really popular and totally meaningless. I guess I have to get used to the thought that there are a lot of people who find it exciting. […] I try not to be prejudiced, but… When I meet people that I cannot connect with and on top of that they all have a taste in music that is so far off from everything that I like, it's sort of an affirmation that we don't have much in common, if you know what I mean?

<div align="right">(Sara, journalist, mid 40s)</div>

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[119] American rock band.

[120] Norwegian country artist and truck-driver, also known as Knut T. Storbukås.

So while bad taste in music does not absolutely disqualify others from social interaction, Sara maintains that it often serves as a confirmation that she probably will not have much in common with such people. Bad taste in music is a sign, or an indicator, of something more. Indeed, such associations are recurrently made by many interviewees. A lack of interest in music, literature, the visual arts, or more generally, aesthetics, is often associated with 'squares without a clue':

> I can be quite judgemental. You know, if you had this painting on your wall that I didn't like, I'd sort of judge you and I'd think that you weren't really interested in the visual arts or that you were a square who didn't have a clue. [Laughs.] […] If I'd walked into a stranger's home, and this person had three IKEA pictures on the walls, I'm sure I'd also find cheap, generic books from some book club on the shelves. I'd have thought that they weren't really interested in culture, and that they'd probably be more interested in football or something. You know, living these square nine-to-five lives. […] I guess I'd find it quite sad, really. […] My friends are interested in music, art, clothing styles… Well, most of them anyway. The others… We call them the sheep [Laughs.] Well, that's how we liked to think in our youth. But I've found that the world is not that simple. You know, it's not just us against the sheep. But still, none of my friends live square lives and have IKEA pictures on their walls. And when I walk into someone's homes and see that type of thing, I still have these thoughts.
>
> (Julia, artist and illustrator, late 20s)

To summarise, many interviewees – typically highly educated people with backgrounds from the social sciences, the humanities or law – draw boundaries between themselves and others based on evaluative criteria related to education, scholastic knowledge and aesthetical preferences. Such criteria are, indeed, salient parts of the evaluative repertoires of quite a few of the interviewees. Although such boundary drawing may not be morally justifiable in terms of explicitly expressing them in certain social situations – an issue I shall return to in the next chapter – the empirical findings suggest that education, scholastic knowledge and aesthetics are important as regards those with whom they would or would not like to associate.

The interviewees who draw boundaries based on criteria related to education, scholastic knowledge and aesthetics are – with few exceptions – situated in the cultural fraction of the upper sectors of the social space. Those located in the

economic fraction are, by contrast, either indifferent to such issues, or – as we saw in the previous chapter – they explicitly shun what they conceive of as 'cultural snobbery' and 'elitism'. So while not *all* the interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space draw on such criteria of evaluation, many do. As most of them are both highly educated and employed in occupations linked to knowledge production (academics and journalists) or cultural production (artists and people employed in cultural enterprises), the exclusiveness of their knowledge, or more generally, the distinctiveness of their practices, is presumably a stake in the struggle in their professional careers. In other words, the value of their assets is largely determined by the successfulness of their closure strategies vis-à-vis other producers of knowledge and/or cultural goods. Conversely, the interviewees located in the economic fraction of the upper sectors of the social space seldom report any interest in scholastic culture, either in their professional or their private lives. And if they do, their tastes are not held with much commitment; they typically attend plays and musical performances because their line of work requires it (e.g. 'I have to attend because I have to entertain my clients'). Thus, it would be highly surprising if these interviewees drew boundaries in the same way as their counterparts endowed with diametrically opposed capital portfolios.

Furthering the claim about the importance of emphasising the capital composition principle of social differentiation in order to understand boundary work directed 'downwards', there is not necessarily a contradiction between the fact that interviewees located in the cultural fraction shun the 'flashiness' of the economically privileged, while drawing sharp boundaries between themselves and others based on knowledge-related criteria. As noted by Sayer,

> [i]t is possible for people to be egalitarian in their views about wealth, both wanting a more equal distribution and resisting the tendency to value people for their wealth, and yet valuing qualities, such as being educated […], so that they discriminate among others in a highly inegalitarian way, selecting out those who are 'able to talk seriously about things'. (Sayer, 2005: 199)

As noted in the previous chapter, interviewees located in the two fractions of the upper sectors of the social space employ different criteria of evaluation in depicting themselves in opposition to the lifestyles of their counterparts. So while the highly educated interviewees located in the cultural fraction might completely reject what they conceive of as the 'conspicuous' and 'snobbish' material consumption of the rich, they might not necessarily refrain from judging others based on criteria related to education and knowledgeability. Indeed, as educational qualifications and esoteric knowledge cannot be inherited in the same way as, for instance, money and property (Bourdieu, 1986), successful closure strategies related to education and knowledgeability are perhaps one of the few ways in which the highly educated can secure their exclusiveness and social esteem. Following Bourdieu's line of reasoning, the social reproduction of the highly educated depends to a large extent on the transmission of embodied cultural capital, which in turn may be converted into educational qualifications and advantages on the labour market (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). According to Bourdieu, such closure strategies are reinforced and even concealed by a 'euphemisation' of language. Thanks to classification schemes produced by sciences such as psychology and biology, a misrecognised 'racism of intelligence' is made possible:

> Educational classification is a euphemized version of social classification, a social classification which has become natural and absolute, having been censored and alchemically transmuted in such a way that class differences turn into differences of nature. […] In educational classification, a social classification is legitimized and given the sanction of science. (Bourdieu, 1993: 178)

Thus, acquired scholastic skills may, under the guise of terms such as 'intelligence', 'talent' and 'giftedness', help to conceal closure processes. Put in Weberian terms, the racism of intelligence is the means through which the highly educated – wittingly or not – produce a 'theodicy of their own privilege'. In this way, institutionally recognised classification schemes function as perceptual categories through which people comprehend the social world, including their perceptions of themselves and others. Such classifications do not only amount to processes of formalised closure, in the sense of those who are found worthy of attaining qualifications, diplomas and

titles in the education system; but as the analysis above indicates, they also amount to processes of non-formalised closure, in the sense that more or less exclusive status groups are formed on their basis.

6.2.2 Material consumption

The connection between class, status and material consumption has regrettably not been scrutinised to the same extent as the consumption of cultural goods, though there are some exceptions (see for instance Veblen, 1967; Bourdieu, 1984; De Graaf, 1991; Lamont, 1992; Holt, 1998; Rosenlund, 2000c; Katz-Gerro, 2003; Van Eijck and Van Oosterhout, 2005; Prieur *et al*, 2008; Daloz, 2010). While the importance of education and the mastery of scholastic culture should not be underestimated, there are reasons to suspect that this is not the *only* means though which more or less exclusive status groups are formed. Indeed, as Weber (1978: 342) points out in his discussion of the notion of social closure, 'it does not matter which characteristic is chosen in the individual case: whatever suggests itself most easily is seized upon'. Moreover, while he notes that status honour normally stands in 'sharp contrast to the pretensions of sheer property,' he nevertheless points out that 'the possibility of a style of life expected for members of a status group is usually conditioned economically' (Weber, 1946: 180).

As established in Chapter 4, what I termed the luxurious mode of consumption is particularly prevalent among the economically privileged interviewees. While tastes for material goods do overlap somewhat between the cultural and the economic fractions of the upper sectors of the social space, the interviewees located in the latter typically have greater means to fulfil their worldly and sensual desires. The luxurious mode of consumption is characterised by preferences for expensive and exclusive material goods such as motor vehicles, clothing, wines and trips to 'exotic' parts of the world. Moreover, these interviewees are far more concerned with consumer brands than the other interviewees in the sample, and they typically shun brands that have connotations to something 'cheap' and 'generic'. Such classificatory distinctions

are also reflected in their demarcations against people perceived as exhibiting 'poor' consumption styles. Everything from consumption of cars, boats and sporting equipment, to food, wines and other beverages is exposed to judgement. Interestingly, interviewees located in the cultural fraction of the upper sectors of the social space – many of whom we saw demarcating themselves from the 'conspicuous' consumption styles of the 'rich people' in the previous chapter – also draw boundaries in similar ways. Explicit boundary work is particularly salient when it comes to looks, appearances and clothing styles:

V: Can you describe a woman of your age who's completely off in her clothing style?

I: Well, she wears skirts which are far too short, shows far too much cleavage, and she… Well, generally, people who don't wear enough clothes look stupid. You know, regardless of how good a figure you have, if you show too much skin, that's not nice at all. It's just trashy. There are a lot of women who dress like that. But the worst thing is people at my age who show too much skin. Especially if they should have left more to the imagination, if you catch my drift?

(Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

V: Do you observe other women and their clothing styles? Do you catch yourself thinking that others have bad taste in clothes?

I: Yes, indeed I do. […] Some people wear these raggedy, old clothes… I guess that's more about having no taste at all rather than having bad taste. I guess they're just not interested in that kind of stuff. But of course, some people are poor and I guess they have to prioritise what they spend their money on. But on the other hand, clothes are really cheap these days, and I guess most people are able to treat themselves from time to time. And you don't have to choose the most expensive stuff. There's a good range for all purses. Other people just don't have a clue. They're just not capable of putting together a nice outfit. But still they have this self-image of being really well-dressed. But in reality, the clothes don't fit them at all. Yet others wear clothes that are made for people who are a lot younger than them. But I guess the ultimate expression of bad taste is people wearing these sweatsuits.

V: Who wears such clothes?

I: You know what? I almost think they belong to a lower class. […] I guess I'd think that this person was a bit simple-minded.

(Pia, lawyer, late 40s)

There are two typical figures of distaste recurring in the data; one who is depicted as 'trashy', 'vulgar', 'loud' and 'cheap', and a second who is not so much defined by the *presence* of bad taste as a *lack* of good taste. These types seem to apply to males and

females alike. The former type is often associated with an inappropriate promiscuity, particularly when females are depicted, and adjectives such as 'slutty' are not unusual. The latter type does not elicit contempt to the same degree, but is nevertheless viewed with suspicion. Both are typically associated with 'lower' and 'simple' types, and as we can see above, Pia even depicts such people as belonging to a 'lower class'. However, it is not just the 'lower-class types' that elicit some interviewees' contempt. Remembering Lucas' conception of real estate agents as lacking in intellectual capacities, such people also seem to be lacking sartorially:

> These real-estate types, they walk around in their suits, without representing any kind of substance or style. They're betrayed by their poorly done Windsor knot. […] You can spot them easily. You can tell by the suit, the way that it's cut… This is a suit bought in Norway. And they probably think it can be passed off as a Gucci, an Armani, or a Boss suit, maybe even a tailor-made suit, but the cut betrays that it has been bought at Dressmann or H&M. And by all means, wearing a suit from H&M is not necessarily bad. I've even got one myself. But I don't try to pass it off as anything else. […] And you can spot them by the way they style their hair, their glasses… They always buy these designer glasses to draw attention. And then there's this giveaway that never fails: the shoes. I've always based my reasoning on the axiom that people wearing two-tone shoes are either Americans or mafia bosses, and that you should be sceptical of both. [Laughs.] People may have nice suits, but if they ruin it all by wearing Bianco[121] shoes, they expose themselves as what they really are; they don't have the money or the taste to buy proper shoes.
>
> (Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

The boundary drawing against people who lack sartorial taste is not just linked to brands and the exclusiveness of the garments in question: it seems knowledge and a sense of aesthetics are equally important. Indeed, as the quote above indicates, donning the 'right' suit in combination with the 'wrong' shoes or a badly knotted tie is taken to reveal pretentiousness and a lack of taste. In addition, a knowledge of what is fashionable and what is 'out' also seems to be of importance. Theodor, who reports being 'style-conscious without buying into every new fad', is nevertheless well-informed about the dictates of fashion, and he is quite observant about what other people wear:

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[121] Franchise shoe store.

I find the latest fad quite amusing. […] All the bright colours that are supposed be mixed in creative ways. Lots of pink, green, blue… You know, all at once. I kind of like it, because it reminds me of the eighties. But still, this type of fashion peaked in Stockholm two years ago. And eventually, mediated by H&M, this fad has arrived in Stavanger. And I find this amusing. Because the people wearing such clothes don't necessarily know that this fashion is two years old.

(Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

This boundary drawing in terms of other people's clothing styles is also linked to knowledge about situational aspects; i.e. where and when (not) to dress in certain ways. Indeed, being either 'overdressed' or 'underdressed' for the occasion is considered inappropriate by several interviewees. Henrik is particularly concerned about people 'underdressing', both when eating out at restaurants and meeting others in work-related settings:

V: Do you catch yourself thinking that other people are badly dressed, that they exhibit bad clothing styles?

I: It does happen, especially if people look scruffy. You know, dirty clothes, or clothes that don't suit the occasion. For instance at restaurants. I mean, you should be properly dressed for such occasions. And in work-related settings too… I mean, there are ways you just can't dress. […] But the worst thing is being scruffy, if you know what I mean? […] I guess these things change. Nowadays, people wear jeans and casual clothes at work. It wasn't like that before. […] And it's not necessarily a development I like. […] When you meet new people, you have to have manners, and that goes for clothing too. […] It has something to do with respect for others.

(Henrik, economist, early 60s)

While looks, appearances and clothing styles are the most salient features eliciting explicit contempt among the resourceful interviewees, other features are also present in the interview data. As noted in Chapter 4, quite a few interviewees are interested in food, wine and drinks and they report spending considerable time and money on buying, preparing and consuming such goods. They also have opinions about those who do not share their interests:

When it comes to food, I don't care about time or money. People are very concerned about these two things and I really don't get it. It's supposed to be as cheap as possible, and it's supposed to be made as quickly as possible. I find that quite

strange, because when people buy a new car, they don't think twice about spending thousands. But when it comes to things you put into your body… You know, things that really affect how the body works. When it comes to these things, people are really stingy. I've never understood that. I come from a family that is very conscious about food. I'm raised thinking you shouldn't care about the cost of food, and you shouldn't care about the time it takes to prepare it. You should eat what you feel like and what you enjoy.

(Emil, musician and social worker, late 30s)

Others are more cautious in their depictions of other people's culinary tastes. Johan reports an awareness that his privileged economic situation means that he can take pleasure in types of food and drinks that most people cannot afford. It nevertheless puzzles him that people can stand 'poor quality wines':

V: Have you ever considered… That your preferences are different from other people's preferences? Is that something you think about?
I: Well, yeah. […] And I can have a hard time understanding other people's tastes, or the lack of it. Well, I can understand that I'm privileged and have had the chance to experience a wider range of things. But when it comes to wine, for instance… When people are served really bad quality wine, and they think it tastes good, then I can tell that they've never really tasted the good stuff. And I really have a hard time understanding how people can enjoy something that is sour or just plain bad.

(Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

More generally, people perceived as 'unhealthy' and/or 'lacking taste' in quality food and drinks, are often viewed with suspicion by those who value such goods. Consumers of 'fast food' and 'junk' are portrayed as particularly suspect. Indeed, people whose diets are largely based on the popular ready-made Pizza Grandiosa and hamburgers from restaurant chains such as McDonald's and Burger King are associated with dubious character traits, such as a 'lack of self-control' and 'ignorance' about nutrition. When probed, the interviewees associate such lifestyles with overeating, obesity, or more generally, 'unhealthiness'. Thus, these classifications also imply moral judgements of people who do not seem to care properly about their own health. Again, such derogatory classifications are aimed at the 'lower-class' types.

Derogatory classifications of other people's consumption styles are also related to a perceived conformity, whether in terms of clothing style, interior design, or one's choice of motor vehicle. Consumers who 'buy what everyone else buys', who 'follow the latest fads', and who thus 'lack individual taste', are viewed with suspicion. Valorising 'individuality' and 'exclusivity' themselves, the conformity of others seems to puzzle many resourceful interviewees:

> *V: How would you never furnish your home?*
> I: I guess most people… There are basically two types. Either it looks the same as it does everywhere, or it's not nice at all. In earlier times, I guess most people were in the last category. Nowadays, there are more people in the former category. It's really nice and all, but the problem is that it's so similar to everyone else's homes. When I see such homes, I'm thinking: 'Why don't you make a little effort to do it differently? Can't you at least acquire one single item that has character?' […] Most people have nice homes nowadays, because people earn more and can afford to buy stuff. And most people buy their stuff at IKEA. And things at IKEA can be nice, you know, individual bits and pieces. But if you buy everything at IKEA, it's just… […] I'm not saying it's ugly, I'm just saying it's boring.
>
> (Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

> There's one thing that has always puzzled me… Why do all people drive around in the same type of car? Why do all people drive a Volkswagen Passat? Haven't they got their own taste? Every other family man in Stavanger drives around in a Passat. I just don't get it.
>
> (Wilhelm, manager in oil company, early 40s)

Boundary drawing related to other people's material consumption is clearly manifested in the interview data. Just as we saw how interviewees deploy criteria related to education, scholastic knowledge and aesthetics in their depiction of 'the lower types', the judgement of such people's material consumption choices is equally harsh. While the former way of evaluating others is quite distinct in terms of the capital profiles of the classifiers, the latter is not linked to the capital composition principle of social differentiation in the same way. Those who classify the material consumption of 'the lower-class' in derogatory terms are dispersed across the divide between the cultural and economic fraction of the upper sectors of the social space. While interviewees located in the economic fraction typically report spending more

money on material goods compared to those located in the cultural fraction, those located in both fractions similarly express aversions to the lower-class types' lack of taste in material goods. And while interviewees located in the two fractions might view each other with mutual contempt, they nevertheless seem to agree that people betraying 'vulgar', 'loud', 'rowdy' and 'cheap' tastes and lifestyles are not those with whom they would wish to associate.

