

Biographies of privilege

Spatiotemporal structures of upper-class formation

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Summary

This thesis offers a study of upper class formation in Norway, a country that is often described as a particularly egalitarian society. Drawing on the Bourdieusian notion of horizontal class divisions, it approaches the upper class as comprised of different fractions, defined by the relative weight of economic capital to cultural capital. Using an occupation-based class scheme, three fractions are identified: an economic fraction (e.g. proprietors, rentiers, chief executives and financial intermediaries); a cultural fraction (e.g. professors, architects, and cultural directors); and a ‘balanced fraction’ (e.g. elite professionals, politicians, and top-level bureaucrats). As well as offering original sociological insights into the social composition of the dominant class in Norway, it suggests novel research designs for studying class formation by combining statistical techniques in a manner that is unusual in class analysis.

The point of departure for the study is the central emphasis placed on biographical experiences for elucidating processes of group formation in sociological theory. The study devotes specific attention to contextualized accounts of class biographies in both time, space and according to the dynamics of class fractions. Class analysis often relies on temporal snapshots, disregards intra-class variation, and abstracts class reproduction away from the spatialized contexts in which much social life is played out. Notwithstanding the growing attention devoted to both space and class fractions in recent contributions, a key argument in the study is that these matters remain insufficiently linked to temporal dynamism and life course variation. Thematically, the articles deal with three biographical features that are anticipated to promote homogenized experiences along class divisions; in addition to the conventional interest in intra- and intergenerational class immobility, the study adds ‘contextual immobility’ as indicated by the degree to which one’s neighbourly environment is reproduced over time.

The dissertation consists of three articles that are prefaced by an introduction that clarifies the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. The methodology employed largely adheres to a ‘relational paradigm’ that focuses on assessing temporal dynamism (social sequence analysis) and topological patterns of

association (multiple correspondence analysis). In addition, segregation indices are employed to account for spatial inequalities. The research designs offer strategies that have hitherto been underexplored for the purposes of analysing class formation. In particular, the joint application of social sequence analysis and multiple correspondence analysis enables the ‘situating’ of class careers in a relational structure, thereby both easing the difficulties of sequence analysis in analysing the structural properties that stratify careers and helping introduce more dynamism into geometric data analysis.

The first article analyses contextual mobility by mapping different neighbourhood trajectories in the Oslo region. It follows three cohorts who left their parental home in 1989 and traces the annual level of affluence or poverty in their neighbourly surroundings over a 24-year period. The article reveals that about one-third experience contextual reproduction of dense poverty or dense affluence and that types of contextual mobility are linked to the parental home environment. The intragenerational reproduction of contextual affluence, however, is far more restricted in physical space, and the affluent are more segregated and isolated over the life course than the poor. The main implication is that the affluent partake in closure strategies of ‘spatial withdrawal’ over the life course that add to and intensify class privilege.

The second article deals with intragenerational class mobility and maps different pathways into the three upper-class fractions. By analysing the 21 birth cohorts who became affiliated with one of these fractions at least once in a ten-year period in adulthood, it uncovers how class careers are patterned by vertical mobility – differentiating between long-range mobility as well as stable affiliations at the top – and horizontal mobility as evidenced by limited mobility between the class fractions.

The last article addresses the key issue of the association between class origins and class destinations within the Norwegian upper class. It assesses the main lines of divisions in the ‘inherited’ capitals pertaining to kinship ties. The origins of the upper class are divided firstly along a *capital volume* dimension that differentiates ‘the newcomers’ of modest origins from ‘the established’ of resourceful origins. Secondly, a differentiation along *capital composition* separates privileged origins in the economic domain from origins in other class fractions. The relationship between class origins and class destinations is then analysed by linking ‘destination careers’ – which are constructed in a similar manner as in Article II – to the ‘origin space’. This procedure

suggests that ‘the newcomers’ are more likely to experience fragile and discontinuous careers or biographically late arrival to the upper class. ‘The established’, on the other hand, seem more likely to experience stable affiliations at the top. However, the established seem internally divided along the dimension of capital composition and their stable affiliation to the upper class seems patterned by origins in specific class fractions. This suggests the existence of multiple fraction-specific cores in the Norwegian upper class that are patterned by a lifelong accumulation of specific forms of capital.

Table of contents

	Acknowledgements	3
	Summary	5
1	Introduction	11
2	Mobility and class formation.....	21
	Class formation: from class consciousness to class awareness.....	22
	The persistency of class inequalities.....	26
	John Goldthorpe: reproduction through strategic calculations	27
	Pierre Bourdieu: reproduction through embodied dispositions	28
	Outline of the theory chapters.....	33
3	A matter of time: class formation as process.....	35
	Theoretical emphasis on temporal unfolding	36
	Class interests and class experiences	36
	The temporal underpinnings of habitus	39
	From snapshots to sequences.....	41
	The limits of temporal snapshots.....	42
	Occupational maturity and the timing of class	43
	Sequences of class events	45
4	Context, interaction and the spatialization of class	51
	Social interaction and differential association	52
	The spatialization of class.....	56
	Spatial exclusion and spatial withdrawal	56
	The urban sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.....	59
	Putting class in its place.....	65
5	Class: a multidimensional structure	69
	Debates on class, status and forms of capital	70
	Putting capital composition to the test.....	72
	Structures of class and forms of capital in Norway.....	74
	Class mobility in Norway	75
	Recent studies of upper-class fractions	78
	Conceptualizing upper-class fractions	84
6	Methodology and research strategies.....	91

Relational sociology.....	93
From mode of thought to empirical inquiry.....	95
Multiple correspondence analysis: the structure of relations.....	97
Social sequence analysis: the structure of time	101
Segregation and spatialized tools of measurement	108
Zooming in on the top: feasibility and data.....	109
7 Summary of articles.....	113
Enduring contexts: Segregation by affluence throughout the life course ..	113
Upper-class trajectories: capital-specific pathways to power	115
Mobility closure in the upper class: assessing time and forms of capital...	117
8 Avenues for future research.....	121
References.....	125

- Article I** Enduring contexts: segregation by affluence throughout the life course
Article II Upper-class trajectories: capital-specific pathways to power
Article III Mobility closure in the upper class: assessing time and forms of capital

1 Introduction¹

With the advent of the widespread concentration of affluence in multiple societies, the call for a resurrection of studies into upper-class formation and the affinities among the privileged is proclaimed in sociological research (Korsnes et al. 2017, Savage and Williams 2008b). While the enthusiasm for the impressive work of Piketty and colleagues has helped establish an apparent consensus with regard to the nature of rising economic inequality (Atkinson and Piketty 2010, Piketty 2014), it is the social characteristics and political behaviour on the part of the wealthy that have concerned social movements. The protestors engaged in *Occupy Wall Street*, for instance, pointed to a politically active, socially cohesive “one percent” community whose existence is socially definable, rather than existing as a mere aggregate of advantaged individuals. However, whether or not individuals who hold dominant positions are rightfully depicted as “communal” is scarcely researched. Indeed, understanding the social characteristics at the apex of the social structure is argued by Savage (2014a:603) to constitute “Piketty’s challenge for sociology” and, indeed, “the fundamental sociological question of our age.”

This study tackles this challenge head-on by approaching the rising disparity between the rich and the poor through the prism of social class. Class analysis, however, seems to struggle to adequately account for three interrelated dimensions of social

¹ In writing the introductory chapters of this dissertation, I have benefited from comments from Marianne Nordli Hansen, Johs. Hjellbrekke, Kobe De Keere, Jørn Ljunggren and Thea B. Strømme. An early draft was presented at a Ph.D. seminar at the University of Oslo and I am grateful for the constructive feedback received there. In particular, I thank Mette Andersson, Kristian Stokke and Anne Bitsch for thorough readings.

divisions, namely, 1) time, 2) space, and 3) intra-class divisions flowing from different forms of capital. While important efforts have facilitated an increasing awareness of class fractional dynamics (e.g., Atkinson 2017a, Flemmen, Jarness and Rosenlund 2017) or the spatialized processes of class formation (e.g., Burrows, Webber and Atkinson 2017, Parker, Uprichard and Burrows 2007), these matters seem insufficiently linked to the importance of time. Pointing to the centrality of temporally constituted *biographies* for class analysis, I suggest research designs that allow more contextualized accounts of upper-class dynamics. While often proclaimed to be a comparatively “open” society (e.g., Breen 2004), I demonstrate that advantages are systematically reproduced over the life course in Norway; not only are there capital-specific and temporal differences in the *class trajectories* within the upper class, but privileged trajectories also have clear spatial manifestations. This phenomenon taps into structured probabilities of social encounters, peoples’ frame of reference, and geographical and “localized” differences in how the social (and physical) world is lived and experienced.

At the most general level, this dissertation follows Giddens’ (1981:105) appeal to “focus upon *the modes in which* ‘economic’ relationships become translated into ‘non-economic’ social structures” and the processes by which classes become formed as socially identifiable groups. The crux of class analysis is the study of class mobility, above all read as an indication of class formation processes whenever closure features work-life mobility and intergenerational mobility patterns. This study follows this conventional interest but adds “contextual mobility” – understood as one’s neighbourly environment over time – to intra- and intergenerational mobility patterns.² I seek to contextualize class biographies *quantitatively* by exploiting the population-wide registry data of full Norwegian birth cohorts. Fortunately, not only are these data rich in the sense that they contain the complete population – circumventing the need to draw inferences from a sample to a population and enabling the detection of the most privileged in society – but they also offer unique insights into temporal processes as they tend to follow individuals over time. Thus, over the course of three articles, this study offers a quantitative mapping of upper-class biographies, serving to contextualize classed inequalities in both time and social and physical space. With quantitative

² I follow Sharkey’s (2008) notion of neighbourhood contexts and their related importance for mobility processes, which should not be conflated with Strauss’ (1971) notion of “mobility contexts,” which argues for the need for grounded theory as a counterweight to quantitative mobility tables.

techniques that serve an exploratory purpose (Savage 2009) – in the sense that they enable discovering patterns in complex relationships – the research designs offer novel combinations of statistical techniques such as the combination of sequence analysis (SA) (structures of temporal order, timing and duration) with multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) (structures of social relations) or segregation indices (degrees of spatial evenness and spatial exposure).

The theoretical backdrop to this study rests on the general idea that homogeneity in experiences – whether conceptualized as embodied through the Bourdieusian notion of habitus (Bourdieu 1990a) or approached in the Goldthorpeian framework of demographic identity-making (Goldthorpe 1984, Goldthorpe 1987) – points to biographical elements of class formation. The difference in experiences serves to further stratify our social relations, as expressed in our patterns of differential associations, tastes and distastes, our cognitive schemes of perception and appreciation, and our inclination to cohere with “someone like me.” Thus, affinities in biographical experiences constitute an important facilitator of group formation processes. Taking the Norwegian dominant class – and the fractional divisions herein – as a point of departure, this dissertation endeavours to tackle one overarching research question: *How are the biographies of the upper class in Norway structured over the life course?*

Over the course of three articles, I approach this topic by raising more specific questions regarding contextual mobility, intragenerational mobility, and intergenerational mobility.

Table 1: Specific research questions

Contextual mobility	Intragenerational mobility	Intergenerational mobility
1. How are individual residential trajectories structured over the life course?	1. In what ways are careers in the upper class characterized by <i>stability</i> ?	1. How is inherited capital distributed within the upper class?
2. Do different types of neighbourhood careers evolve in close proximity or at more distant sites?	2. What level of <i>circulation</i> between the different upper-class fractions structures careers?	2. In which ways are the divisions in inherited capital linked to different upper-class careers?

3. Are types of residential pathways different in terms of geographical mobility?

3. Are there differences in careers at different stages of the life course?

4. How segregated are the neighbourhood careers during the life course?

A central aim in this study is to stress the importance of three core elements that have occasionally served as blind spots in studies of class but that nevertheless aid in conceptual and empirical clarity:³ first, the reliance on temporal unfolding; second, a need for contextualizing social processes in physical space; and third, an acknowledgement of the class structure in a multidimensional fashion pertaining to multiple forms of capital.

First, I seek to tackle a common mismatch between the theoretical emphasis on class trajectories and the methodological analysis of snapshots. Temporality and class trajectories are widely acknowledged in class analysis, whether through Wright's emphasis on class interests (Wright 1985), Goldthorpe's notion of demographic identity-making (Goldthorpe 1987) or Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital accumulation and capital conversion (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1996a). Pointing back to Aage Sørensen's (1986a) critique of the mobility table and its reliance on two snapshots in time, I draw on Andrew Abbott's (2001, 2016) emphasis on temporal unfolding and his proposal of sequence analysis (SA) as a *new method for old ideas* (Abbott 1995). SA enables finding patterns in time-varying data by taking the whole sequence into account, rather than having to rely on one temporal feature, such as duration or a specific transition. SA allows accounting for temporal unfolding in terms of temporal order, duration and timing. All three articles in this study employ SA, but I seek to combine this methodology with other techniques. In the first article, a sequence typology is combined with geographical mapping and segregation indices to embed sequences in physical space. In the third article, I propose to tackle Abbott's (2001:123)

³ It is important to note that I do not suggest that these elements constitute an exhaustive list of what should be included when studying upper class formation. Of obvious importance, for instance, are the *gendered* dimensions of class inequality. Due to space considerations, I have not delved into the interlinkage between class and gender, although I fully recognize the importance of this topic. I hope that my contribution here will encourage further work that aims to unpack how time, space, and forms of capital intersect with gender in facilitating *gendered* biographies of privilege.

discontent over the inability of SA to embed sequence careers in the social structure by combining SA with MCA.

Second, my aim is also to contextualize pathways in physical space by adhering to an emergent literature on *the spatialization of class* (e.g., Atkinson 2006, Burrows, Webber and Atkinson 2017, Dowling 2009, Parker, Uprichard and Burrows 2007, Savage 1996, Savage 2010b). When people from similar backgrounds live in homogeneous neighbourhoods throughout the life course, they may develop ties to their neighbours and a shared sense of belonging and understanding, which, in turn, may contribute to the formation of social classes (Crossley 2013, Dowling 2009, Savage 1996:141). In addition, residential areas may serve as sites for reconverting and accumulating resources (Bourdieu 1999a, Sharkey and Faber 2014, van Ham et al. 2012), thus serving to intensify existing class inequalities. However, the notion of one's classed experiences is too often limited to the familial environment and therefore sidesteps investigating the structuring of one's social surroundings over time. Studies that emphasize the centrality of space for the study of class, however, often fail to acknowledge temporality. Hence, a second aim of this dissertation is to emphasize how mobility closure in the class structure may be reinforced due to durable exposure to homogeneous surroundings over time and how the spatial may assist in facilitating cohesion and affinities along class divisions. Methodologically, the combination of an SA of individuals' place types and spatial tools such as maps and segregation indices helps tap into how social and physical space are interlinked over time.

Finally, I answer recent calls to reorient class analysis towards the upper segments of the class structure and, in particular, the social divisions therein by separating cultural capital from economic capital (Khan 2012, Korsnes et al. 2017, Savage and Williams 2008a). Recent attempts to redraw the class map have pointed to the increasing polarization of the class structure (Savage 2015, Savage et al. 2015a, Savage et al. 2015b), yet fractional divisions within the upper echelons following the logic of cultural and economic capital are scarcely highlighted in the conventional literature on class. In the Bourdieusian spatial metaphor of the class structure, however, both horizontal and vertical divisions following different forms and volumes of capital are deemed to be important in struggles for societal domination (Bourdieu 1996a). Different forms of capital may serve as specific "market capacities," to borrow

Giddens' (1981) term, which enable both the accumulation of further capital and the conversion of one form of capital into another (Flemmen 2013a, Flemmen 2013b). Thus, Bourdieu's multiple forms of capital help in studying different strategies for capital accumulation and mobility closure. The upper segments of the class structure are depicted as constituting "a field of power" wherein different sources of power and different dispositions facilitate antagonisms and struggles among the privileged (Bourdieu 1996a, Wacquant 1993a). In this study, I operationalize the class structure with a class scheme that acknowledges such fractions among the upper class and therefore enables analysing whether mobility barriers between such divisions persist (Hansen, Flemmen and Andersen 2009). Drawing on recent studies of upper-class fractions in Norway (e.g., Flemmen et al. 2017), I contribute to this body of research by adding the third dimension of social space – trajectory – to the conceptual insistence on the two dimensions of capital volume and capital composition. I suggest that combining MCA and SA allows more processual attention to the study of relational topographies.

The empirical analyses of this dissertation consist of three sole-authored articles:

1. Enduring contexts: segregation by affluence throughout the life course

Published in *The Sociological Review* 2018, 66(3): 645–64.

2. Upper-class trajectories: capital-specific pathways to power

Published in *Socio-Economic Review's* special issue "Elites, economy and society: New approaches and findings" 2018, 16(2): 341–64.

3. Mobility closure in the upper class: assessing time and forms of capital

Published in *British Journal of Sociology* 2018, doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12362

The main findings of this dissertation are two-fold. On the one hand, I contribute with findings regarding class mobility; on the other hand, I uncover important aspects of spatial inequalities. First, although previous studies have highlighted how the Norwegian upper class is differentiated by "the newcomers" and "the established" in

terms of familial origin (Flemmen 2012, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2003, Hjellbrekke et al. 2007), I contribute to this research by showing that this opposition relates statistically to differences in work-life careers in terms of stability and class fractional attachment. Although, from a comparative perspective, Norway might be a country that is characterized by more “open” opportunity structures, relatively speaking (see e.g., Breen 2004), this study suggests that merely measuring the likelihood of accessing the top brackets of the societal hierarchy overshadows the significant variations among those who reach the top. Importantly, this study suggests a disadvantage faced by individuals of modest origins in their relative tendency towards experiencing fragile careers or a biographically late arrival in the upper class. Statistically, the recruitment patterns of “the newcomers” are more likely to feature work-life experience on the lower rungs of social space, and they suggestively include strategies such as “working up the ladder” and holding limited tenure positions as senior officials in political and interest organizations or simply denote failed attempts to secure prolonged profits in the economic domain. The latter finding dovetails with a recent study of the unstable careers of newcomers to the American economic elite (Korom, Lutter and Beckert 2017), and I suggest that the unstable element of the newcomers’ trajectories points to future studies on the phenomenon of a “class ceiling” (Friedman, Laurison and Miles 2015, Laurison and Friedman 2016). Whereas the notion of a “class ceiling” denotes the relative ability of individuals hailing from privileged families to reap economic rewards from service class affiliations in comparison to their less privileged peers, I suggest that this line of work should also focus on the potential *temporal logics* of class ceiling mechanisms. Although studies of class ceilings importantly demonstrate that merely attaining a dominant class position downplays important variations in the returns to such positions, this study suggests that adding a temporal element to economic success also points to important life-course patterns that stratify “the established” from “the newcomers.”

This dissertation also shows that “the established” – i.e., individuals hailing from capital-rich origins – also seem internally divided, suggestively cementing what Goldthorpe (1984, 1987), with reference to Sorokin, dubbed “class cores,” which reflect both a “lifetime” (as highlighted in *Upper-class trajectories (article II)*) and a “hereditary” affiliation with a class (as shown in *Mobility closure (article III)*). Not only are “the established” more likely to experience stable affiliations with the upper class in

their work-life careers, but there is also a statistical relationship between hailing from families rich in economic capital and experiencing stable affiliations with the economic fraction of the upper class and vice versa with the fractions rich in cultural capital or of a more balanced capital holding. Thus, rather than pointing to one integrated core, the “the hereditary” and “the lifetime” affiliations suggest relatively durable mobility barriers along the lines of class fractions and thus the cementation of capital-specific class cores. This phenomenon, in turn, has important implications for the likelihood that such cores will form as social groups, given their level of homogeneity over the life course.

The notion of capital-specific cores also suggests that capital composition – i.e., the relative weight of cultural capital to economic capital – structures Norwegian mobility patterns. This adds to nuance the conceptions of a unified upper class or sociological approaches to elites that fail to distinguish between internal divisions along forms of economic and cultural capital. This is the case, for instance, in the uniform category of an “elite class” derived from a latent class analysis of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) (Savage et al. 2015a, Savage et al. 2015b, Savage et al. 2013). Moreover, the temporal variation unveiled in mature class careers also challenges research designs that rely on temporal snapshots, for instance, based on assumptions about “occupational maturity” (Goldthorpe 1987:70–72). Careers that feature fragility/late arrival versus stable attachment point to important divisions within the upper-class trajectories. In summary, then, the substantive finding of the divisions between “the newcomers” and “the established” suggests that including temporal attachment to class and approaching class as a multidimensional phenomenon along forms of capital are important for understanding how privilege is reproduced and maintained within and across generations.

The second key finding of this dissertation concerns the importance of spatial manifestations of concentrated affluence. Studying the temporal patterns of urban inequality, I unveil how the affluent are highly secluded and how they suggestively partake in strategies of spatial withdrawal over the life course. Rather than measuring how segregated the urban space is at one point in time, I demonstrate how the social surroundings wherein people live are temporally structured, starting from when they leave their parental home in their late teenage years and onwards in a 24-year period. In

contrast to a scholarly assumption of the spatial fixity or “entrapment” of the urban poor (e.g., Bourdieu 1999a, Sharkey 2013), I demonstrate how it is the truly affluent – rather than the truly disadvantaged, to paraphrase Wilson (1987) – who are the most spatially isolated over time. I draw on the notion of *spatial withdrawal* (Atkinson 2006) and argue that the patterns of affluent seclusion in Oslo may be enabled by a dual process of closure: first, through severe deregulation of the housing market (Brevik 2001, Wessel 2016) and, second, through classed sentiments of belonging and thus symbolic boundaries that signify classed residency (Galster and Turner 2017, Jarness 2013, Jarness 2017b, Rosenlund 2009, Rosenlund 2017). I thus contribute to the segregation literature by empirically demonstrating a need for paying attention to *temporal* manifestations of spatial affluence alongside those of poverty, which in turn, emphasizes spatial withdrawal alongside spatial exclusion. In addition, I contribute to the recent literature on *the spatialization of class* by highlighting how the mechanisms for understanding the ways in which the spatial serves to intensify class inequality are entwined with temporal processes.

This introductory part of the dissertation consists of eight chapters. Chapters 2–5 deal with theoretical and conceptual issues. First, I offer a brief summary of the general literature on class mobility, aiming to demonstrate that processes of class formation do not necessitate class consciousness and that sociologists have increasingly shifted attention to how class divisions become more “biographical” in advanced societies. I also sketch two opposing frameworks for explaining the persistency of class immobility in the works of Goldthorpe and Bourdieu. Here, I give particular weight to the latter, as I predominantly rely on the conceptual approach of Bourdieu in the three articles. The next three chapters also deal with conceptual and theoretical matters, emphasizing time (chapter 3), space (chapter 4) and forms of capital (chapter 5). The aim of those chapters is to situate my contribution in these more specialized debates and to highlight how I fill existing knowledge gaps. Chapter 5 also serves to present the Norwegian case and justifies studying upper-class fractions in what is often perceived to be an egalitarian society. Chapter 6 elaborates the methodological point of departure by summarizing the key ideas of “relational sociology” and by discussing the three statistical tools employed: MCA, SA and segregation indices. Chapter 7 offers a summary of the three articles, followed by a discussion of avenues for future research in chapter 8. After the introduction, the three articles are attached.

2 Mobility and class formation

This chapter aims to briefly summarize some general developments in the literature on class formation and is organized in two parts. First, I sketch how the field has gradually moved away from an interest in classes as mobilized political groupings to more biographical accounts of how class immobility facilitates the homogenization of experiences that help shape social formations without explicit class consciousness. This sketch serves to justify the continued relevance of studying class, even in societies where people do not actively identify with class, and it points to the importance of mapping *classed biographies*. In particular, it serves to justify the importance of studying upper-class biographies in an “egalitarian” country such as Norway, which is predominantly perceived to be “elite-less” by its inhabitants and where explicit articulations of an upper class are comparatively uncommon (Hjellbrekke, Jarness and Korsnes 2014).

Second, I turn to key theories that help explain the mechanisms behind class immobility. As this dissertation primarily draws on the conceptual apparatus of Bourdieu, I offer a summary of the key properties of his approach to class dominance. I do so by contrasting his approach with that of Goldthorpe and by emphasizing their divergent definitions of class resources and theories of action. This chapter thus lays the groundwork for more specialized discussions regarding the importance of time (chapter 3), space (chapter 4), and forms of capital (chapter 5).