6.2.3 A sense of one's place

In the previous chapter it was established that the mutual taste-related antagonism between the cultural and the economic fractions of the upper sectors of the social space manifests itself in a highly concrete 'sense of one's place', as people navigate physical space by seeking out interaction with their peers while avoiding 'the others'. This way of navigating physical space is not, however, restricted to the antagonism between cultural and economic capital. The interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space report avoiding certain neighbourhoods and establishments such as restaurants, cafés and bars due to the somewhat unpleasant presence of people perceived as representatives of the 'lower types' alluded to earlier. Places of distaste include certain areas located in urban districts such as Hundvåg, Varden, Storhaug and Tjensvoll. As most of these areas are depicted as dominated by huge apartment buildings located in rather 'unattractive surroundings', several interviewees report that they avoid even going to, let alone settling down, in such 'concrete jungles':

> V: Where would you never settle down here in Stavanger?
> I: Not in the area around Varden, where there's only apartment blocks. A concrete jungle, as they say. […] You know, these project blocks for people on social benefits. I could never live there.
>
> (Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

> I would never live down by those apartment blocks near Varden […] First of all, I don't like that type of building, the architecture. I have to live in a detached house, where there's freedom, where I've got my own garden. […] I mean, those apartment blocks give me the creeps. It's terribly impersonal. And sometimes I walk past them when I'm on my evening walks... It's really eerie. There are probably thousands of

people living there, but you don't see a living soul out in the streets. It's terribly impersonal and eerie.

<div align="right">(Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, early 40s)</div>

While the aversions expressed to such neighbourhoods are linked to perceived aesthetical and architectural flaws in the physical features of the buildings and their surroundings, this is often entwined with derogatory depictions of the types of people inhabiting these neighbourhoods. They are often categorised as 'people living on social security benefits', 'drug addicts' and 'criminals':

Down at Terje Vigens road, for instance… Or Terje Blue Light road, as people call it. People use bed sheets as curtains. Lots of noise at night-time, police cars driving back and forth. Families that I wouldn't have as my neighbours, if you know what I mean?

<div align="right">(Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s)</div>

It is not, however, just the perceived presence of people causing harm and disorder that makes the resourceful interviewees say that they shun certain neighbourhoods. Some interviewees report avoiding areas associated with 'squares'. This is the case with Philip, who reports feeling 'claustrophobic' in areas inhabited by 'down-to-earth' types of people:

V: You were referring earlier to down-to-earth kinds of people who only care about their lawns. Can you elaborate?
I: […] I feel really claustrophobic walking such streets. […] It might just be my prejudices, but if an area is dominated by that type of people… I don't know… It's this down-to-earth way of life that I have trouble relating to. [….] All kinds of ordinary attitudes and opinions, people without the ability to think abstractly. Very limited worldviews and interests in political matters.[…] I guess people have become like that because they're surrounded by that type of people, you know, because all their neighbours are like that. To me, it appears very down-to-earth. I imagine this is the way it was in the fifties. Extremely claustrophobic. I keep getting reminded of this quote by this Islamic revolutionary, Sayyid Qutb.[122] […] When he travelled around in the United States, what struck him most was that people were obsessed with their lawns. You know, this suburban way of life, people spending their time mowing their lawns… And he found this empty and meaningless. And this quote, 'obsessed by their lawns', that's a bit like what I think too when I see such places.

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[122] Egyptian author and poet, member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s.

You know, this type of milieu where everything is down-to-earth, people without a sense of humour and without an interest for the world outside their neighbourhoods.

(Philip, high school teacher, early 40s)

These interviewees also report avoiding establishments such as shops, restaurants and cafés in Stavanger's urban areas. As several of them appreciate expensive 'high-quality' food and drinks, establishments such as McDonald's and Burger King offering 'generic junk-food', as well as kebab shops and types of restaurants associated with 'low-quality' and 'fattening' food, are avoided. Even establishments serving food and drinks that satisfy the interviewees' requirements are avoided due to the perceived presence of types of people with whom they do not feel at ease:

V: Do you have any criteria when it comes to restaurants, cafés and bars?

I: It has to be nice. There's got to be some kind of style to it. And I have to relate to the staff in a comfortable way. Restaurants like TGI Friday's in Bergen… I hate those! It's the same with certain pizza parlours in this town. You know, when the waitresses are so exaggeratedly friendly that they almost sit down beside you to chat, you know, as if we were pals. I mean, if that happens I'll leave immediately, even though I really like pizza. […]

V: Are there other places than pizza parlours you steer clear of? Where you don't feel comfortable?

I: Yeah, places where working-class people go, if you know what I mean? Places like Crazy Piano. I don't know if that place even exists anymore. And this place that was called Gossip once. I think it's Inside now. Places filled with manual workers. There's no snobbery to it. They're just not my type of people. I can't relate to them. We have nothing in common to talk about. And I guess they can't relate to people like me either. […] It's much more fun to seek out places where there are people with similar occupations, people with similar backgrounds, where we have things to talk about, the same kind of humour and interests and stuff like that.

(Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

V: Are there places in Stavanger you steer clear of?

I: Well, I've only been to places like Hexagon like three times in my whole life. I just don't feel like going to those places. Big places with lots of really drunk people. […] Chevy's and all these pubs. I don't feel at home at such places.

V: What kinds of people go to such places?

I: […] I guess they live lives totally different from mine. I guess uneducated people without any academic background whatsoever.

(Mikkel, manager, oil firm, mid 30s)

As we can see, the interviewees' evaluation of both staff and clientele is decisive in whether they seek out establishments such as restaurants, cafés and bars. Indeed, if the staff lack discreetness and act in 'overly friendly ways' and the clientele fail to match his interests, Lucas will stay away from pizza restaurants and other establishments. In similar ways, Mikkel does not 'feel at home' at certain bars. Both associate such places with 'the working-class' and 'the less educated'. Recurring places of distaste for these interviewees include bars and nightclubs such as Inside, Dicken's, Corvetten, Crazy Piano, Kobra and Beverly Hills Fun Pub. The clientele at such places is associated with 'unhealthy' drinking habits, 'rowdy' behaviour, as well as promiscuity and 'desperate mating strategies':

> I don't like places like Dicken's, Corvetten and places like that. […] My prejudices tell me that mainly drunks go there. People sitting by the bar and complaining to the bartender, telling their whole life story. That's what I imagine. […] And then there are these meat markets where people have these desperate mating strategies just before closing time. It just doesn't appeal to me.
>
> (Emil, musician and social worker, late 30s)

> You won't find me at Beverly Hills Fun Pub and places like that, where you'll find the worst aspects of Norwegian drinking culture. Drunk people behaving rather inelegantly. It's almost dangerous to go there. It's too noisy, too many drunk people and too loud music. I guess I sound like a sixty-seven year old, but I never went there when I was nineteen either. I've never felt comfortable there.
>
> *V: What kinds of people go there?*
>
> I: [Laughs.] I'm so glad that this is an anonymous interview. Well, there aren't many professors going to Beverly Hills Fun Pub. I can tell you that much. There are people with gelled hair, fashionable clothes. People who have never put a foot at a university. […] Very noisy personalities. I like people who are laid back. Not the noisy types.
>
> (Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

To summarise, sympathies and antipathies towards the perceived presence of certain kinds of people are of decisive importance in terms of where the interviewees feel 'at home' or 'out of place'. Most of the interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space report avoiding neighbourhoods and establishments such as shops, cafés, restaurants and bars due to the presence of a 'lower-class' type of person perceived as having lifestyles, tastes and types of behaviour alien to their own. They are often

depicted as 'the working-class', 'the lower-class', 'the uneducated' and the like. While some interviewees report that they enjoy 'mixed' crowds and neighbourhoods – some even report that they occasionally 'go slumming it' at bars and restaurants – there seem to be limits as to how different from themselves other people can be before they choose to stay away. As noted in the previous chapter, resourceful people have a greater possibility to choose their place of residence, or more generally, their movements in physical space. Indeed, as discussed earlier, the notion of 'elective belonging' (Savage *et al*, 2005a) presupposes the ability to choose, and there are reasons to believe that this ability increases proportionally with the endowment of resources, particularly economic capital, due for instance to housing prices. In other words, the differential distribution of resources manifests itself in both a social and geographical 'sense of one's place', as people navigate the local milieu by seeking out interaction with their peers while avoiding 'the others'. Indeed, this finding lends further support to Rosenlund's (2009a, 2011) assertion that there exist structural homologies between social, mental and spatial structures in Stavanger.

6.2.4 Monopolisation and exclusionary strategies

At the heart of exclusionary closure strategies is the attempt by a group of social actors to establish exclusiveness and distance from outsiders: this in turn allows members to assert and defend their claims to esteem and prestige (Scott, 1996: 32; Bottero, 2005: 43). Thus, exclusionary closure strategies are tightly connected to processes of monopolisation, i.e. the ways in which a group of social actors gains control and exclusive possession of resources, which may be both material and symbolic. Among Weberians the term is used broadly, not only to refer to market concentration and imperfect competition in the economic sphere, but as is evident in Weber's discussion of the social sphere, it also refers to the differential distribution of status honour (Weber, 1946: 186ff). In this regard, monopolisation involves the identification of certain specific attributes of lifestyles as the basis for exclusion so that a limited circle of those deemed 'eligible' can attain exclusive access to resources of various kinds.

	'The lower-class types' (as classified by the interviewees in the upper sectors of the social space)
Referred to as	The lower-class, the working-class, workers, the uneducated, the less educated, the poor, the lower types, the common people
Lifestyles rousing distaste	Consumption of 'cheap' and 'daft' popular culture, inexpensive or ordinary material consumption choices, unhealthy food and beverage consumption, dubious moral-political values and attitudes, promiscuity
Ascribed characteristics	Unintelligent, dumb, daft, vulgar, trashy, loud, rowdy, cheap, scruffy, ordinary, down-to-earth, square
Geographical areas rousing distaste	Tasta, Hundvåg, Storhaug, Tjensvoll, Varden
Associated establishments rousing distaste	Hexagon, Beverly Hills Fun Pub, Chevy's, Corvetten, Dicken's, Inside, Corvetten, Crazy Piano, Kobra

Table 4: Condescending classifications of the 'lower-class types'

As summarised in Table 4, interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space express aversions to 'poor' consumption styles and tastes in a 'lower-class type' of person. More specifically, we have seen that they deem practitioners of certain lifestyles as unimaginable as friends or life companions. There is also considerable evidence that interaction with such people is intentionally avoided. While they rarely make explicit claims of superiority based on their lifestyles and tastes, the ways in which they classify and evaluate the practices and tastes of 'lower' cultural consumers indicate that these are deemed 'less honourable', to put it in Weberian terms. In other words, the evaluation of others involves the identification of certain specific attributes of lifestyles which serves as a basis for group exclusion. As we have seen, judgements are involved based on characteristics linked to education, knowledgeability, aesthetics, material consumption choices, as well as moral and political convictions. These findings resonate well with studies of residential segregation, marital homogamy and friendship patterns in Stavanger and other Norwegian cities (e.g. Hansen, 1995; Rosenlund, 2009a, 2011; Ljunggren, 2010; Ljunggren and Andersen, 2012), which all point to processes pertinent to elective affinities and differential association. People tend to rub shoulders, marry and settle

down with people similar to themselves; by the same token, they tend to avoid social interaction with people who are dissimilar. While these studies have pointed to such tendencies based on survey and census data, the present analysis has provided further empirical evidence due to its data on subjective boundary drawing expressed. We might thus with some degree of confidence conclude that more or less exclusive status groups are formed based on positive or negative evaluations of lifestyles and tastes.

So while the boundary drawing analysed in the previous chapter may – if viewed in isolation – be interpreted as endeavours fuelled by egalitarian values to eradicate or compress existing status hierarchies, or at least endeavours to demonopolise the power to define the dominant principles of social esteem, the findings in this chapter complicate the matters. In the previous chapter we saw that the interviewees located in the two fractions of the upper sectors of the social space express mutual aversions to a perceived self-assertiveness of 'the others'. In this chapter we have seen that these interviewees *also* demarcate themselves from the lifestyles and tastes of a 'lower type' of person. While they typically draw boundaries in *usurpationary* terms in demarcating themselves from people perceived as members of 'the elite' (as opposed to the perceived 'normality' of themselves and the people with whom they associate) – they typically draw boundaries in *exclusionary* terms when demarcating themselves from the 'poor' consumption styles and tastes amongst a 'lower type' of person. Thus, the two types of closure strategies are by no means mutually exclusive on an empirical level. On the contrary, the very same interviewees demarcate themselves from the lifestyles and tastes of those perceived as both 'above' and 'below' themselves in the social hierarchy. Parkin's (1979: 89ff) notion of 'dual closure' captures this point neatly: according to him, social actors seldom draw only on one type of closure strategy, but frequently resort to both usurpationary and exclusionary strategies.

This leads us back to the issue of morality and its relatedness to the stratifying impact of lifestyles and tastes. As implied in the analytical strategies of Lamont (1992; see also Skarpenes, 2007; Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2010), the relative salience of 'moral boundary drawing' vis-à-vis 'cultural boundary drawing' among social actors (e.g. judging others for their lack of kindness as opposed to judging them for their lack of taste for modernist poetry) means that the former may 'outweigh' or 'modify' the stratifying impact of the latter, or vice versa. However, as previously argued in Chapter 2, deploying an analytical strategy which *a priori* presumes a 'zero-sum' relationship between different evaluative repertoires is highly questionable. As repeatedly demonstrated in this analysis – and perhaps quintessentially shown in the case of the highly educated interviewees' depiction of people adhering to the politics of the Progress Party – moral and aesthetical criteria of evaluation are tightly entwined. In other words, the people classified are judged for aesthetical *as well as* moral flaws, and this indicates a reinforcing rather than a modifying relationship between the two. Moreover, the perceived social standing of the types of people classified vis-à-vis the perceived social standing of the classifiers themselves is also of decisive importance. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the interviewees predominantly refer to *moral* criteria of evaluation in drawing boundaries in usurpatory terms (e.g. by linking the perceived conspicuousness of 'the elite' to a dubious morality). By contrast, as we have seen in this chapter, the very same interviewees predominantly refer to *aesthetical* criteria in drawing boundaries in exclusionary terms (e.g. by depicting 'the lower types' as lacking a taste for quality wines or the fine arts). In other words, the classifiers draw on both repertoires of evaluation, and which repertoire is most salient seems to depend on the perceived characteristics of the people who are classified, and not whether the classifiers themselves are predominantly 'moral' or 'aesthetical' in their boundary work orientations.

The conception of morality itself also seems to be differentially distributed, in the sense that *what* is conceived of as morally dubious seems to vary between the fractions. While interviewees located in the cultural fraction and the economic

fraction draw on similar moral vocabularies to depict practices rousing their distaste (e.g. 'conspicuous', 'self-assertive', 'flashy'), we have seen that such terms may refer to wholly different practices. On the one hand, interviewees in the cultural fraction may believe that visiting art galleries and attending plays are the most natural things in the world, yet interviewees in the economic fraction will depict them as 'flashy' and 'attention-seeking' for doing so. On the other hand, the interviewees in the economic fraction may not think twice about driving SUVs or donning expensive jewellery, yet interviewees in the cultural fraction will depict them in the same terms for doing so. Scrutinising only the content of the evaluative vocabularies without taking the people or practices to which the classifications refer into account may thus be highly misleading. Of course, this does not mean that morality has no significance in the formation of status groups. On the contrary, we have seen that it plays a highly important role. The point is, however, that the interview data do not lend support to Lamont's (1992) contention that morality has a modifying effect on taste-related boundary drawing.

6.3 Boundary drawing 'from below'

The analysis so far has been exclusively concerned with the classificatory practices directed 'downwards' from the point of view of interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space. We shall now turn to boundary drawing 'from below', meaning the classificatory practices of interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space. In this regard, I shall particularly focus on boundary drawing directed 'upwards'.

6.3.1 Morality and a sense of dignity

As established in Chapter 4, the tastes and lifestyles of the interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space are largely characterised by what I termed the practical mode of consumption. They express a distinctly instrumental orientation to culture, implying their shunning cultural goods which are 'too complicated', as well as 'overly expensive' or 'unnecessarily fancy' material goods. Unless cultural goods

provide them with immediate satisfaction in terms of entertainment, comfort or practical knowledge, they do not see any point in craving them. Moreover, they are by far the least endowed with the propensity to classify; some of them even explicitly reject classificatory practices, and statements such as 'I don't want to waste my time being opinionated about these things' are common.