Class formation: from class consciousness to class awareness

Social mobility is in many ways the quintessential object of study in stratification research. The analysis of *class* mobility, however, was resurrected from its original Weberian and Marxian roots in response to the inclination to study mobility as the attainment of socio-economic status (Goldthorpe 1984). Studies of occupational status attainment (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967) centred on analysing the extent to which occupational status was patterned by individuals' attributes – such as educational qualifications – in addition to individuals' origins, signifying a difference between “achieved” and “ascribed” attributes for status attainment. Dissatisfaction with the conceptual and analytical aspects of this tradition – such as the relative neglect of a relational occupational structure due to a continuous notion of “status” and overly ideological notions of society as “open” (Goldthorpe 1984, Goldthorpe 1987) – facilitated a reorientation towards analysing mobility in the context of the class structure, particularly among European scholars. This reorientation, Goldthorpe (1984) argues, marked a turn towards emphasizing the implications of the mobility process for *class formation* and for the potential of *class-based collective action* more in line with the scholarly roots of the Weberian and Marxian framework.

Although Marx famously never articulated any formalized account of class, the Marxian roots of class analysis can hardly be understated. Emphasis on class formation in Marx' writings has often been linked to the idea that the inherent drive for increased profits characterizing the capitalist organization of the economy would facilitate increased polarization between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, with the end result of a class-conscious and revolutionary working class capable of abolishing capitalism and oppression. Hence, key to the Marxian tradition is the transformation of a “class-in-itself” into a conscious, collective force, and thus a “class-for-itself” (Scott 1996:73–75).

Against the backdrop of the class structure–class consciousness–class action formula often interpreted to be the Marxian prediction for revolution, many scholars have rejected the suggested conditions in which “objective” class positions may give rise to subjective class consciousness. To Weber, class structures objective life chances through the market and economic activities, but does not *necessarily* give rise to

mobilized political agitation, although it may form the basis for it.⁴ The Weberian distinction between *class situation* and *social class* formation points to the ways in which “objective” class situations may become the basis for which groups are socially established primarily through patterns of class immobility. For Weber, a social class “makes up the totality of those class situations within which individual and generational mobility is easy and typical.” Thus, given the variations in mobility patterns “the unity of a social class is highly variable” (Weber 1978:302). The contingent relationship between similar class situations and socially existing social classes, depending on mobility closure, has been argued to be somewhat neglected in the Marxian tenet of the inevitability of a revolutionary proletariat under the conditions of capitalism (Giddens 1981:98, Scott 1996:68–69).⁵ However, both neo-Marxian and neo-Weberian scholars have engaged extensively with the mapping of class immobility, partly out of considerations for social class formation.⁶

From the 1970s onwards, a vast body of research set out to map patterns of mobility in the context of a *class structure*, whether operationalized in its Marxian (e.g., Wright 1985) or Weberian rendition (e.g., Goldthorpe 1987, Goldthorpe et al. 1969).⁷ Additionally, the two dominant class schema of the Weberian Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) scheme and the Marxian Wright scheme were systematically put to the test (e.g., Marshall et al. 1988), including in Norway (Gooderham and Ringdal 1995). Large international comparative studies of class mobility were carried out with firm conclusions about how *class counts* (Wright 1997), and the relative stability of intra- and intergenerational reproduction of class over time was unveiled (Erikson and

⁴ As noted by Scott (1996:39), for Weber, social classes in themselves were not deemed capable of political action. This capability, Weber maintains, requires *parties* such as labour unions or political parties that represent and partake in political conflict on behalf of the interests of a social class.

⁵ At the least, this statement seems to hold true at the more abstract level of analysis, although Marx, for instance, pointed to the potential preventive influence of class mobility (“the constant flux”) on the formation of class consciousness in his concrete analysis of American wage labourers. Goldthorpe (1984) thus argues that this critique applies primarily to the later structural Marxists rather than to Marx himself.

⁶ There appear to be some disagreements about whether the patterning of mobility closure should be interpreted as a *determinant of class boundaries* in itself or whether it simply denotes tendencies towards group formation based on different situations in a class structure (see, e.g., Giddens 1981, Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992 footnote 8, Scott 1996).

⁷ See Hout and DiPrete (2006) for a review of the surge of studies on mobility within the RC28 research community.

Goldthorpe 1992).⁸ With the development of log-linear modelling that enabled accounting for cross-generational changes in class structures (i.e., discrepancies in the margins of the mobility table), a distinction between absolute and relative rates of mobility became customary. Originally, the relative rates of fluidity (accounting for structural change) were argued to point to tendencies towards societal “openness,” whereas the absolute rates of mobility were considered the most important for processes of class formation, given that it is the absolute rates that indicate the level of homogeneity characterizing different classes (Goldthorpe 1987:29,46).

Homogeneity of experiences is widely held as the key mechanism for facilitating social groups based on intra- and intergenerational mobility closure (Giddens 1981, Goldthorpe 1982, Goldthorpe 1987). For Giddens (1981:107–11), closure in class mobility denotes *mediate class structuration* and should be viewed as the most important condition for class structuration in a society. In addition, he emphasizes *proximate class structuration*, which includes divisions flowing from the degrees of authority, the division of labour and what he dubs “distributive groupings.” The latter include homogeneity in consumption patterns and closure in physical space through neighbourhood segregation and community patterns. Goldthorpe’s work on class formation has primarily focused on mobility closure – i.e., *mediate* class structuration – and a key premise of his work has been that the more a class consists of individuals of different work-life trajectories and class origins, the less likely it is to be formed as a social group. On the other hand, the greater the extent to which a class consists of individuals with a homogenous basis of experience, the more it is likely to be integrated socially. Goldthorpe has also suggested that heterogeneity within a class in terms of mobility patterns may foster the cementation of a “core” within a class alongside more unstable and mobile class affiliations:

“...class formation is threatened where the rate and pattern of mobility in a society is such as to prevent the emergence or the continuation of what might be termed ‘class cores’: that is, collectivities representing, as Sorkin (1927) put it, a ‘relatively stable and permanent’ component among those holding similar class positions at any one point in time, as distinct from the component that is ‘permanently changing’. Class formation, in other words, is seen as requiring

⁸ Later large-scale studies on comparative trends of social mobility in Europe suggested *increased* rather than stable trends of social fluidity in most countries under study (including Norway) (Breen 2004, Ringdal 2004). However, in the Norwegian case, both the *enduring* significance (Hansen 1995) and the withering away of class inequality (Colbjørnsen et al. 1987) have been emphasized, as noted in chapter 5.

that classes should possess some degree of demographic identity, following from the association that exists over time between individuals and families and particular class positions, rather than being no more than shifting and insubstantial aggregates” (Goldthorpe 1984:19).

The concept of class cores points to a dynamic in which a class may consist of both mobility closure (i.e., both a “hereditary” and a “lifetime” affiliation (Goldthorpe 1984:37) and thus a homogeneous core, as well as trajectories that are more fluctuating and long-ranging.

The assumption that widespread immobility would “mechanistically” translate into a class-for-itself as a revolutionary societal force is largely rejected in these studies of class mobility. Goldthorpe, for instance, views immobility in the class structure as crucial for the facilitation of a “demographic identity” that is “primary” for class formation processes. Thus, demographic class formation facilitates “the potential for further development,” depending on other factors such as other forms of social divisions, the relative strength of unions, wartime and societal conflicts, and the presence of political leadership. Hence, studying the level of mobility closure in a society may function as a first step in assessing the likelihood that classes become the basis for collective action but do not translate into an immediate political class-conscious force (Goldthorpe 1984:19, 37–38). Indeed, the contingent relationship between class reproduction and class identification seems thoroughly rethought in later works. As noted by Giddens (1995), rather than attenuating, class relations may become even more important when explicit class affiliations are not prevalent:

“...with the stripping away of many forms of traditional solidarity, including class solidarities, the labour market assumes in some ways a greater role in the lives of most individuals than before. Class relations become more ‘biographical’, but nonetheless remain structured by the imperatives of capitalist production” (Giddens 1995:xvi).

Pointing to a distinction between class consciousness and class awareness, Giddens argues that the latter may perfectly well entail a “*denial of the existence or reality of classes*” (Giddens 1981:111–17). Hence, individuals may cohere and recognize intra-class affinities in outlooks and lifestyles (class awareness) without being particularly conscious about the fact that they share equivalent market capacities and face similar life chances. Indeed, practices of dis-identification may even be read as a

response to hegemonic discourses of working-class stigmatization (Skeggs 1997) and thus as an expression of the salience of class domination.

Explicit class consciousness also seems hard to observe empirically. Rather than articulating strong class identification, the dominated working class seems more inclined to downplay its disadvantage and emphasize its “ordinariness” (Devine 1992, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2001, Skilbrei 2005) and to actively “dis-identify” with class (Skeggs 1997). Such, practices of dis-identification, however, do not imply that class is not part and parcel of generating *classed practices* such as differences in friendship, marriage and acquaintance patterns (Bottero and Prandy 2003, Prandy 1999), lifestyle and taste variations (Atkinson 2017a, Flemmen, Jarness and Rosenlund 2017) or even divisions in political position-takings (De Keere 2017, Flemmen and Haakestad 2017, Harrits et al. 2010). Although class may not seem to be articulated in terms of explicit consciousness and collective action, it nonetheless “exist[s] at the morphological level of demographic clustering and unequal life chances” (Scott 2001:140) and serves to stratify our social relations. As discussed next, the misrecognized aspect of class affinities due to embodied inclinations for association and coherence is key to the Bourdieusian understanding of how class domination is played out and maintained in society.

The persistency of class inequalities

As a burgeoning field, mobility research has become increasingly characterized by methodological innovations and technical considerations. In response to this technical focus, multiple scholars have called for more attention to conceptual innovations and *explanations* of the prima face object of study: the stability of class relations over time (Devine 1998, Goldthorpe 2000a, Pahl 1993, Savage 1997). It is widely held that class reproduction in contemporary societies is often mediated through the educational system. There seem to be cross-country commonalities in such mediation, despite the societal differences in educational systems. Norway, for instance, has no tuition fees in accessing higher education and provides generous opportunities for student loans; however, vast inequalities are evident. Class origins seem to persistently influence educational choices (Hansen 2005, Mastekaasa 2006, Strømme and Hansen 2017), educational performance (Andersen and Hansen 2012, Hansen and

Mastekaasa 2006) and the economic and labour market returns to education (Flemmen 2009, Hansen 2001, Mastekaasa 2011). Cross-country similarities in school-mediated modes of reproduction notwithstanding, different national contexts are also argued to affect the family-school nexus in transmitting class privilege from one generation to the next (Hartmann 2000). For instance, Mastekaasa (2004) has argued that rather than being sorted into elite educational institutions, the Norwegian educational system mediates class advantage through sorting into elite fields of study. Thus, rather than being the vehicle of “meritocracy”, the educational system seems key in facilitating class reproduction through class-based educational choices, achievements and rewards. However, disagreement about the theoretical rationale for class reproduction – whether mediated through education or evident in a more direct inheritance of class privilege – characterizes the scholarly field to date.

Under the acronym of CARs (Capitals, Assets, Resources), Savage, Warde and Devine (2005) point to how class analysts from the 1980s onwards shifted attention away from macro-processes such as the division of labour in capitalist economies to “micro”-level analysis of how class privilege can be transferred over time by emphasizing different forms of assets (Savage et al. 1992, Wright 1985), capitals (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1986) and resources (Goldthorpe 2000a, Goldthorpe and Jackson 2008). However, there appears to be little theoretical consensus regarding the mechanisms that enable such transferences. For the sake of brevity, a distinction can be made between a theoretical position that draws on rational choice theory and a position that emphasizes embodied and pre-reflexive modes of acquiring and transferring resources. This distinction also partly overlaps with what might be viewed as a “restrictive” and a more inclusive definition of CARs. The latter also resonates with a “cultural turn” in class analysis (see, e.g., Devine and Savage 2005).

John Goldthorpe: reproduction through strategic calculations

The first position is largely associated with Goldthorpe and his colleagues. In this framework, class situations are defined by differences in employment relations, such as between employers, the self-employed and employees. Among the latter, a further differentiation is made according to regulations of employment, crudely defined as the division between a “labour contract” and the “service relationship.” Based on

rational action theory, Goldthorpe argues that we should understand class immobility as a product of the “mobility strategies” that are pursued by the classes (Goldthorpe 2000a:238). Following Boudon (1974), Goldthorpe (2000a:242) argues the different classes are motivated by the preference “*to avoid downward class mobility*” facilitating different goals and aspirations for the classes, given their relative position in the class structure. Individuals and families, Goldthorpe argues, partake in mobility strategies that are conditioned on balancing the costs and benefits associated with class-specific goals and aspirations as well as the constraints flowing from different means of realizing their goals. For instance, the mobility opportunities arising from an advantaged origin (i.e., having a father in the service class) enable favourable future prospects due to the very nature of the employment situation; not only greater volumes of economic resources but also less fluctuation in incomes and a longer and sharper upward curve of income growth enable sons from the service class to be constrained less by economic means than sons from the working class.

The observed stability of the relative trends in social mobility should be understood in the context of the two kinds of differing mobility strategies, Goldthorpe maintains: strategies “from below” and strategies “from above.”⁹ While the latter may include the promotion of specific educational careers, the transference of social contacts, and the adaptation of specific social skills, lifestyles, manners, etc. that enable the service class to reproduce itself, the former include, e.g., specific educational preferences (such as vocational training) and a preference for early entry into the labour market. As the overarching goal of mobility strategies is to avoid downward mobility and, at the least, to maintain the class position of one’s parents, the different classes will follow different strategies that echo their class-conditioned opportunity structures. Hence, the reproduction of class inequalities may be attributed to “adaptive individual and family strategies” (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992:397).

Pierre Bourdieu: reproduction through embodied dispositions

For the present purposes, two interrelated aspects of an alternative Bourdieusian framework for understanding social reproduction may be contrasted with Goldthorpe’s

⁹ Owing a clear affinity to the Weberian idea of closure. See, for instance, Parkin (1979) for a different approach to closure strategies from above and below in a Weberian framework.

theory of social mobility; first, Goldthorpe's relatively "restricted" view on CARs and, second, his rational action theory. On the one hand, a key critique of Goldthorpe's theory of social mobility is his relatively restrictive view on the resources that facilitate unequal opportunity structures for the different classes (e.g., Devine 1998, Savage, Warde and Devine 2005:38–39). For Goldthorpe, the resources that individuals draw on in their mobility strategies are linked to his operationalization of class as pertaining to different employment relations. Thus, resources are largely linked to benefits as a product of these divisions (Devine 1998). In the Bourdieusian framework, however, the class structure is not confined to the regulations of employment but is metaphorically conceptualized as a multidimensional space flowing from the distribution of capitals (i.e., the material and social "conditions of existence" (Bourdieu 1984:170). In *Distinction*, both economic capital and cultural capital are demonstrated to constitute the dominant forms of capital, and different class situations (positions in social space) are differentiated by the volume of capital, the relative weight of cultural to economic capital and the changes/stability in the relative volume and composition of capital over time (Bourdieu 1984).

For Bourdieu, multiple forms of capital are important in stratifying the classed opportunity structures in a society. Not only economic capital but also cultural capital (whether *embodied* through manners, demeanour, and pre-reflexive dispositions more generally, *institutionalized* through, e.g., educational credentials, or *objectified* through, e.g., esteemed objects of art), social capital (i.e., social networks) and field-specific capital (capital that generates "profits" in the semi-autonomous arenas of social life that often characterize differentiated advanced societies) are viewed as key to facilitating and maintaining societal domination (Bourdieu 1986). Drawing on both Weberian and Pascalian notions of the need for power to justify, legitimize and "cloak" itself to be effective (Bourdieu 2000b:104, Wacquant 1993b:25), Bourdieu grasps societal domination as immanently related to *symbolic power*, which denotes the relative capacity to enforce societal classification schemes (Bourdieu 1991). Bourdieu argues that the legitimate forms of classification schemes in a society are part and parcel of power struggles and contribute to naturalizing and reinforcing class privilege (Bourdieu 1991, Bourdieu 1996a). Whereas the relational structure of capitals – the social space – amounts to an "objectivity of the first order," Bourdieu maintains that the social world additionally exists in terms of a "second order" in the form of our mental structures and

principles of classification that, on a symbolic level, help structure our inclinations for judgement, taste, emotions and perceptions (Bourdieu 1990a, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

By extension, sociologists have, on the other hand, questioned the implicit reflexivity that is assumed in Goldthorpe's rational action theory. Rather than making cost-benefit calculations for major life decisions such as educational and occupational choices, Bourdieu argues that choice-making rarely seems to be based on rational calculation but, rather, reflects more pre-reflexive notions of what seems possible and "natural," given a specific upbringing and class position (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Bourdieu and Passeron 1979).¹⁰ The concept of habitus entails an acknowledgement that people's experiences structure their immediate (and long-term) inclinations with regard to the social world and facilitate specific "schemes of perception and appreciation" (Bourdieu 1990a:53) that ensure "the causality of the probable," pointing to a correspondence between dispositions and objective mobility chances. Habitus thus engenders practices, "which pre-empts the objective future" (Bourdieu 2014:250). Such schemes are held to be particularly influenced by one's upbringing, and class differences in childhood thus facilitate class-specific habituses that structure action uniformly; habitus is generative "within limits" and serves as an "analogical sense" that facilitates coherences in practices (Bourdieu 1977:96, 112). Mediated through habitus, class origins facilitate specific "modal trajectories" that tend to reproduce class differences over the generations (Bourdieu 2014).

In contrast to being a product of reflexive decision-making, as in Goldthorpe's rational action theory, social action is viewed as a result of embodied dispositions, which means that people are not necessarily aware of the classed logic of their actions (Bourdieu 1990a, Bourdieu 2002). The embodiment of practices via habitus thus serves to mystify or *naturalize* class inequalities. The systematic differences in the choice behind pursuing higher education, for instance, may simply be articulated as a "normal

¹⁰ However, Goldthorpe has gone to great lengths to ease the insistence on rationality. Despite advocating quite explicitly for stricter notions of rationality elsewhere (e.g., Breen and Goldthorpe 1997), Goldthorpe (2000a:238, footnote 12) argues that his overall theory of social mobility does not require *de facto* decision-making processes and applies if "mobility strategies" "only 'emerge' over time in a more or less implicit and piecemeal fashion" (see also Goldthorpe 2000b:164–65). The critique of Goldthorpe's rational action theory, however, extends beyond any formulation of "weak" forms of rationality, as it also taps into disagreements about whether individuals' choices should be held to be a product of more or less "atomistic individuals" or embedded in relations (Abbott 2007b, Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991:39-40). Chapter 6 deals with these matters at greater length.

biography” for children of the privileged classes but seem to be a “non-choice” for those of the working class (Ball et al. 2002, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Thus, there is a relative “fit” between one’s *position* in the class structure and one’s embodied *disposition*, which translates into a restricted set of *a space of the possible*, Bourdieu (1984) argues.

For Bourdieu, classes are also engaged in mobility strategies; however, for him, such strategies are linked to the further accumulation and conversion of forms of capital. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) emphasizes how position-takings in a *symbolic space*, such as variations in tastes, aesthetic judgements, and lifestyle and consumption patterns, are part and parcel of maintaining class dominance. In opposition to Weber’s distinction between *status groups* and *classes*, he maintains that the two instead constitute “two *modes of existence* of any group” (Bourdieu 2013:294). Mediated through habitus, the distribution of capital in a society is translated into effective signs of distinction when misrecognized as such. Taste thus becomes a symbolic expression – even a (mis)recognized legitimation – of classes. Lifestyles and taste affinities serve as symbolic signs that guide individuals’ “sense of place” (Bourdieu 1987:7) that may serve to both constrain and enable class mobility; habitus, as an embodied schema for practices, is thus a principle of “*inadaptability as well as adaptability*” (Bourdieu 2014:234 italics in original). By extension, his concepts point to the importance of paying attention to not only variations in the opportunity structures for accessing dominant positions but also variations in the *desire* to do so (Wacquant 1993b:21). Rather than a product of rational calculation, then, Bourdieu views mobility strategies as arising from a “practical coherence” due to class-specific dispositions and the societal distribution of capitals; these mobility strategies may be manifold, ranging from strategies for childbirth, education, marriages, and ideological strategies, to successor strategies (Bourdieu 2014:252–53).

Bourdieu also emphasizes how mobility strategies are class fraction-specific, with individuals hailing from families rich in economic capital typically pursuing different strategies from those hailing from families rich in cultural capital. The different mobility strategies partly reflect different selection criteria in the class fractions, such as the greater need for scholastic success for success within the cultural fraction (Bourdieu 2014:256–57). In *State Nobility*, Bourdieu (1996a) analyses how the

chiasmatic opposition between the cultural pole and the economic pole in the field of power is reproduced, in part through educational institutions that serve to bring together a homogeneous body of students that stimulates further social homophily and to consecrate their students with symbolic capital.¹¹

Given the weight that Bourdieu places on the pre-reflexive and habitual nature of human action, his critique of the Marxian emphasis on class consciousness seems unsurprising. Bourdieu states that the mechanistic understanding of the conditions for practices amounts to a “short circuit fallacy” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:69) in which Marxians neglect not only the relative autonomy of producers of ideology in a society – which ultimately affects the relative likelihood of acknowledging “objective” power struggles – but also the relative importance of that which resembles the Weberian concept of *parties* (Bourdieu 1991).¹² For Bourdieu, classes are “classes on paper,” in the sense that they do not exist as collective groups with political agency, as envisioned by (some) Marxian scholars. For classes to become a political force, “the alchemy of representation” is needed; that is, political parties, labour union representatives and so on serve to embody the class as a whole (Bourdieu 1991:106–07, 29–32). Only then, Bourdieu maintains, can classes be formed as “groups” and a collective historical force in a society. Hence, for a class to be formed, it has to be *symbolically produced* through “*classmaking*” (Bourdieu 1987:8), which, in turn, entails the emphasis on how “classification struggles... are a dimension of any class struggle” (Bourdieu, quoted in Wacquant 2013:282).¹³ By emphasizing the embodiment of class reproduction, Bourdieu therefore offers a useful conceptual apparatus for understanding how our social worlds may be stratified along class divisions without there being strong articulations of class consciousness in a society. Crucial to such processes, however, is the *biographically constituted habitus*, which entails sociological sensitivity to contextualized and temporal accounts of class reproduction, as argued in the following.

¹¹ For a more recent analysis of symbolic consecration in elite schooling see, e.g., Khan (2010).

¹² The importance of political representation for the likelihood of classes to be formed as political actors is widely recognized (e.g., Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992).

¹³ See Wacquant (1991) for a discussion of Marxian and Weberian scholars’ alleged neglect of symbolic classification struggles for the making of a class.

Outline of the theory chapters

Building on these ideas, the remainder of this theory section is divided into three chapters that correspond to the three overarching theoretical points of departure for this study: first, a chapter that pinpoints the theoretical backbone of temporality for class formation processes; second, a chapter that emphasizes the need to contextualize group formation processes in proximity in physical space; and, finally, a chapter that highlights the notion of the class structure as a multidimensional phenomenon in which divisions among the dominant class are recognized along forms of economic and cultural capital. By suggesting that some of these ideas remain underexplored to date, I underline how this study seeks to fill these lacunae by pushing conceptual boundaries, suggesting methodological innovations and contributing by advancing our sociological understanding of the social makeup of power.

3 A matter of time: class formation as process

From the brief summary of the literature on class formation, it can be assessed that the structures of class in a society are dependent on neither the subjective recognition of such structures nor the existence of political mobilized class action (Bourdieu 1987, Hout, Brooks and Manza 1993, Scott 2001). Rather, class may be effective in the structuring of everyday life, even when misrecognized as such. A social class, i.e., a social group, as opposed to a bundle of equivalent class situations, is formed on the basis by which its members are characterized by homogeneous experiences facilitated by – first and foremost – the stability of class across generations and within individual work-life careers. The demographic clustering of individuals through class *immobility* is therefore widely held as crucial to the formation of social classes. However, the crux to understanding such classed processes lies in the *pervasiveness of class over time*, and the overall aim of this chapter is to unveil how such temporal processes are articulated in different theoretical approaches to class formation.

I start by emphasizing how temporal sensitivity is recognized by more “conventional” class theorists such as Goldthorpe, who points to demographic formation, and Wright, who emphasizes class interests. Subsequently, I turn to highlighting how temporal unfolding lies at the heart of the Bourdieusian notion of the habitus. I then proceed to discuss how the dominant strategy for studying class mobility

– the mobility table – has been criticized precisely due to its lack of sufficient attention to temporal unfolding and the converse reliance on temporal snapshots. Next, I present research that has utilized sequence analytical tools to allow more temporal sensitivity when analysing class mobility. Finally, I illustrate how I contribute to this existing body of literature by offering statistical designs that seek to “embed” sequential careers in a social structure.

Theoretical emphasis on temporal unfolding

Temporal dynamism is commonly held to be important in class formation processes. In Goldthorpe’s work, time is primarily linked to the notion of demographic identities flowing from mobility closure, whereas time features in Wright’s understanding of objective class interests. In Bourdieu’s oeuvre, time is immanently related to his notion of habitus, which governs the likelihood of elective affinities among individuals and the formation of groups. In the following, I offer a brief summary of these points, highlighting how Goldthorpe views time as important primarily in the sense of *past time*, whereas Wright’s discussions of time and class formation make him more inclined to emphasize *future time*. I then point to how Bourdieu’s notion of habitus entails sensitivity to *the order* and *timing* of experiences in individuals’ trajectories. I start with a discussion of the more “conventional” approaches to class before proceeding to the concept of habitus, which also offers an in-depth account of *how* class trajectories may forge group boundaries.

Class interests and class experiences

Class trajectories are widely held to be key to processes of group formation in the wider literature on class. Wright and Shin (1988) offer a useful distinction between two ways in which temporality is addressed in approaches to class. First, there is a “structural approach,” which conceptualizes the class structure as consisting of “fixed locations,” irrespective of the individuals who may be more or less mobile in this structure. This approach typically links class to social conflict by emphasizing how class locations relate to different degrees of opportunity and constraint in terms of material interests and resource availability. Second, there is a “processual approach,” which

primarily links classes to how individuals derive similar biographical experiences over time that facilitate a “subjective condition of conflict” by cementing sentiments of identity and meaning-making for individuals who engage in class conflicts. Thus, the “processual approach” concerns how individuals, through their lifetime, “learn” to become members of a given class with respect to identities, worldviews, lifestyles and so on. In respect to temporality, the two approaches differ in how time is conceptualized, whereas the “processual approach” regards temporality in its past tense, in which “*class is an embodiment of the past in the present,*” the “structural approach” emphasizes future time, where “*class is an embodiment of possible futures in the present*” (Wright and Shin 1988:59). Moreover, Wright and Shin argue that this distinction also relates to different approaches to “consciousness,” in which the “processual approach,” above all, is concerned with *identity* (which is embedded in past experiences) and the “structural approach” is primarily interested in *interests* (which they link to anticipations about what lies ahead).

Although the acknowledgement of both future *and* past time seems to characterize most approaches to class, the relative theoretical weight arguably differs. Goldthorpe has argued quite explicitly for the “primacy” of demographic identity-making as a prerequisite for the formation of socio-cultural and political action (Goldthorpe 1984). On the other hand, Wright’s emphasis on (socio-political) class formation processes makes him inclined to centre his attention on class *interests*. Wright’s general concern when dealing with class trajectory is a matter of *future* or *probable* trajectory, which he argues has important implications for cognition and class interests:

“two individuals in identical working-class jobs in terms of statistically defined relational characteristics would have very *different material interests* if one was certain to be promoted into a managerial position and one was certain to remain for life in a working-class position” (Wright 1989:329 emphasis added).

Theoretically, Wright has argued explicitly for a “trajectory-view of class” (Wright 1989:329) to fully capture class antagonisms and thus to accurately conceptualize the class structure. Wright acknowledges that some occupations entail “a systematic temporal dimension to their class location” when structured as careers. This entailment means that actual mobility, strictly speaking, occurs only when traversing

different class trajectories (Wright 1989:329).¹⁴ The acknowledgement that class situations are characterized by temporal dynamism such as in notions of classes-as-careers is frequently emphasized in the literature (Abbott 2006, Bertaux and Thompson 1997a, Blackburn and Prandy 1997, Miles and Savage 2004, Savage 1997, Savage 2000, Savage et al. 1992:222, Stewart, Prandy and Blackburn 1980:271–72).

In the writings of John Goldthorpe, the emphasis placed on trajectories seems somewhat contradictory. While sometimes argued to be of only secondary interest, it is elsewhere argued to be of crucial relevance for understanding class formation processes. Suggestively, this discrepancy in his authorship points to a different analytical weight given to studying patterns of fluidity (assessing the level of “openness” in a society) and studying processes of class formation. In their comparative study of rates of *fluidity*, for instance, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992:306–07) argue that distinctive pathways to similar class destinations should be treated as being of only secondary importance. Although remaining fairly sympathetic to the ideal of including life-course variations in studies of class mobility (see, e.g., Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992:281), they hold that different trajectories essentially denote different mobility strategies implemented by individuals and families responding to different resources and different stages of the life course.

In the earlier works on *class formation* in Great Britain, on the other hand, trajectories seem to be of more theoretical importance,¹⁵ and the emphasis placed on class trajectories is, for instance, argued by Marshall et al. (1988:83) to constitute one of the key advantages of the Goldthorpean approach to class. As Bühlmann (2010) importantly points out, Goldthorpe’s interest in class formation clearly relies on biographical explanations. As seen, a key idea behind Goldthorpe’s interest in class formation is the primacy given to stability in intra- and intergenerational class locations, which serves to cement demographic affinities that enable socio-cultural homogeneity and increase the likelihood of class-based political mobilization. When commenting on the heterogeneity of the service class, for instance, Goldthorpe points to different *trajectories* as being influential on the likelihood that socio-political or communal

¹⁴ This issue is discussed in multiple places in Wright’s work (see, e.g., Wright 1978:92–93, Wright 1985:185–86, Wright 1989:329–31, Wright 1996:712, Wright 2005:17–18, Wright and Shin 1988).

¹⁵ As seen, Weber highlighted both inter- and intragenerational patterns of immobility as key to the formation of a social class.

affinities would arise (Goldthorpe 1984:25). Goldthorpe emphasizes how the service class is characterized by high levels of inflow mobility but is limited in terms of both inter- and intragenerational outflow mobility. This phenomenon creates two countervailing tendencies towards class formation in the service class, Goldthorpe argues, and in such circumstances, the notion of trajectory seems to be given additional theoretical weight:¹⁶

“...it would seem of obvious importance to investigate the way in which transitions from particular origins to particular destinations are actually accomplished – in terms, that is, of the routes, timing, degree of decisiveness, and permanency of the mobility involved” (Goldthorpe and Llewellyn 1987b:64).

Hence, Goldthorpe’s account of *class formation* clearly rests on biographical explanations to which individual experiences and trajectories are important (Bühlmann 2010). A perhaps more in-depth account of *how* homogeneous experiences facilitate group formation processes, however, is offered in Bourdieu’s notion of habitus.

The temporal underpinnings of habitus

As noted in chapter 2, habitus is key to Bourdieu’s understanding of how groups are formed and how the reproduction of class difference is effectively maintained in fairly mundane ways (Bourdieu 1984). It is because people in similar social positions tend to embody similar dispositions that “objective” divisions due to capital possessions tend “to be translated into durable linkages and groupings” (Bourdieu 1985:730).

However, the crux of the notion of habitus is temporal sensitivity; habitus is a concept inherently reliant on temporal unfolding. In fact, historicity lies at the heart of Bourdieu’s definition: “The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history” (Bourdieu 1990a:54). The habitus is therefore not only a “structured structure” that points to how one’s disposition at a point in time is structured by past experiences but also a “structuring structure” that facilitates structural inclinations (“objectively

¹⁶ Intragenerational class mobility is widely held to enable or constrain group formation processes. For instance, discrepancies in work-life career mobility between professionals and managers within the service class led Savage et al. (1992) to argue against service class homogeneity. However, see Goldthorpe’s response (1995:319–20). See also Savage (1993b) for a demonstration of the importance of career mobility for class formation processes.

adapted without conscious aims”) in the practical world and thus structures experiences to come (Bourdieu 1990a:53).

As seen, Bourdieu (1990a:54) gives “disproportionate weight” to the social milieu in one’s upbringing for the formation of habitus, making one’s “class origin” especially important to what types of dispositions one embodies over the life course. However, habitus is never theorized to be a mechanistic concept reflecting parental class. On the contrary, it is “never the replica of a single social structure but a dynamic ...set of schemata” (Wacquant 2016:64) that is subjected to “permanent revision” and that changes continuously “in response to new experiences” (Bourdieu 2000b:161). However, this dynamism of permanent revision never entails “radical” transformations, Bourdieu maintains, as past experiences (which, above all, reflect the earliest experiences of one’s upbringing) always constrain or narrow in the *field of possibles* when encountering a new environment. Hence, the restriction of the “radical” transformations of habitus lies in how revisions are made on the “basis of the premises established in the previous state” (Bourdieu 2000b:161). Consequently, it is not only the different experiences that one encounters over time but also *the order of experiences in time* that structure the habitus; the constancy in the revision of the habitus entails that the ordering of experiences becomes important for dispositions, as each previous state serves to revise how the next is likely to be experienced.

Thus, the cohesion arising from similar objective stances in the stratification order becomes intensified the more the pathways to specific class “destinations” resemble each other *over time* (Bourdieu 2014:244, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:99).¹⁷ The emphasis placed on temporal order is evident, for instance, in Bourdieu’s assessment of why two individuals’ habitus are never exactly the same. Sameness would require “two members of the same class to have had the same experiences, in the same order,” as habitus is shaped by “chronologically ordered” trajectories (Bourdieu 1990a:60). Thus, the whole sequence of events that people experience over time is seen to forge habitus at any given point in time. Moreover, the more similar individuals’ dispositions are, the greater the likelihood for the cementation of symbolic boundaries and internal recognition.

¹⁷ See, for instance, Boltanski’s (1987) chapter on the diversity of careers in his analysis of how the French Cadres become “made” as a group.

As noted in the last chapter, Bourdieu maintains that for every class, there exists a “modal trajectory,” which tends to be actualized via a habitus that facilitates the likelihood of “the causality of the probable” (Bourdieu 2014). When individuals are not following the “probable career” that is associated with their class of origin, such as through ascending or descending class mobility, a person’s “practical” relationship with his or her class destination is affected, according to Bourdieu. Because an individual’s habitus is shaped by one’s class origin and one’s trajectory over time, the experience of mobility or immobility is “concretely felt in a sense of being either at home in a group... or out of place” (Bourdieu 1996a:185–86).¹⁸

In other words, class-based cohesion, mutual appreciation and recognition hinge on the levels of affinities between individuals’ habitus, which themselves are a product of biographical trajectory. Simply studying peoples’ class position at a given point in time thus only partly taps into inclinations for coherence and affinities, as group formation is contingent on whether the “trajectories which have brought them to these are themselves similar” (Bourdieu 1987:5).

From snapshots to sequences

Although a theoretical emphasis placed on temporal unfolding seems evident in many theories of class formation, most quantitative approaches to measuring class mobility struggle to take such dynamism into account. In these final sections of this chapter, I offer a review of the critique of the quantitative mobility table due to its reliance on measuring snapshots in time and the corresponding neglect of class trajectories. I then discuss some responses to this critique and sketch key methodological ambitions to include more dynamism in mobility studies, that is, to account for life-course variation. Here, I particularly emphasize the notion of “occupational maturity,” which has gained a foothold in class mobility research.

Pointing back to the theoretical weight of the *combined* importance of *temporal order*, *duration* and *timing* in biographical accounts of class formation, I then review a few studies that apply SA in class mobility research. I end this chapter by clarifying

¹⁸ The relationship between social mobility and embodied dispositions is thematized in Bourdieu’s notion of a cleft habitus – a *habitus clivé* – a term that he also linked to his own experience with upward mobility (Bourdieu 2007).

how I not only follow this scant body of research but also seek to propose new strategies for using SA to account for class trajectories as being composed of intra- *and* intergenerational mobility.

The limits of temporal snapshots

The initial claim for a need for greater sensitivity to temporal unfolding and life-course variation in studies of mobility has been perhaps most clearly expressed by Aage Sørensen (1986a). In his review of stratification research, he points to important pitfalls associated with the conventional mobility table.¹⁹ The gist of Sørensen’s critique is that the dominant approach to social mobility relies on measuring two snapshots in time to assess a relationship between social origins and social destinations.²⁰ The reliance on two snapshots, however, does not accurately capture theoretically important variations in how social reproduction may be maintained in a society. For instance, Sørensen criticizes the reliance on a point-in-time measurement of *class destinations*, noting instead that what we believe we measure as a destination is “in fact an observation of a person’s location at some point in time during a process of intragenerational mobility” (Sørensen 1986a:77).

Indeed, “the problem in trying to allocate a person to a single class for their lifetime on the basis of an occupation at a point in time” (Blackburn and Prandy 1997:498) has been a constant thorn in the side of mobility research, as it inevitably begs the question of “choosing the right point in their careers” (Blackburn and Prandy 1997:499) to measure both class origin and class destination alike (Abbott 2006, Bertaux and Thompson 1997b). There are differences between individuals who are affiliated with a class at a point in time, hinging on whether one is at an upward, downward or stationary trajectory. As seen, theoretically, such life experiences are expected to shape expectations, preferences, behaviour and dispositions more generally. As argued by Abbott, there are important temporal variations over the course of an

¹⁹ Pitfalls that he views as being equally applicable to the path analyses in the status attainment paradigm (Sørensen 1986a:81–83).

²⁰ Leaving aside Sørensen’s critique of the notion of “openness” in class mobility research and his insistence on including vacancy competition in the notion of societal opportunity structures (Sørensen 1986a:79, Sørensen 1986b).

individual's life, making the notion of "an outcome" difficult to assess in quantitative sociology (Abbott 2016:165–97).

"What if I do badly for many years then inherit wealth? What if society lets me live like a lord but I flame out at forty-three? When exactly is (or was) the outcome of my ninety-five-year-old father's life? [...] People move endlessly through the life course" (Abbott 2007a:4).

The nature of occupations themselves may also be characterized by more or less dynamism. For instance, class locations may become more or less stepping stones in a career, rather than class destinations in and of themselves (Abbott 2006, Savage 2000). In his early studies of class formation, for instance, Goldthorpe points to the changing significance of "intermediate" class positions in the class structure. Finding that the intermediate class positions feature in both widespread inflow and outflow mobility, he remarks that the nature of these class locations seemed to have changed. "In work-life perspective, they often appear less as 'destinations' than as 'staging posts', through which men pass on trajectories of widely different kinds..." (Goldthorpe 1984:27). Adult affiliation with intermediate class positions would therefore differ, depending on whether this situation was indeed the endpoint of the class career or, rather, a stepping stone to further class advancement. Thus, Goldthorpe acknowledges that relying on temporal "snapshots" may wrongfully estimate intergenerational patterns (Goldthorpe 1984:33). Moreover, classes are often associated with different temporalities, such as the dynamism of future prospects and career opportunities that often demarcate the service class or the middle classes from the working class (Goldthorpe 1982, Goldthorpe 1995, Savage 2000).

Occupational maturity and the timing of class

There have been some important efforts to include more dynamism when assessing class mobility. Featherman and Selbee (1986), for instance, have pointed to the advantage of cumulative mobility tables and event history analysis. Event history analysis allows accounting for the duration of class events and highlights a specific transition in intragenerational careers, while the cumulative mobility table accounts for differences in the frequency of class affiliations during the life course. Examples of such efforts have also been persistent in Norway. Natalie Rogoff Ramsøy's concern with *social stratification in a temporal framework* (Ramsøy 1975) partly facilitated the

collection of work-life histories. These data entailed sensitivity to intragenerational mobility, and they have been analysed by means of cumulative mobility tables (Mayer et al. 1989).

However, the response to Sørensen's reservations concerning the conventional mobility table has not led to the abandonment of snapshots in the field of class analysis.²¹ While largely sympathetic to Sørensen's proposal of understanding "intergenerational mobility as a life-course process," Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992:280) object to certain attempts at including more life-course dynamism in mobility tables. For instance, they argue against the usefulness of mobility tables that rely on measuring counts of class events (rather than *one* class position) in the cell entries. Such tables cannot conceive of temporal *duration* when approaching class mobility in the context of the life course, as they hold that "...each 'class event' counts for the same, whether it refers to a shift in class position that lasted for three months or for thirty years" (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992:281).

Naturally, these concerns seem valid, and the introduction of a time dimension could lead to additional obscurity if there were not techniques that carefully accounted for duration or the stability in the class situations attained over time. In this respect, one strategy is to include temporal *timing* when selecting the point of measuring class attainment. As noted by Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1987b:51–54), the occupation reported at a given snapshot in time connotes vastly different life situations when analysing the level of mobility for different age groups. The likelihood of upward trajectories is, for instance, more persistent at younger age rather than older age. Thus, a notion of "occupational maturity" at age 35 is introduced, during which there is a "marked falling-off in the probability of job changes which involve major shifts of occupational level" Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1987b:53). The Goldthorpean remedy to Sørensen's critique of "arbitrary snapshots" thus relies on measuring class destinations at their time of peak, reaching a biographical age of occupational maturity.

²¹ Some have advocated turning to more qualitative understandings of class trajectories by means of life stories, also in the *long durée* over the span of multiple generations (Bertaux 1981, Bertaux 1991, Bertaux 1995, Bertaux and Thompson 1997a). Sørensen, however, warns against abandoning quantitative mappings of class mobility, which he argues necessitate a need for "quantitative answers" (Sørensen 1986a:91).

While intergenerational mobility patterns are often measured at the time of this assumed peak, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) also seek to include intragenerational trajectories in their models. This strategy consists of measuring three-point tables where two events of one's class career are added to a measure of origin; both the initial class position and the "mature" class destination are incorporated into the mobility table. This strategy was also implemented in the seminal work in *Social mobility and class structure in modern Britain* (Goldthorpe 1987) and seems persistent as a general empirical strategy in the literature (e.g., Marshall et al. 1988, Savage et al. 1992). However, although such three-point tables seem to be better at capturing life-course variation, this procedure hardly features in contemporary studies of class mobility (Friedman and Savage 2018:70).

Sequences of class events

The three-point mobility table, however, does not seem to be completely satisfactory as a strategy for accounting for dynamism in class mobility, particularly as it fails to accurately account for *trajectories*. As noted by Halpin and Chan (1998:113), the inclusion of the entry class and the mature class in a log-linear mobility table "discards all information on what happens between these two points."²² Recent comparative work suggests, for instance, that while there is a marked relationship between class origin and first-entry occupational attainment, the influence of class origins is strengthened over the work life (Barone and Schizzerotto 2011). Moreover, the supposed solution to the lack of attention to *temporal duration* in the cumulative class event tables, i.e., highlighting the *temporal timing* of the assumed occupational peak, neglects attentiveness to *temporal order* and in fact measures only the former dimension of time by a proxy. In general, not only would it be misleading to juxtapose class events that lasted for three months with those that lasted thirty years, but it would

²² This claim is acknowledged in part by Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1987a:140): "We may, however, first note...how adopting a diachronic or biographical perspective on mobility produces a very different picture from that derived from that synchronic, cross-sectional view of a conventional mobility table. It is in this way made abundantly clear that to interpret the main diagonal cells of such as table as indicative of a total absence of mobility or, for that matter, the off-diagonal cells as indicative of mobility of a permanent kind, may well be highly misleading; and further, that even when three-point analyses of the kind of Table 5.1, which at least enable inter- and intragenerational transitions to be distinguished and set in relation to each other, a still very inadequate idea may be obtained of the amount and pattern of work-life mobility that individuals have in fact experienced."

also surely be deceptive to equate class trajectories that consist of similar events but at different time points and in a different order in a life course. The suggested strategies for including temporal sensitivity in class mobility thus seem to emphasize one temporal feature at the expense of others. For instance, event history analysis enables studying the timing of specific transitions in a class trajectory, but it leaves the question, as raised by Andrew Abbott (2006:143), of why not use “the whole career to conceptualize mobility.”

As seen, theoretically, order, duration and timing are temporal dimensions acknowledged to be of biographical importance at the outset in class theory. Abbott’s (2006) and Bühlmann’s (2008) concern with the inability to incorporate temporality in any systematic manner in the dominant strands of the scholarly literature of class mobility therefore points to important analytical deficiencies. The acknowledgement of such drawbacks has spurred some attempts to capture class trajectories as a whole sequence of events, rather than emphasizing some features of work-life mobility (such as the duration of posts held). SA – originally introduced from biology by Andrew Abbott – has been suggested not only as a means of finding resemblance in work careers in general (e.g., Abbott and Hrycak 1990, Araujo 2018, Blair-Loy 1999, Bühlmann 2008, Pollock, Antcliff and Ralphs 2002, Stovel, Savage and Bearman 1996) but also as an alternative to class mobility in particular (Bison 2011, Bukodi et al. 2016, Bühlmann 2010, Chan 1995, Halpin and Chan 1998). As described in more detail in chapter 6, SA finds resemblance between pair-wise sequences of events by accounting for whether states occur of the same duration, in the same order and at the same time in the sequence.

Three studies make use of SA to construct class histories within the class structure as a whole, while two zoom in on the more privileged service class. Analysing the whole of the class structure, Halpin and Chan (1998) point to 17 typical class careers in Ireland and 10 typical pathways in Great Britain, and the authors argue for a promising future for SA in the study of class mobility. Few studies, however, have fulfilled this alleged promise, and an appeal to turn to sequential tools for studying class mobility is evident even in the most recent contributions in the field (Friedman and Savage 2018). For the Italian case, Bison (2011) identifies 15 careers paths and shows that the majority of class trajectories are characterized by immobility. A regression

analysis suggests that the probability of experiencing a downward career is inversely associated with class origins and educational credentials. His cross-cohort analysis suggests more mobility and upward mobility presently than before, although suggestively due to structural expansion rather than to increased intragenerational fluidity.

Bukodi et al. (2016) find 8 class histories for men and 9 for women in Great Britain. The majority of the substantive content of the clusters resemble in regard to the genders, apart from some exceptions; women have two upwardly mobile class careers, pointing to early and late upward mobility, while men have only one; women have no history that predominates in lower supervisory and technical occupations; women's histories include one career of downward mobility, whereas men's do not. As a means of assessing changes over time, Bukodi et al. (2016) analyse whether the preponderance of each cohort differs in the class histories. For men, they discover overall very small changes, given the time differences in the cohorts observed, although some notable changes are evident, such as an increase in the stable careers of higher managers and professionals. For women, some change is evident. In addition to being more likely to have a stable affiliation with higher managerial and professional work, women have experienced a growth in the persistency of upward mobility over the work life, which is linked to mobility into the lower-level salariat. However, in contrast to Daniel Bell's prediction of the coming of an education-based meritocracy, the authors find that educational credentials are largely reinforced or modified by class origin and "cognitive abilities" (see, e.g., Barone and Schizzerotto 2011 for further evidence against the notion of an education-based meritocracy in Europe).

Two other studies use SA as a means of assessing different pathways to the more privileged service class in Great Britain (Bühlmann 2010) and in Hong Kong (Chan 1995). Chan finds that typical pathways into the service class are distinguishable into 4 groups: one characterized by a career through routine nonmanual employers; one through small proprietors and artisans; one that is sourced through skilled manual workers; and one sourced through semi- and unskilled workers. The different trajectories are then linked to differences in residency, educational level and class origin. In Great Britain, Bühlmann's (2010) analysis suggests that careers into the service class are differentiated into pathways onto different factions among managers, professionals,

and associate professionals. Moreover, important heterogeneity herein is unveiled when these types are subjected to an additional sequence procedure, finding three sub-clusters of each pathway. Substantively, he shows that careers are different, depending on educational length, how long an intermediate period is, and the different types of feeder positions. Educational length is the most persistent for the careers of the professionals, and long periods of education are linked to more direct access to service class work. However, the careers of managers, professionals and associate professionals are all characterized by both direct routes and more indirect paths through feeder occupations. He shows that the direct routes are more persistent for men; in contrast, women's pathways into service class positions are more characterized by indirect routes through feeder occupations such as clerical work.