Regarding classifying other people's lifestyles and tastes, the story is more or less the same. While they do express an awareness of difference between themselves and those practising lifestyles alien to their own, the usual response is that they 'don't care' about such differences and that they would rather adhere to a 'live and let live' approach. When probed on their perception of differences, some do, however, express aversions, both to people practising expensive lifestyles and those engaging in 'high culture':

> *V: Do you ever think about how other people spend their money?*
> I: Well, yeah. I observe all these rich people and how they spend their money. They just shop for the sake of shopping. I just don't understand why they need all the stuff they buy. I know of people who spend like 100 000 a month just shopping. I don't see the point in doing that. But I guess when you start doing that, it's difficult to stop. […] It's just squandering. They've got boats, cars, houses, cabins… […] For instance, I know of this family with two kids… How on earth do they have time to enjoy all the stuff they buy? They never use their boat. They just own it for the sake of owning it. […] People like that don't even have the time to maintain the things they own. They hire people to do that. They hire people to paint their house, mow their lawns and clean the windows. They don't have time for it, because they spend their time earning money so that they can buy even more stuff.
>
> (Martin, carpenter, late 40s)

> *V: You mentioned something about rich people earlier. I didn't really catch what you said.*
> I: Rich people… They live their privileged lives. I'm not saying that everyone is like that, but many of them are. They typically enjoy high culture and they drink their champagne. […] But in a sense it's just funny. People who have been lucky… You know, people who have landed on the right side of things, and for that reason think they're better than others lower down on the social ladder. It's extremely narrow-minded to think like that.
>
> (David, electrician, mid 20s)

Although most of these interviewees report that they might enjoy material goods such as cars, boats and summerhouses themselves, what is perceived as 'excessive luxury' and 'squandering' is clearly frowned upon and often linked to a dubious morality. In this regard, the boundary drawing is quite similar to the aversion expressed by the interviewees located in the cultural fraction of the upper sectors of the social space. Indeed, flashiness and self-assertion through the consumption of material goods is viewed with particular suspicion. However, most of the interviewees located in the lower sectors report that they do not have a problem with consumers of cultural goods or expensive material goods as long as such people do not 'look down on them' for not wanting to conform to their lifestyles and tastes. Such is the case with Eva, who expresses scepticism of what she perceives as the dubious propensity of the rich to denigrate those who do not care about expensive clothing brands:

> I: I don't care if the rich are interested in branded clothes. But I find it disturbing if that's the only kind of clothes they wear, and if they also look down on others for not doing so. […] They think they're high above people who don't wear the same brands they do. […] I remember when I went to school, there were two kinds of people; those who wore branded clothes and those who didn't. And it signalised your rank in the group.
>
> *V: Is that something you experience nowadays? That others look down on you… Not necessarily because of clothing, but…*
>
> I: …because of education and stuff like that? Yeah, I guess so. Not where I work right now. But it was like that at a place I worked earlier. […] But I guess there are a lot of people who experience that. I guess it depends on what kind of work you do. I know this guy. He's a rubbish man. I remember he and I went someplace together… And all the time he had to emphasise that he was able to do more than collecting rubbish. I guess he felt that others were looking down on him for being a rubbish man. But you know, society would have collapsed if it weren't for people like that. Not everyone can be doctors, lawyers and such, if you know what I mean? [...] It's the personality that counts, not your bloody occupation!
>
> (Eva, secretary, mid 40s)

The contention that occupational prestige, education, money, the possession of goods, or the mastery of certain lifestyles 'do not count' in the calculation of human worth is a recurring theme expressed by these interviewees. Instead, moral qualities such as being kind, caring, respectful and thoughtful seem to be the most important – and in some cases the *only* – criteria against which others are judged. If others break with

these standards, sharp boundaries are drawn, especially if they are perceived as rich and/or powerful, such as bosses or superiors at work:

> *V: Have you ever felt uncomfortable having different preferences than other people?*
>
> I: I guess. Sometimes I get the impression that I can't talk about certain stuff in front of others. It feels kind of unnatural, in a way. For instance… I worked at this place a couple of years ago. […] And I often had my surfboard and my skateboard in the back of my car. And one day my boss asked me: 'What are you doing after work?' And I was like: 'Uh, I guess I'm going to ride my skateboard.' And then he said: 'Oh my God! What if our customers find out?' And I was like: 'So what? They probably have hobbies too. What's the problem?' […]
>
> *V: How did you react to that situation?*
>
> I: I found it stupid. It was almost a parody. Because later that day, when we were all eating lunch, he said he had to leave early, because he was going to have a look at these motorbikes, you know, trail bikes or something. […] And then he came back twenty minutes later with this new bike, a 20 000 impulse buy. And then he started driving like a madman. […] I mean, here was the boss of our company, on one wheel, full speed ahead, driving down stairs and everything. And this guy has the nerve to complain about my skateboard! […] This guy was obviously unable to put himself in my shoes. He was totally narrow-minded. He knew what he liked and his views of things became the norm somehow.
>
> (David, electrician, mid 20s)

While most of these interviewees seem to be concerned about the morality of resourceful others, they seldom report feeling inferior or expressing any deference to such people. And while they do report unpleasant experiences related to other people's judgements of them, they seem rather immune to the denigration of their evaluators:

> *V: You said something earlier about people frowning upon other people's choices. How would you react if people frowned upon you going to Ayia Napa for your holidays?*
>
> I: I couldn't care less. It's not my style to care what others think about what I do, if you see what I mean?
>
> (Jon, electrician, mid 20s)

> *V: Have you ever felt uncomfortable about having different preferences than other people? Or, you know, being different from others in general?*
>
> I: Yeah. […] Just the other day, at work, I had to clean up some popcorn that someone had spilled all over the floor. And then this man came walking by. […] You know, wearing a leather coat, shiny shoes and a cane. He almost looked like a baron.

And a couple of ladies by his side too. And then said to me: 'I can see you're cleaning up. That's good!' You know, just to snipe at the working class. I said to him: 'Yeah, somebody's got to do it.' It was really funny. And a bit peculiar.

V: How did you react to it?

I: Well, at the time what I really wanted was a stick with barbed wire instead of the broom.

(Lars, security guard, mid 20s)

A certain tension is, however, traceable in the ways in which these interviewees talk about others. On the one hand, they do not express any 'goodwill' or the desire to acquire tastes for goods they do not like. Nor do they express any explicit deference to or endorsement of the consumers of these goods. On the contrary, they draw on moral criteria of evaluation in depicting themselves as different from such people. On the other hand, the moral boundaries drawn against people perceived as flashy and self-assertive may also indicate feelings of inferiority. In other words, the moral indignation expressed against flashiness might indirectly imply a need to maintain a sense of dignity and self-worth. As noted by Skeggs (1997) in her study of working-class women in the UK, there is a certain ambivalence implied by these women's attempts to dis-identify with other people's classifications of them. Skilbrei (2005) has found similar signs of ambivalence amongst Norwegian working-class women. Dis-identifications might, in other words, simultaneously imply both resistance and subjection to what Bourdieu (1977, 1991b) has termed 'symbolic violence'.[123]

6.3.2 A sense of one's place

Just as the interviewees in the upper sectors of the social space had a 'sense of one's place' both in an abstract and a concrete spatial sense, the interviewees in the lower sectors also feel 'out of place' in certain settings:

V: Do you like plays? Have you attended plays at Rogaland Teater?

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[123] I shall return to the notion of symbolic violence in the next chapter.

I: No, Rogaland Teater is for the posh people. And Stavanger Konserthus too. It's just the posh people who go there. […]

V: Who are the posh people?

I: That's west-end people, the refined people, often older than I am. I guess there's other people there too, but that's the impression I get. And I guess a lot of people have that impression. […]

V: So you steer clear of such places?

I: Yeah, I don't feel at home because it's for people in suits and ties and the whole package. I've got a suit back home, and I like wearing it. But at places like that you have to dress in a particular way, you know, to blend in with high society. And I think that's wrong. You should be allowed to dress as you like. Except for showing up naked. [Laughs.]

V: Do you feel uncomfortable on such occasions? At places where you have to dress in certain ways?

I: Yeah. Especially when you have to play this role that you're not used to, or dress in ways you're not used to. […] I guess other people feel like this too. At parties at work, for instance, I can clearly spot the ones who aren't used to wearing suits. And I guess you look out of place. You easily get labelled. […] And that can make people feel uncomfortable.

<div align="right">(Lars, security guard, mid 20s)</div>

Places where the interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space report feeling out of place, and/or depict as unthinkable to visit, include Rogaland Teater, Stavanger Konserthus, art galleries, 'fancy' nightclubs such as Taket and Hall Toll, as well as 'posh' restaurants such as Tango, Renaa and Bølgen & Moi. Besides avoiding such places due to a lack of interest in scholastic culture and/or due to money matters, such places are also associated with kinds of people with whom they would rather not associate:

V: Are there places in Stavanger you'd never go to?

I: Hall Toll.

V: How come?

I: I don't like the thought of being stopped at the door and being told that you're not welcome. You know, just for wearing a hoody. It's ridiculous. Stigmatising some while laying out these red carpets for others. You know, five hundred people in a queue outside, just waiting to get in, and these types from certain circles walk past them all, just by whispering a secret password to the doorkeeper. That kind of place is not for me. No way.

V: What kind of circles are we talking about here?

I: Well, I don't know. […] I just don't want anything to do with them. […] I guess the people going there are these daddy's boys who are out to hit on daddy's girls. The gold-digger type. […] It's the kind of people that I don't get along with.

(David, electrician, mid 20s)

Conversely, the places where they do feel at home are bars such as Beverly Hills Fun Pub, Hexagon and Dicken's, as well as kebab shops and restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King and Peppe's Pizza – in other words, the very places the interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space report avoiding due to the presence of a rather 'uninteresting' and somewhat dubious 'lower type' of person. The contempt thus seems to be mutual and social interaction is more or less intentionally avoided due to a perceived mismatch in lifestyles and tastes.

6.3.3 Usurpation and self-exclusion

As summarised in Table 5, interviewees located in the lower sectors of the social space express aversions to a perceived lifestyle-related snobbery among resourceful others, and they almost exclusively allude to moral standards of evaluation in depicting practitioners of certain lifestyles as rather suspect. In this regard, their boundary work is quite similar to that scrutinised by Lamont in her study of morality amongst American and French working-class men:

> Morality is generally at the center of these worker's worlds. They find their self-worth in their ability to discipline themselves and conduct responsible yet caring lives to ensure order for themselves and others. *These moral standards function as an alternative to economic definitions of success and offer them a way to maintain dignity and to make sense of their lives* […]. Workers use these standards to define who they are and, just as important, who they are not. Hence they draw the line that delimits an imagined community of "people like me" who share the same sacred values. (Lamont, 2000: 2ff, my emphasis)

In one sense, then, the moral boundaries drawn against people perceived as conspicuously consuming both expensive material goods and intellectually challenging cultural goods might be conceived of as usurpationary closure strategies, i.e. endeavours to impose alternative criteria of evaluation in opposition to the

perceived presence of an unjust distribution of esteem. Moreover, by distancing themselves from and avoiding people and places associated with lifestyles, tastes and moralities alien to their own – or, by the same token, sticking to 'people like us' – more or less amorphous counter-groups are formed.

	'The upper-class types' (as classified by the interviewees in the lower sectors of the social space)
Referred to as	The rich, the upper-class, high society, the posh people, the refined, people in high places, the snobs, west-end people
Lifestyles rousing distaste	Consumption of 'unnecessary' material goods and 'high culture', membership in 'exclusive' social circles
Ascribed characteristics	Uppish, snobbish, self-assertive
Geographical areas rousing distaste	Eigenes, Madla, Stokka
Associated establishments rousing distaste	Stavanger Konserthus, Rogaland Teater, Hall toll, Taket, Renaa, Bølgen & Moi

Table 5: Condescending classifications of the 'upper-class types'

Portraying themselves in opposition to people perceived as practising conspicuous lifestyles by alluding to moral standards, this may maintain dignity, self-worth and esteem within their own social milieu. However, refusing to participate in such lifestyles and/or associate with their practitioners arguably comes at a price. As noted by Willis (1977) in his study of the process by which 'working-class kids get working class jobs', pupils reproduce themselves and remain working-class through their own culture of resistance to school and scholastic knowledge. Their 'countercultural' rebellion, opposition to authority and their refusal to submit to the requirements of a curriculum that supposedly encourages social mobility through attaining educational qualifications disqualify them from the opportunity to access middle-class jobs. Along the same lines, Bourdieu (1984: ch. 7; 1990b: 54ff) argues that deprived people's refusals to associate with resourceful others and their lifestyles may be interpreted as something akin to sentiments of 'sour grapes', since what is *subjectively* perceived as unthinkable is *objectively* out-of-reach in the first place. In other words, not having, or having had, monetary resources to buy expensive goods,

and/or not having the basic knowledge and frames of reference necessary to appreciate certain cultural goods, render such goods both objectively inaccessible and, through the workings of their class habitus, subjectively undesirable. In this way, people deprived of cultural and/or economic resources make a virtue out of necessity in shunning what is out-of-reach. Engaging in alien lifestyles and/or associating with their practitioners thus become rather 'unnatural', with the effect that they would rather keep to people like themselves.

As regards the formation of status groups, people who refuse to partake in expensive and/or intellectually demanding lifestyles are thus in a sense doubly excluded. On the one hand, they exclude themselves from entering certain social milieux. On the other, they are 'denied' access to such milieux in the first place because they are – as we have seen earlier in this chapter – perceived as 'boring', 'unintelligent' and 'lacking taste'. While it could be argued that this is not exclusion *per se*, since these people do not wish to frequent such milieux and even speak disparagingly of people who do, such refusals nevertheless imply processes pertaining to the maintenance and reproduction of socially structured elective affinities. So while they may certainly maintain a sense of dignity, self-worth and esteem within their own status group, they indirectly close themselves off from certain opportunities in this process.

Though such refusals may function as usurpationary closure strategies, their consequences are rather different from the ones depicted in the previous chapter. In the case of those endowed with high amounts of cultural capital and relatively less economic capital, their refusals to associate with people practising expensive lifestyles might on the one hand exclude them from certain privileges implied by frequenting such milieux (e.g. exclusive social networks, job opportunities and know-how as regards the accumulation of economic capital). On the other hand, they can resort to the privileges implied by their stock of institutionalised cultural capital, such as exclusive access to certain sectors on the labour market. Conversely, refusing to associate with people practising intellectually demanding lifestyles by those endowed

with high amounts of economic capital and relatively less cultural capital, might exclude them from certain privileges exclusively possessed by those endowed with high amounts of cultural capital, yet they can resort to the privileges implied by their stocks of economic capital. Those endowed with low amounts of *both* forms of capital, by contrast, can only resort to their morality, dignity and the recognition of their peers. While they might undoubtedly lead fulfilling lives according to their own standards, their *life-chances* are nevertheless quite different from those located in the upper sectors of the social space, whose privileges are institutionally safeguarded.

6.4 Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter I addressed the question of whether, and if so how, 'vertical' boundary drawing amounts to processes of social closure and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups. The empirical findings can be briefly summarised as follows. First, quite a few interviewees – predominantly located in the cultural fraction of the upper sectors of the social space – demarcate themselves from others based on evaluative criteria related to education, scholastic knowledgeability and aesthetics. Second, interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space – predominantly in the economic fraction, but also in the cultural fraction – also draw symbolic boundaries against the 'poor' material consumption styles of a 'lower type' of person. Third, interviewees located in the lower sectors mobilise moral sentiments against the perceived self-assertive conspicuousness of consumers of both cultural and material goods.

Based on the assumption that the classifications of approval and disapproval which interviewees make vis-à-vis other social actors indicate processes of group inclusion and exclusion, I argue that the patterns of vertical boundary drawing scrutinised in this chapter, as well as the horizontal boundary drawing from the previous chapter, lend further support to the Bourdieusian homology thesis as outlined in Chapter 2. More specifically, the structures of the social space do not only correspond to a differential distribution of lifestyles and cultural tastes as established in Chapter 4,

but they also correspond to a differentiated estimation of social esteem related to these lifestyle differences. Moreover, as the interviewees report navigating Stavanger's urban areas by seeking out interaction with their peers while avoiding interaction with 'the others' due to lifestyle-related criteria, the structural oppositions existing 'on paper' seem to translate into social boundaries that are reflected in geographical space.

I would thus argue that we can see the contours of two main hierarchical status structures in Stavanger: one tied to education, scholastic knowledge and consumption of cultural goods, and another to money and the consumption of material goods. As the social distribution of lifestyles, as well the boundary drawing expressed on the basis of subjectively perceived lifestyle differences, systematically correspond to the structures of the social space, it seems reasonable to claim that class relations manifest themselves through status group formation. Moreover, as the entrance into these groups seem to be limited and subjected to conditions, formalised closure processes tied to the exclusive possession of institutionally recognised resources (i.e. cultural and economic capital) seems to be reinforced by non-formalised closure processes. This reinforcement may be conceived of as a 'Matthew effect' – the process through which social advantages lead to further advantages (see Merton, 1968; Rigney, 2010).[124] Indeed, as noted by Parkin (2002: 96ff), the relationship between resources and social esteem is a two-way street; sometimes esteem flows from the possession of resources, and sometimes it is more like a springboard to gaining such possessions. Thus, the class-status nexus can be viewed as a mutually reinforcing dual system which constitutes asymmetrical power relations between groups of social actors endowed with high and low volumes of capitals, as well as between groups of social actors with a preponderance of either cultural or economic capital.

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[124] The term Matthew effect refers to a verse in the Gospel of Matthew (13:12), which observes that '[w]hoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.'

CHAPTER 7
EGALITARIANISM, (MIS)RECOGNITION AND LEGITIMACY

7.1 Introduction

Given the classed hierarchical status structures pointed to in the previous chapter, as well as processes through which a classed mastery of certain lifestyles is consolidated into advantages and privileges – for instance through the Norwegian educational system (e.g. Andersen and Hansen, 2012) – it is reasonable to claim that the class-status nexus amounts to an unequal distribution of life-chances. In other words, it seems the classed distribution of lifestyles is pertinent to asymmetrical power relations. However, while this observation seems viable from a sociological point of view, the notion of hierarchy seems to unsettle most of the interviewees, regardless of their positions in the social space. This chapter addresses the question of how the legitimacy of power relations, linked to lifestyle differences and status hierarchies, is bestowed. It hinges upon a theoretical-methodological debate concerning the applicability of Bourdieu's (1984) model of 'symbolic domination' in contexts different from those it was originally designed to comprehend. The crux of Bourdieu's argument is that power differentials arising from an unequal distribution of capitals can be 'misrecognised' by social actors, meaning that power relations are not perceived for what they objectively are, but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder. Legitimacy in this sense does not imply that the power relations are acknowledged and accepted by dominant and subordinate actors alike. On the contrary, it results from a misconception of the 'real' cause of asymmetric power relations, which, according to Bourdieu, is the unequal distribution of capitals. The legitimacy of power relations is secured because the question of legitimacy is not raised. Power relations are naturalised and taken for granted and thus remain in the realm of doxa.

Several scholars, however, have contended that Bourdieu's model of symbolic domination does not apply outside of France, and especially not in a Norwegian context (see for instance Danielsen, 1998; Skarpenes, 2007; Skarpenes and Sakslind, 2008, 2010). A recurrent objection is that egalitarian values deeply embedded in social democratic Norway 'modify' the stratifying effects of lifestyle differentials

compared to countries like France, with its highly centralised state apparatus, remnants of an aristocratic past, its valorisation of pageantry and so forth. Indeed, it is argued that Norway is an exceptional case, in the sense that 'elitist' or 'snobbish' practices and attitudes elicit suspiciousness and even contempt. Further, it is argued that egalitarian values have negative consequences for both the currency of certain cultural practices and the legitimacy of taste hierarchies.