I follow these studies in approaching mobility processes holistically – in the sense of accounting for the whole sequence of events, rather than selecting an arbitrary snapshot or relying on strategies that are less sensitive to dynamism such as focusing on one transition or estimating summary measures of class seniority. The existing body of work relies on data of representative samples and tends to collect class histories through retrospective data. In contrast, I can explore more reliable constructions of career typologies by having access to population-wide registry data. This access also enables studying more restricted groups of the population. In addition, I seek to add two points that seem less thematized in the literature. First, most of these studies, apart from perhaps Bühlmann's analysis of the British service class, do not emphasize class fractions and therefore do not analyse the potential horizontal barriers to intragenerational careers. Indeed, all studies apply some version of the Goldthorpean EGP scheme, which does not emphasize horizontal class fractions, as noted in chapter 5.

Second, while some studies make use of various regression techniques to assess whether, and in what way, each sequence type is stratified by covariates, I seek to move beyond the regression model and to embed the sequence typology of upper-class careers in a relational structure – what I, in *Mobility closure (article III)*, dub “an origin space.” Doing so allows “anchoring” the class sequences in a multidimensional structure and further unpacking a more complex relationship between inherited resources and adult outcomes. In summary, I seek to add more conceptual emphasis on the Bourdieusian notions of forms of capital and capital accumulation by assessing the lifelong

accumulation of *multiple forms of capital* over the life course. I thus aim to add more biographical sensitivity to the conventional interest in the linkage between class origins and class destinations.

Time is important for understanding class trajectories, but it is also important in mediating – or even intensifying – the intersection of spatial and social inequalities. In the next chapter, I emphasize how a biographical account of class formation should also acknowledge *place* as key in facilitating differential association, serving as a site for capital accumulation and engendering sentiments of belonging.²³

²³ Note, for instance, that Wright's preference for a "trajectory view of class" also encompassed the notion of patterned place types over the life course: "Ideally, to measure fully class trajectories we would need complete class biographies of individuals, biographies which would include data on the class character of such things as: the individual's family of origin, *the various communities the individual has lived in*, the class character of the individual's schooling experiences, all previous jobs and the length of time within each and a range of other class-pertinent experiences (unemployment, strikes, etc.). This complex, multidimensional space of class experiences over time could then be collapsed into a smaller number of theoretically coherent types of lives (lives completely embedded in the working class; lives which move back and forth between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie; lives with increasing distance from the working class; etc.)" (Wright and Shin 1988:64, emphasis added).

4 Context, interaction and the spatialization of class

“Class formation does not take place on the head of a pin. It occurs in specific spatial contexts” (Savage et al. 1992:33).

As seen, the theoretical concern for mapping trends of class immobility – what Giddens (1981) denotes the process of “mediate” structuration – lies at the heart of class analysis. A vast body of research has mapped the extent to which intra- and intergenerational mobility closure structures the life chances of individuals in contemporary societies. In addition to this overriding interest in class mobility, it is important to note that Weber’s initial distinction between class situations and social class also pointed to wider social processes that facilitate demographic circulation such as restrictions in “connubium” (intermarriage) and “commensality” (shared living and eating environments) (Scott 1996:206). This phenomenon taps into the role of *distributive* groupings, particularly as expressed through residential segregation, as one source of what Giddens dubs the “proximate” structuration of class. Indeed, it has been decades since geographers such as Thrift and Williams (1987) called for more systematic attention to space in understanding the *geographies* of class formation.

This chapter reviews key debates in the literature that call for more attention to contextualizing class formation: both in terms of social interaction and as embedded in physical space. First, I outline the critique of Bourdieu’s emphasis on analysing “latent” objective structures and the alleged lack of attention to social interaction in his notion of habitus. A critical appeal to situating group formation in social contexts has therefore been voiced, and I offer a brief discussion of this claim. Second, I turn to the specific

case of situating group formation in physical space; here, I outline the main ways that class and space have been linked in the literature and offer a discussion of the ways in which the Bourdieusian toolkit can aid in our understanding of spatial and social processes. Finally, I sketch how this study seeks to tackle the call for contextualizing class formation processes beyond the sphere of “mediate” structuration processes. In particular, I point to how studies of spatial inequality often leave temporal elements with regard to class residency underexplored and how I offer to remedy this shortcoming.

Social interaction and differential association

The call for more contextualized accounts of group formation processes has been made with explicit reference to Bourdieusian approaches to class inequality. For instance, Bottero (2009) points to how social homophily and differential association are of crucial theoretical importance in Bourdieu’s account of how groups become formed and inequality is reproduced. Although Bourdieu maintains that the likelihood that classes will be formed as real mobilizable groups is heavily dependent on “the alchemy of representation” (Bourdieu 1991:106), he also acknowledges that affinities in social positions and thus similar dispositions facilitate “...a certain propensity to come together in reality, to constitute themselves into real groups” (Bourdieu 1990b:117–18).

Due to the selectivity of our everyday encounters, our interactions are systematically patterned and help shape and reinforce shared perceptions and cohesion. Differential association is a phenomenon that is persistently found in the scholarly literature (see, for instance, Bottero and Prandy 2003, Butler 2008) and that arises, Bottero (2004:995) argues, as “our choices are governed both by contiguity and by the social comfort that comes from associating with ‘people like us.’” Just as our class origin and trajectory influence our dispositions, tastes, and practices, so will our social surrounding continuously help shape our preferences and tastes. The level of homogeneity in our networks will therefore add to the likelihood of established collective affinities. Hence, the social networks and constellations of acquaintances in which people partake should be accounted for in our understanding of homogenizing effects and group formation processes (Bottero 2009:408).

In Bottero's (2009:406) opinion, the mechanisms bringing shared dispositions into "enduring homophilous linkages" remain a mere *theoretical a priori* and seem overly deterministic in Bourdieu's rendition of class reproduction. Indeed, intersubjective negotiations in concrete situations and the substantive content of social networks are held to be relatively underexplored topics in Bourdieu's field analyses (Bottero 2009, Crossley 2013, De Nooy 2003, King 2000). In part, this lack of research on this issue echoes Bourdieu's insistence on avoiding *substantialist* modes of thought "...which foreground the individual, or visible interactions between individuals, at the expense of the structural relations..." (Bourdieu 1993:29) and his corresponding favouring of *epistemic* over *empirical individuals* (Bourdieu 1988:22–23).²⁴ However, the phenomenon of homophilous differential association and its implication for the reproduction of societal domination should be empirically examined and not simply be theoretically assumed, Bottero (2009) maintains. Moreover, Bottero also objects to the specific *content* of the "theoretical *a priori*" proposed by Bourdieu, pointing to his claim of the conservative force of habitus:

"By emphasizing early socialization in shaping the habitus, Bourdieu underplays firstly, the degree of potential heterogeneity of any given milieu which may shape the lifeworld; and, secondly, the way agents modify and reconstruct their dispositions throughout their lives, as they traverse different social contexts and contacts" (Bottero 2009:409).

Arguments against the static nature of habitus²⁵ have partly fuelled conceptual redevelopments. For instance, rejecting an alleged distinction between the "primary" (i.e., the familial environment) and the "secondary" (i.e., engagement in extra-familial domains) "layers" of habitus, Cornelissen launches a notion of "context-specific habitus," in which "habitus is centered on *contexts* rather than *childhood* exclusively" (Cornelissen 2016:6). Cornelissen, however, appears to have abandoned the notion of habitus as temporally constituted, preferring to define the concept as entailing "interlinked bundles of dispositions acquired in specific contexts" (Cornelissen 2016:11). As highlighted in the foregoing, a key tenet of Bourdieu's rendition of the concept is precisely its being a "product of history" that ensures an "active presence of

²⁴ This phenomenon also reflects Bourdieu's reluctance to make use of social network analysis (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) or his critique of both functionalist theories of elites and Marxist theories of the ruling class that "...study *populations* of agents who occupy positions of power" rather than "...studying *structures* of power, which is to say systems of objective relations" (Wacquant 1993b:20–21).

²⁵ See, for instance, Goldthorpe's (2007) claim that there is little room for "re-socialization" in Bourdieu's theory. Note, however, Lizardo's (2008) response. See also Joppke's (1986) critique of Bourdieu.

past experiences” (Bourdieu 1990a:54), making practice be not a mere resultant of a different contextual exposure but, importantly, a product of its social historicity. The implication is that not only are individuals influenced by the contexts in which they are engaged but people also enter contexts with specific dispositions based on their previous engagement in other contexts that add to their specific ways of engaging in each new milieu.

As noted in the previous chapter, however, the alleged determinism negatively attributed to Bourdieu seems to be at odds with the temporal sensitivity and dynamism inherent in the concept of habitus (Wacquant 2016). However, allowing this dynamism to be of sociological significance implies analysing individuals’ life paths by accounting for contextual factors along their way. Admittedly, the level of homogeneity in the networks and the concrete contexts in which individuals are embedded should be considered an important element in understanding how the habitus is subjected to “permanent revision” and continuous change “in response to new experiences” (Bourdieu 2000b:161). I thus concur with Bottero’s argument that the “lifeworld” that is derived from homogenous networks will differ from that of a more heterogeneous kind and that such differences, in turn, have implications for group cohesion (Bottero 2009:408) (see also Crossley 2013). Moreover, the temporal endurance of a specific kind of context is also likely to reinforce the habitus to the extent that “the relative strength ...of dispositions depends in part on the frequency with which they are actualized” (Lahire 2003:339). In summary, there appear to be good reasons to emphasize both *space* (context) and *time* (contextual duration) when seeking to contextualize processes of class formation.

However, I am more hesitant with regard to Bottero and Crossley’s (2011:103) argument that “...the impact of ...shared relations to capital can only operate through patterns of concrete social connection, distance and propinquity.” It would seem that Bottero and Crossley downplay Bourdieu’s emphasis on a shared trajectory²⁶ when they claim that “if they do not interact and do not belong to a common network then there is no good reason to suppose that they will share similar tastes, even if they do possess the same resources” (see also Crossley 2008:93). Rather, it seems that the crux of shared tastes is homogeneity in *social time*, rather than the mere possession of similar

²⁶ Although strongly acknowledged elsewhere; see, for instance, Prandy and Bottero (2000).

resources. Naturally, such homogeneous dispositions may be reinforced to the extent that one belongs to a homogeneous common network, but it seems insufficient to assume that the latter would be the only prerequisite for the former (Fox 2014). In Norway, for instance, important associations between positions and dispositions in political preferences (Flemmen 2014, Flemmen and Haakestad 2017) and cultural tastes (Flemmen, Jarness and Rosenlund 2017) prevail, and it would be strange to assume that such patterns of dispositional affinities are *only* a product of face-to-face interaction among Norwegians, although some degree of these homologies may be attributed to homogenous circles of friends and acquaintances. Further, there are reasons to believe that if we discard the homogenizing effect that arises from similar trajectories over time, we lose sight of important mechanisms *producing* homophilous interaction at the outset, as dispositional affinities are seen to be “*predictive* of encounters, affinities, sympathies, or even desires” (Bourdieu 1998a:10–11) and to “contribute to determining whether (biological) bodies come together or stay apart” (Bourdieu 1996a:182–83). Thus, taste affinities may contribute to the formation of social ties (Lizardo 2006).

A shift to more contextualized notions of habitus formation has also been voiced in response to Bourdieu’s alleged emphasis on *specific singular* fields and not as a “multi layered” phenomenon flowing from contextual impulses that stem from the multiple fields in which people engage (e.g., Atkinson 2017c, Lahire 2003, Lahire 2011).²⁷ Atkinson has also argued for more attention to how our social worlds are shaped by our everyday routine paths, as embedded in specific localities and spatial trajectories, as well as the multiplicity of the contextual relations that form our experiences (such as additional types of domination along gendered and ethnic lines) (Atkinson 2010, Atkinson 2017a, Atkinson 2017c). Hence, such experiences are part and parcel of processes of habitus formation and are thus structural affinities in the societal struggle for domination, Atkinson argues.

The emphasis on more contextualized accounts of habitus formation does not imply that a shared social milieu and homogeneity in patterns of neighbours, acquaintances and social interaction would increase the likelihood that classes would form as self-conscious organizing groups (Bottero 2004). Rather, the mechanisms of

²⁷ Although both Atkinson and Lahire emphasize the multiplicity of the social fields in which people partake, Atkinson highlights a unifying element in individuals’ *social surface*, while Lahire emphasizes fragmentation (Atkinson 2017c:26–27).

differential association are more likely to boost the misrecognized, mundane and tacit aspect of group cohesion; to the extent that we meet individuals who resemble ourselves in our day-to-day routines, “we tend to think of our social situation as normal and unexceptional” (Bottero 2004:998). Thus, the overlap of social and physical space may serve to *naturalize* class divisions (e.g., Bourdieu 1996b, Bourdieu 1999a). Indeed, contextualized accounts of class formation have pointed specifically to the importance of physical proximity for “spatialized” class formation processes, and I turn to these debates next.

The spatialization of class

“The process by which social groups cohere, identity themselves, and take positions is, fundamentally a territorial one, driven by complex processes of sorting and sifting, differentiation, and stratification” (Savage 2014b:29).

The importance of space for social class formation is increasingly highlighted in the scholarly literature. In the following, I review two elements of this body of work. First, I highlight how studies of spatial segregation have conventionally focused on mapping patterns of spatial exclusion. I point to how this focus seems linked to a general anticipation that the affluent are somehow “placeless” and mobile. I argue against this notion by highlighting studies that document the profound rootedness of “elite territories” (e.g., Burrows, Webber and Atkinson 2017) and emphasize a corresponding turn to analysing strategies of spatial withdrawal alongside processes of spatial exclusion. Next, I turn to review key elements in what may be dubbed an “urban sociology of Bourdieu” that seems to have dominated the renewed interest in the spatialized dimensions of class formation (Parker, Uprichard and Burrows 2007).

Spatial exclusion and spatial withdrawal

Studies linking social inequality and spatial processes have conventionally concerned the embeddedness of the working class in place and have viewed the

dominant class as being more detached and less “spatialized.”²⁸ As emphasized by Cunningham and Savage (2015), elites are conventionally understood to be particularly placeless, with transnational orientations, connected through technological advances that make them the emblem of the *network society*, in which “...elites are cosmopolitan, people are local” (Castells 2000:446). The privileged upper middle classes are also typically held to be particularly mobile. It has long been suggested, for instance, that the service class is characterized by its high levels of geographical mobility (Thrift 1987).

Conversely, the urban poor have conventionally been argued to be *stuck in place* (Sharkey 2013), *chained to place* (Bourdieu 1999a) and “locked out” (Atkinson 2008) due to *the weight of the world* (Bourdieu 1999b). MacDonald et al. (2005) find, for instance, that young adults who grew up in England’s poorest neighbourhoods were predominantly *stuck in place*, in the sense that their neighbourhood careers were localized and that people often lived in the same or in close proximity to the neighbourhood in which they grew up. On the one hand, such localized neighbourhood careers provided cohesion and community among these disadvantaged youths – and thus buffered against any sense of feeling *socially excluded*. On the other hand, the local environment entailed “bad” networks and contacts that helped reproduce disadvantages over the life course by making “poor work” readily accessible, thus providing few possibilities to escape poverty. The spatial anchorage (or, rather, entrapment) of the urban poor has been a key tenet in urban sociology. Urban deterioration’s facilitating the disappearance of jobs (Wilson 1996) has, for instance, been linked to how urban centres become inhabited by *the truly disadvantaged* (Wilson 1987), making the urban poor figure as *urban outcasts* (Wacquant 2008).²⁹

²⁸ From an inequality perspective, space can be conceptualized in two distinct ways. On the one hand, space is viewed as important in understanding how people may come together and develop social ties, cement communities and develop a shared sense of belonging (“place as habitat”); on the other hand, space may also help in structuring the interconnectedness of classes that are not located in the same physical place. Hence, the spatialization of class and the relationship between space and class formation operate in a manner that both connects individuals who are physically distant and unites individuals of proximity (Savage 1996). In this study, I focus on degrees of intra-class proximity.

²⁹ Naturally, in the U.S. context in particular, the ecologies of the urban poor are deeply entwined with racialized processes of discrimination and exclusion (Conley 1999), although classed assets should not be overlooked when approaching the American “hyperghetto”: “It is the cumulative structural entrapment and forcible socioeconomic marginalization resulting from the historically evolving interplay of class, racial, and gender domination, together with sea changes in the organization of American capitalism and failed urban and social policies, not a ‘welfare ethos,’ that explain the plight of today’s ghetto blacks” (Wacquant and Wilson 1989:25).

The prevalence of analysing the marginalization and exclusion of the urban poor has facilitated what has been depicted as a “social exclusion” framework (Cunningham and Savage 2015) or a “poverty paradigm” (Sampson 2012:57) in urban sociology. This framework has recently been exemplified by Wacquant (2018:101), who points to how the relatively recent *Urban Ethnography Reader* published by Oxford University Press consists of almost 900 pages without any systematic account of upper-class areas.³⁰ While understanding the dynamics of the urban poor is pivotal for studying urban inequality, a key argument in *Enduring contexts (article I)* is that understanding the geographies of the advantaged is of additional importance. The ways in which classed experiences are mediated through spatial processes should be recognized as a matter to apprehend for all aspects of the hierarchy. The importance of reorienting attention towards spatialized processes at the high end of the class structure is also alluded to when inspecting mere levels of segregation over time, as reminded by Douglas Massey. In his warning about *the (coming) age of extremes* over 20 years ago, Massey (1996) expressed dissatisfaction with researchers’ turning a blind eye to the vast and rapidly growing geographical segregation by affluence alongside poverty. He argued that it was only by analysing both aspects that researchers would understand how urban spaces feature chains of reinforcing inequality.³¹

Today, there appears to be no less a need to acknowledge the spatial concentration by affluence along with poverty. Recent comparative work in Europe, for instance, has uncovered growing levels of segregation at particularly worrisome levels among the most affluent residents in European cities (Tammaru et al. 2016). In Oslo, growing levels of segregation are found to be primarily linked to increasing segregation by affluence rather than by poverty (Ljunggren and Andersen 2015, Wessel 2016). In the U.S., a geographical component of social inequality has been highlighted by economists such as Raj Chetty (2014) in emphasizing geographically patterned opportunity structures; even controversial writers such as Charles Murray have raised the alarm that American society is spatially *coming apart* (2012).

³⁰ Wacquant (2018:101) suggests that this fact reflects in part urban sociologists’ “romantic infatuation” with the dominated and the fact that areas of concentrated privilege pose relatively few “social problems” for city managers.

³¹ See also Massey (2007:192–210).

Consequently, the assumption of the geographical detachment of the affluent is contested in more recent contributions, and sociologists are again turning their academic gaze to geographies of affluence in addition to geographies of poverty.³² Rather than detachment, Butler (2008) finds, for instance, that personal networks are highly embedded in the immediate localities where the affluent live and that a sense of “people like us” is strongly articulated in the social networks within these sites. Moreover, Savage reports that

“[f]ar from lamenting the loss of community, these people [the well-educated and affluent middle classes] waxed lyrical about where they lived. They were clear that they did not live in a faceless global locale, but in a particular place with its own identity, meaning and ‘aura’, which it was immensely important for them to claim affiliation” (Savage 2008:152; See also Hanquinet, Savage and Callier 2012).

Hence, there appears to be no reason to adopt the conventional tenet about the rootless, mobile existence of the elites and the upper classes (or the privileged service class), as opposed to the spatially entrapped working class; rather, space should be viewed as something that may contribute to both excluding the urban poor and serving as sites for strategic withdrawal for the advantaged (Atkinson 2006). Recently, there have been a number of studies that help remedy the lack of attention devoted to spatial processes within the upper rungs of the class structure (Atkinson and Flint 2004, Atkinson et al. 2017, Burrows, Webber and Atkinson 2017, Cunningham and Savage 2015) and that help shift attention to how spaces serve to seclude the affluent in “alpha territories” (Burrows, Webber and Atkinson 2017).

The urban sociology of Pierre Bourdieu

Rather than extending the classical notions of “housing classes” (Rex and Moore 1969) – or “housing status groups” (Payne and Payne 1977) – a recent “spatial turn” in class analysis has predominantly drawn on the framework of Pierre Bourdieu (Parker, Uprichard and Burrows 2007). This body of work largely analyses how residential choices and segregation patterns are governed by an alignment between individual habitus and a locale (see, e.g., Benson 2014, Benson and Jackson 2013, Butler and

³² An interest in the geographical conditionings for group formation processes at the high end of the class structure was naturally pertinent in classical works of elite formation such as Mills’ (2000 [1956]) *The Power Elite* or Baltzell’s (1958) study of the upper class.

Robson 2003b, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2005, Watt 2005). Although the notion of spatiality is very apparent in field theory in general, there is some ambivalence as to whether this notion points to space in its metaphorical sense or whether social relations should be approached in their physical location (Savage 2010a:15), and the analytical toolbox of Bourdieu himself could easily be criticized for abstracting social relations out of their social contexts, as alluded to in the foregoing. Indeed, it is primarily in his later works that physical space is explicitly thematized. Although an opposition between the rural and the urban, between the geographically fixed and the geographically mobile, was pertinent in his early analysis of, for instance, bachelorhood in Béarn (Bourdieu 2008), it is primarily in *Pascalian meditations* (Bourdieu 2000b), *The weight of the world* (Bourdieu 1999b) and *The social structures of the economy* (Bourdieu 2005) that Savage (2011) traces the roots of the (lost) urban sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.³³

At least three interrelated approaches to spatial inequality are found in the Bourdieusian toolkit:³⁴ first, the twin concepts of habitus and capitals allow understanding the social sorting of housing in an urban landscape; second, the idea of capital accumulation allows understanding how sites may facilitate the reproduction of inequality (also known as ecological effects or neighbourhood effects in the wider scholarly literature); and, finally, and perhaps most importantly, it offers insight into how the spatial may serve as a sign of *distinction*, influence habitus formation and give rise to classed identity-making. In turn, this phenomenon points to class formation processes due to sentiments of cohesion, appreciation and association within homogenous (or mixed) environments.

First, the Bourdieusian toolkit offers important insights into how physical space becomes socially stratified by means of the concepts of habitus and forms of capital (Bourdieu 2018). Admittedly, residential choices are stratified by levels of affordability – and thus economic capital – but qualitative studies reveal that residential choices are additionally stratified by other sorts of capital on which people draw in skilful housing strategies (Boterman 2012, Butler and Robson 2003b, Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015, Stillerman 2017). For instance, studying gentrifiers in London, Butler and Robson

³³ However, sensitivity to the spatial manifestations of “mental structures” was also pertinent in the earlier works, such as in the studies in Béarn and Algeria (Wacquant 2018:96–97).

³⁴ Naturally, these tools are by no means exclusively found in the works of Bourdieu. The interest in “site effects,” for instance, constitutes a wide-ranging research field under the heading of “neighbourhood effects,” in which sociologists, geographers and economists have engaged extensively.

(2003b:74–75) found that middle-class individuals often favoured “place over price”; that is, their residential strategy implied first deciding which area they wanted to live in – based on the symbolic value imprinted in the area – and then finding an apartment or housing that was affordable, given their economic means. Hence, they emphasize how classed characteristics are attached to a place, facilitating an idea of the area (“place-in-the-mind”) that allows deciding whether there is a likely congruence between the place (what they call “area habitus”) and the individual habitus, often driven by a desire to live in an area with “someone like us.” As seen, such desires are indeed part and parcel of the concept of habitus:

“Through the systematic ‘choices’ it makes among the places, events and people that might be frequented, the habitus tends to protect itself from crisis and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible, that is, a relatively constant universe of situations tending to reinforce its dispositions” (Bourdieu 1990a:61).

Hence, the notion of habitus helps in our understanding of how people’s inclinations to “feel at home” – and their corresponding discomfort with “feeling out of place” (Bourdieu 1999a:128) – together with different abilities to choose where to live in the city (capital possession) produce a stratified urban environment. For instance, Galster and Turner (2017) document a preference for homophilous residency in the Oslo region. They find that the likelihood of moving out of an area increases when the status composition of one’s neighbours changes and that this inclination to exit heterogeneous areas is the most persistent among the most affluent. In the Norwegian city of Stavanger, Lennart Rosenlund (2009) has unveiled how there is a systematic relationship between neighbourhood preferences (including taste *and* distaste) and the relative volume and composition of capital, thus demonstrating how the city constitutes a specific “universe of ‘stylistic possibles’” that govern the residential patterns along class divisions (Rosenlund 2017).³⁵ Moreover, Jarness (2013, 2017b) points to how different areas are systematically valued *and devalued* along inter- and intra-class divisions. In Jarness’ study, respondents with high volumes of cultural capital reported that they “feel at home” and that they avoid areas that were inversely preferred and disliked by respondents with much economic capital.

³⁵ For an analysis of the Danish city, Aalborg, see Faber et al. (2012: ch. 6), and for the city of Porto, Portugal, see Pereira (2018).

Second, Bourdieu draws attention to how the spatial may figure in strategies of capital accumulation and thus how a correspondence between physical and social space may facilitate “spatial profits” (Bourdieu 1999a:126). In particular, the importance of the social capital accumulated in one’s neighbourly environment, whether read as a source of maintaining disadvantage (such as the provision of “bad contacts”; MacDonald et al. 2005) or through accumulating social capital (Butler 2008, Devine 2008) that may be useful in the labour market or in educational strategies (Toft and Ljunggren 2016), is emphasized in the literature. This point is a key premise in my analysis of neighbourhood trajectories in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, but the idea also figures in *Mobility closure (article III)*, where modalities of neighbourhood careers are included as a source of social capital.³⁶ In the wider scholarly literature, neighbourhoods are increasingly acknowledged as important in interfering with individual life chances, as evident in the burgeoning literature on the topic of *neighbourhood effects* (see, for instance, Sharkey and Faber 2014, van Ham et al. 2012). In Oslo, independent associations are found between growing up in upper-class neighbourhoods and the likelihood of completing higher education, particularly so in elite fields of study, and becoming affiliated with the upper class in adulthood. Curiously, these associations are found to be comparatively stronger for working-class adolescents than for their more privileged peers, although the family environment naturally remains a more forceful predictor of structured life chances (Toft and Ljunggren 2016). In summary, then, the neighbourly environment is increasingly acknowledged as a site for capital accumulation.

Finally, and perhaps most influentially, recent applications of Bourdieusian concepts to spatial inequality have emphasized how housing choices may serve as signs of distinction and thus entail important implications for notions of belonging and senses of identification. Indeed, Bourdieu argues that housing entails pertinent signifying capacities, as “[t]his form of property expresses or betrays... the social being of its owners... but also reveals their taste” (Bourdieu 2005:19). Hence, housing may become a key sign of distinction, and physical space may, as such, be approached as “symbolic battlegrounds” (Rosenlund 2009:266). Given the different distributions of capital in

³⁶ The classification of resources into different blocks of forms of capital (economic, cultural, social etc.) is heuristic in the sense that, e.g., types of neighbourhood careers are *primarily* seen as reflecting different availabilities of social capital in one’s neighbourly environment, although they arguably reflect cultural capital in its embodied mode, as well. A similar caveat is emphasized in *Mobility closure (article III)*.

physical space and the corresponding different symbolic capitals attached to different places, Bourdieu argues that areas themselves are hierarchies in which sites may be defined as “a *position*, a rank in an order” (Bourdieu 1999a:123; see also Bourdieu 1996b, Bourdieu 2018). Indeed, physical space is no less of a battleground – with corresponding stakes and struggles – than any societal phenomenon, Bourdieu argues. The relationally defined hierarchy of sites may further serve to reproduce the general divisions among the classes, Bourdieu argues, as the physical imprint of social divisions may serve to *naturalize* differences (Bourdieu 1999a).

Scholars have emphasized how space is not just a physical entity in which social processes are played out; rather, spaces may become “constituents in class formation” (Savage 1996:69) that enable performative acts of signification (Benson and Jackson 2013) and become important in eliciting *classed* identities (Devine 2005, Savage 1993a, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2005). Through the constantly revised habitus, one’s physical milieu also helps in “transforming habitus through residence” (Benson 2014:3107). Indeed, in a much cited paragraph from *Globalization and belonging*, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst argue that space may have become of comparatively greater influence in the creation of classed identities compared to occupational attachment in the social division of labour. Savage et al. (2005:207) thus argue that “one’s residence is a crucial, possibly *the* crucial, identifier of who you are,” which places moving decisions “at the heart of contemporary battles over social distinction.”³⁷ Again, rather than being a dynamic particular to working-class communities, as often anticipated in the conventional reading of geographies of class mentioned above, the spatial confinement of affluence and class advantage also seems prevalent. For instance, Atkinson (2008:50) argues that the neighbourhood is now “a key space of identity formation, pride and defence – for the affluent as much as for the poor.”

The privileged classes are often characterized as having not only a greater capacity to choose where to live due to the sheer possession of higher levels of

³⁷ That residential strategies weigh in struggles over distinction and give rise to a sense of identity that may serve to reinforce intra-class cohesion should naturally not be equated with the idea that spatially embedded intra-class communities are sufficient for class formation, in the sense of a political force in society, in which perhaps the *linking* capacities of spaces are of greater importance (Savage 1996). Indeed, Savage (1996) suggests that the distinction between a spatialization of *dense ties* and of *wide-ranging ties* corresponds to the likelihood that classes form as distinctive class-based cultures and identities, as opposed to political mobilization and organizational linkage analogous to Goldthorpe’s distinction between demographic and socio-political class formation processes.

economic capital but also a greater capacity to influence the sites in which they reside. Hence, the service class is seen to influence “how its choices of residence function and look” (Thrift 1987:242). The ability of the middle classes – and, in particular, the more advantaged upper classes – to choose where to live in the city has facilitated what Savage and colleagues have coined “elective belonging” (Savage 2010b, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2005), which distinguishes the middle classes from the working class, whose residency is characterized by “dwelling.” For the middle classes, they claim, the symbolic identification attached to place becomes key to housing, as they always have the option to move when feeling “out of place,”³⁸ allowing moral rights over places to be exerted. Hence,

“The culturally engaged middle classes are highly vested in their place of residence, which they claim to have actively ‘chosen’, and which conveys great symbolic meaning, and a sense of their own self-worth, their identity, and a proclamation of who they are” (Savage 2010b:128).

A similar finding is evident in Silva and Wright (2009), who reveal how housing is an “evolving asset” for the privileged that signifies an expression of the self, while housing largely remains “functional” for the working classes. In Great Britain, it is those who are “culturally engaged” in a space of lifestyles who seem to be the most invested in place (Bennett et al. 2009, see also Savage 2010a). Scandinavian evidence corroborates the idea that those of the dominant class view the places where they live as an expression of self more often than the more deprived working class (Hauge and Kolstad 2007, Ottosen 2009). Hence, these approaches to housing emphasize a crucial insight into how class differences are spatialized; through the different capacities enabled by divergent stocks of capital – not only economic (the means to purchase a house) but also cultural, social, and, importantly, symbolic capital (the abilities to enforce the classifying principle of a site vis-à-vis others) – it is possible for spaces to become *strategic* elements in the battle for domination and to facilitate spatial “profits” and dispositional affinities within homogeneous milieux.

³⁸ Arguably, the conceptual pair of *dwelling* and *elective belonging* also elicits notions about a spatially fixed disadvantaged working class and a mobile existence on part of the affluent.

Putting class in its place

Notions of how the spatial may be important in elucidating processes of class identification and reinforce class privilege serve as a backdrop for my analysis in *Enduring contexts (article I)*. However, I seek to emphasize and empirically explore two additional insights found in the literature: first, a temporal aspect of *residential trajectories*, giving due weight to the importance of past experiences in eliciting classed belonging and the likelihood of “site effects,” and, second, the notion of *contextual mobility* rather than geographical mobility in and of itself, highlighting the importance of the classed affinity between spaces that may be geographically apart. In addition, I offer an empirical assessment of the alleged mobility of the privileged, in contrast to the fixed existence of the disadvantaged. I thus analyse spatial mobility not only in terms of changes in place types over time but also the level of physical mobility that characterizes the life courses of the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

First, the spatialization of class is arguably a matter of *process*. Benson (2014), for instance, has argued that residential *trajectories* should be taken into account when studying how notions of classed belonging may elicit processes of class formation. Sentiments of belonging to specific sites vary by past residential experiences (see also Southerton 2002), and studying residential trajectories helps in tapping into how spatial contexts may help transform and shape habitus, Benson (2014:3102) argues.

In housing studies, there have been explicit calls for further attentiveness to life-course processes in quantitative mappings of housing trajectories (Clark, Deurloo and Dieleman 2003, Coulter and Van Ham 2013, Coulter, van Ham and Findlay 2016, Lee, Smith and Galster 2017, Stovel and Bolan 2004, van Ham et al. 2014), and studies of “neighbourhood effects” are increasingly highlighting the importance of duration and exposure to place types (Miltenburg and van der Meer 2018, Musterd, Galster and Andersson 2012, Sharkey and Faber 2014, South et al. 2016, Wodtke, Harding and Elwert 2011, Wodtke 2013). To date, however, this research seems limited to mapping residential poverty. In *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I follow these studies’ emphasis on temporality, but I move beyond the “poverty paradigm.” I analyse residential pathways from adolescence into adulthood and map the *structures* of place types over

biographical time.³⁹ Doing so entails not only acknowledging the importance of past residential experiences but also recognizing that the timing, duration and order of past experiences may be important for how space relates to notions of belonging and facilitates “site effects.”

Second, spatialized processes of belonging do not presuppose the fixing of people to distinct places. Indeed, types of places may be reproduced and thus consistently “consumed,” having perhaps a profound influence on a sense of belonging and eliciting classed identities even when experiencing physical mobility.⁴⁰ Identification may thus be achieved through “bonds that relate the identity of a person to the identity of a *type* of settlement” (Feldman, cited in Benson 2014: 3101, italics added). This idea is crucially highlighted in Patrick Sharkey’s notion of “contextual mobility,” which I employ in *Enduring contexts (article I)*. Distinguishing between physical continuity and contextual immobility – where the former corresponds to the classical “fixing to place,” while the latter entails the process through which types of places are reproduced over time – he finds that even though specific places may undergo change, individuals’ socio-economic environment is inherited over the generations with remarkable persistency. Sharkey primarily links this persistency to the inheritance of *poverty* and *racial* inequality. For instance, he documents that out of all the African-Americans who grew up in the poorest quarter of U.S. neighbourhoods, more than 70% reside in equally poor contexts in adulthood (Sharkey 2008, Sharkey 2013). According to Bourdieu, the reproduction of contexts over time may signify the ways in which the spatial figures in classed struggles:

“Struggles for appropriation of space can take an *individual* form: *spatial mobility* within or between generations – as with relocations in both directions between the capital and the provinces, or successive addresses within the hierarchized space of the capital – is a good indicator of success or reverses in these struggles, and more generally, of the whole social trajectory...” (Bourdieu 1999a:128).

Third, in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I also seek to empirically tackle the notion that there is a difference in the degree to which the dominant and the dominated are spatially fixed or geographically mobile. This notion is echoed in studies of how the

³⁹ As changes in the housing market may facilitate different conditions for “spatialized” class formation (Benson and Jackson 2017), I study three successive cohorts.

⁴⁰ For analyses that specifically examine geographical distances in geographical mobility patterns, see (Devine et al. 2003, Savage 1988, Savage, Stovel and Bearman 2001).

dominated class in France is *chained to place* (Bourdieu 1999a) or how “socially excluded” young English adults experience only a very localized housing career (MacDonald et al. 2005). I first analyse differences in place types (contexts) over the life course by means of SA and cluster analysis. I then map these contextual mobility types onto physical space, uncovering the degree of geographical distance/proximity between them over time by using both geographical coordinates and yearly estimates of segregation levels.

However, we should be careful in deducing from observed segregation to assumptions of actual inter-class interaction and/or seclusion. Even if segregation levels are shown to be fairly low in an urban environment, interaction patterns may still be significantly classed through social bonds such as friendships and acquaintances or by strategies of avoidance of disadvantageous neighbours. In the words of Talja Blokland and Mike Savage (2008:10), “[p]hysical proximity provides local relationships with a specific context, but proximity only does not guarantee that the relationship will be formed.” The classical work by Elias and Scotson (1994) offers, for instance, a forceful analysis of practices of inclusion and exclusion in a shared environment based on residential seniority.⁴¹ Indeed, socially mixed environments may still serve as sites for careful management of the “mixture” of social contact.

The notion of elective belonging, for instance, also entails a particular stance towards social interaction; “Elective belongers try to “bracket out” those who live in the place” (Savage 2010b:110).⁴² Extending the notion of *elective* belonging, Watt (2009) introduces a concept of *selective* belonging, emphasizing how the dominant class may both actively belong to selective elements of a space and “disaffiliate” with others (see also Atkinson 2006). It is frequently emphasized that parents may seek to seclude the social milieu of their children and ensure a homophilous socialization by sending their children to private schools rather than to the public schools available in their social surroundings (Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz 1995, Butler and Hamnett 2007, Poupeau, François and Couratier 2007). In mixed environments, parents are found to be much

⁴¹ See also Bourdieu (1999a:128). For a more recent emphasis on boundary drawing demarcating “the established” and “the outsiders” based on residential seniority – as discursively articulated through the notion of *nostalgia* – see Blokland (2003).

⁴² See also Butler and Robson (2003a, 2003b) for an analysis of the various ways in which gentrifiers in different local London contexts engage in strategies of inclusion in or withdrawal from local educational institutions.

more likely to withdraw their children from the local school, lending the affluent a “capacity to ‘partially exit’” without openly withdrawing from the area (Andreotti, Le Galès and Fuentes 2013:594). Notwithstanding these caveats, the degree to which one’s social milieu is persistently reproduced over time arguably taps into the likelihood of encounters and durable exposure to homogeneous surroundings suggestively adds to intensify dispositional affinities and intra-class cohesion.

Thus far, I have argued that temporal unfolding is an important element in studying the likelihood of groupness within the upper class. Relatedly, I have argued that time is also key to analysing spatial inequalities, and I have highlighted the importance of studying concentrated privilege alongside concentrated disadvantage. To paraphrase Giddens, I have highlighted how biographical accounts of the privileged need to complement “proximate” sources of class structuration with “mediate” sources derived from class immobility. In the next chapter, I turn to the third point of departure for this dissertation and elaborate the theoretical backbone of class fractions flowing from multiple forms of capital.

5 Class: a multidimensional structure

A key property of Bourdieu's *Distinction* is a multidimensional conception of the class structure, whereby mobility patterns and dispositional divisions are highlighted as following both horizontal and vertical divisions.⁴³ In conventional studies of class mobility, meanwhile, such horizontal movements seem to be undertheorized (e.g., disclaimed as mere *situs* differences), are suggested to be negligible (e.g., due to empirical research), or remain simply undetected (e.g., due to a uniform conception of the class structure).

The aim of this chapter is to detail upper-class fractions following the ideas advanced by Bourdieu and to discuss the conceptual approach employed in this dissertation. First, I point to some of the conceptual disagreements about the notion of cultural capital and the Bourdieusian “joint assessment” of class and status, primarily as articulated by John Goldthorpe and his colleagues, given the dominance of his analytical approach in the field of mobility studies. Second, I briefly point to studies that have attempted to put the capital composition principle to the test – often by designs that analyse the existence of a structural homology between a space of positions and a space of position-takings (often lifestyle and taste differences). Third, I proceed to summarize the key debates and empirical findings regarding the existence of a multidimensional class structure in Norway. This review seeks to justify both the study

⁴³ Naturally, an emphasis placed on both “horizontal” and “vertical” movements in the stratification structure was already key to classical works, such as Pitirim Sorokin's analyses in the 1920s (Sorokin 1959). However, Bourdieu's approach to multidimensionality, which deviates methodologically and theoretically from Sorokin (Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2004:165), is the general framework that is followed in this study.

of an upper class in an allegedly “egalitarian country” and the analyses of upper class fractions. Finally, I present how upper-class fractions are conceptualized in this dissertation.

Debates on class, status and forms of capital

To recapitulate, a key idea in Bourdieu’s scholarship is that the stratification order (based on different amounts and types of capitals) stratifies dispositions. Hence, the “objective” structure of difference is echoed (*homologous*) in a symbolic space of differences mediated via the habitus. The tastes and lifestyles of the dominant class are characterized by a sense of distinction through which the dominant class harvests symbolic profits at the expense of the tastes of the dominated classes. In short, Bourdieu seeks to “rethink” or overcome Weber’s distinction between class and status (Bourdieu 1984:xii). Thus, the symbolic dimensions of lifestyle and taste differentials are integral to conceptualizing class dominance.

Among class analysts, meanwhile, the integration of “status” and “class” has also been criticized. John Goldthorpe, for instance, has not only offered a critique of the notion of cultural capital (Goldthorpe 2007) but also of the rejoinder of class and status (Goldthorpe 2008:352–53). According to Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, 2007), the Weberian distinction between these two dimensions of stratification should be kept analytically separate. Restricting the concept of class to the causal components affecting life chances through labour markets and “production units,” they maintain that status reflects perceived “social honour,” which is articulated by different lifestyles and patterns of association. They proceed to illustrate how class and status are analytically distinct by pointing to empirical evidence that shows how class has more explanatory power in predicting inequalities in economic outcomes whereas status has more explanatory power in predicting inequalities in consumption. For political outcomes, they find that class predicts traditional left-right stances whereas status predicts differences in libertarian-authoritarian stances. “Merging” class and status into one multidimensional structure of difference – such as in the Bourdieusian approach – thus fails to account for these separate logics, they contend.

However, the ways that Chan and Goldthorpe conceptualize the “status order” seem vulnerable to conceptual obscurity; the status order is measured as the ordering of occupations based on the degree of similarity of friendship patterns. That friendships patterns should accurately display divisions in honour seems to be the least contested (as noted by Le Roux et al. (2008), they resemble more what Bourdieu dubs *social capital*), and this conceptualization seems to conflate what Giddens (1981:109) has identified as two dimensions of Weber’s notion of status. On the one hand, it reflects social differentiation based on “honour”; on the other hand, it also points to “groupness” founded in the sphere of consumption. These two elements of *status* may in fact not overlap, and the latter – dubbed *distributive groupings* – is also integral to processes of class structuration, according to Giddens. Whether or not Chan and Goldthorpe would agree with the latter statement, it remains evident that their theoretical insistence on status, as distinct from class, nonetheless points to the former type, i.e., reflecting inequality in honour, whereas their empirical strategy arguably picks up on “groupness.” Moreover, as pointed out by John Scott, whereas Weber emphasized the importance of mobility closure for processes of social class formation,

“...his argument clearly pointed to more widely than this to other demographic processes. Intermarriage and restrictions on marriage, informal interaction, shared participation in social activities, and the overlapping occupancy of distinct class situations are all relevant to the formation as they are all elements in the demographic circulation of people among class situations” (Scott 1996:30).

The Bourdieusian suggestion of “overcoming” the class-status divide, meanwhile, relates not only to how the space of lifestyles is homologous to a space of positions but also to how the cultural domain features as a causal component in maximizing life chances and solidifying class reproduction. Thus, the opposition between economic and cultural capital relates to different modes of begetting advantage, depending on analytically different logics and “marketplaces” (Flemmen 2013b). The dominant class scheme available to date – also figuring as the official measure in the EU (Rose and Harrison 2014) – which is anchored in the Goldthorpean notion of class, does not recognize such fractional divisions within classes. In the studies of social mobility by Goldthorpe and colleagues, horizontal differences are briefly mentioned and primarily linked to what he calls *situs* differences. Goldthorpe (1987:341) argues, for instance, that one of the consequences of the expansion of the service class in the class structure was its internal heterogeneity along *situs* divisions – pointing to differences

between occupational groups and sector cleavages – but the implications of such heterogeneity is to a lesser extent spelled out. The validity of disclaiming the importance of such heterogeneity for class processes, however, seems not altogether clear; as argued by Atkinson (2015:55), such divisions are often linked to educational differences, which, in a Weberian sense, are deemed to be of great importance in differentiating the causal component that stratifies life chances in the labour market. Such differences, therefore, should perhaps be of interest in Goldthorpe’s “Weberian” approach to class. Others have pointed to how Goldthorpe’s service class is too unidimensional (Savage 1994:73). Empirically, the service class in the U.K. is discovered to be internally differentiated along different forms of assets – organizational position, property and cultural knowledge – and claims for recognizing such heterogeneity have been made accordingly (Savage et al. 1992).

Although within-class differences are by no means unrecognized in the scholarly literature – Marx emphasized, for instance, internal divisions within the bourgeoisie such as between financiers and industrialists (see e.g., Marx 1991) – the inherently antagonistic relations between class fractions emphasized by Bourdieu seem less accentuated. As seen, the relative weight of cultural and economic capital thus allows recognizing the tensions – and the struggle – not only between those with more or less capital but also along those whose capital composition relies more or less on a specific kind. Thus, class antagonisms are also acknowledged within classes pertaining to divisions along class fractions. For Bourdieu, the different poles of the field of power are at once antagonistic, engaging in struggle over the dominant form of capital and the legitimate strategy for reproduction, but also united in their shared “illusio” in the field and in an “organic solidarity” due to a division of labour between its constituents subfields. This organic relationship is, for instance, exemplified in top-level bureaucrats’ and economic agents’ increasing reliance on the educational system to legitimize their power, but the “organic solidarity” is also lubricated by family ties that extend the different fractions of the field of power (Bourdieu 1996a:386–89).

Putting capital composition to the test

The influence of Bourdieu on class analysis – and especially British class analysis – can hardly be underestimated. The ideas of forms of capital, lifestyle

differentiation, symbolic power, relational struggles, and habitus and modes of recognition and misrecognition fostered a new “cultural turn” in class analysis (Devine and Savage 2005). However, the growing influence of Bourdieusian concepts has also spurred questions about the level of applicability of Bourdieu’s country- and historically specific constructs to other temporal and social contexts.

As seen, economic capital and cultural capital were discovered to constitute the two principal forms of capital that structured the social space in the French society of the 1970s. However, it is important to keep in mind that Bourdieu’s “model” does not presuppose that these specific forms of capital are just as dominant in structuring a multidimensional structure elsewhere. Indeed, Bourdieu quite explicitly warned against the uncritical importation of empirical and conceptual particularities across time and contexts – dubbing it “cultural imperialism” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999) – and advocated empirical explorations of alternative articulations of class domination in other societies.⁴⁴ He argued, for instance, for a “Soviet variant” of social space, in which *political capital* was likely to hold significant value in the societal struggle for domination (Bourdieu 1998b).

Despite these efforts to suggest alternative forms of capital that may be profound in structuring the social space in particular countries, most “social space” applications in the style of Bourdieu suffice to empirically analyse whether the two forms of capital – cultural and economic – cement a multidimensional structure along the volume and composition of capital. This phenomenon is primarily assessed by analysing whether a social space has such features and whether there exists a *homology* between this structure and a structure of position-takings, most notably lifestyle and taste variations.⁴⁵

In Great Britain, for instance, the application of Bourdieu’s spatial account of class has primarily been put to the test in the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project and the more recent GBCS. In the first project, the capital composition

⁴⁴ According to de Saint Martin (2015:23–24), this point was stated more explicitly in the original study *Anatomie du goût* than in *La Distinction*.

⁴⁵ A more recent study even reanalyses the material from *Distinction* to statistically assess whether divisions between class fractions – i.e., along horizontal divisions – were indeed statistically significant in Bourdieu’s *Distinction*. The authors conclude by demonstrating that Bourdieu’s claim of the importance of class fractions indeed is statistically sound and that there are significant divisions in the taste variations between the upper-class and upper-middle-class fractions, with these divisions being linked to cultural capital (Brisson and Bianchi 2017).

principle was contested as a structuring feature in the formation of middle-class lifestyle and consumption patterns; the key opposition between industrialists and intellectuals – uncovered by Bourdieu – was not seen to be a salient feature in cultural position-takings (Bennett et al. 2009, see also Savage 2010a). Instead, the professional-executive branches of the middle class were somewhat homogeneous in their cultural position-takings. Only at the fourth axis in their MCA was capital composition seen to be of some importance. The GBCS, meanwhile, made the assessment of the homology thesis somewhat more difficult to study, as it included cultural position-takings in the operational definition of the social space (Atkinson 2017b). The validity of the capital composition principle in structuring a homology between a space of positions and a space of position-takings in the U.K., however, is suggested in a number of empirical works by Will Atkinson (Atkinson 2017a, Atkinson 2017b). Atkinson argues that the CCSE project was unable to detect the usefulness of the capital composition principle due to specific constructions of genre categories, the emphasis placed on the frequency of consumption patterns, bias in the types of tastes available in the survey, and the dependence on an occupational scheme lacking attentiveness to horizontal divisions (Atkinson 2017b:4–5).