The debate about the applicability of Bourdieu's model of symbolic domination highlights an important issue relevant in understanding the present empirical case. The pressing question is whether, and if so in which ways, differences in tastes and lifestyles amount to relations of legitimate domination, despite the explicit mobilisation of sentiments against 'elitism', 'snobbery' and 'self-assertion'. Throughout the previous chapters it has been established that the ways in which the interviewees classify other people's lifestyles and tastes are indicative of social closure and the formation of more or less exclusive status groups. However, as has been alluded to, many interviewees are reluctant to express their aversions explicitly. Although all the interviewees express an awareness of difference, many utter certain reservations before expressing their antipathies, and derogatory classifications of other people's lifestyles are often followed by self-conscious moral considerations. A certain tension seems to exist in the interview data. On the one hand, different tastes and lifestyles are differentially distributed among interviewees endowed with different capital portfolios, and these differences are salient when the interviewees classify and differentiate between their 'own' types of people, and the types of people with whom they would rather not associate. On the other hand, the very same interviewees reject self-assertion, and when classifying others in derogatory terms, most of them express mixed feelings about this. It is to the significance of such moral ambiguity we will turn.

The analysis proceeds as follows. First of all, I discuss how the interviewees' reluctance to assert themselves is linked to moral sentiments. I then move on to

discuss how the symbolic value of practices is produced. Finally, I discuss the seemingly paradoxical coexistence of egalitarian values, and hierarchical relations of power, status and prestige.

7.2 Morally suspect self-assertion

A recurring feature in the interviewees' boundary drawing is linked to moral aversions to practices and attitudes perceived as 'conspicuous', 'self-assertive' and 'snobbish'. Although there are important differences in what types of practices are classified as such, there seems to be widespread tacit agreement that other people's self-assertion is somewhat suspicious and not justifiable in moral terms. Moreover, very few interviewees claim superiority based on their own lifestyles and tastes; indeed, they recurrently reflect upon how their *own* preferences and tastes may be perceived negatively by others. In this regard, there seems to be widespread awareness of the danger of being perceived as 'snobbish'. This applies to consumers of material and cultural goods alike:

> *V: You mentioned earlier that you are privileged. Have you ever experienced other people being opinionated about the way you spend your money? Is this something you think about?*
>
> I: My income is far higher than average. And I've got lots of stocks and other assets. And I've got the opportunity to do whatever I want, and spend money on whatever I want. And in that sense, I'm privileged. […] But for one, I never show off. And second, I never boast of my riches. Or, you know, talk about it. So I try to avoid people becoming kind of envious. And that's something I think about, that people easily get envious.
>
> (Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

> *V: You have used the term snob several times. Doing the work you do… Have people made remarks in that regard?*
>
> I: Like I said earlier, this old-fashioned… This divide between high culture and popular culture… Traditionally, the consumption of high culture has been associated with snobbish or elitist attitudes. But in my view, the term should be reserved for people who exhibit a kind of unsympathetic attitude towards people who like popular culture. […] You know, people who don't show any kind of accommodating attitude towards others. I mean, we all have our different tastes. And I truly believe there should be room for everyone, for every taste. But that doesn't mean I have to seek out every kind of… Well, I consider myself open and curious. But still, there are lots

of things I don't like. So I guess some people would call me a snob. But I hope people don't do that, because I don't feel like a snob.

(Olivia, head of cultural enterprise, late 40s)

A recurring theme in the interview data is that being labelled 'snobbish' or 'elitist' is undesirable and something with which the interviewees dis-identify. This finding resonates well with a study conducted by Haarr and Krogstad (2011) who have pointed to an increased frequency of anti-elitist sentiments in Norwegian newspapers lately. Many interviewees report preferences and tastes they fear others will perceive as snobbish, and this seems to unsettle quite a few of them. As we can see in the quotes above, there is an awareness of anti-snobbish sentiments, and the interviewees point out that they do not want to rouse negative attention, envy and the like. The notion of snobbishness is ambiguous, however, and it is not always clear whether the interviewees are referring to specific 'elevated' preferences and tastes, to a perceived 'better-than-you' attitude among cultural consumers conspicuously displaying such preferences, or to a combination of both. As we can see, Olivia is aware of this ambiguity, and she tries to separate the two meanings of the term by pointing out that an 'old-fashioned' way of depicting things implies that the consumption of 'high culture' is directly associated with 'snobbish' and 'elitist' attitudes. However, she also says that the term 'snob' should be reserved for people who refuse to exhibit an 'accommodating attitude' towards consumers of popular culture. Although she is not particularly interested popular culture herself, she maintains that she is no snob because of her openness, and hopes accordingly that other people do not perceive her as such. Peter reasons along the same lines:

V: We've been talking about things you like and things you don't like. Have you ever been confronted by others because of your tastes? Have people made remarks?

I: I don't think people perceive me as a cultural snob, no.

V: Do you consider yourself a snob?

I: No, I wouldn't classify myself as a snob. But I guess I have quite specific and, according to some, peculiar preferences. But that doesn't make me a snob in the sense that… Well, I guess I'm snobbish in the sense that I pick and choose things I like, and steer clear of other things. In that sense I might be a bit snobbish. […] But still I'm very… I've got this relativistic approach to culture. Even if I don't like Ole

Ivars[125] personally, I have no problem understanding that others like that sort of thing and take pleasure in it.

(Peter, cultural worker, mid 30s)

Peter argues that his 'relativistic' view of culture implies that he 'understands' why other people might like musical acts such as Ole Ivars, even though he himself is not particularly interested in such music. This view, he holds, prevents him from being labelled a snob. Similar self-perceptions are widespread among interviewees who report specific preferences and tastes, but who also are aware of the danger of being perceived as snobs because of their preferences. However, not all interviewees are able to evade the thought of being perceived as snobs by others – and some even consider themselves to be snobs:

> *V: You mentioned earlier that you detest snobbery. Can you elaborate?*
>
> I: Yes, I do. But, you know, I guess I'm a bit snobbish myself. And I'm sort of… I'm a bit afraid to admit it. […] I don't want to be a snob, but in a sense I am. […] There are certain things I don't want to be associated with. […] For instance, what I do leisure-wise. I'm a bit snobbish when it comes to… We've got this old sailboat. You know, this really old boat. […] I don't want to be associated with a soulless plastic boat. You know, I catch myself thinking like this all the time. I want a sailboat, not a motor boat. I want a nice cabin, not a caravan. Things like that. […] So I catch myself looking down on other people's choices. To be honest, I do.
>
> (Freja, head of cultural enterprise, mid 40s)

Some interviewees even express feelings of regret: for example, upwardly-mobile Nora who keeps in touch with her old childhood friends, but regards them as ineligible as romantic partners:

> *V: You were joking earlier about you being a snob…*
>
> I: Well, no. I mean yes. Well, I have to admit… You know, these old friends of mine from [name of residential area[126]]… I've known them all my life and I really like them. I really do. But none of them could be my boyfriend. And it shames me to admit that, because if you ask me why, it's because they haven't got a proper

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[125] Norwegian musical act associated with the *dansband* genre. Both Ole Ivars and the dansband genre as a whole are recurrently classified as 'bad taste' among several interviewees.

[126] Nora notes at a different point in the interview that this part of town is 'rather seedy'.

education, they haven't got proper jobs, they aren't interesting in that way. […] And thinking like that, that's snobbery. And that makes me a snob. And that's sad. It's sad to admit that, because if I really loved these guys, I wouldn't give a damn about these things.

(Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

Others report avoiding certain forms of 'conspicuous' consumption and retreat to more 'discreet' styles to avoid unwanted negative attention. Henrik, for example, drives a top model SAAB, a car that can be as expensive as a Mercedes-Benz or a BMW, but which he thinks will attract considerably less attention, thus hoping to avoid the 'snob effect':

V: If you were to buy a new car, what kind of car would you definitely not buy?

I: I don't want a BMW or a Mercedes. […]

V: What is it about these cars that make them less attractive to you?

I: The snob effect. [Laughs.]

V: In what way?

I: Well, people can buy whatever they want, but I won't buy such cars myself. That's my opinion. If others want to, that's fine by me. Go ahead, but it's not for me.

(Henrik, economist, early 60s)

To summarise, many interviewees – especially those who express specific and elaborate cultural preferences – report an awareness of the danger of being perceived as 'snobbish' by others. This applies to the consumers of cultural and material goods alike. Most of the interviewees do not want to be perceived by others as elitist or snobbish, and they tend to dis-identify with such terms. The interviewees who do report a perceived danger of being regarded as a snob, hope to evade this by maintaining a discreet profile and by alluding to moral qualities such as 'openness', 'respect' and 'understanding'. Moreover, most of the interviewees are reluctant to claim superiority for themselves, and very few are willing to justify themselves with references to elevated aesthetics and esoteric knowledge, or argue that their tastes are 'better' than those of others. The recurring phrase when probed is that their tastes are

'different, but not better'. Thus, there seems to be widespread tacit agreement that taste-related self-assertion is morally suspect and should be avoided.

The story so far undoubtedly bears resemblances to the findings reported by Skarpenes (2007); asserting oneself and/or explicitly disparaging other people's tastes seem to be considered morally inappropriate by interviewees located in the uppers sectors of the social space, even though – as the previous chapters have shown – they do draw lifestyle-related boundaries between their types of people and 'the others'. As Skarpenes (2007: 552) argues, judging others on aesthetical grounds implicitly means judging others on moral grounds. This, I would argue, is a plausible explanation for the interviewees' self-reflexive reservations and moral considerations before expressing their derogatory classifications. However, a low degree of moral justifiability as regards self-assertion and the denigration of others does not mean that taste hierarchies do not exist; nor does it mean that mastering certain lifestyles cannot produce advantages and privileges. As argued in Chapter 2, there is not necessarily a connection between the form and content of justifications and the legitimacy of power relations linked to lifestyle differentials, as these power relations might be naturalised and taken for granted.

7.3 The production of symbolic value

Bourdieu (1984) asserts that certain lifestyles and cultural practices can function as symbolic capital (1) insofar as the mastery of such lifestyles is unequally distributed; and (2) insofar as such mastery is sought-after and/or produces deference in the eyes of non-practitioners. In other words, the possession of symbolic capital implies esteem and prestige outside the limited circles of the practitioners of the lifestyles in question. In what follows I shall discuss two ways in which symbolic value production is evident in the interview data, despite the prevalence of anti-elitist egalitarian sentiments. The first has to do with the interviewees' perceptions of other practitioners of lifestyles in which they themselves engage, but which they have not yet fully mastered; the second has to do with lifestyles the interviewees perceive as

alien and even morally dubious, but which nevertheless produce a kind of implicit deference.

7.3.1 Feelings of inferiority

In the interview data there are seemingly few signs of explicit deference to other people's lifestyles. However, scrutinising deference empirically is difficult, and it is debateable whether qualitative interviews are suitable tools with which to study such matters in the first place. If the interviewees *do* esteem and endorse practitioners of lifestyles they do not master, teasing this out without rousing feelings of inferiority or shame in the interview situation is arguably quite a challenge. This would imply important ethical as well as epistemological considerations. Nevertheless, having to tease out such estimations in the first place is in itself an interesting empirical finding. An indication of why explicit endorsements of other people's tastes occur rarely in the interview data might be found in the following quote, which is fairly typical in this regard:

> *V: You said something earlier about people in Stavanger who wear certain kinds of expensive clothes. Can you elaborate?*
>
> I: Well, I often get this impression that they've bought their way into a certain style. […] But it might just be me being envious. It's a bit like, 'I would love to have that jacket, but I cannot afford it'. I guess it's often like that, but I don't dare admit it. […] But on the other hand, I don't want to be like these wanna-be-rich people. […] You know, the type of people that strive to identify with the people with real money. And there are lots of people in that category in this town. People who make too much effort to fit in… I mean, they forget all about what really matters in life. To me it seems really stressful. They want the best there is, but they've only got half the wages of the people they want to be associated with. I call them *nouveau riche* people from Sandnes.[127] [Laughs.]
>
> (Marianne, manager, small firm, late 40s)

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[127] According to population figures, neighbouring town Sandnes is half the size of Stavanger. People residing in Sandnes and further south (e.g. Bryne, Klepp, Nærbø, Egersund) are recurrently classified in derogatory terms by the interviewees (e.g. 'peasants', 'provincials', 'simpletons').

Marianne is torn between aspiring to adopt expensive lifestyles on the one hand, and a dis-identification with the pretentiousness and social climbing of the 'wanna-be-rich' on the other. Although she reports spending money on expensive material goods, she cannot buy 'whatever she desires'. And even if she could, she might risk falling into the category of those who 'make too much effort' to fit in with 'the people with real money'. An aversion to pretentiousness and inauthenticity is a recurring feature – either implicitly or explicitly – in the interviewees' boundary drawing towards people with whom they do not want to associate. In this particular case, deferring to the clothing styles of the rich would indirectly mean that Marianne would be a part of the 'nouveau riche' category which she strongly dislikes. One could thus argue that outright admiration of, and deference to, other people's lifestyles would imply some form of self-reproach, in the sense that one would be admitting to aspiring to being something one is not (Sayer, 2005: 174). In other words, there might be several pre-reflexive defence mechanisms at work which prevent such self-disparagement.

Nevertheless, there are several clear signs of deference in the interview data, despite the general tendency of interviewees to mobilise a sense of worthiness or dignity in the face of unattainable lifestyles. Interestingly, these are typically found among upwardly-mobile interviewees who report feelings of inferiority related to their lifestyles and tastes earlier in their lives:

> *V: Have you ever experienced feeling uncomfortable because of your taste when you meet others? You know, thinking that your taste is not good enough? […]*
>
> I: Yeah, I see what you mean. Well, not really. Or… I guess I did when I was younger. But I guess it has something to do with maturity and the development of your self-image. When you're past your forties like me, then it's… You know, you are who you are. […] You strive your whole life to find out who you are, who you like and what you like. And style is either something you've got, or something that you haven't got. But it can change over time. You develop a taste for something new. You see things you haven't seen before that suddenly appeal to you. So there is a development, in a sense. And with time, you grow confident. What you like is good enough.
>
> *V: In your younger days, what made you feel uncomfortable?*

I: I guess it had to do with a fear of not being advanced enough, if you know what I mean? You know, not getting stuff, not understanding what other people understand. You know, lagging behind in that way. […] But I have to say, this is something that I haven't reflected on for a long time. I guess it's more often that people perceive me… That they feel inferior in my presence, even if I don't intend to make them feel like that.

(Sara, journalist, mid 40s)

At times I've felt uncomfortable and inferior, but that's a long time ago. Now I'm a grown man and I've developed a fairly grandiose self-image. [Laughs.] But when I was young, it was a problem for me. I came from this little place called [rural area], a place pervaded by this peasant culture. […] And when I moved to Stavanger, I sought out these advanced places and scenes, and I was kind of different from the others. I wasn't really accepted at first. And I felt like an idiot for coming from [name of rural area], liking the wrong kind of music, wearing the wrong kind of clothes… You know, having the wrong manners. So there was definitely a feeling of inferiority because of my cultural preferences.

(Thomas, journalist, early 40s)

Although these interviewees point out that they do not feel any embarrassment or inferiority related to their current tastes, they do report having had such unpleasant feelings earlier. As upwardly-mobile people – as well as geographically mobile in the case of Thomas – they have had to break with their familiar milieu and acquire new forms of knowledge and new ways of relating to cultural goods along the way. Having arrived at their current social positions after long university educations, they may retrospectively make fun of themselves for having once felt awkward and inferior. However, the path to arriving at this point has not always been easy: Sara has been worried about not being 'advanced enough' and 'failing to comprehend'; similarly, Thomas reports having felt 'like an idiot' for listening to the 'wrong' kinds of music and wearing 'wrong' kinds of clothes. The unpleasantness they report, which is associated with 'not fitting in' in new social milieux, bears important resemblances to the self-reflexive accounts of some upwardly-mobile Scandinavians (see for instance Sveen, 2001; Solvang, 2002; Ambjörnsson, 2005; Seljestad, 2006). A recurrent feature in such accounts is the fear of betraying the ideals of the groups one 'leaves behind', and a fear of not fitting in with the new social milieux.

Fitting in is not always an ideal, however. At several points during the interview August is eager to point out that he does not follow the perceived norm of his fellow economists in keeping up-to-date with 'gadgets' and other kinds of 'fancy stuff'. But he admits that his refusal comes at a price:

> To be honest… I once owned this car… Well, it's not that long ago. I drove around in my father's old car, a Hyundai Accent. I felt like I only needed the old man's hat. And I noticed… Other drivers couldn't bear to drive behind my car. They had to overtake and speed past me. So when people tried to overtake, I gave it some gas. [Laughs.] And I also had this Skoda once. And the old Skodas were not like Skodas are now. And I had this uncomfortable feeling. My wife didn't care, but I felt really uncomfortable. […] And I guess there are other things too. For instance, I don't own one of those flatscreen TVs. It can be painful when you start reflecting on these things. [Laughs.]
>
> (August, economist, late 50s)

Although August somewhat jokingly reports that it is 'painful' reflecting too much on not conforming to other people's tastes, this quote indicates that other people's opinions of him are taken into account. In similar ways, Nora reflects on her experiences of becoming a lawyer and having to cope with other lawyers' estimations of her:

> I: Typically, when I'm out eating with people from work, everyone drinks wine except me. I cling to my beer. And all the others are like: 'Come on! Can't you at least try?' And I guess some of them think that I drink beer just to show everyone that I'm not like the others. You know, to show that I'm from [name of residential area] or whatever. But really, that's not why I drink beer. It just tastes better. And I don't want to sit there drinking wine just to fit in. But they think I do it to prove something. But I don't care. And I guess according to them I like to watch football and do that kind of stuff just to prove something. But that's not why I do it. I genuinely like it. But I think others think I do it to prove that I'm not like all the others who have studied law.
>
> *V: What's your opinion? Are you like all the others who have studied law?*
>
> I: Well… Luckily, there are different types of people who study law. But still… I remember the two first weeks at law school… I must admit, I thought it was going to be hell. I mean, all the girls wore pearl earrings and these sweaters with small bears printed on them. […] And I wore tons of black make-up and my hair was a mess. I thought, 'This is going to be hell!'. […] If you generalise a bit, the people who study law… Law students are a particular kind of breed. We all are. We begin to talk in the same manner. It's very fascinating. […] People who study law are, in general, more well-dressed than most people. They wear these shirts, and they speak more

refined… But me, personally, I don't speak that refined. Definitely not. And my clothes… Well, I'm wearing nice clothes right now, but that's because I came straight from the court house. But I mean… Yeah, I'm a bit different than the rest of them. […] And from time to time people make remarks about how I do things at work. I don't know if the remarks are meant positively or negatively, but people make remarks. But I think that's a good thing, because the others are so bloody boring. And I hope I'm not as boring as they are.