The homology thesis has also been assessed in other national contexts, and structural correspondence between a space of positions and a space of position-takings has been observed in different societies. This result has been the case in countries as different as Denmark (for the city of Aalborg) (Prieur, Rosenlund and Skjøtt-Larsen 2008, Skjøtt-Larsen 2012), Serbia (Cvetičanin and Popescu 2011), and Belgium (for the region of Flanders) (De Keere 2017, Roose, van Eijck and Lievens 2014).

Structures of class and forms of capital in Norway

Any study of class mobility within a national context should be sensitive to the likelihood that the findings derived in other societies may not be transferable to the specific case under study. In the Norwegian case, sociologists have questioned the applicability of the capital composition principle, often by pointing to the structural differences between Norwegian and French power structures and by emphasizing the

egalitarian features of Norwegian history and contemporary society (Danielsen 1998, Skarpenes and Sakslind 2010, Skarpenes 2007).⁴⁶

There is, however, a growing literature that corroborates the notion of a multidimensional structure of class in Norway. As the question of the usefulness of acknowledging horizontal divisions in Norwegian opportunity structures taps into an important premise of this study, I will highlight how previous research has laid a fertile groundwork for studying class fractions in Norway, paying particular attention to the surge of studies on upper-class dynamics. Pointing to the importance of capital-specific reproduction and the evidence of a homology between positions and position-takings, my aim is to further formulate how this study contributes to existing knowledge by including temporal sensitivity in the study of upper-class fractions in Norway. The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows: first, I review studies on class mobility in Norway by emphasizing that the question of whether Norway constitutes a *class society* in the first case has been a topic of dispute. Second, I point to newer studies of class that tend to be concerned with both a renewed interest in the upper echelons of the class structure and the class fractions flowing from the notion of multiple forms of capital. Subsequently, I specify how this study contributes to advancing our knowledge of upper-class formation. In the final section of this chapter, I present the conceptual definition of an upper class that is employed in this study. I briefly discuss how this conceptualization relates to the notion of elites and acknowledges the more conventional class analytical interest in property and ownership.

Class mobility in Norway

In general, there seems to have been only scant attention to mapping the patterns of class mobility in Norwegian sociology. In particular, the upper class seems to be studied to a lesser extent than in other European countries such as the U.K. (e.g., Giddens 1974, Scott 1982, Scott 1997). One likely reason for this situation may be the historically weak standing of a Norwegian bourgeoisie. As an aspect of what has been

⁴⁶ The argument against taste *distinctions* in Norwegian society fostered a number of critical remarks suggesting both conceptual and methodological flaws in studying how distinctions may be articulated in an interview setting with middle-class respondents (Andersen and Mangset 2012, Hjellbrekke, Jarness and Korsnes 2014, Jarness 2013, Jarness 2017a, Skogen et al. 2008a). See Skarpenes and Sakslind (2008) for a response to some of these arguments and Skogen et al. (2008b) for a reply to this response.

dubbed “democratic capitalism,” the historian Sejersted (1993) has pointed to how the lack of a strong national industrial and financial bourgeoisie – as well as the relatively large influx of foreign-owned industry – meant that the state had to play a “compensatory role” in facilitating Norwegian industrialized capitalism during the second half of the 19th century. Thus, the state acted as both entrepreneur and industrial strategist in the absence of national “organized capital.” In addition to a historically weak bourgeoisie, Norway has not had a nobility in a resembling manner, such as in the neighbouring country, Sweden, and sentiments of egalitarianism seem particularly persistent among Norwegians – also in comparison to their neighbouring Swedes (Hjellbrekke, Jarness and Korsnes 2014).

While few and far between, there have been some important efforts aiming to map mobility within the Norwegian class structure. A novel study by Ramsøy (1977) was one of the first to implement the log-linear mobility table, and a key finding of hers was the stability in father-son mobility for the cohorts born in 1921, 1931, and 1941. Later studies, however, suggested increased openness over time. Of crucial importance were the two books *Klassestruktur og klassekiller* [class structure and class divisions] (Colbjørnsen, Hernes and Knudsen 1982) and *Klassesamfunnet på hell* [the class society on the wane] (Colbjørnsen et al. 1987), which were affiliated with Wright’s comparative study of national variations in mobility patterns. Based on empirical analyses of class inequalities in terms of income, mobility patterns and levels of class consciousness, the authors proclaimed the attenuation of Norway *as a class society* and the coming of meritocracy.⁴⁷ These conclusions were based on findings including weak sentiments of class consciousness among the working class; small income differences between the classes when controlling for, inter alia, occupation and education; and more predictive power of education rather than class origin in explaining class destinations. The latter finding was interpreted to indicate the advent of meritocratic selection criteria. Resonating well with the “death-of-class” literature that received much appraisal around the same period (e.g., Bauman 1982, Bell 1976, Clark and Lipset 1991), the authors thus predicted the withering away of *classed* opportunity structures in Norway.

⁴⁷ See Elstad (1982) for a critique of their conceptualization of class in their first book *klassestruktur og klassekiller*. Elstad documents how the usage of subjective indicators of autonomy, power and influence included nurses, teachers, and store clerks in the managerial class. Elstad argues that the corresponding finding of small class divisions thus seems less surprising.

Multiple sociologists objected to these bold claims, and debates followed (Birkelund 1996a, Birkelund 1996b, Elstad 1982, Elstad 1983, Gooderham and Ringdal 1995, Gooderham and Ringdal 1996). Without rehearsing all the theoretical and methodological objections to this book, it suffices to underline two points that were established at the outset of this introduction; first, structures of class may be of societal importance without the existence of class consciousness, and second, the educational system may be important in mediating, rather than obstructing, class privilege. The notion that Norway is particularly equal, with a corresponding lesser need to apprehend class inequalities in Norway, nevertheless seems evident in the scholarly debate. In the large comparative studies of class mobility during the 1990s and early 2000s, for instance, societal openness rather than closure is often emphasized when estimating Norwegian class mobility (Breen 2004, Ringdal 2004) – a recurrent finding among Scandinavian countries in comparative designs (Beller and Hout 2006, Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). The relative openness in Scandinavian countries is often seen in the context of a social democratic welfare regime with a generous welfare state, centralized wage bargaining, strong unions, extensive taxation and a “compromise” between capital and labour (Engelstad 2002).

Conceptually the Norwegian class structure has been approached in different ways. Whereas the early studies of mobility often adhere to either the neo-Weberian framework of Goldthorpe (e.g., Ringdal 1994, Ringdal 2004) or the neo-Marxian framework of Wright (e.g., Ahrne and Leiulfstrud 1988, Colbjørnsen, Hernes and Knudsen 1982, Colbjørnsen et al. 1987),⁴⁸ Marianne Nordli Hansen’s (1995) study, *Class and inequality in Norway*, was one of the first to unpack the horizontal dimensions along the forms of capital in Norwegian opportunity structures. Approaching the class structure as a multidimensional phenomenon encapsulating both vertical divisions and horizontal divisions, Hansen develops a class scheme of 10 occupational groupings pertaining to the level and volume of cultural and economic capital. She underlines how classes constitute cultural communities and documents class inequalities among the post-war cohort in their levels of educational attainment, occupational success and marriage and divorce patterns. Hansen emphasizes that the horizontal differences between occupations primarily relying on cultural capital (e.g.,

⁴⁸ An even earlier study in the Marxian tradition was offered by Hans I. Kleven (1965) in the book *Klassestrukturen i det norske samfunnet* [the class structure in Norwegian society].

the academics) are distinct from those between occupations primarily relying on economic capital (e.g., top-level managers and chief executives). Rather than the withering away of classed opportunity structures, Hansen demonstrates the salience of class – and class fraction – inequalities in Norway.

Recent studies of upper-class fractions

Although Scandinavian countries have often served as “outliers” in international comparisons, there are reasons to believe that the comparable *equality* documented may be “a phenomenon of the mid-twentieth century” (Jonsson 2004:248) and that Scandinavian countries have witnessed a turn to increased inequality in more recent times. In Norway, the late 1970s and early 1980s were characterized by a number of important shifts in national policies including the deregulation of key societal arenas such as the credit market and the housing market. In the decades that followed, the public sector both became smaller due to privatization and witnessed a turn in governance through the implementation of new public management (Brevik 2001, Tranøy 1994). In tandem with these political shifts away from the state-regulated social democratic policies, inequality became intensified.

Christensen, Fløtten and Hippe (2006) report, for instance, that the 5,000 richest individuals in Norway experienced an enlargement of their incomes by 213% from 1993 to 2004, primarily due to the growth in capital gains. Analysing top income since 1875, Aaberge and Atkinson (2010) show how a steady decline in economic inequality after the post-war era was reversed in the early 1990s, facilitating large discrepancies in the Norwegian income distribution, primarily concentrated at the very top. The concentration of economic capital among the most privileged is also evident in Hansen’s (2012) analysis of private wealth in the period 1993–2009. She documents that private wealth is even more skewed than income, especially when analysing financial wealth.⁴⁹ For example, after the mid-2000s, the wealthiest 0.1% owned approximately 30% of total financial wealth. Hansen (2014) also documents that rather than being occupationally active and being “working rich,” the wealthy elite consist of rentiers who disproportionately hail from very affluent origins and whose wealth tends

⁴⁹ Hansen (2012: 217) measures financial wealth as bank deposits, stocks and securities and taxable foreign wealth.

to be inherited. The level of inheritance among the utmost wealthy in Norway has also been increasing in recent years, and Hansen thus suggests that these findings in combination challenge conceptions of an egalitarian society. Instead, she suggests the advent of “a new Nordic model” in which “egalitarian tendencies in the general population coexist with thriving elites and capitalist dynasties” (Hansen 2014:478).

In more recent years, there has been a surge in studies of elites and the upper class in Norway (many of which are reported in the book by Korsnes, Hansen and Hjellbrekke 2014).⁵⁰ A general finding seems to be that elite recruitment is very restricted, as class origin heavily influences the likelihood of accessing the top. For some societal sectors, such as public administration, this recruitment is primarily mediated through educational credentials (Klausen 2002, Mastekaasa 2004). A number of studies on the upper class also highlight class fractional divisions in the upper class, following the Bourdieusian notion of multiple forms of capital. For instance, extending Hansen’s early emphasis on capital-specific reproduction in Norway, I, together with colleagues, have uncovered class fraction inheritance at the upper rungs of the class structure; not only is the likelihood of recruitment into the upper class stratified by the parental volume of capital, but the relative likelihood of being affiliated with any specific class fraction of the upper class is persistently linked to the type of capital dominant in one’s class origins. The sons and daughters of fractions rich in economic capital are relatively more likely to enter the economic fractions than the cultural fractions and vice versa (Flemmen et al. 2017, Toft and Flemmen 2018).

The economic fraction of the upper class has not only been thoroughly analysed in Hansen’s (2012, 2014) research on income and wealth accumulation; Flemmen (2012) has also utilized MCA to uncover the key lines of divisions in the Norwegian economic upper class. He finds that, first, the men and women who were affiliated with this fraction in 2005 are internally differentiated between “the newcomers” – hailing from less privileged origins – and “the established” – who hail from privileged origins and who tend to have high educational levels. Second, the economic upper class in 2005 is divided between proprietors (as indicated by their sources of income), who also tend to have parents in business, and employees (i.e., receiving salaries), whose parents tended

⁵⁰ An increasing attention to elites and the upper class is also apparent in the other Scandinavian countries (see, e.g., Björklund, Roine and Waldenström 2012, Ellersgaard 2015, Ellersgaard, Larsen and Munk 2013, Gustavsson and Melldahl 2018, Larsen 2015, Melldahl 2017, Olsen et al. 2014).

to have occupational affiliations outside of the business world. Together, these studies thus underline the importance of property ownership in understanding how the capitalist class is reproduced over generations.⁵¹ Property ownership is also suggested to have implications for ideological variation within the Norwegian private business elite, and Gulbrandsen (2005) has documented that owners of large private firms are politically and ideologically more conservative than are employed leaders, although the elites in Norway generally tend to express support for the Norwegian welfare state in survey research (Gulbrandsen and Engelstad 2005).

A number of studies have also analysed recruitment patterns into the elite professions – a class fraction that is typically characterized by high volumes of capital but of a more “balanced kind.” Among the elite professions, restricted recruitment over time, despite educational expansion, seems to be the general finding, often driven by profession-specific reproduction over the generations (Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2004, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2014, Strømme and Hansen 2017). In recent years, the relative mobility seems to have decreased, and the evidence suggests more field-specific reproduction than before. Such “dynastic” tendencies seem particularly evident among lawyers, doctors and engineers, suggestively signifying the importance of industry-specific forms of social capital. The social capital that is derived from having parents in business, on the other hand, is suggestively linked to capital conversion, as the intergenerational outflow from business to other elite branches is comparatively high (Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2014).

Another general finding in the literature seems to be that parental capital of a specific kind begets capital-specific returns, including when fraction-specific reproduction is not prevalent. The sons and daughters of the economic upper class receive systematically higher incomes than their upper-class peers, both within the elite professions and in the economic upper class (Flemmen 2009, Hansen 2001). The persistence of this type of “class ceiling” (Friedman, Laurison and Miles 2015, Laurison and Friedman 2016) is also evident in the cultural upper-class fraction. Ljunggren (2016), for instance, has demonstrated that the sons and daughters of the economic fraction who engage in the cultural field reap systematically greater economic rewards

⁵¹ For similar arguments in other national contexts, see, e.g., Waitkus and Groh-Samberg (2018) and Gustavsson and Melldahl (2018).

than successful artists and cultural elite members of the cultural fraction. Not only economic capital, such as income, but also the attainment of cultural capital seems to be stratified by the forms of capital in one's family of origin. Within the educational system, Andersen and Hansen (2012) find that there are systematic differences in educational performance; not only are these differences patterned by capital volume, but fractions rich in cultural capital also perform systematically better than those rich in economic capital. Moreover, such class inequalities are found to be more persistent in oral exams than in written exams, which is argued to indicate that students rich in cultural capital exhibit embodied dispositions that are recognized in face-to-face examination to a larger extent than anonymous written exams.

In addition to these important studies on specific segments of the upper echelons of the class structure, Hjellbrekke, Korsnes and colleagues have dissected the relational divisions within the Norwegian *field of power* in a number of studies (Denord et al. 2011, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2003, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2005, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes 2009, Hjellbrekke et al. 2007). These studies draw explicitly on a Bourdieusian notion of a field of power – consisting of the relational space that differentiates “...between the agents who possess a sufficient amount of one of the different kinds of capital to be in a position to dominate the corresponding field” (Bourdieu 1998a:34). Analysing survey data derived from the Norwegian Power and Democracy Project's Leadership Study 2000 (Gulbrandsen et al. 2002), the main findings of these analyses may be summarized as follows:

- elite networks and board memberships are “inherited” and differentiate between “the newcomers” and “the established” according to the privilege in one's family origin;
- tendencies towards marriage homogamy in terms of both elite networks and educational profiles are persistent;
- some “sectors” are more open than others: the religious, judicial and academic domains are the least accessible, and the political domain is the most open;
- the field of power is structured according to the following oppositions:⁵²

⁵² Interestingly, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes (2018) also show that the structure of the Norwegian field of power is homologous to the structure *and placement* of attendees at the Norwegian central bank's annual dinner. They thus argue that the dinner itself serves as an important site for the consecration of symbolic power.

- along the volume of economic capital, which is also related to inherited social capital in business,
 - between “the established” – who tend to rely on educational capital – and “the newcomers” – who are more likely to accumulate political capital, and
 - the opposition between capital composition comprising inherited economic capital and high educational credentials, on the one hand, and inherited social capital, on the other hand;
- intersectional circulation is suggestively linked to political capital; and
 - an interconnected core of elite networks, characterized by multipositionality and intersectionality, is identified as comprising individuals who partake in the “tripartite” system (i.e., positions that are engaged in the corporatist structure of the economy).

Regarding gender, Hjellbrekke and Korsnes (2016) find that women in the field of power are internally divided among a) upwardly mobile “newcomers,” b) “established” inheritors and c) “meritocrats” with high volumes of educational capital. Despite being underrepresented in the “field of power,” the divisions among women appear more clear-cut than those among men. The underrepresentation of women is also documented in studies that I have conducted with colleagues (Flemmen et al. 2017, Toft and Flemmen 2018); we find that women are particularly underrepresented in the economic fraction of the upper class and tend to be recruited into the cultural fraction of the upper class. Analysing gender dynamics in both class origins (i.e., mothers’ and fathers’ class) and class destinations (i.e., sons’ and daughters’ class), we find no systematic differences in analysing mothers’ and fathers’ class. However, we find that daughters seem to be more stratified by parental economic and cultural resources than sons, although this relationship is only evident in conjunction with specific fractions of the upper class. It is only by recruitment into the economic or the balanced fraction of the upper class that there seems to be a gender-specific payoff in parental capital. Within the cultural fraction, parental capital seems to engender a “gender-neutral” advantage (Toft and Flemmen 2018).

These studies of upper-class and elite dynamics arguably pinpoint the usefulness of approaching the horizontal divisions flowing from multiple forms of capital in Norway. Moreover, not only are horizontal divisions evident in the differences in opportunity structures, but the relationship between a social space and a space of position-takings – the question of the existence of homologies – is also assessed (for a review of “Scandinavian experiences,” see Hjellbrekke and Prieur 2018, Rosenlund 2015). In Norway, both vertical and horizontal divisions are discovered to structure political stances (Flemmen and Haakestad 2017), lifestyle differentiations (Flemmen, Jarness and Rosenlund 2017, Jarness 2017a, Rosenlund 2009) and residential patterns (Rosenlund 2009, Rosenlund 2017). Thus, the differences in capital seem to generate different modes of existence that become manifest in outlooks, preferences, likes and dislikes as well as one's orientation in physical space. Given the persistency of egalitarian sentiments, however, it is suggested that traits of cultural distinction are often manoeuvred in a manner that upholds sentiments of moral egalitarianism; while difference is strategically downplayed in social encounters, “strategies of condensation” are conveyed privately. Thus, distinctions may harvest symbolic profits below the “radar” of the moral framework of egalitarianism (Jarness and Friedman 2017). Qualitative research on the subjectivities of the cultural fraction of the upper class also finds that elite identification is articulated in the context of a moral repertoire of “egalitarianism,” constituting an “elitist egalitarianism” (Ljunggren 2017).

Some evidence suggests that the capital composition principle has become increasingly important in Norway during the last three decades. For instance, studying the Norwegian city of Stavanger, Lennart Rosenlund has empirically revealed how a capital composition principle became increasingly manifest as a structuring factor in the distribution of both capitals and lifestyle differences over time (Rosenlund 2009); while this principle was undetectable in the 1970s data, though less so in 1980, it was not until 1990 that it constituted an important dimension in the MCA. There is also evidence that suggests that the patterns of spatial segregation between cultural and economic fractions are increasing in Oslo, starting from the beginning of the 2000s (Ljunggren and Andersen 2015).

In summary, a significant amount of Norwegian evidence demonstrates the usefulness of introducing capital specificity when studying class divisions. Building on

these studies, my aim is to contribute to this literature by highlighting the temporal endurance of the principle of capital specificity in addition to adding more temporal sensitivity to the study of mobility more generally. Indeed, multidimensional accounts of class are often limited to the two-dimensional structure of the volume and composition of capital. I thus contribute to this tradition by highlighting the third – often forgotten – dimension of social space: class trajectory. As seen in chapter 3, the theoretical underpinnings for accounting for how fractional reproduction comes about and the implications of class immobility for dispositional affinities rest on temporal unfolding. However, in resemblance to most studies of social mobility, the existing literature on capital-specific mobility barriers relies on analysing temporal snapshots. Methodologically, I also contribute to the body of work by suggesting a statistical design that adds more processual sensitivity to the mapping of relational patterns.

Conceptualizing upper-class fractions

In this dissertation, rather than *elites*, the concepts of *upper class* and *upper-class fractions* are employed, as I wish to engage with the more general discussions of class mobility and class formation. This employment of these concepts also reflects an acknowledgement that the concept of *elite*, as derived from classical elite scholars such as Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels, entails a primary concern with *rule* (Bottomore 1993, Hartmann 2007:5–22).⁵³ However, the employed conceptualization of upper-class fraction as flowing from different forms of capital has similarities with more widely defined understandings of elites. As I point to in *Upper-class trajectories (article II)*, Khan’s (2012:362) definition of elites as “those who have vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource” sits easily with this understanding of upper-class fractions, and whenever the concept of elite is employed in the dissertation, it points to this more inclusive definition.

There appear to be few available class schemes that explicitly differentiate between upper-class fractions and that acknowledge horizontal divisions at the top strata of the class structure. For instance, by means of latent class analysis, the architects

⁵³ A similar definition is evident in the neo-Weberian separation of class situations and command situations, where the latter point to relationships of authority (Aron 1950a, Aron 1950b, Scott 1996, Scott 2003:156–59).

behind the GBCS sketched “a new model of social class” that was explicitly guided by a Bourdieusian recognition of multiple forms of capital in stratifying a spatial topology of the class structure. However, one of the main findings was a polarized class structure along a vertical dimension, separating one “unified” precariat from a “unified” wealth elite or elite class (Savage et al. 2015a, Savage et al. 2015b, Savage et al. 2013). Thus, the potential horizontal divisions separating the top fractions of the class structure are unaccounted for in this model of social class.

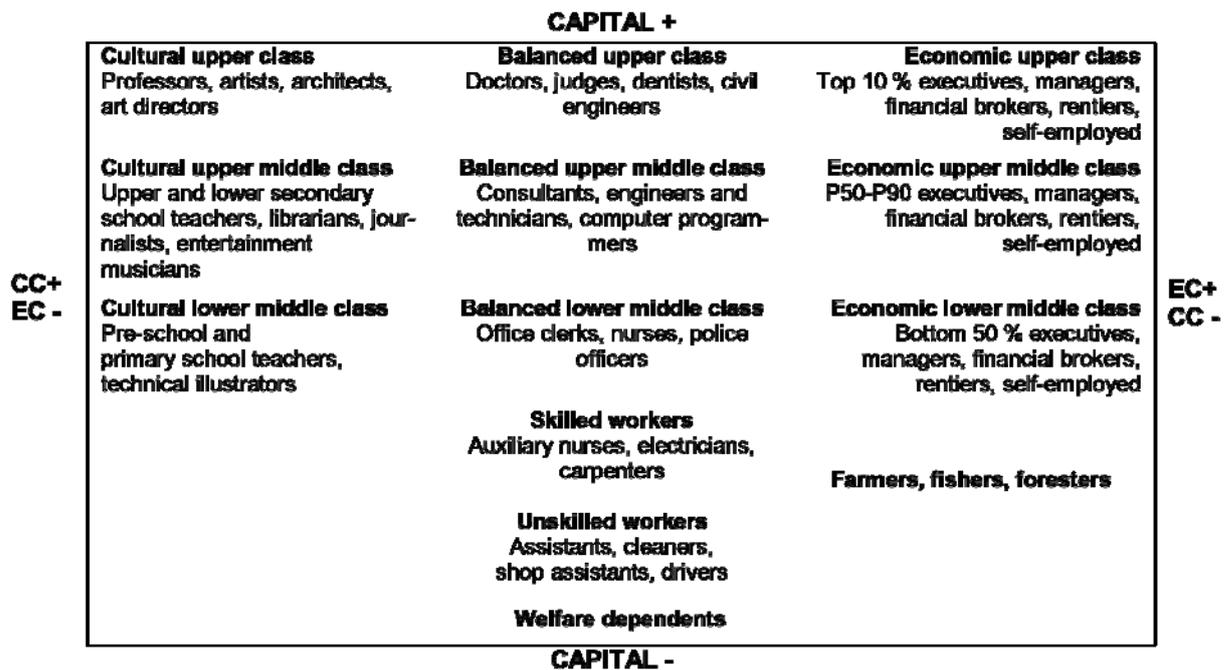
In the EGP class scheme, however, an upper class seems to have been dismissed altogether. The Marxian and Weberian emphasis on the fundamental division between classes embedded in property ownership – a division between capitalists and labourers – is, in practice, left unaccounted for. Instead, the scheme is largely constructed alongside differences in the “labour contract” that regulates conditions for work. Goldthorpe, for instance, has argued that “the category of the employer...[has]...reduced significance” in class analysis during a time in which capitalist organization is “depersonalized,” with large enterprises being run by “professional managers” rather than individual capitalists who “combine ownership and control of the means of production” (Goldthorpe 1984:17, 41). The significant changes in the organization of enterprises with the advent of joint-stock companies, corporations and the large influx of professional managers notwithstanding, ownership of the means of production is arguably still important in facilitating advantageous life chances for the privileged few whose holdings are considerable (Flemmen et al. 2017, Scott 2001). Moreover, the inheritance of wealth is also increasingly highlighted as a mechanism that facilitates patterns of wealth dynasties that endure over generations – including in Norway (Hansen 2014).⁵⁴

With an explicit attention to the upper class, as well as the fractions herein, the Oslo Register Data Class (ORDC) scheme is favourable in comparison to available alternatives; it enables dissecting the socio-anatomy of different fractions of class. The scheme is based on an occupational sorting on a very detailed level (almost 10,000 occupational titles occur in the administrative registers). The classification scheme is operationalized heuristically and aims to tap into different “conditions of existence”

⁵⁴ In general, Goldthorpe and the associated studies within the structural class framework have been criticized for relying on an excessively restricted notion of economic resources flowing from occupational income rather than acknowledging the intergenerational transference of other forms of economic assets such as property ownership and wealth (Devine 1998, Scott 2001). Crompton (1998:56) traces the issue of the non-discovery of proprietors to the usage of occupation-based class schemes.

based on the volume and forms of capital.⁵⁵ I follow Flemmen’s (2013a, Flemmen 2013b) emphasis on the Giddensian (1981:103) notion of *market capacities* and approach the different class fractions and class divisions as pointing to different *spaces of possibles*, where mobility strategies may consist of advantages derived from singular species of capital or conversion strategies where one form of capital derives advantages in the form of another. The class scheme with example occupations is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Oslo Register Data Class scheme with example occupations



The logic behind the occupational sorting follows the two dimensions of capital volume and capital composition. Whereas vertical divisions – the upper class, the upper and lower middle class, the working classes and farmers as well as welfare recipients – connote a division along *capital volume*, the horizontal divisions between fractions of the upper class and the middle classes reflect the relative composition of capitals. The right-hand side of the scheme sorts class situations that primarily rely on economic capital, whereas the left-hand side of the scheme identifies class situations that rely on economic capital. Class fractions that rely on a mixed – or a balanced – composition of capital are placed in the middle. While the class scheme is based on an occupational sorting, the construction additionally relies on information about income retrieved from

⁵⁵ As argued by Bourdieu (1987:4), “Occupation is generally a good and economical indicator of position in social space and, in addition, provides valuable information on occupational effects, i.e., effects of the nature of work, of the occupational milieu, with its cultural and organization specificities, etc.”

the tax registers. Information about income is utilized to identify i) individuals relying on welfare transferes,⁵⁶ ii) individuals engaged in farming, fishery and forestry, and iii) the self-employed, proprietors and rentiers, as well as iv) to differentiate a vertical dimension in the economic domain of the space. Among everyone grouped in the economic fraction, a relative income criterion (based on summarizing earnings, capital income and self-employed income) differentiates the economic upper class (top 10% of income-rewarding individuals in the economic fraction), from the economic upper middle class (the following 40% of the income distribution) and the economic lower middle class (the 50% lowest income-rewarding individuals in the economic fraction). Thus, to some extent, the economic upper-class fraction echoes what Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1987b:46–47) distinguish as a division “between what could be termed *élite* occupations, on the one hand, and, on the other, *élites within* these occupations.” This point should not be exaggerated, however, as significant variation has been demonstrated within the economic upper class, as defined in the ORDC scheme (Flemmen 2009, Flemmen 2012) – a case in point also demonstrated in this dissertation.

There are three upper-class fractions identified. The notion of capitalist class situations (i.e., the economic upper class) could be viewed as a simplification of Scott’s (1997:278-79) notion of four types of capitalists in contemporary capitalist societies, consisting of (i) conventional entrepreneur capitalists, (ii) rentier capitalists extracting dividends from their shareholdings, (iii) executives and directors, and (iv) financial capitalists who hold multiple directorships. There is no information about directorships or actual shareholdings in the registry data, but by distinguishing between different forms of income (capital income, income from self-employment and earnings), it is possible to include what might be dubbed SPRs (self-employed, proprietors and rentiers) in the class scheme along with executive capitalists (see Flemmen 2013b:25–26). The inclusion of SPRs, for instance, makes the ORDC scheme a slightly more attractive alternative than other newly elaborated schemes that acknowledge the class structure in a multidimensional fashion such as that of Atkinson (2017a). The other two fractions entail a high volume of capital but of a balanced or a cultural kind. In the balanced

⁵⁶ As pointed out by Morris and Scott (1996), individuals without occupations such as the retired or the long-term unemployed are not simply *lacking* occupational status but have distinct relations to the labour market that should be taken into account when studying the class structure. However, the welfare dependence group in the ORDC scheme is nonetheless fairly heterogeneous and is likely to bring together different market experiences. In particular, the distinction between the long-term and the short-term unemployed is not recognized unless temporal duration is built into the research design.

fraction of the upper class, this phenomenon often denotes occupations that are well-paid but that often require excessive elite credentials. Drawing on Bourdieu's model of the field of power (Bourdieu 1996a), the balanced fraction includes e.g. the elite professions and upper-level state bureaucrats. The cultural fraction typically groups occupations that deal with the mastery of symbolic forms or that have definition of power over cultural expressions. Table 2 gives an account of the different occupations that dominate the fractions in the scheme. It depicts the most common occupational groups for the cohorts under study in article III (the cohorts of 1962–1965) in the year 2012, i.e., the occupations for individuals who are affiliated with the upper class at age 47–50.

Table 2: Main occupations in the different upper-class fractions among those aged 47–50 in 2012.

Economic fraction	Freq.	%	Cum.
Directors and chief executives	1,052	25.51	25.51
SPRs	717	17.39	42.90
Production and operations department managers	697	16.90	59.80
Other department managers	594	14.40	74.20
General managers of small enterprises	341	8.27	82.47
Finance and sales associate professionals	319	7.74	90.21
	—	—	
Total	4,124	100.00	
Balanced fraction	Freq.	%	Cum.
Engineers and related professionals	2,133	44.04	44.04
Medical doctors and other health professionals	778	16.06	60.10
Public sector directors and department heads	490	10.12	70.22
Aircraft pilots	314	6.48	76.70
Psychologists	262	5.41	82.11
Legal professionals	219	4.52	86.63
Senior officials of interest organizations	133	2.75	89.38
	—	—	
Total	4,843	100.00	
Cultural fraction	Freq.	%	Cum.
Academics and higher education teaching professionals	989	44.49	44.49
Architects	421	18.94	63.43
Writers and creative or performing artists	243	10.93	74.36
Department managers	188	8.46	82.82
Decorators and commercial designers	155	6.97	89.79
	—	—	
Total	2,223	100.00	

I make use of the upper-class fractions identified by the ORDC scheme in both *Upper-class trajectories (article II)* and *Mobility closure (article III)*. Doing so enables me to study whether careers traverse or remain within class fractions and points to the degree of circulation within the upper class. Arguably, such differences would not have been detected if the upper class had been conceptualized in a uniform manner, as the capital composition principle remains “undetectable without an appropriate model” (Rosenlund 2009:309). Having clarified the theoretical underpinnings of my focus on the conceptual triad of time, place and forms of capital, I turn next to discussing the methodological framework employed in this dissertation. The following chapter therefore offers an overview of how I suggest that these contextualized notions of upper-class formation may be empirically – and quantitatively – dissected.

6 Methodology and research strategies

The field of class analysis has a lengthy history with methodological disputes. In fact, disagreement over which technical measurements are superior for mapping trends of class mobility and the reproduction of class inequality is often anxiously voiced to overshadow theoretical and conceptual innovations in the field (see, e.g., Goldthorpe 2000a). Suggestively, the current convention with regard to mapping class mobility reflects two types of dissatisfaction with the statistical techniques previously employed. On the one hand, there was a concern for the American tradition of analysing status attainment as a continuous relationship and the associated neglect of the structural relationship between different class locations. This concern facilitated a turn to a categorical notion of the stratification order. On the other hand, concerns for statistical corrections for changes in marginal distributions – and thus structural change in the class structure – championed the implementation of log-linear modelling and the corresponding (relative) turn from absolute rates of mobility to social fluidity, as mentioned in the foregoing.

The methodological tools adopted in this dissertation differ from these well-established conventions in the field. Elements of the research designs employed are partly or completely novel for studying class mobility. I therefore provide a somewhat in-depth discussion of the methodological contribution of this dissertation, with particular weight given to SA, which is employed in every article. There are indisputable advantages with the mobility table, first and foremost, evident in its ability to assess relative trends of mobility and the enabling of the country-wide comparisons

inherent in these estimates. These matters are of great importance for the general assessment of opportunity structures in a society. However, the previous chapters offered some theoretically important drawbacks of this dominant mode of studying social mobility, and this dissertation seeks to circumvent some of these deficiencies. The statistical techniques that I employ emphasize temporal processes (SA) and structural affinities across multiple categorical attributes (MCA). In addition, I make use of spatially sensitive instruments such as visualizations of maps and segregation indices. In summary, I hope to offer a more contextualized mapping of the trajectories of the dominant class in Norway. Rather than seeking to construct biographies by qualitative means such as interviews, I suggest *quantitatively* mapping the structural properties of upper-class trajectories.⁵⁷

The methodological tools employed in this dissertation can be viewed as adhering to a “descriptive turn” in sociology (Savage and Burrows 2007, Savage and Burrows 2009) that emphasizes the detection of “descriptive assemblages” (Savage 2009) – favouring the unveiling of patterns in population-wide datasets rather than searching to isolate causal inferences based on statistical sampling. Moreover, these techniques are primarily associated with a relational mode of inquiry that is often advocated in opposition to more conventional statistical techniques such as a regression framework. In the following, I will therefore lay out the theoretical-philosophical underpinnings of “relational sociology” and present the defining features of the statistical tools employed in this dissertation – primarily through the epistemological considerations offered by Pierre Bourdieu and Andrew Abbott. I will emphasize both the disadvantages and advantages of the two approaches and argue for a need to view the two techniques as being complementary, as they, in combination, enable capturing both relational topographies and temporal unfolding. In addition, I present the methodology behind segregation indices.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Miles (2016) for an account of how sensitivity to time and place may be included in qualitative approaches to studying group formation processes.

Relational sociology

In his 1997 “manifesto” of relational sociology, Mustafa Emirbayer (1997:282) argues that

“The key question confronting sociologists in the present day is not ‘material versus ideal,’ ‘structure versus agency,’ ‘individual versus society,’ or any other dualisms so often noted; rather, it is the choice between substantialism and relationalism.”

That which is meant by this division is a choice between approaching the social world as something that consists of specific *substances* or specific *relations*. Drawing on John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley (1949), he follows their division between two branches of substantialism (self-action and inter-action), on the one hand, and the true relational notion of transaction, on the other hand. The first branch of substantialism is the perspective of self-action, which entails both uniform notions of actors (rational choice models as well the model of the norm-following individual) and structures (structuralism). In both cases, the substantialist perspective of self-action assumes that there are self-acting entities that are both “the legitimate starting point to all sociological inquiry,” and that “[do] all of the acting in social life and account for its dynamism” (Emirbayer 1997:285).

The other branch of substantialism concerns inter-action;⁵⁸ here, action is analysed as something that *happens among entities*, first and foremost represented in variable-driven sociology where fixed entities have variable attributes. In opposition to the substantialist framework, however, Emirbayer launches his relational programme. In the relational framework, the idea of discrete entities is rejected, and individuals are viewed as inseparable from “the transactional contexts within which they are embedded” (Emirbayer 1997:287). Putting action, rather than actors, as the centre of analysis is a common feature of both the relational view and newer attempts at theorizing social life in the mechanism framework of “analytical sociology,” as outlined by Peter Hedström and colleagues (Hedström 2005, Manzo 2010). However, the

⁵⁸ Here, “inter-action” is differentiated from “interaction.” Interaction is indeed often highlighted in a *relational* fashion, where “the meaning of an action is comprehensible only when it is situated in social time and place.” Indeed, within the relational programme, “interaction” is argued to be made primitive in a way that acknowledges “the endless interplay of cross-individual structural definition of the flow of action, an interplay that is an evident fact in social life” (Abbott 2007b:7–8).

relational view is different from the mechanism position, as the latter retains the notion of given and fixed entities. Conversely, action becomes a key means of *accounting* for entities in the relational programme (Abbott 2007b:8). Doing so entails addressing not only the relational structure in which social action is embedded but also the temporal processes through which social life is played out.

“What is distinct about the transactional approach is that it sees relations between terms or units as *preeminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes* rather than as static ties among inert substances” (Emirbayer 1997:289, emphasis added).

Therefore, the relational stance facilitates a turn in one’s “choice of population” (Bertaux 1981): from entities to relations. The theoretical importance of this shift – from the substantialist to the relational – has implications for how we approach, and explain, a number of social phenomena. In class analysis, this shift means that the key explananda of mobility analysis – the social *reproduction* of inequality – is understood as social action derived “from its temporal and structural relation with other actions” (Baldassarri 2007:2), a stance that is arguably quite far from Goldthorpe’s rational action theory, as outlined in chapter 2, where purposive, atomistic individual action is deemed fundamental (Goldthorpe 2000a).

The relational framework has fundamental implications for a number of key sociological concepts. For instance, when understanding the notion of individuals or a “personality,” the relational stance rejects the ready-made purposive individual actors but offers an understanding of how a self is constantly produced and reproduced in interaction vis-à-vis others based on “the various endowments and contrasts afforded by our own past and by our current environment to others” (Abbott 2007b:12). An immediate affinity with Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, as outlined above, is naturally evident, testifying to Bourdieu’s relational framework.⁵⁹ Other key concepts such as “power” may also serve to illustrate the relational stance. In the substantialist mode of thought, power is viewed as an entity, something that can be “seized” or “held.” In the

⁵⁹ The importance of the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer for both Emirbayer’s manifesto and Bourdieu’s work is illustrative of this point. Cassirer’s distinction between “relation-concepts” and “thing-concepts” – the very crux of the relational programme – not only is key to Bourdieu’s insistence that “the real is the relational” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:97), but also resonates with Charles Tilly’s (1999) favouritism of “bonds” rather than “essence,” Andrew Abbott’s (2001) “narrative positivism” or Norbert Elias’ (1978) figurational approach.

relational, however, power is viewed as a relational structure and is thus “transformed from a concept of substance to a concept of relationship” (Emirbayer 1997:291).

From mode of thought to empirical inquiry

In general, the relational programme may be convincing to adopt theoretically but prove more difficult to implement empirically (Baldassarri 2007). In the scholarly literature, such empirical challenges are often discussed as alternative ways of employing quantitative methods in a relational, rather than through a substantialist, framework (Emirbayer 1997, Mohr 2013, Savage 1997). Hence, the key antagonist often figures in the form of the conventional survey-based regression model and the standard variable-oriented sociology, which do not recognize that “[e]very social fact is situated, surrounded by other contextual facts and brought into being by a process relating it to past contexts” (Abbott 1997:1152).

As argued by Andrew Abbott (2001), most standard quantitative approaches to social life engage with a “general linear reality” (GLR) framework, with not only implications for the statistical assumptions that are made but also “philosophical assumptions about how the social world works” (Abbott 2001:39). These notions include i) assumptions about fixed entities with time-changing attributes, ii) a “monotonic causal flow,” involving, for instance, an assumption of a uniform time dimension, iii) the assumption that a given attribute has only one effect on another attribute, iv) the assumption that the order of things is negligible, v) case-wise independence, and vi) the independence of contexts. All these assumptions, Abbott holds, appear technical in nature but have real theoretical implications (see also Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991:254):

“Many sociologists treat the world as if social causality actually obeyed the rules of linear transformations. They do this by assuming, in the theories that open their empirical articles, that the social world consists of fixed entities with variable attributes; that these attributes have only one causal meaning at a time; that this causal meaning does not depend on other attributes, on the past sequence of attributes, or on the context of other entities. So distinguished a writer as Blalock has written ‘These regression equations are the “laws” of a science.’ To say this is to reify an entailed mathematics into a representation of reality” (Abbott 2001:59).

Hence, Abbott (1997:1164) contends that within the dominant paradigm from the 1970s onwards, sociologists “learned *from the method* a set of assumptions about social reality that fundamentally shaped their vision of the social world.” A similar critique is offered by Bourdieu, and he routinely underscored the importance of applying methodological tools that correspond with a sociological understanding of the world; for Bourdieu, doing so implied the implementation of a geometric modelling of data (Lebaron 2009), which allowed unveiling “a whole network of statistical relations” (Bourdieu 1984:103). Abbott’s tenet of how *time matters* led him to introduce the statistical technique of SA into the sociological toolkit (Abbott 1983, Abbott 1995, Abbott 2001).

Two interrelated caveats concerning the relational programme are often highlighted: its alleged inability to perform a “causal analysis” and the inability to identify “what are the crucial variables” (Abbott 2001, Bertaux 1981). Some proponents of relational statistical techniques would claim that the causality assumed identified in causal inference designs is a mere description itself (Abbott 2001:123) and that the explanations that are suggested through control variable methods are insufficient as explanations of the social world. For instance, arguing for a revival of the Chicago School, Abbott highlights the necessity of an embedded sociological analysis in both temporal and spatial contexts, and he highlights how “[n]othing that ever occurs in the social world occurs ‘net of other variables’” (Abbott 1997:1152).⁶⁰ Others would argue that it is precisely the opportunity to *not* have to grant one variable master status that is the chief advantage of relational approaches (Savage 2009). In contrast to striving for identifying the singular crucial variable in an analysis, the advantage of relational techniques is that they enable a detection of “the crucial *actual patterns*, not what are the crucial variables” (Abbott 1997:1168). Others would then argue that while searching for causal effects has its own merit, establishing exploratory patterns in the social world comes logically prior – *description first*, as famously proclaimed by Benzécri (Lebaron

⁶⁰ Here, Abbott explicitly favors the Chicago School’s relational features and downplays the Blumerian interpretation of the Chicago School (which, especially through its symbolic interactionist strand, is critiqued as being substantialist (Fox 2014)). “In making contextuality the central focus of the Chicago School, I am departing from the tradition that has emphasized the role of the subjective, of values, of intersubjectivity generally, in Chicago writing on social life ... I am arguing that the important aspect of intersubjectivity is not so much its subjective character as its *relational* character ... I am also seeing the Chicago focus on process – which many have noted before – as logically correlative with the Chicago focus on place, both physical and social. In doing this, I am of course reading selectively” (Abbott 1997:1173, footnote 21).

2015). As stated by Chan (1995:469), “I would argue that ascertaining how events unfold complements, if it does not have logical priority to, the search for causal factors.”

Having briefly pointed to some key properties of the relational paradigm, I turn next to the specific techniques that are employed in this study. I start by presenting MCA, as geometric representations of data often are preferred as a relational tool. I next present SA and emphasize that time is often insufficiently acknowledged in relational statistical techniques and that social structure is often unaccounted for in SA. I thus emphasize that SA and MCA complement each other. Finally, I turn to segregation indices.

Multiple correspondence analysis: the structure of relations

A key deficiency with the GLR framework inherent in the regression model, Abbott holds, lies in its inability to empirically analyse the view – which is common among sociologists – “that social determinants lie in closely related bundles,” and he points to Weber’s concept of “elective affinity” and the related notion of ideal types as examples (Abbott 2001:54). In a regression framework, one is allowed to include a few interactions that open a “single causal meaning of contextuality,” but variables are mostly analysed “net of” other effects (Abbott 1997:1152). Correspondingly, the contingencies of these related bundles are not uncovered in the regression framework:

“The particular relations between a dependent variable...and so-called independent variables ... tend to mask the complete system of relationships which constitutes the true principle of the specific strength and form of the effects registered in any particular correlation” (Bourdieu 1984:103).

Rather than estimating the simple correlation between an independent variable (e.g., class origin) and a dependent variable (e.g., class destination), Bourdieu (1992:98) contends, correspondence analysis is a “relational technique of data analysis whose philosophy corresponds exactly to what...the social world is. It is a technique which ‘thinks’ in terms of relations.”

MCA, as an extension of correspondence analysis, is a statistical technique that was developed based on the French statistician Jean-Paul Benzécri in the early 1960s (Lebaron 2015). It uncovers latent patterns in a large indicator matrix where each unit is

recorded with multiple properties, i.e., registered with values along multiple sets of categorical data. There is one row for each unit and one column for each category of all the variables. The cells are binary, with the values of 0 and 1.⁶¹ The technique offers a way of eliciting the main underlying dimensions in this large matrix envisioned through geometric representations of both the row profiles (the cloud of individuals) and the column profiles (the cloud of categories). The technique is based on finding the patterning of data envisioned by the lowest possible number of dimensions that capture the variance of the points. The overall dimensionality of each cloud is set by the formula $K - Q$, where K = categories, Q = questions and the overall variance (the inertia) equals the sum of the eigenvalues, i.e., the variances of each dimension/axis. These dimensions are hierarchical in the sense that the first dimension captures most of the variance (or, rather, maximizes the dispersal in the cloud), followed by the second and so on. When deciding on the appropriate number of dimensions to include to capture the sufficient level of variance in the data needed for interpretation, it is customary to judge the decrease in eigenvalues, the cumulated Benzécri's modified rates⁶² and the overall interpretability of the axes (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:46, 51–52).

In these spaces, distances refer to the level of affinities discovered in the matrix; individuals who are in close proximity in the cloud of individuals are typically similar in their attributes, whereas proximity in the cloud of categories reveals which categories typically characterize the same individuals. Thus, this technique allows eliciting patterns in large matrices, taking account of the contingencies of every attribute recorded. When interpreting the dimensions that are retrieved for an analysis (i.e., interpreting the axes that sufficiently capture the main variance in the indicator matrix), one typically selects all categories that contribute above average for the construction of the axis (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:52).

I make use of MCA in *Mobility closure (article III)*, where I construct a specific “origin space” for individuals with upper-class positions at least once in the period 2003–2012.⁶³ I analyse only the cohorts of 1962–1965 to retain individuals who are of

⁶¹ As an alternative to the binary indicator matrix (BIM), a Burt matrix may also be applied in MCA. In the latter, each variable is listed as both columns and rows; see Greenacre (2007:140–41). In the MCA performed in *Mobility closure (article III)*, however, a BIM is applied, as is common in sociology.

⁶² These values indicate the degree of departure from the *sphericity*, which is the cloud where all eigenvalues are equal (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:40).

⁶³ The MCA was performed with the SPAD 9.0.26 software (www.coheris.fr).

similar ages when the different types of information are available in the data. Additionally, that is, I analyse individuals who have upper-class affiliations in their mature careers (around ages 40–50). The balanced fraction is more dominant in the earlier phases of the careers – likely reflecting the more direct routes into the elite professions – thus, studying the more mature careers allows picking up on more variation in the other fractions, as well. For example, when I analyse the age period of 26/28–35/37 and condition on one upper-class affiliation at least once in this 10-year period, the cultural fraction amounts to 6%, the balanced fraction amounts to 18%, and the economic fraction amounts to 1% of the annual states. In the older cohorts retained for the analysis, these shares amount to 12%, 24% and 18%, respectively, making this sub-population more favourable for picking up on the variations in the different fractions. However, analysing pathways in the transition from the educational system to the upper rungs of the class structure would make for an interesting research question in its own right.