(Nora, lawyer, mid 30s)

While Nora regards herself as different from most lawyers, taking pride in not being 'boring' like the others, her account bears traces of awkwardness. By drinking beer at work-related social gatherings – and not wine like the others – she is confronted with her difference in somewhat unpleasant ways. By not conforming to the group standard she is accused of conspicuously demonstrating her difference. Indeed, the dilemma of wanting to be different yet fit in is a recurring theme in several self-reflexive accounts. As noted by Bourdieu (1984), there are two possible strategies for newcomers to the game of distinction; either striving for assimilation with the taste of dominant groups (evident, for instance, in the 'hyper-correctness' of the *petite bourgeoisie*), or explicit dissimilation from such tastes (as evident in the strategies of the cultural *avant-garde*). Regardless of whether one strives to 'fit in' or 'stand out', it seems a certain amount of labour is required, especially among upwardly-mobile people navigating unfamiliar social terrains. While social mobility may certainly bring about pleasantness in terms of economic and symbolic rewards, the interview data suggest that it may also be associated with feelings of inferiority and insecurity.

The uneasiness expressed highlights the importance of what Bourdieu (1984: 170; 1990b: 62) refers to as the diachronic aspect of the conditioning of class habitus. While the primary conditioning or the habitus (i.e. exposure to social and economic conditions of existence during a social actor's early years) continues to structure people's conduct throughout their lives, the embodied history inscribed in the habitus is not written in stone. Indeed, intra-generational social mobility implies exposure to new and different conditions as time goes by, which implies that the mobile actor has to adapt to a new habitat, as it were. A secondary conditioning of the habitus may

produce structures which are somewhat at odds with the primary structures, thus constituting what Bourdieu (2004a) refers to as *habitus clivé* – a cleft or split set of embodied dispositions. In other words, the embodied history inscribed in the habitus can be a source of 'misadaption as well as adaption, revolt as well as resignation' (Bourdieu, 1990b: 62). At any rate, the negative feelings associated with not fully mastering lifestyles valorised in the social groups one attempts to gain entry to, indicate that such mastery constitutes deference in the eyes of would-be members.

7.3.2 Ressentiment

Signs of deference are also traceable in the ways in which the interviewees talk about the tastes and lifestyles of those far removed from their own social milieu. Although we have seen that practices perceived as 'conspicuous', 'flashy' and 'snobbish' produce moral disparagement, there is a certain tension between admiration and aversion apparent in the interview data. There are important signs of admiration and deference to be found in the ways in which the interviewees classify others. Theodor, who repeatedly expresses contempt for 'the rich' and their 'lack of values', nevertheless reports feeling 'inferior' among such people:

> *V: Have you ever found yourself in situations where you feel uncomfortable? You know, where you feel uncomfortable for being different, where you're not among your own type of people?*
>
> I: I've always had this problem with this sort of chit-chat setting. […] You know, situations where you are forced to meet people you don't have much in common with, and you're obliged to be there for like three hours. […] So there have been some situations where I haven't felt one hundred per cent at home. For instance at these events the local government invite me to from time to time, where all these important financial types are present. […] I've often declined these invitations. I guess it's flattering to be invited by the mayor. You know, these neat invitations with official imprints and all. Actually, my secretary was shocked the other day when I declined to meet the royal family at one of these gatherings. But I was like, 'Why would I want to do that?' I saw no point in going there. […] It's not always easy, or interesting for that matter, to talk to people I can't relate to. Because they're interested in completely different things than I am, and there are other norms and terminologies and all sorts of things that I'm not used to. […]
>
> *V: Do you feel uncomfortable in such situations? Do you feel inferior in a way?*
>
> I: Yes, I've had problems with feeling inferior before. But it's better now. I have worked to improve myself. [Laughs.] […] But of course, it's much easier in

situations where I'm in control. You know, this is my area of expertise, these are my people, this is just fun. I'm much more cautious when I'm in unfamiliar social settings. […]

V: What kinds of settings are uncomfortable?

I: You know, the cocktail party type of thing. From time to time I have to tag along with my wife to these work-related gatherings, where there are all these bankers and that kind of people. Places where I'm the alien. […] I guess I'm more comfortable on the inside of things, not being the one that's on the outside of the circle.

(Theodor, head of cultural enterprise, early 40s)

Accordingly, interviewees expressing aversions to the conspicuous lifestyles and moral values of certain types of people does not necessarily imply they feel superior to such people. On the contrary, they may even express deference to and envy of the practitioners of such lifestyles:

When I see all these people who spend unbelievable amounts of money on clothes and appearances… I tend to get envious, because they can afford it, and I cannot. But I also think that these people spend way too much time and money on these things. […] It's alien to me. You know, I don't know that many people working in the oil business. […] The people I know work in the public sector. Moneywise, we're way below others in Stavanger, especially the oil people. Many people earn a lot of money. The standard of living is high. And being an out-of-towner originally, I tend to notice these things. There's a lot of money floating around, and I notice it affects people. It affects me too. I want to go shopping in all these fancy shops. There are lots of really cool clothes, and I get attracted to the whole thing. But then again, I think that's a bad thing, because it preoccupies people. People are more concerned about buying stuff than getting to know others. […] But the most serious problem is that its affects me. I also want nice clothes!

(Andrea, consultant, public sector, early 30s)

While Andrea tries not to let the materialistic lifestyles of the rich influence her, she admits they do. Apparently, there is a tension between an aversion to the expensive lifestyles of 'the others' on the one hand, and a somewhat shameful confession that she also wants to take part in these. A recurring tendency is for the interviewees to reflect self-consciously on their own feelings of envy after expressing antipathies. Among the interviewees located in the cultural fractions of the social space, this tension is most apparent when it comes to money and expensive goods. Similarly, the interviewees in the economic fractions self-consciously reflect on their lack of cultivation when comparing themselves to others:

Sometimes I wonder about other people's taste in music. […] I can't understand the code. You know, what makes people like the things they do. […] I thought about this yesterday. I was at this church concert, and some of the people attending were just out of their minds. They clapped their hands like madmen. […] And then I got this feeling: What do they hear that I don't hear? I can't seem to find that… Well, I guess I understand the liking part, because I probably clap my hands just as enthusiastically when I hear music that I like. And the music I like… Those people probably think, 'What the hell? This guy has to be an idiot for liking this'. […] I can understand that people get involved and that they lose themselves in a way. But what I cannot understand is what kind of mechanisms make some people like this, and others that. I don't know if it's something they've developed when they were really young, if it's the culture they've been brought up with, if it's the kind of parents they've had, or the education they've had, or… I have no idea. But it's got to be something.

(Wilhelm, manager, oil company, early 40s)

Notwithstanding Wilhelm's attempt at a sociological analysis of cultural differentiation, it is apparent that encountering people from different backgrounds and with different abilities evokes mixed feelings. Just as the interviewees in cultural fractions both resent and envy the expensive lifestyles of the rich, the interviewees in the economic fractions reflect upon the difference between themselves and others with similar awe and deference:

V: Have you ever experienced feeling uncomfortable meeting other people with different tastes than yours?

I: Yes, it can be uncomfortable, in the sense that… You know, you get a bit hesitant, and you try to find themes or issues that you both can relate to. […] For instance, when I meet people who have read a lot of books… I know that I'm unable to appreciate the same things as they do, because they're probably more… They're not the kind of entertainment junkie that I am. They probably read books in a totally different way than I do. And meeting such people can sometimes be a bit uncomfortable. […] And to be honest, I wish I had this interest in a wider range of culture. For instance, I wish I had the ability to appreciate the use of language in books. You know, like people who can sit for hours pondering on one sentence. […] But we're all different in that regard. And at some point I became what I call an entertainment junkie, and I'm not as involved in cultural issues in the way some other people are. And sometimes that can be uncomfortable, knowing that you don't get the same type of stimuli from high culture, the way other people do. And I… Well, I won't say that I feel left out, because there are lots of other areas that I'm in control of. But I guess there are people who feel embarrassed because they don't get high culture. And instead they talk down about it, because they don't get it. […] I guess it's because people see no use in it. […] An opera, for instance, because it makes no sense to them.

(Mikkel, manager, oil company, mid 30s)

Despite the aversion expressed, there does seem to be at least some mutual deference between the fractions. In the case of interviewees located in the cultural fractions, they shun the conspicuousness of material luxury, yet report feelings of envy for not being endowed with similar amounts of economic resources. Conversely, the interviewees in the economic fractions dislike the conspicuousness of elevated cultural tastes and esoteric knowledge, yet report envy of the ability to appreciate certain cultural forms.

The ambivalence, or the apparent contradiction, between aversion and admiration can be conceived of in terms of 'ressentiment' (not to be confused with the term 'resentment'). The term was originally coined by Kierkegaard (1978; see also Sartre, 1956; Scheler, 1961; Weber, 1966; Nietzsche, 2003), and refers to a sense of hostility directed at what is perceived as the cause of people's frustrations. The sense of weakness or inferiority in the face of this 'cause' generates a morality which attacks or denies the perceived source of one's frustration. As noted by Bourdieu,

> Ressentiment […] is the sentiment of the person who transforms a sociologically mutilated being – I am poor, I am black, I am woman, I am powerless – into a model of human existence, an elective accomplishment of freedom and a *devoir-être*, an ought-to-be, a *fatum*, built upon an unconscious fascination with the dominant. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 212)

In other words, ressentiment is a reassignment of the pain that accompanies a sense of inferiority onto an external scapegoat. The social actor creates an enemy image, or a cause that can be blamed for one's own inferiority. Thus, people perceive themselves as thwarted not by their own failures, but by something external. As is evident from the interview quotes above, there is an apparent contradiction between feelings of hostility roused by a perceived conspicuousness and 'better-than-you' attitude among other groups, and an admiration of the lifestyles practised by the objects of ressentiment. Although the notion of ressentiment admittedly implies a problematic projection of motives onto the interviewees, it nevertheless highlights the ambivalence between admiration and aversion apparent in the interview data. More

importantly, it indicates that boundary drawing and expressed aversions do not entail a devaluation of the symbolic value of the practices in question. On the contrary, the quotes above indicate that the aversions expressed by non-practitioners indirectly entail admiration, and thus the production of symbolic value. Accordingly, the mobilisation of egalitarian sentiments against elitism and snobbery does not necessarily indicate an eradication of taste hierarchies. This is not, however, to say that egalitarian values are not without their consequences.

7.4. Under the moral radar

Based on extensive anthropological fieldwork, Gullestad (1984, 1985, 1992) has argued that there is a 'code of modesty' prevailing in Norwegian society. While Norwegians – like most people – are hungry for recognition and have certain needs to 'show what they are good for', there are few legitimate means by which to express being different from or better than others. There is in other words a dilemma between aspirations to prestige, esteem and honour on the one hand, and internalised moral guidelines cherishing equality as sameness on the other.[128] According to Gullestad (1992: 103ff), a recurrent solution to this dilemma is an 'under-communication of success' among the successful. The Norwegian code of conduct thus demands that a person is self-effacing, not boastful, not forward, and one should not 'blow one's own trumpet'. In effect, this means that successful people cannot lay claim to prestige themselves, and in some cases they even have to be 'nicer' than everybody else, in that they have to downplay their successfulness. As noted by Daloz (2007, 2010) such informal codes of conduct discourage feelings of superiority and can typically be seen among members of various social elites. These codes are particularly

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[128] Gullestad (1992: 184ff) notes that the English term 'equality' is often translated into the Norwegian term *likhet*, which literally means 'alikeness' or 'sameness'. This is, however, one of at least three other possible translations of 'equality': *likeverd* ('same or equal value'), *likeberettigelse* ('same or equal right') and *likestilling* ('same or equal status'; often used to denote equality between genders). Following de Tocqueville's (1969) distinction between the idea of 'equality' and the idea of 'similarity' or 'identity', Gullestad's point is that these two ideas are tightly entwined in the Norwegian context. Whereas 'equality' in the US means 'equal opportunity' (i.e. to become different), *likhet* in Norway emphasizes similarity in processes of social life as well as similarity in terms of economic resources, prestige, political power, etc.

prevalent in political representatives, who cultivate an image of 'conspicuous modesty'. In other words, certain ways of acting are more or less strategically employed to monitor self-presentation in front-stage situations (Barnes, 1954; Goffman, 1959). According to Daloz' comparative inquiries, such under-communication of esteem is hardly found outside Scandinavian countries.

There are some interesting resemblances in the interview data to the points put forward by Gullestad and Daloz. As we have seen throughout the previous chapters, self-assertion is deemed inappropriate and morally dubious across the social space. Based on the discussion so far, it could thus be argued that a code of modesty is tacitly accepted and taken for granted by most of the interviewees. There is, however, a certain resistance to this moral code to be found. Some interviewees even explicitly challenge the idea of equality as sameness, and they refuse to acknowledge such codes of modesty:

> *V: Do you ever restrict your consumption of goods? You know… 'What will the neighbours say' type of thing?*
>
> I: No, never. When I was a little boy… You know, my parents had this small business. […] And the Law of Jante was extremely powerful where I grew up. So my parents were always very cautious about doing things, especially when it came to buying stuff. It was like, 'No, no! We can't buy a new car, because people might dislike it, at it can affect who will buy stuff from us.' So I remember from very early on, I told myself never to let other people make decisions for me. I have to make my own decisions and stand for them. And I have abided by that rule. If I let other people influence my choices, it would be wrong. […] So I never let others' expectations of what to do or not to do influence my choices in life.
>
> (Johan, CEO, mid 50s)

> *V: Have you ever experienced other people being opinionated about the way you spend your money?*
>
> I: Sometimes.
>
> *V: How do you feel about that?*
>
> I: Luckily, from when I was very little, I haven't cared much about what other people think of me. Let them have their opinions. I don't waste energy on thinking about other people's opinions. You know, if you have something on your mind, tell me. I'd rather have people tell it to me straight, than have people walking around with their secret opinions.

A recurring theme typical among interviewees located in the upper sectors of the social space is an expressed aversion to 'The Law of Jante', a popular saying referring to the novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* (1936 [1933]) by Aksel Sandemose. Generally, the Law of Jante refers to negative depictions of individual success and achievement, or a mentality emphasising the collective while discouraging those who stand out as achievers. Several interviewees reflexively point out that they perceive their environment as pervaded by such a mentality, while explicitly disavowing this mentality themselves. As we can see in the quotes above, the Law of Jante is associated with letting others influence and/or discourage the consumption of expensive material goods. The aversion to the Law of Jante is also prevalent among consumers of cultural goods and those who value esoteric knowledge:

> I don't want to be bored to death by dumb people. And saying that some people are dumber than others, that's not allowed in this country. Because everybody's supposed to be the same. But that's rubbish! Some people *are* dumber than others. [Laughs.] And I want to be surrounded by smart, knowledgeable and intelligent people. […] I mean, a book can be judged by its cover. And the older I get, the more I rid myself of all the things that have been so instilled in me at school and at home… You know, this notion that you shouldn't judge others because of their looks or whatever. But I mean, I do. And I don't think it's wrong.

(Lucas, lawyer, early 30s)

> *V: We've talked quite a bit about your preferences in literature, visual art and so on. And if I've understood you correctly, you're very clear about what you like and what you dislike.*
>
> I: Oh, yes. It's like that all the time. I'm very judgemental and prejudiced. […] But I believe that prejudices, they are there for a reason. And it has somehow become morally suspect, but I don't take that kind of moral sentiments very seriously. […] Apparently, there are many people who find me arrogant because of it. And guess I am in a sense.
>
> *V: These moral sentiments and their relation to aesthetics…*
>
> I: It all started with functionalism. I mean, when functionalism came along, it wiped away everything that was considered to be immoral. […] They wiped away ornamentation, painted every wall white… Well, they sort of cleaned it all up and made it all nice and orderly. […] And this notion that ornamentation is morally reprehensible… That notion stuck with me for a long time in my younger days. But

when I grew older, I learnt that things are not necessarily like that. […] And I really believe that learning new stuff, acquiring knowledge about aesthetics for instance, that's what makes life worth living.

(Sofia, academic, mid 60s)

There is thus an awareness of an anti-elitist mentality stipulating that one cannot claim that certain tastes or certain forms of knowledge are 'better' than others. While there are quite a few interviewees who seem rather unsettled by claiming superiority based on their tastes and lifestyles, there are some who reject this mentality, explicitly refusing to acknowledge it or let it discourage their worldview. Lucas points out that despite attempts by his family and the school system to discourage him from 'judging a book by its cover', he reserves his right to deem others 'dumb'. Similarly, Sofia refuses to let other people's perception of her as 'arrogant' discourage her 'prejudgment'. On the contrary, she historicises the deeming of aesthetic judgements as morally dubious, and maintains her belief that gaining a knowledge of aesthetics is 'what makes life worth living'. However, such reflexive refusals do not necessarily imply that these people will act however they please:

V: We were talking earlier about you being labelled as a member of the cultural elite…

I: Well, I guess I am. But still, I've been very careful to appear indistinct and, you know, hard to pin down. And it's all about positioning, of course. There's a difference between what I personally think or feel, and the professional role I play, so to speak. In a town like Stavanger, to appear elitist equals death. I mean, if I am to appear in public, I won't show any elitist tendencies… Well, not that I am elitist, but I am very careful about expressing myself in ways that don't appear too academic, too elitist or too high cultural… And that's also because Stavanger is a schizophrenic town. On the one hand, people strive to acquire elite status through the consumption of high culture. […] On the other hand, this is a town where all forms of snobbery and elitist attitudes are sanctioned very hard. […] So in my professional role, this is something I am very conscious about. For instance, I've had a fair share of media coverage lately, especially in the local newspaper. You know, because of [the work I do]. And just the other day, they printed this fairly long interview. And I think it was more important to the paper-reading Stavangerian that they got to know that I play football in my spare time, rather than [the work I do]. […] But I mean, this is my professional role. As a private citizen… I'm not afraid to wave my flag and tell people what I like and don't like, if you know what I mean? Not at all. But it all depends on the situation. And sometimes it can be difficult, because it's not always that obvious whether I am somewhere in an official capacity, or if I am, you know, just me.

Thus, Jonas compartmentalises different roles. Although he sees no problem in 'waving his flag' (i.e. expressing his tastes) as a private citizen, he is careful not to act in 'elitist ways' as a professional in the public sphere. As he regards Stavanger as a 'schizophrenic' town that is characterised by people who strive to become cultivated, yet one where cultural elitism and snobbery are strongly discouraged, he reports that he reflexively considers and monitors his public appearances. So while several interviewees do not acknowledge the Law of Jante *personally*, they nevertheless find it appropriate to 'keep their heads down' in order to avoid negative attention from those who do not share their views.

Although arguably they are under the spell of egalitarian ideals of sameness like any other Norwegian, there is an important difference: they are endowed with a certain reflexivity enabling them to monitor their presentation of self when required by the situation. More specifically, following Goffman's (1959) distinction between 'the front stage' and 'the back stage', this reflexivity implies a social competence which endows its holders with the ability to differentiate between different types of situations requiring different modes of impression management. As these interviewees are aware of anti-elitist sentiments which may result in unwanted negative attention on themselves or the groups they represent, they under-communicate their differences vis-à-vis their perceived audiences when enacting their roles as professionals in the public sphere. Expanding on Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, it might be suggested that the reflexive monitoring of appearances in different contexts reflects a form of 'role distance', or an expressed separateness between oneself and one's putative role (Goffman, 1961: 83ff). Translated into Bourdieusian terms, these interviewees are endowed with an 'illusio', or a 'feel for the game', which enables them to comprehend and consider when and where it is (in)appropriate to act in certain ways. This suggests that it might be socially profitable to underplay differences and cultivate an image of 'conspicuous modesty' in certain situations (Daloz, 2007).

However, while some people may more or less calculatedly employ such strategies to avoid rousing hostility in the public eye, the successful enactment of these strategies is not necessarily the result of consciously or 'cynically' pursued goals of wanting to deceive the public. But it does imply a capacity to monitor one's presentation of self in ways that suit the situation. This capacity may, in turn, prove to be socially profitable, regardless of its motivation. Indeed, there are several indications of the effective under-communication of esteem to be found in the interview data:

> *V: This type you were talking about… People who look down on others… Is that something you experience a lot here in Stavanger?*
>
> I: Well, I guess. In certain circles it's like that. But I mean, I don't have friends in high places. I don't know these people. But my impression is that such circles are fairly… It's like 'we're the boys, we stick together.' So I guess there are such tendencies, here as in Oslo and other places. But everyone's not like that. My neighbour, he's a CEO and earns insane amounts of money. But still, he's the sweetest guy in the world. I guess if you had walked into him on the street, you wouldn't have noticed that he's got this fancy job, lots of money… Well, I guess you could tell in some respects. Anyway, there are these other types that have to emphasise their fancy titles. I noticed that at this other place I worked earlier. It was really important to them what kind of titles they had and what kinds of people they knew.
>
> (Eva, secretary, mid 40s)

> *V: Where do you fit into all of this? These people you were referring to ['posh people']… Do you feel comfortable in their company?*
>
> I: Yes and no. It depends on what kinds of people they are. It's all about how they relate to other people. […] Sometimes I can get along with people who are preoccupied with their fancy concerts, white tablecloths and champagne glasses. But they have to be nice and treat you in a decent manner. […] For instance, the parents at this pre-school… It's a fairly homogenous group. […] You can tell by the types of cars parking outside. You know, Audi, Mercedes, all sorts of… […] And you can tell by the clothes they wear. But then again, who are these people, really? And who are we to judge and say stuff like, 'Oh, they've got this high cultural manner, they think they're better than us' and that kind of crap? When I hear such things, I get really sad, because they are people with feelings too. And most of the parents in this pre-school, they always give a helping hand, they have faith in the work we do and they show it every day. And all people should be treated equally. Just because they wear fancy suits, drive Mercedes, have nice houses and work as CEOs, lawyers and doctors… Who are we to judge them? And it really pisses me off when people start rambling on about such people. They are nice people who deserve respect.
>
> (Klara, pre-school teacher, late 30s)

While both interviewees regard 'snobbish' and 'self-assertive' people as morally dubious at other points in the interviews, the quotes indicate that neither the consumption of expensive material goods, nor the consumption of 'high culture', is necessarily problematic. Eva's neighbour is 'the loveliest man in the world' despite his earning 'insane amounts of money' as a CEO. The suit-wearing, Mercedes-driving parents at the pre-school where Klara works are still the 'first to give a helping hand' when it is needed and thus they 'deserve respect'. It even makes Klara angry and sad when people dislike such types only for being rich and successful. Thus, practising esoteric or exclusive lifestyles is in itself not perceived as problematic, if the practitioners act within the limits of what is morally justifiable. Throughout the previous chapters we have seen that it is seldom the possession of money, education, knowledge, or the mastery of certain lifestyles to which the interviewees express aversions. Rather, it is only when people are perceived as conspicuous or self-assertive about such matters that hostility is evoked. In other words, as long as practitioners of lifestyles which could potentially produce suspicion (1) do not assert themselves on the basis of practising these lifestyles in ways perceived as morally reprehensible by non-practitioners; and (2) exhibit accommodating and jovial attitudes towards others, it seems they are provided with an extraordinary endorsement in the eyes of non-practitioners. In other words, one might be esteemed for practising lifestyles associated with high amounts of cultural and/or economic capital even in a society that cultivates equality as sameness, provided that one is able to operate under the moral radar of egalitarianism and combine the practice of such lifestyles with an explicit display of moral qualities such as kindness, caring, modesty, unselfishness and so forth.

7.5 An egalitarian paradox?

Despite the hostility to snobbery and self-assertion, the mastery of certain lifestyles and tastes can produce deference and endorsement in the eyes of non-practitioners. Thus, simply rejecting Bourdieu's model of symbolic domination is by no means warranted (cf. Skarpenes, 2007). On the contrary, and in accordance with the

Bourdieusian framework, I would argue that it is the *morality* of the upper classes that is brought into the field of opinion, and not their esteem *per se*. While the egalitarian sentiments directed against elitism and snobbery might very well be considered an effective position-taking which draws attention to how certain groups *handle* their social esteem, these sentiments do not challenge the taste hierarchies which bestow recognition on these groups. Nor do these sentiments infringe on the production of symbolic value of esteemed practices. While certain practices are rejected as 'not for the likes of us' by non-practitioners, this nevertheless entails a confirmation of a tacit understanding that the lifestyles of the upper classes are more esteemed. Indeed, such tacit understandings are part and parcel of what Bourdieu (1984, 1991b) refers to as 'symbolic violence'; subordinate actors apprehend the social world through perceptual categories conditioned by their positions in the social space. However, what such position-takings might have helped to accomplish is a rather widespread suspicion of elitism and snobbery, in the sense that it is not morally justifiable to explicitly claim superiority on the basis of the mastery of esteemed tastes and lifestyles.

Thus, insofar as practitioners of expensive and/or intellectually demanding lifestyles are provided with an extraordinary endorsement by non-practitioners due to tactfulness and expressed jovial attitudes, this implies that it is not necessarily taste hierarchies as such that are brought into question by such sentiments. Rather, it is first and foremost the immorality of self-assertion that is the point of contention. Thus, egalitarian values are compatible with taste hierarchies. Indeed, as asserted by Gullestad (1992: ch. VIII), the egalitarian ideology implied in the valuation of equality as sameness somewhat paradoxically conceals, and even helps to maintain, the hierarchical structures of society. According to Gullestad, Norwegians have adopted an interactional style whereby sameness between the participants of an encounter is emphasised, while differences are tactfully concealed. This does not imply *actual* sameness, but rather a way of under-communicating differences. When equality as sameness is not possible, people avoid each other. Yet the idea of sameness is sustained by such avoidance strategies. As people avoid others because

they are 'too different', and seek out others still because they are 'alike', egalitarian ideals tend to be exclusively applied between members of the same rank. Thus, there exists a somewhat false belief that most people are 'ordinary people', a belief which is in fact a generalisation based on the lifestyles and attitudes of the group with which one associates. Other categories are exceptions to that rule. In the process of striving for sameness, people indirectly erect symbolic boundaries between themselves and people who are not considered the same. Such boundaries are not primarily established to shut people out, but first and foremost to protect and preserve a social identity which is defined within a reference group. Thus, Gullestad argues that there are 'more discrepancies both within the ideologies themselves and between ideology and social life than Norwegians are generally aware of and willing to recognize' (Gullestad, 1992: 100).

Several of Gullestad's points are transferable to the present empirical case. First, inferring from the ways in which the interviewees classify others, there is considerable evidence of avoidance strategies. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the interviewees express aversions to the tastes and lifestyles of others, and such aversions even manifest themselves in a highly concrete 'sense of one's place', as people navigate physical space by seeking out interaction with those like them while avoiding interaction with 'the others' based on taste-related criteria. Second, we have seen that different conceptions of 'ordinariness' are differentially distributed in tandem with the distribution of different lifestyles and tastes. Leaning on Bourdieu's argument about the functioning of the habitus, I have argued that the interviewees take the naturalness of their own tastes for granted. This naturalness is, in turn, used as a yardstick against which 'the others' are judged. Finally, as we have seen in this chapter, egalitarian ideals of sameness are very much present in the interviewees' accounts. Even those who disavow such ideals are influenced by them, in the sense that they monitor their appearances in certain 'front stage' situations in order not to rouse negative sentiments when they are in the public eye.

Following Gullestad's line of reasoning I would thus argue that egalitarian ideals of sameness, along with a classed distribution of different conceptions of ordinariness, contribute to a misrecognition of power relations. If resourceful people go about their business tactfully and avoid rousing anti-snobbish sentiments, it seems they can be left in peace without having to worry about their eliciting the suspicion of groups of less resourceful people. Thus, processes of non-formalised closure (i.e. crystallised social boundaries given rise to by social actors' choice of friends and partners, exclusive social networks, residential segregation, preferences as regards leisure activities, etc.) are driven underground into covert, informal codes of exclusion. While it is outside the scope of this thesis to speculate on the consequences of the formation of status groups, it might nevertheless be suggested that their formation serves as a basis for exclusion so that a limited circle of those deemed eligible can achieve monopolies of resources of various kinds. Moreover, as noted by Parkin (2002: 96ff), the relationship between resources and social esteem is a two-way street; sometimes social esteem flows from the possession of resources, and sometimes it is more like a springboard to the attainment of such possessions. Insofar as such processes remain covert, they will not be questioned, and they can thus prevail largely unnoticed. In other words, as long as resourceful people keep their heads down, patterns of inter-marriage, informal friendships and residential clustering seem to be perceived as rather 'innocent' by outsiders, even though such patterns amount to processes of social closure.

Thus, this study indicates that egalitarian ideals of sameness veil the 'real' causes of social closure and the production of inequality, in the sense that such processes prevail largely unquestioned (save perhaps for some leftist politicians and conflict-oriented sociologists). In this way, the mastery of certain lifestyles does not only imply what Murphy (1988: 136) refers to as 'power to profit from', in the sense that the practitioners are endowed with the capacity to convert this mastery into other forms of resources (such as money, educational qualifications, advantages on the labour market and membership of exclusive social networks); it might also imply 'power over' in the sense that less resourceful social actors tacitly accept the unequal

distribution of such capacities. Thus, egalitarian values might somewhat paradoxically coexist with, and even help to maintain, relations of legitimate domination, in the sense that groups of subordinate social actors comply to a differential distribution of power which does not benefit their life-chances (see Lukes, 2005: 83ff).

One should, however, be careful not to essentialise 'Norwegianness', and Gullestad's account might very well be criticised for sweeping claims about 'Norwegian exceptionalism'. In a recent study, for instance, van Eijk (2012) demonstrates similar egalitarian sentiments in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that there are important differences between countries in this regard. Indeed, furthering the argument about applying a Bourdieu-inspired framework in a relational rather than in a substantialist mode of analysis, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of not using the peculiarities of the French case as a litmus test to assess the characteristics of power relations and the legitimacy which bestows them in other empirical cases. The fruitfulness of cross-national comparisons notwithstanding, it is important to highlight that power relations linked to a differential distribution of social esteem may express themselves in highly different ways in different national contexts, without this necessarily implying that their structural underpinnings are radically different. Indeed, as noted by Weber in his discussion of the relationship between class and status, the ways in which American and German 'chiefs' enact their roles vis-à-vis their 'clerks' are strikingly different, even though the social distance between the 'chiefs' and the 'clerks' in the two countries are homologous:

> Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. This 'equality' of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The 'equality' of status among the American 'gentlemen', for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by the different functions of 'business', it would be considered strictly repugnant – whether the old tradition still prevails – if even the richest 'chief', while playing billiards or card in the club in the evening, would not treat his 'clerk' as in every sense fully his equal in birthright. It would be repugnant if the American 'chief' would bestow upon his 'clerk' the condescending 'benevolence' marking a distinction of 'position', which the German chief can never dissever from his attitude. This is one of the reasons why in America the German 'clubby-ness' has

never been able to attain the attraction that the American clubs have. (Weber, 1946: 187)

7.6 Conclusion

Given the classed distribution of tastes and the systematic boundary drawing accounted for in previous chapters, this chapter has addressed the question of how differences in tastes and lifestyles amount to relations of legitimate domination in Stavanger. Taking the debate about the applicability of Bourdieu's model of symbolic domination in contexts outside of France as a point of departure, this chapter has discussed the apparent contradiction between egalitarian values on the one hand, and hierarchical relations of power, status and prestige on the other. The argument put forward can be summarised as follows. First, it has been established that taste-related self-assertion is deemed morally suspect by most of the interviewees, which among other things implies that those who report specific and elaborate cultural preferences are somewhat unsettled by being associated with cultural snobbery and elitist attitudes. Second, it has been asserted that despite the widespread refusals to acknowledge other people's superiority, there is still considerable empirical evidence of deference and endorsement to be found in the interview data. Thus, I have forwarded the argument that certain lifestyles and tastes function as symbolic capital outside the limited circles of those who possess mastery of the lifestyles in question. Third, I have asserted that the suspiciousness produced by anti-elitist sentiments may be eluded, provided that practitioners of expensive/and or intellectually demanding lifestyles 'keep their heads down' (i.e. act tactfully, modestly, respectfully, etc.). Thus, joviality and under-communication of difference might be the egalitarian version of *noblesse oblige*. Finally, leaning on the works of the Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, I have argued that egalitarian ideals of sameness imply a misrecognition of asymmetric power relations. Insofar as processes of social closure prevail largely unquestioned, asymmetric power relations are provided with a kind of legitimacy they would not otherwise have. Thus, egalitarian values somewhat paradoxically coexist with relations of legitimate domination.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

8.1 A summary of findings

This thesis has investigated processes of social closure based on lifestyle differences, in particular differences in people's consumption preferences and aesthetical tastes. It has accentuated three interrelated aspects of what I call a class-status nexus – the social distribution of lifestyle differentials; the formation of status groups on the basis of lifestyle affinities; and relations of domination and subordination. Drawing on data generated by qualitative in-depth interviews with forty-six Stavangerians hailing from different classes and class fractions, the findings can be briefly summarised as follows:

First, the analysis points to structural affinities between class positions and different cultural tastes. Based on the assumption that the ways in which people classify various cultural goods are indicative of their modes of perceiving, appropriating and appreciating these goods, I have mapped out different sets of more or less unified taste orientations. I have pointed to four main modes of consumption prominent in the empirical data: *the intellectual mode, the luxurious mode, the educational mode* and *the practical mode of consumption*. The most striking differences concern whether goods are appropriated and appreciated as a means to an end, i.e. instrumentally; or when goods are appropriated and appreciated as ends in themselves, i.e. in a disinterested or non-instrumental manner. These differences are clearly linked to the interviewees' positions in the local social space, i.e. in the relative distribution of different species of capital. Coupled with Rosenlund's (2000c, 2002a, 2009a) analyses of cultural practices and tastes in Stavanger, these findings indicate that both what types of goods Stavangerians consume, as well as how they appropriate and appreciate these cultural goods, are structured in systematic ways; the social distribution of different consumption preferences and aesthetical tastes is clearly linked to the local class structure. I have thus argued that these findings support the general sociological idea that social actors in similar class positions tend to be endowed with similar dispositions and embodied practical senses – or *class habitus* – which, in turn, generate similar practices and tastes which differ systematically from

those of social actors situated elsewhere in the class structure. The empirical findings indicate that the social distribution of lifestyles in present day Stavanger is classed.

Second, the analysis lends support to the idea that this classed distribution of lifestyles amounts to the formation of more or less exclusive status groups. Based on the assumption that the ways in which people classify, evaluate and estimate other people's lifestyles are indicative of elective affinities and processes of group inclusion and exclusion, I have identified two main types of symbolic boundary drawing which correspond to the structures of the local social space. What I have referred to as *horizontal* and *vertical boundary drawing* indicate more or less explicit lifestyle-related antagonisms between groups of social actors located in different sectors of the social space. More specifically, entwinements of aesthetical and moral criteria of evaluation are used by interviewees to systematically demarcate 'us' from 'them'. These findings indicate that the structures of the social space not only correspond to a differential distribution of lifestyles; they also manifest themselves in socially differentiated estimations of lifestyle differences. As lifestyle differences are subjectively perceived and recognised as significant by the interviewees, Bourdieu's (1984: 6) dictum that 'taste classifies the classifier' seems to be supported. Moreover, previous studies of closure processes in Stavanger and other Norwegian cities have suggested that a classed marital endogamy and tendencies for residential segregation facilitate a demographic clustering of individuals into communal groups (Hansen, 1995; Rosenlund, 2009a, 2011; Ljunggren and Andersen, 2012). The current findings indicate that perceived lifestyle differences are important factors in the structuring of how such social relationships coincide.

Finally, the analysis suggests that socially recognised lifestyle differences express relations of domination and subordination. Insofar as (1) a classed distribution of lifestyles amounts to non-formalised social closure, implying monopolisation of social esteem and prestige accruing to privileged groups; (2) social esteem can be consolidated into institutionally secured privileges and advantages, for instance in the

educational system or on the labour market; and (3) this differential distribution of privileges and advantages is tacitly accepted or taken for granted by the non-privileged, the current analysis suggests that privileged groups have *power over* less privileged groups. Tacit perceptions of the order or things – or *doxa* – imply that closure processes and the unequal distribution of advantages and privileges are rarely questioned. While the analysis certainly points to an extensive mobilisation of egalitarian sentiments against the perceived 'elitism', 'vanity' and 'conspicuousness' implied in other people's lifestyles, such classifications are exclusively directed against people who are regarded as 'showing off' in somewhat 'inauthentic' ways, and/or perceived as thinking they are 'better than others' based on morally dubious grounds. The unequal distribution of privileges and advantages is, however, rarely problematised. On the contrary, if privileged others are perceived as acting in morally acceptable ways (i.e. not 'showing off' their riches), they are provided with an extraordinary endorsement in the eyes of the non-privileged. Thus, the analysis suggests that if the privileged act under the 'moral radar' of egalitarian sentiments, closure processes are misrecognised, and this implies relations of legitimate domination in the Bourdieusian sense of the term.

8.2 Contributions and future challenges

This thesis has contributed to contemporary sociological debates on class, status and social closure, both on a substantial and on a theoretical-methodological level. Substantially, it has expanded on a body of research on class and cultural life in Stavanger, in particular the work of Lennart Rosenlund. It lends firm support to his assertion that the distribution of lifestyles is structured by the capital volume and the capital composition principle of social differentiation. It has also generated additional insights about classed perceptions and classifications, which both supplement and expand on Rosenlund's studies. More generally, the present analysis points to an enduring significance of class in the structuring of social inequalities, in the sense that the social and economic conditions implied in different class positions fundamentally affect the ways in which people perceive, think and act in the social world.

Furthermore, these classed modes of conduct amount to social closure, meaning that groups of social actors, intentionally or otherwise, monopolise advantages and privileges by restricting the opportunities of groups of outsiders.

These findings contradict the supposed 'death of class' in contemporary Western societies. While structural changes might certainly have affected class relations – for instance in and through a marked decline in subjective 'class consciousness' and 'class awareness' – this does not imply a 'capitalism without classes' as scholars such as Beck (1992), Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2001) posit. On the contrary, despite changes related to a decline in industrial production, a rise in the production of services, deregulation of labour markets, a decline in the political impact of labour unions, rising levels of education and income, and in some countries an expansion of the welfare state, it seems class relations have enduring influences on the structuring of both 'objective' social inequalities and the constitution of subjective self-identities. In this study the significance of class has been demonstrated by pointing to a classed structuring of lifestyle differentials which in turn leads to processes of social closure. So while the structuring of subjectivities and cultural identities might not always be expressed in *class terms* by social actors themselves, the expressed demarcations and symbolic boundary drawing nevertheless seem to be systematically structured by underlying class relations. Other studies investigating such processes demonstrate similar tendencies. These include studies of Denmark (Prieur *et al*, 2008; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2008; Faber *et al*, 2012), Finland (Kahma and Toikka, 2012), the UK (Le Roux *et al*, 2008; Bennett *et al*, 2009; Atkinson, 2010), France (Lebaron *et al*, 2011) and Croatia (Cvetičanin and Popescu, 2011). All these studies point to the need for a concept of class that is not restricted to people's subjective awareness of class processes, or the realisation of classes as political agencies. While historical changes might have proven Marx and Engels' (1967) prophesies about the rise of the working class as a revolutionary historical agent wrong, the notion of class itself should not be confused with certain scholars' one-sided depiction of it. Particularly dubious are arguments heralding the coming of a new historical epoch of modernity in which the notion of class is rendered obsolete as far as the analysis of structured subjectivities is

concerned. The notion of class employed in the current analysis is, by contrast, rather different than that of the proponents of such assertions.

On a theoretical-methodological level, this thesis has demonstrated the applicability of Bourdieu's conceptual framework to a different research object. Following Bourdieu's (1984, 1990b) insistence on applying his conceptual and methodological tools in a 'relational' mode of analysis, I have endeavoured to 'distil' crucial theoretical-methodological insights from his empirical work to map out lifestyle differentials and closure processes in present day Stavanger. Thus, my concern has *not* been to map out similarities with, or differences from, the form and content of specific lifestyle properties pertinent to class divides in Bourdieu's France in the 1960s and 1970s – a task which seems to preoccupy a range of researchers today. While it would be interesting to make substantial comparisons in time and space, this is, I argue, not a prerequisite in order to apply Bourdieu's analytical framework. In other words, Bourdieu can be evoked without engaging in discussions about 'the peculiarities of the French'. More generally, I suggest that the current application of an extended Bourdieu-inspired analytical framework can contribute to a further development of what has come to be known as 'cultural class analysis', meaning a type of class analysis which is not restricted to the economic and political spheres of society, but which also encompasses the cultural sphere (see for instance Savage, 2003; Bottero, 2005). While the application of Bourdieu's work is already at the forefront of this development, the present study can be seen as contributing with the following theoretical-methodological clarifications and elaborations:

First of all, this study demonstrates the importance of analysing the empirical entwinement of class and status relations. While it might be fruitful to distinguish between the two on a conceptual level in order to analytically accentuate different aspects of the social world, one runs the risk of viewing class and status as two ontologically separate mechanisms that manifest themselves in autonomous ways. Indeed, this view is forwarded by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, 2007a; Chan, 2010b)

as an explicit critique of Bourdieu-inspired analyses. This would, however, be an erroneous path to follow, as it fails to grasp the ways in which economic and cultural factors are entwined in the structuring of societal inequalities. It would be more fruitful to view the two as a *class-status nexus* and map out the ways in which the two are interrelated. In this thesis I have provided a reading of Bourdieu's work as an attempt to expand on Weber's ideal-typical and schematic conceptual distinctions by providing a viable model of the ways in which relations of class and status are entwined in contemporary societies. While this reading of Bourdieu's work is consistent with several other scholars' applications of it (e.g. Prieur *et al*, 2008; Le Roux *et al*, 2008; Lebaron *et al*, 2011), it also breaks with those who *subsume* the notion of class to notions of culture, identity and subjective self-perceptions. The application of Bourdieu's conceptual framework does not in other words guarantee a sound framework for investigating the class-status nexus. To reiterate a crucial point forwarded by Crompton and Scott (2005), the focus on cultural issues in class analysis should not override or obscure other issues related to class and its structuring of social inequalities. There is, in other words, the impending danger of sociological reductionism implied by 'taking culture too seriously'. Endeavouring to map out homologies between a social space, a symbolic space and a space of class habitus can remedy this potential problem, as it recognises the analytical distinction between 'economic' and 'cultural' factors, while viewing them as empirically interrelated.

Second, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of a reorientation back to Bourdieu's original concern with social actors' *modus operandi*, i.e. the scrutiny of lifestyle differences in and through the application of the notion of habitus. In mapping out the classed distribution of different modes of consumption, it has challenged a body of research associated with the notion of the 'cultural omnivore' and the preoccupation with social actors' *opus operatum*, which in effect implies a one-sided focus on the observable outcomes of cultural practices. An extended focus on the 'hows', and not just the 'whats', of cultural consumption has rendered possible the view that a given cultural good might be perceived, appreciated and appropriated in different ways by different social actors. It has thus challenged the questionable

assumption that the prominence of 'broad', 'open' or 'eclectic' cultural tastes – typically measured in terms of survey respondents' volume or composition of preferences for cultural goods – necessarily implies a decline in or a marked reconfiguration of cultural hierarchies. I have suggested that the notion of the cultural omnivore functions as an unfortunate 'red herring' in drawing attention away from important differentiating processes. While it is not possible to empirically assess the structures of the habitus directly, I have, by scrutinising social actors' classifications of cultural goods and other people's consumption styles, endeavoured to map out fine-grained cultural distinctions. Thus, this study has also demonstrated the usefulness of qualitative in-depth interviews in assessing research questions regarding the social distribution of lifestyles.

Third, the analysis has demonstrated the importance of broadening the scope of what constitutes lifestyle differentials. While the social distribution of the consumption of 'legitimate' cultural goods (i.e. certain forms of literature, theatre and music) is undoubtedly important in this regard, there is an unfortunate tendency within the research field to become fixated on such differences at the expense of other forms of lifestyle differentiation. As Scott (2002: 33ff) points out, Weber's original notion of *Lebensstil* denotes the totality of a group's existence: its whole way of life. Bourdieu's analyses were also concerned with a wide range of lifestyle properties, and not just the universe of 'legitimate culture'. There is in other words no viable reason why the mapping of lifestyle differentials should be restricted to the assessment of the social distribution of the consumption of a limited set of cultural goods. In this analysis I have employed a wide notion of cultural consumption in focusing on the consumption of both cultural and material goods, as well as a wide range of leisure activities. I have also brought attention to moral issues and the ways in which they are implied in the class-status nexus. While I do not argue that I have provided an exhaustive account of these issues, I have demonstrated the importance of not reducing lifestyle differentiation to a limited universe of cultural goods.

Fourth, the present inquiry has demonstrated the fruitfulness of analytically accentuating different aspects of the class-status nexus. In this regard, I have focused on three interrelated aspects – the classed distribution of lifestyles, the formation of status groups on the basis of lifestyle differences, and asymmetrical power relations arising from such differences. While I do not suggest that these aspects represent the totality of the class-status nexus, the point is that they are not analytically reducible to each other. For instance, a classed distribution of lifestyles might in principle exist without social actors subjectively perceiving such differences, much less recognising them as significant as regards with whom they do or do not want to associate socially. Conversely, social actors might in principle form social collectives based on perceived lifestyle differences without the existence of a classed distribution of lifestyles. Thus, there is the risk of erroneously drawing conclusions about one aspect of the class-status nexus on the basis of empirical scrutiny of another aspect of it. This study can be read as an inceptive endeavour to analytically break down the various aspects of the class-status nexus while recognising the connections between them.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis has demonstrated the applicability of social closure as an overarching concept in the study of lifestyle differentiation. While several scholars have pointed to affiliations between Weberian closure theory and the work of Bourdieu (e.g. Honneth, 1986; Murphy, 1988; Manza, 1992; Hansen, 1995), there have been remarkably few attempts to cross-fertilise the two in empirical studies. One aspect in which such cross-fertilisation can prove particularly fruitful concerns the analysis of the ways in which the mastery of particular lifestyles is consolidated into assets producing advantages and privileges. While the notion of social closure is already implicit in the Bourdieusian notion of capital, as it denotes scarce resources that constitute exclusive advantages for their possessors in social life, contemporary usage of the term appears vague and mainly unsubstantiated. More specifically, if we are to accept Prieur and Savage's (2011) reasonable assertion that cultural capital is to be understood in 'relative' rather than in 'absolute' terms, this implies that what constitutes socially valorised cultural practices cannot be defined a

priori, as the 'rules of the game' within social fields are always subject to change due to on-going struggles over the principles for social recognition. In other words, the social distribution of cultural capital cannot simply be measured by studying the distributional pervasiveness of a predefined set of 'highbrow culture'. The question remains, however, how one is to empirically assess the production of symbolic value of cultural practices. According to a relative understanding of the term, *all* cultural practices can, in principle, function as cultural capital. Nevertheless, evoking the notion of cultural capital requires one to be able to point to social boundaries between practitioners and non-practitioners of cultural practices, meaning advantages for the former at the expense of the latter. As scrutinising the social distribution of lifestyles cannot, in itself, point to such boundaries, further empirical assessment is required. In this regard, I have suggested a crucial analytical distinction between *formalised* and *non-formalised closure*. In this way, it is possible to distinguish between social closure that is legally and institutionally secured on the one hand, and social closure that is dependent on more or less explicit boundary drawing on a subjective level on the other. Particularly focusing on the latter type, I have reworked Lamont's (1992) notion of symbolic boundaries and analysed how people use a combination of different evaluative criteria in distinguishing themselves and their peers from other groups. While recognising that social closure cannot be conceptually reduced to symbolic boundary drawing, I have nevertheless demonstrated that it constitutes one important aspect of it.

Indeed, if cultural class analysis is to aim to do more than merely identifying different types of cultural consumers, it is time to expand its scope. In a research field where many scholars have one-sidedly concerned themselves with taste distribution and rather fruitless debates about the significance of the cultural omnivore, my contention is that the time has come to focus to a greater extent on issues of social closure and power differentials arising from the cultural sphere. While this thesis has not established a normative point of view, it has pointed to closure processes which are likely to significantly affect people's life-chances. These processes seem to be largely misrecognised by the people who have undergone in-depth interviews in this study. It

would be unfortunate if sociologists were to continue to do the same. To borrow a phrase from Lamont (1992: 192): 'Only by recognizing the impact of cultural style on inequality is it possible to attempt to overcome its effects.'

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Authorization from Norwegian Social Science Data Service

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

NSD

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 584

Vegard Jarness
Sosiologisk institutt
Universitetet i Bergen
Rosenbergsgaten 39
5015 BERGEN

Vår dato: 11.06.2009   Vår ref: 21905 / 2 / KS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 29.04.2009. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

21905	*Petropolis and Cultural Life. Processes of Social Differentiation in Stavanger*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Vegard Jarness*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2012, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim   Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Kontaktperson: Katrine Utaaker Segadal tlf: 55 58 35 42
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Avdelingskontorer / *District Offices:*
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TRONDHEIM: NSD. Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no
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APPENDIX 2: MCA – Contributions of active categories

Label	Relative Weight (%)	Squared distance to origin	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	Axis 4	Axis 5
OCCUPATION							
Worker/Operator, u	0,474	20,11670	3,96	0,02	2,87	0,02	0,18
Worker/Operator, f	2,368	3,22333	1,13	2,59	0,14	0,08	6,13
CEO	0,908	10,01740	3,38	2,85	0,18	0,49	0,38
Employee, leading position	1,626	5,15049	6,20	1,87	0,06	4,37	0,02
Employee, other	1,792	4,58150	0,08	0,53	1,27	0,01	2,13
Self-employed	0,458	20,84480	0,03	0,13	0,15	0,00	2,21
Pupil/Student/Apprentice	0,450	21,22810	1,07	0,34	16,13	2,61	0,99
Pensioner	0,923	9,82906	1,19	0,45	2,43	3,39	1,88
TOTAL	8,998		17,04	8,76	23,23	10,97	13,93
MANAGER							
Does not manage others	5,201	0,92261	1,26	2,87	0,02	0,01	0,00
Manages 1-9	2,099	3,76316	1,30	3,30	0,00	2,42	2,77
Manages 10-49	0,884	10,31250	5,51	0,81	0,93	0,00	1,19
TOTAL	8,185		8,08	6,98	0,95	2,42	3,96
PUBLIC/PRIVATE							
Public, state	1,460	5,84865	0,04	5,62	1,84	0,09	0,50
Public, municipality/county	1,989	4,02778	0,33	8,67	0,15	1,87	1,64
Private	4,530	1,20732	0,09	9,95	0,64	2,93	0,05
TOTAL	7,979		0,46	24,24	2,63	4,90	2,18
VALUE OF CAR							
Does not own a car	0,552	17,10000	1,85	1,50	2,26	0,82	0,69
Value below kr 100.000	2,194	3,55755	0,86	2,57	0,24	0,34	0,22
Value kr 100.000-199.999	2,155	3,64103	0,29	0,03	1,69	0,41	0,36
Value kr 200.000-299.999	1,894	4,27917	0,07	0,48	0,13	0,36	0,37
Value kr 300.000-499.999	1,847	4,41453	1,58	1,32	0,52	0,23	0,69
Value above kr 500.000	0,766	12,06190	2,21	2,18	2,64	0,69	0,71
TOTAL	9,408		6,85	8,07	7,48	2,86	3,03
VALUE OF BOAT							
Does not own a boat	6,322	0,58177	1,57	0,44	0,00	6,66	0,19
Value below kr 100.000	1,760	4,68161	0,97	0,15	0,91	8,50	2,37
Value kr 100.000-199.999	0,418	22,90570	1,37	0,21	0,00	5,32	0,03
Value kr 200.000-299.999	0,292	33,24320	0,30	0,78	0,09	0,40	1,02
Value kr 300.000-499.999	0,324	29,90240	0,91	0,08	5,00	0,88	4,28
Value above kr 500.000	0,197	49,68000	1,07	0,23	0,01	0,11	0,07
TOTAL	9,313		6,18	1,89	6,01	21,86	7,95
VALUE OF SECOND HOME							
Does not own a second home	5,927	0,68708	1,77	1,14	0,15	8,01	0,13
Value below kr 500.000	0,631	14,83750	0,01	0,03	0,61	0,00	0,39
Value kr 500.000-999.999	0,663	14,08330	0,01	0,01	2,26	1,84	1,16
Value kr 1.000.000-1.499.999	0,513	18,49230	0,00	0,58	2,23	2,40	0,28
Value kr 1.500.000-1.999.999	0,450	21,22810	0,74	0,79	0,01	2,04	0,19
Value kr 2.000.000-2.999.999	0,560	16,84510	1,51	1,11	0,56	3,76	0,02
Value above kr 3.000.000	0,545	17,36230	5,83	0,53	2,50	4,72	1,63
TOTAL	9,290		9,87	4,19	8,31	22,77	3,81

| OCCUPATION OF FATHER							
Worker/Operator, u	1,444	5,92350	2,61	0,41	7,71	0,91	7,24
Worker/Operator, f	2,328	3,29492	1,02	1,63	0,12	1,02	6,06
CEO	0,939	9,64706	0,94	1,72	3,93	0,02	0,05
Employee, leading position	1,965	4,08835	3,12	0,28	2,13	0,42	1,74
Employee, other	0,773	11,92860	0,44	0,35	0,08	1,72	0,49
Self-employed	1,397	6,15819	0,30	0,05	0,32	3,07	0,28
TOTAL	8,848		8,41	4,42	14,29	7,15	15,87
EDUCATION OF FATHER							
Basic level	2,360	3,23746	1,94	0,97	11,13	1,94	5,47
High school	2,983	2,35185	0,35	2,18	0,22	0,27	6,80
University, short	2,573	2,88650	1,68	1,42	3,44	3,21	1,17
University, long	1,215	7,22727	2,81	3,91	2,23	1,06	1,56
TOTAL	9,132		6,78	8,48	17,02	6,49	14,99
EDUCATION OF RESPONDENT							
Basic level	0,521	18,19700	4,40	0,01	9,01	4,35	6,34
High school, humanities/health	0,671	13,90590	1,65	0,42	1,30	0,23	0,07
High school, mercantile	0,647	14,45120	1,60	1,84	0,42	0,41	0,12
High school, vocational	0,876	10,41440	2,17	3,00	0,37	0,05	10,68
High school, general	0,631	14,83750	1,78	0,87	0,09	0,07	1,53
Univ.short, humanities/health	1,736	4,75909	0,00	5,16	2,06	0,33	0,33
Univ.short, economy	0,773	11,92860	0,56	2,24	0,27	2,68	3,32
Univ.short, technical	0,939	9,64706	0,67	4,54	0,53	1,25	0,46
Univ.long, humanities/health	1,602	5,24138	2,87	8,13	1,14	3,32	1,52
Univ.long, economy/law	0,418	22,90570	2,27	0,01	0,02	0,27	0,28
Univ.long, technical	0,742	12,47870	2,98	0,11	0,05	1,39	0,06
TOTAL	9,558		20,96	26,31	15,25	14,35	24,72
EDUCATION OF BEST FRIEND							
Basic level	0,552	17,10000	3,07	0,27	0,37	0,73	3,01
High school	2,494	3,00949	5,49	2,77	3,42	1,55	2,55
University, short	3,512	1,84719	0,48	0,01	0,84	3,79	2,51
University, long	2,936	2,40591	6,33	3,61	0,20	0,16	1,50
TOTAL	9,495		15,37	6,65	4,82	6,23	9,57

APPENDIX 3: MCA – Coordinates of active categories

Label	Relative Weight (%)	Squared distance to origin	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	Axis 4	Axis 5
OCCUPATION							
Worker/Operator, f	0,474	20,11670	-1,34	-0,08	0,99	0,08	-0,24
Worker/Operator, f	2,368	3,22333	-0,32	0,45	-0,10	0,07	0,62
CEO	0,908	10,01740	0,90	-0,77	-0,18	-0,29	-0,25
Employee, leading position	1,626	5,15049	0,91	-0,46	-0,07	0,64	0,05
Employee, other	1,792	4,58150	0,10	0,24	-0,34	0,03	-0,42
Self-employed	0,458	20,84480	-0,13	-0,23	0,23	-0,01	0,84
Pupil/Student/Apprentice	0,450	21,22810	-0,72	0,38	2,40	-0,95	-0,57
Pensioner	0,923	9,82906	-0,53	-0,30	-0,65	-0,75	-0,55
MANAGER							
Does not manage others	5,201	0,92261	-0,23	0,32	0,02	0,01	0,01
Manages 1-9	2,099	3,76316	0,37	-0,54	0,02	0,42	0,44
Manages 10-49	0,884	10,31250	1,16	-0,42	-0,41	0,01	-0,44
PUBLIC/PRIVATE							
Public, state	1,460	5,84865	0,08	0,85	-0,45	0,10	-0,22
Public, municipality/county	1,989	4,02778	0,19	0,90	-0,11	-0,38	0,35
Private	4,530	1,20732	0,06	-0,64	0,15	0,32	0,04
VALUE OF CAR							
Does not own a car	0,552	17,10000	-0,85	0,71	0,81	0,48	-0,43
Value below kr 100.000	2,194	3,55755	-0,29	0,47	-0,13	0,16	0,12
Value kr 100.000-199.999	2,155	3,64103	-0,17	0,05	-0,35	0,17	-0,16
Value kr 200.000-299.999	1,894	4,27917	0,09	-0,22	0,11	-0,17	0,17
Value kr 300.000-499.999	1,847	4,41453	0,43	-0,37	-0,21	-0,14	0,23
Value above kr 500.000	0,766	12,06190	0,79	-0,73	0,74	-0,37	-0,37
VALUE OF BOAT							
Does not own a boat	6,322	0,58177	-0,23	0,11	0,00	0,40	-0,07
Value below kr 100.000	1,760	4,68161	0,35	-0,12	-0,29	-0,86	0,44
Value kr 100.000-199.999	0,418	22,90570	0,84	-0,31	-0,01	-1,40	0,10
Value kr 200.000-299.999	0,292	33,24320	0,47	-0,71	0,22	-0,46	0,71
Value kr 300.000-499.999	0,324	29,90240	0,78	-0,22	1,57	-0,65	-1,39
Value above kr 500.000	0,197	49,68000	1,08	-0,47	-0,08	0,29	-0,23
VALUE OF SECOND HOME							
Does not own a second home	5,927	0,68708	-0,25	0,19	0,06	0,46	-0,06
Value below kr 500.000	0,631	14,83750	0,06	-0,09	-0,39	0,01	0,30
Value kr 500.000-999.999	0,663	14,08330	0,06	-0,06	-0,74	-0,65	0,51
Value kr 1.000.000-1.499.999	0,513	18,49230	0,02	-0,46	-0,83	-0,85	0,28
Value kr 1.500.000-1.999.999	0,450	21,22810	0,59	-0,58	-0,06	-0,84	0,25
Value kr 2.000.000-2.999.999	0,560	16,84510	0,76	-0,61	0,40	-1,02	-0,07
Value above kr 3.000.000	0,545	17,36230	1,52	-0,43	0,86	-1,16	-0,66

OCCUPATION OF FATHER							
Worker/operator, u	1,444	5,92350	-0,62	-0,23	-0,92	-0,31	-0,86
Worker/operator, f	2,328	3,29492	-0,31	-0,36	-0,09	0,26	0,62
CEO	0,939	9,64706	0,47	0,59	0,82	-0,06	0,09
Employee, leading position	1,965	4,08835	0,59	0,16	0,42	0,18	-0,36
Employee, other	0,773	11,92860	0,35	0,29	-0,13	0,59	0,30
Self-employed	1,397	6,15819	-0,21	-0,08	-0,19	-0,58	0,17
EDUCATION OF FATHER							
Basic level	2,360	3,23746	-0,42	-0,28	-0,87	-0,36	-0,58
High school	2,983	2,35185	-0,16	-0,37	0,11	0,12	0,58
University, short	2,573	2,88650	0,38	0,32	0,46	0,44	-0,26
University, long	1,215	7,22727	0,71	0,78	0,54	-0,37	0,43
EDUCATION OF RESPONDENT							
Basic level	0,521	18,19700	-1,35	0,05	1,67	-1,14	-1,33
High school, humanities/health	0,671	13,90590	-0,73	0,34	0,56	-0,23	0,12
High school, mercantile	0,647	14,45120	-0,73	-0,73	-0,32	-0,31	-0,17
High school, vocational	0,876	10,41440	-0,73	-0,80	0,26	0,09	1,33
High school, general	0,631	14,83750	-0,78	-0,51	0,15	-0,13	0,60
Univ.short, humanities/health	1,736	4,75909	0,01	0,75	-0,44	0,17	-0,17
Univ.short, economy	0,773	11,92860	0,40	-0,74	0,24	0,73	-0,79
Univ.short, technical	0,939	9,64706	0,39	-0,95	-0,30	0,45	-0,27
Univ.long, humanities/health	1,602	5,24138	0,62	0,98	-0,34	-0,57	0,37
Univ.long, economy/law	0,418	22,90570	1,08	0,05	0,08	0,32	-0,31
Univ.long, technical	0,742	12,47870	0,93	-0,16	0,10	0,54	-0,11
EDUCATION OF BEST FRIEND							
Basic level	0,552	17,10000	-1,10	-0,30	-0,33	-0,45	-0,89
High school	2,494	3,00949	-0,69	-0,46	0,47	-0,31	0,39
University, short	3,512	1,84719	0,17	-0,02	-0,20	0,41	-0,32
University, long	2,936	2,40591	0,68	0,48	-0,10	-0,09	0,27

APPENDIX 4: List of interviewees

Pseudonym	Occupation	Age	Capital volume	Cultural capital	Economic capital
Andrea	Public sector consultant	Early 30s	+	+	-
Anna	Manager, oil company	Early 50s	+	-	+
August	Economist	Late 50s	+	+	-
Aurora	Pre-school assistant	Mid 30s	-	+	-
Daniel	Pre-school teacher	Late 50s	-	+	-
David	Technician	Mid 20s	-	-	+
Elias	Secondary school teacher	Early 30s	+	+	-
Elisabeth	Nurse	Late 20s	-	+	-
Ella	Shop-keeper	Mid 30s	-	-	+
Emil	Musician/social worker	Late 30s	-	+	-
Emma	Nurse	Early 60s	-	+	-
Eva	Secretary	Mid 40s	-	-	+
Freja	Head of cultural enterprise	Mid 40s	+	+	-
Georg	Banker	Late 40s	+	-	+
Helene	Medical doctor	Late 20s	+	+	-
Henrik	Economist	Early 60s	+	-	+
Johan	CEO	Mid 50s	+	-	+
Jon	Electrician	Mid 20s	-	-	+
Jonas	Head of cultural enterprise	Mid 30s	+	+	-
Julia	Artist/illustrator	Late 20s	-	+	-
Klara	Pre-school teacher	Late 30s	-	+	-
Kristian	Dentist	Late 30s	+	+	-
Lars	Security guard	Mid 20s	-	+	-
Lea	Medical doctor	Mid 30s	-	+	-
Lucas	Lawyer	Early 30s	+	-	+
Maria	Primary school teacher	Early 40s	-	+	-
Marianne	Manager, small firm	Late 40s	-	-	+
Marta	Manager, small firm	Mid 30s	+	-	+
Martin	Carpenter	Late 40s	-	+	-
Mikkel	Manager, oil company	Early 40s	+	-	+
Nora	Lawyer	Mid 30s	+	+	-
Oda	Manager, small firm	Late 30s	+	-	+
Oscar	Academic	Mid 30s	+	+	-
Oliver	Musician	Mid 30s	-	+	-
Olivia	Head of cultural enterprise	Late 40s	+	+	-
Patrick	Construction worker	Mid 40s	-	+	-
Peter	Cultural worker	Mid 30s	+	+	-
Pia	Lawyer	Late 40s	+	-	+
Philip	Secondary school teacher	Mid 30s	-	+	-
Robert	Electrician	Mid 20s	-	-	+
Sara	Journalist	Mid 40s	+	+	-
Sebastian	Politician	Late 30s	-	-	+
Sofia	Academic	Mid 60s	+	+	-
Theodor	Head of cultural enterprise	Mid 40s	+	+	-
Thomas	Journalist	Early 40s	+	+	-
Wilhelm	Manager, oil company	Early 40s	+	-	+
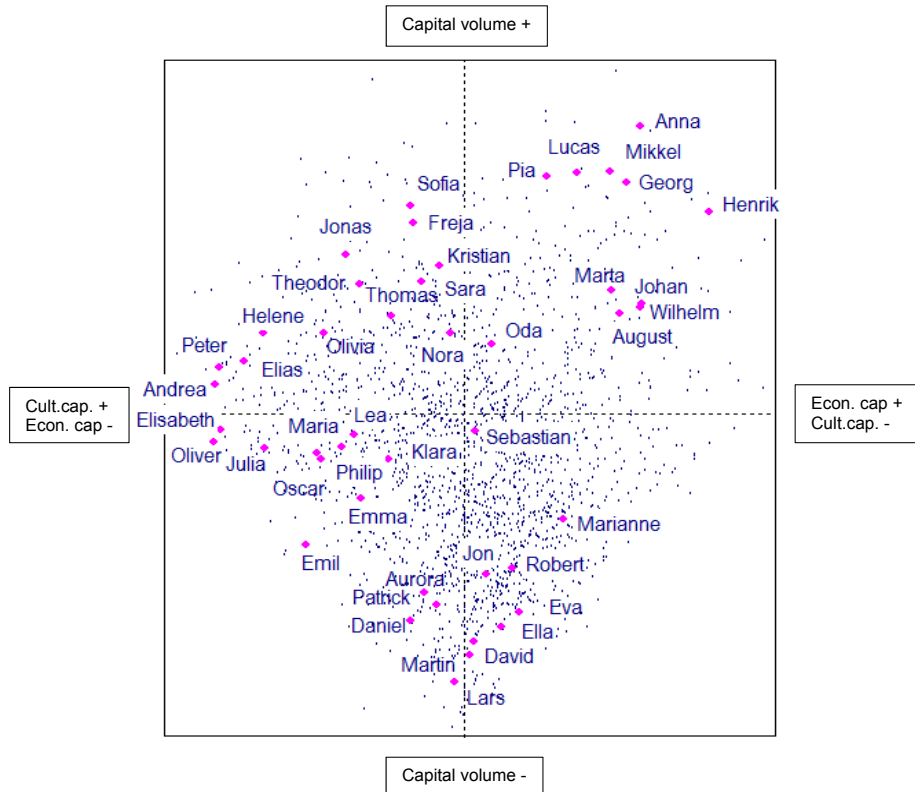
Projection of interviewees onto the cloud of individuals, fac.plane 1-2

APPENDIX 5: Interview schedule

How do you spend your spare-time? What do you like to do?
Are you a member of any clubs, organisations, associations or the likes?

What's your opinion on Stavanger's cultural life?
Are you satisfied with what Stavanger has to offer? What could be better?
Did you attend any events arranged by Stavanger2008? What did you (not) like?

What kind of music do you listen to?
Do you have any favourite artists?
Are there any types of music you don't like?
Do you attend concerts? What kinds? How often?
Are there any types of concerts you'd never attend?
Do you play any instruments yourself?

Do you go to the movies? How often?
Are there any particular films you are interested in?
Are there any types of films you'd never watch?
Do you like to watch TV? How often? What types of programmes?
Are there any types of programmes or channels you steer clear of?
Do you like comedy? What types?
Are there any comedy shows you disapprove of?
What is bad humour to you?

Do you listen to the radio? How often?
Are there any particular channels or programmes you prefer?
Are there any types of radio shows you dislike?

Do you like to read books? How often?
What types of books do you prefer?
Are there any types of books you'd never read?
Do you read newspapers? Which ones?
Are there any newspapers you'd never read?
Do you read other types of reading matters (magazines, etc.)?

Do you like plays?
Are there any particular types of plays you like?
Are there any types of plays you dislike?
Do you attend plays at Rogaland Teater? How often?

Do you like visual art? What kinds?
Are there any types of visual art you dislike?
Do you have pictures on your walls at home? What kinds?
Are there any types of pictures you wouldn't put on your walls?
Do you attend art exhibitions? How often?

Do you work out or exercise?
Are there types of sports or activities you'd never do?
Do you like to watch sports on TV?
Are there types of sports that don't interest you?

Can you describe what kind of clothes you like to wear?
Are there any types of clothes you'd never wear?
Where do you buy your clothes?
Are there any clothing stores you'd never go to buy clothes?
Would you say that you follow fashion? Why (not)?

Do you own a car? What type?
What is important to you when you buy a new car?
Are there any types of cars you'd never buy?

How would you describe your home?
Do you have particular preferences when you decorate your home?
Where do you buy furniture?
Are there places you'd never buy furniture?
What kind of home would you not feel comfortable living in?

What kind of food do you like?
Are there any types of food you dislike?
Do you like to cook? What sort of dishes do you like to make?
Where do you buy food? Are there any particular shops you like/dislike?
What do you prefer to drink?
Are there any types of beverages you never drink?

Do you eat out? How often?
Are there any particular restaurants or cafés you like here in Stavanger?
Are there any restaurants or cafés you'd never go to?
What kinds of people go there?
Do you go to bars? How often?
Are there particular bars you'd never go to?
What kinds of people go there?

Do you ever notice that your tastes and preferences are different from that of others?
Would you say that it is important to you that the people with whom you socialise have similar preferences and tastes as you?
Do you ever catch yourself thinking that other people have strange preferences or bad tastes? What is bad taste to you?
Have you ever felt uncomfortable for having different tastes than others?

Would you say that you like to live in Stavanger? What is good/bad about living here?

If you were to move, in what part of town would you like live?
Are there parts of town you'd never consider moving to?
How do you spend your holidays?
Are there any destinations you prefer going to?
Are there places you'd never go for holidays?

How do you spend your money after the bills are paid?
How much money would you say you spend each month?
Would you say that money is important to you?
Do you ever catch yourself thinking about how other people spend their money?
Do you ever experience others being opinionated about how you spend your money?

How would you compare your way of life to others in Stavanger? In what ways are you (dis)similar to others?
What types of people do you get along with? What qualities do you value in others?
What types of people don't you get along with? What is it about such people you don't like?
Do you have kids?
Are there any particular values you want to transfer to your children?
Are you interested in politics? Are there any political issues you feel more strongly about than others?
If it was Election Day tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
Are there any political parties you would never vote for?
Stavanger is often referred to as the Oil Capital of Norway. In your opinion, what is good/bad about the oil business in Stavanger?

Age?
Place of residence?
Original place of residence?
Line of work?
Occupational sector?
Educational level?
Educational type?
Mother's education and line of work?
Father's education and line of work?
Education of best friend?
Household income?
Value of home?
Value of second home?
Value of car?
Value of boat?
Number of books at home?
Frequency of theatre visits last year?

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