The research design is guided by studying class reproduction in a manner that is analogous to the locus of mobility studies on the correlation between an independent variable – class origin – that is associated with a dependent variable – class destination. This analogy is studied by using supplementary variables. This usage enables analysing how the distribution of active points is associated with other attributes that do not affect the construction of the space in itself. Hence, the relational structure of the origin space can be read as a “predictive map” (Lebart, Morineau and Warwick 1984:100–08) that is correlated with the class destination. In my analysis, this reading enables seeing how the specific structure of the origins of the upper class is linked to their adult class careers (a sequence typology based on the procedure in *Upper-class trajectories (article II)*).

By means of the test values, it is possible to assess whether the dimensions in the origin space are statistically significantly associated with the mean points of the supplementary variable of the destination careers (Lebart 2006). Standard deviations serve to assess the magnitude of the pair-wise distances in the space. As a rule of thumb, distances between these categories can be considered “notable” when they are larger than 0.5 and “large” when they are greater than 1 (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:59). Moreover, I perform post hoc ANOVA tests of the mean points in the cloud of individuals as a robustness test of the group-wise comparisons. Although I point to

significant and notable relationships between the social divisions in origins and the destination careers of the upper class, it should be acknowledged that I provide only estimates of the mean points in the space and that there are naturally many exemptions to the typical “biographies” constructed. On the other hand, as reminded by Bourdieu, “*reproduction operates but statistically*, which means that the class ... perpetuates itself without all of its individual members reproducing themselves” (Wacquant 1993b:29).⁶⁴

To construct the origin space, I employ specific MCA, which means that I set redundant or missing categories as passive while only retaining the sociologically meaningful categories for the construction of the space (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:61–62). I make use of 14 variables for the construction of the origin space, and I heuristically divide them into blocks of economic, cultural, social, and extended social capital. The categories within these blocks are fairly “balanced,” ensuring that none disproportionately dominate the analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010:38). As I argue in the article, these blocks should be deemed heuristic, in the sense that some of these categories may entail different types of resources. In particular, the parental industry, which is classified under social capital, may just as much denote differences in inherited cultural capital.

While MCA has many favourable features, it arguably has some caveats, and for the present purposes, temporality is the most important for its practical means of approaching upper-class formation. This statement appears quite paradoxical; as argued in the foregoing, temporality is a key element of Bourdieu’s theory of practice. As seen in chapter 3, the dispositions embodied by individuals engaged in a field/space are only sufficiently apprehended when accounting for the specific history shaping the structure of the field/space and the habituses alike, Bourdieu argues (1984, 1993). Attentiveness to time is also argued to partly constitute a reason for Bourdieu’s rejection of other statistical tools such as social network analysis (SNA) (De Nooy 2003).⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Such exemptions may even serve to disguise the reproduction, Bourdieu argues: “The statistical logic of its functioning means that it reproduced established structure with enough exceptions to create the illusion of independence and democratization” (Wacquant 1993b:30).

⁶⁵ As noted, despite its strong affinity with a relational mode of inquiry (Abbott 1997, Bottero and Crossley 2011, De Nooy 2003, Mohr 2013), Bourdieu argued against the usage of SNA (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:113–14), not only partly because of its symbolic interactionist backdrop, which entails favouring manifest, rather than latent, “objective” structures but also because of its “exclusive focus on the present, which entails a denial of the past” (De Nooy 2003:318).

Arguably, however, this issue is not a methodological dispute, but the distinction appears more theoretical in nature; it is a rejection of symbolic interactionism in favour of a relational theory of practice and fields (and thus a rejection of substantialist readings of interaction (Fox 2014)), rather than a rejection of SNA in favour of MCA.⁶⁶ Indeed, there appears to be no inherent attentiveness to temporality in MCA in comparison to SNA. Perhaps even to the contrary, there appears to be more dialogue among social network analysts about change and process (see, for instance, Abbott 1997:1167, Emirbayer 1997, Mohr 2013:305–06) than among practitioners of MCA.⁶⁷ Studies that analyse class mobility with MCA tend to rely on temporal snapshots (e.g., Flemmen 2012) and summary measures of careers (e.g., Bühlmann, Davoine and Ravasi 2017, Ellersgaard, Larsen and Munk 2013, Hjellbrekke et al. 2007, Lebaron 2000, Lebaron 2001, Lebaron 2008).

Thus, it seems necessary to complement the correspondence analysis with time-sensitive alternatives, such as SA. This is a key argument in *Mobility closure (article III)*, where I seek to tease out temporal sensitivity in the MCA by utilizing SA to construct time-sensitive modalities in the origin space and to link this structure to a temporally patterned “outcome variable,” namely, the upper-class careers that are the focus of *Upper-class trajectories (article II)*.⁶⁸

Social sequence analysis: the structure of time

One of the most severe challenges to relational sociology, Emirbayer (1997:305) contends, is to accurately account for dynamism and temporal order, as relational sociology “too often privileges spatiality (or topological location) over temporality and narrative unfolding.” Indeed, sociological analyses often rely on studying a given snapshot in time, and this shortcoming applies to the standard mobility table as well as the relational techniques of MCA and SNA alike. SA, on the other hand, offers a way of retaining sensitivity to temporal processes while maintaining the relational account of

⁶⁶ In fact, De Nooy (2003) argues that the joint usage of an indicator matrix serves as a bridge between MCA and SNA. Mohr (2014) emphasizes that Cassirer was also a key foundation for early approaches to network analysis through the influence of Lewin’s “hodological space,” facilitating an apparent affinity between SNA and Bourdieu’s relational sociology. See also Singh (2016).

⁶⁷ However, efforts are also evident within geometric data analysis. Within an MCA framework, changes over time have, for instance, been accounted for by projecting one snapshot onto the distribution of active points from another time (e.g., Coulangeon 2013).

⁶⁸ The sequence analyses are performed with the R package “TraMineR” (Gabadinho et al. 2011).

“social reality in terms of ‘events in contexts’ rather than ‘entities with variable attributes’” (Abbott and Tsay 2000:24).

Temporal sensitivity seems especially critical when approaching class mobility, as “time is not simply a background in which mobility takes place, but is also integral to the mobility process itself,” meaning that “the problem of how the dynamism of people’s life courses can be analysed using quantitative techniques has become one of the central concerns of social mobility research in recent years” (Savage 1997:315). As argued in previous chapters, the conventional log-linear model for estimating class mobility suffers, *inter alia*, from the drawback that it does not take into account variation in job duration. A position held at one point in time is taken to indicate a reliable estimate of an individual’s class location. A viable option for taking account the duration of class positions when wanting to estimate careers would then be event history. Event history models are good ways of including the duration of time in a regression framework. The drawback, however, is that they do not account for temporal order; rather than focusing on whole careers (“whole” relative to what data permits, naturally), they focus on individual transitions. However, as argued thus far, the temporal context – both the order and timing of events in time as well as their durations – is an important theoretical precondition for key concepts in class analysis such as in Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as well as for a wider acknowledgement of class trajectories in class theory.⁶⁹ SA rests on the acknowledgement that

“...it is not enough that actors are affiliated, that they are connected to each other, or even that they interact with each other in a manner that cultivates such important phenomena as solidarity – their social action and long-term experiences must also unfold in regular sequence patterns. It is this sequential patterning that gives rise to many of the concepts that directly concern social scientists today” (Cornwell 2015:25).

The optimal matching (OM) algorithm – the most common technique applied in SA – was first implemented in the early 1970s and proved to be a useful tool for biologists to estimate, for instance, resemblance in structures of DNA (Abbott and Tsay 2000). It was only later introduced into the social sciences during the 1980s and early 1990s, primarily through Andrew Abbott (Abbott 1983, Abbott 1990, Abbott and Forrest 1986, Abbott and Hrycak 1990). However, its application in sociology still

⁶⁹ A number of theoretical approaches to social life presuppose a corresponding sensitivity towards temporal contextualization, such as Giddens’ structuration theory (Cornwell 2015:23–24).

seems relatively modest (for fairly recent “reviews and prospects,” see, e.g., Aisenbrey and Fasang 2010, Blanchard, Bühlmann and Gauthier 2014, Brzinsky-Fay and Kohler 2010). As noted above, within the field of class mobility, sequence analytical techniques are only scantily applied as an alternative to the mobility table, save for some important exceptions (Bison 2011, Bukodi et al. 2016, Bühlmann 2010, Chan 1995, Halpin and Chan 1998).

OM seeks to assess the level of similarity between each pair of sequences based on edit distances that take into account the whole list of elements in both sequences. The level of similarity – and the corresponding level of dissimilarity – between sequence pairs is based on the least costly way of editing the one sequence into the other. Three forms of elementary operations enable editing: substitution, insertion and deletion. An example drawn from Cornwell (2015:111-12) may help illustrate these procedures.

Imagine that we have two sequences S_1 and S_2 that consist of eight elements.

S ₁	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
S ₂	A	B	B	C	C	D	E	E

The goal of OM is to assess how similar these sequences are by transforming the one into the other with as little effort as possible. As a first step, we might see that both sequences contain the sub-sequence ABB and might perform three steps of insertion, deletion and substitution to transform S_2 into S_1 :

Insertion: inserting three AAAs at the beginning of S_2

S ₁	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B			
S ₂	A	A	A	A	B	B	C	C	D	E	E

Deletion: deleting the three elements of DEE

S ₁	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
S ₂	A	A	A	A	B	B	C	C

Substitution: Substituting CCs with BBs

S ₁	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
S ₂	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B

In summary, then, S₂ has been transformed into S₁ through the effort of eight separate operations: two substitutions, three insertions and three deletions.

However, there are often multiple ways to align sequences, depending on which of these operations are used. As in the example above, the least costly way of aligning the two sequences may not be by taking the sub-sequence of ABB as a starting point, and OM relies on the alignment procedure that is the most efficient. Crucially, the OM algorithm is designed to optimize the *least expensive* route to editing one sequence into the other, and the matter of which operations are deemed the costliest is modelled by the researcher. A key task in OM is therefore to assign specific costs to each operation, making one or the other more or less likely in the matching procedure.

There are multiple ways of deciding on the cost regime, and some conventions are available; for instance, the Levensthein distance applies the same cost for both indels (insertion and deletion) and substitution, the Levensthein II distance applies only indels, and the Hamming distance applies only substitution costs and does not allow insertion and deletion.⁷⁰ Note, however, that whether making indels or substitutions costlier has implications for whether the matching procedure favours order or timing. As seen in the example above, indel operations are less sensitive to the timing of elements than the substitution operation (Lesnard 2010, Lesnard 2014). As pointed out by Bukodi et al. (2016:5), whenever sequences consist of equal lengths and relatively long spells, the indel operation will play a minimal role in the matching procedure (see also Abbott and Tsay 2000:12). Therefore, in *Upper-class trajectories (article II)* and *Mobility closure (article III)*, I follow their strategy of setting the indel cost as half the maximum substitution cost in my analysis of class careers. The indel costs in the other SA are set by a statistical criterion based on observed transitions and a common future (Studer and Ritschard 2016).

⁷⁰ As the Hamming distance does not allow insertion and deletion, it can be applied only to sequences of the same length.

Setting the substitution costs has been seen as the most crucial methodological choice for SA. This observation also seems related to the fact that cost regimes have traditionally been the target of criticisms of OM. For instance, Wu (2000) has critiqued the implausibility of viewing the social world in terms of resemblance in a substitution manner, particularly due to the symmetry implied; to what extent is it meaningful to assign the same cost for landing a job compared to losing a job?⁷¹ Should not the order of transitions matter for the social meanings assigned sequence resemblance?

The general response to this critique has been to underline that OM does not seek to model the social world but merely to trace patterns in data. Halpin (2014:77-78), for instance, has argued that Wu mistook the substitution operation for a transition and argues instead for the view of SA as “a mapping of the state-space distances onto the sequence domain, yielding a set of sequence-space distances,” which makes “state-space distances ... just statements about differences between the categories of the state-space variable.”⁷² Where feasible, theoretical considerations help in deciding on the plausible distances in the state-space. In *Upper-class trajectories (article II)* and *Mobility closure (article III)*, I rely on the ORDC class scheme, as presented in chapter 5, to construct the substitution cost matrix. Doing so implies a theoretical difference between not only vertical class divisions but also horizontal class fractions. The application of theoretical concerns for setting substitutions costs is also prevalent in other studies that rely on an existing class scheme (see, e.g., Bukodi et al. 2016, Chan 1995, Halpin and Chan 1998). The remaining sequence analyses that are performed in this dissertation rely on statistical criteria for assigning substitution costs, as they do not correspond to a state-space that is easily conceptualized theoretically. Thus, the statistical developments by Studer and Ritschard (2016) helped guide the optimal solution for these matrices. As noted in each of the articles, however, each SA has been subjected to robustness tests with alternative cost regimes.

The result from the OM algorithm is a large matrix (dubbed a dissimilarity matrix) that returns a value that denotes the efforts implied in editing one sequence into

⁷¹ See also Levine (2000). It should be noted that the implementation of sequence alignment in the social sciences did not include all alignment operations that were employed in biology such as swaps and reversals of entire sub-strings due to an acknowledgement of the differences between social and biological processes (Cornwell 2015:120).

⁷² This view of the alignment procedure, however, was already apparent in Abbott and Tsay (2000:5): “...OM algorithms are today conceived less as actual models for reality than as generalized patterns-search techniques. It is this pattern-search capability that has led to their application in social science.”

the other, i.e., each sequence pair level of dissimilarity. To reduce the level of detail, cluster analysis is employed as a means of constructing typologies from these resultant matrices. For all analyses, I employ the Ward linkage to construct the clusters, and in *Mobility closure (article III)* and in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I combine this linkage criterion with the procedure of partitioning around medoids (PAM), as suggested by Studer (2013). This linkage seeks to minimize the weighted distance to the medoid, whereas the Ward linkage groups cases based on minimizing the within-group sum of squares (Ward Jr 1963). The Ward linkage is beneficial in its ability to create clusters of fairly similar sizes. To decide on the number of clusters, I have primarily relied on the statistics provided by Studer, but I have also taken Cornwell's (2015) advice in judging the meaningfulness of the clusters. I did so particularly in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, where my sociological interest was primarily based on the extremes of the neighbourhood distribution.

In addition to the caveats associated with the predefined cost regimes that have to be applied by the researcher, another possible downside is associated with the application of cluster analysis. The groups defined are not necessarily "real" latent groups in the social world, and the reasons for choosing a specific cluster solution are often pragmatically weighted between statistical "stopping rules," substantial and theoretical considerations and analytical interest. As pointed out by Brendan Halpin, cluster analysis based on dissimilarity matrices from SA in the social sciences often does not produce clusters that are as stable and homogeneous as those observed when applied in biology. He argues, however, that because life-course data often imply that sequences are distributed fairly evenly, relatively unstable cluster solutions will be produced even though the sequence space is highly structured. Thus, although cluster analysis should be read primarily as an indication of "data reduction" rather than as the discovery of true latent classes, it serves to reveal groups of sequences that are distinct and sociologically informative (Bukodi et al. 2016:5, Halpin 2016). Another pitfall of OM is that it deals with discrete notions of time, whereas time in the social world is in fact continuous. This objection, however, seems minor compared to the dominant approach of temporal snapshots, and alternatives to OM that strive to take better account of the contexts by which elements occur in a sequence are discovered to be either non-metric or to produce results that are largely in line with the OM algorithm (Halpin 2014). This objection therefore appears less acute for the promise of OM.

A key reservation against SA, however, was launched by its very godfather; in *Time Matters*, Andrew Abbott stresses how SA is beneficial in creating typologies that are sensitive to temporal processes but fails to embed such temporal unfolding in the social structure (Abbott 2001:123).⁷³ This failure, in turn, is a caveat that I seek to circumvent by proposing to combine SA and MCA. In *Mobility closure (article III)*, I seek to embed the time-sensitive “destination careers” reconstructed from the intragenerational class careers in *Upper-class trajectories (article II)* in the relational structure of origins. Moreover, the usage of sequence typologies for the construction of time-varying assets in the “origin space” (parental income and wealth trajectories, as well as neighbourhood careers) allows adding information about the timing, duration and order of resource availability in the origins of the upper class. Thus, in *Mobility closure (article III)*, the conventional origin-destination nexus is analysed with sensitivity to the dual forms of relational structures, in terms of both forms of capital and structures of time. In addition to the substantive findings stressed in *Mobility closure (article III)*, a key argument in this article is in fact methodological, arguing how the joint application of SA and MCA helps render key theoretical assumptions visible in quantitative analysis.⁷⁴

A second attempt at embedding SA in the social structure is offered in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, where I suggest mapping typologies of neighbourhood careers onto physical space, revealing a distinct pattern between social and physical inequality. This mapping is performed in a two-fold procedure: first, in tracing the geographical coordinates of the different neighbourhood careers and making use of visualization by maps and, second, by estimating the yearly level of segregation that pertains to the areas that surround people facing different neighbourhood careers.

⁷³ In a similar vein, Bourdieu (2000a:302) warns against trying to understand trajectories without “having previously constructed the successive states of the field through which that trajectory has progressed” (Bourdieu 2000a:302). In his analysis of the scientific field, Bourdieu (1975:27) points to, for instance, how different career trajectories need to be understood relationally: “Each career is fundamentally defined by its position in the structure of the system of possible careers.”

⁷⁴ To the best of my knowledge, MCA and SA have not been previously combined in efforts to study class mobility by “anchoring” a sequence typology in a geometric space. However, I thank Tobias Dalberg, for pointing to one study that employs SA for constructing a time-sensitive variable in an MCA (Carlhed 2017).

Segregation and spatialized tools of measurement

In addition to employing quantitative tools that are advantageous for revealing temporal unfolding and relational topologies, I make use of segregation measurements that allow studying spatial manifestations of inequality over time. In *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I suggest combining conventional segregation levels with clusters obtained from SA so that the level of spatial homogeneity in typical contextual careers may be assessed.

A central debate in the segregation literature concerns the definition of the area unit, particularly its scale. In *Enduring contexts (article I)* and for the neighbourhood modalities in *Mobility closure (article III)*, neighbourhoods are operationalized at a fairly small scale, using constructions from Statistics Norway (Statistics Norway 1999): the median area surface is 0.31 square kilometres. This operationalization is constructed purposively to account for individuals' immediate surroundings and thus exposure to individuals of homogenous or heterogeneous social standing. Qualitative studies of how the spatial elicits notions of belonging have, for instance, emphasized small-scale area units such as particular streets or buildings (Savage 2010a:27). However, in *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I also analyse the level of segregation among the three cohorts under study over time. As discussed in the article, doing so implies a slightly larger scale due to the low frequency of individuals within each geographical unit. Thus, rather than Statistics Norway's *Grunnkrets*, I make use of *Delområde* for the segregation analyses conducted in *Enduring contexts (article I)*. As a means of assessing the robustness of this level of detail, a further alternative based on municipalities was pursued, as discussed in the paper. The key findings in the article were corroborated by this robustness test.

The question of how to best measure segregation is a heated topic in the literature. In *Enduring contexts (article I)*, I have opted for two of the most conventional indices, namely, the segregation index – which captures the phenomenon of “spatial evenness” – and the isolation index – which captures the phenomenon of “spatial exposure” (Massey and Denton 1988).⁷⁵ While spatial evenness denotes the extent to which groups are equally well represented in a residential area, given the overall

⁷⁵ The segregation indices are estimated with the “Seg” package in R (Hong, O'Sullivan and Sadahiro 2014).

distribution in the region at large, spatial isolation indicates the likelihood that a group member will encounter an individual of the same group in the residential area.

There are many well-known problems with these indices. For instance, the isolation index is dependent on group sizes, which makes it hard to assess comparative levels of isolation between groups of different sizes. In *Enduring contexts (article I)*, however, I circumvent this issue by focusing my discussion on comparing the two groups of analytical interest, the *dense affluence* and *dense poverty* clusters of neighbourhood trajectories. In part enabled by the initial partitioning of the Ward algorithm, these groups are equally sizable, each amounting to 18% of the sub-population under study. Another issue with segregation indices concerns the ability to assess statistical significance. As the data permit studying the complete population (or complete sub-populations), the trouble with drawing inferences from a sample to a population is arguably less acute with the results presented. However, as a means of assessing the robustness of the results presented, I have also performed a bootstrap simulation of the reported levels with the R command `ResampleTest` available in the OasisR package. The substantive emphasis placed on these segregation levels in the article was corroborated with this procedure.

Zooming in on the top: feasibility and data

The administrative register data are assembled from official registers. While not gathered for the purpose of scientific research, the data offer a number of advantages over sampled survey data (see also Savage and Burrows 2007, Savage and Burrows 2009). In particular, the data (i) make it possible to study exclusive groups that are small in numbers and (ii) allow more contextualization.

First, it is well known that it is difficult to study the upper class or elites who are few in numbers with sampled surveys (Savage 1997, Savage and Williams 2008a).⁷⁶ As Bertaux and Thompson (1997b:8) argue, this difficulty constitute a general problem to studying inequality, as “...the extent to which they are open or closed is crucial to understanding social mobility in any society.” Although Bertaux and Thompson

⁷⁶ However, in the GBCS, an over-representation of the privileged in U.K. society has facilitated insightful analyses of the powerful (for a discussion of these survey data, see Devine and Snee 2015).

advocate qualitative approaches, the Norwegian register data facilitate studying mobility patterns in restricted reaches of the class structure *quantitatively*.

Second, the administrative register data also remedy another shortcoming of sampled survey data, namely, the selection of “representative” respondents who are analysed abstracted from their social contexts. The sampled survey research thus tends to separate “...individuals from their social contexts of friends, [and] acquaintances” (Abbott 1997:1162), which is inconvenient, as “...individuals are embedded within family, occupational, and local contexts...” (Bertaux and Thompson 1997b:7). At worst, Bourdieu argues, “...random sampling may completely destroy the object of research, whenever this object owes something to the structure of the groups which random sampling precisely has the effect of annihilating.” Hence, “...seemingly...neutral techniques bring in an implicit theory of the social, that of the public conceived as an ‘atomized mass’” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991:39–40). The localized contexts of interpersonal relations, however, are important elements in peoples’ “lifeworlds,” as noted in the previous chapters, and these considerations are particularly underlined in *Enduring contexts (article I)*. Having longitudinal data encompassing the complete population permits constructing specific “place types” that intimate contextualized aspects of life courses.

However, the register data also include important caveats and shortcomings. First, although they provide information about the complete population and are organized in a panel structure (i.e., multiple measurements of the same population over time), the registers contain information on only a limited set of social characteristics that are reported for purposes other than social research. This fact implies that important information regarding values, outlooks, preferences and so on is not available in these data. Studying class inequality in a relational approach would ideally include many additional sources of information, such as

“an exhaustive sample of actor-action units, their temporal and structural relationships to all the other relevant actor-action units and information for each of these units, with respect to both the actor’s attributes, preferences, group affiliations as well as the actions’ characteristics and dependence on other actions” (Baldassarri 2007:3).

As discussed in the final pages of this introduction, these matters should be analysed in alternative ways than the strategy pursued presently.

Another important caveat with the data at hand is the limited time frame. Occupational information, for instance, is available only in a ten-year period (2003–2012), which limits the opportunities for analysing intragenerational class careers over the life course. In *Upper-class trajectories (article II)*, I seek to approximate this problematic by analysing cohort-specific typologies and find that there is a similar logic to the patterns that emerge. As I also note in the article, important variations are naturally evident at a more granular detailed level, but the general differentiation of differences between long-range, short-range and stable careers (i.e., vertical mobility barriers) and capital-specific careers (i.e., horizontal mobility barriers) structures careers for all cohorts observed. However, although this technique approximates analysing differences over the life course, it is difficult to assess with this design whether the observed similarities actually denote life-course dynamics, period effects or cohort effects. In *Mobility closure (article III)*, I measure parental resources. Here, the information available in the data is also limited by time. In particular, the parental occupational industry is collected from the 1980 census. However, other forms of resources are measured at multiple times (parental income and wealth, as well as the level of affluence in the neighbourhood), which also facilitates introducing dynamism into studying class origins.

Another problem with the register data concerns the quality of the information that they contain. Although certain sources of data may denote comparatively better quality than what is usual in quantitative data (consider, for instance, the difference between self-reported income and tax-reported income), other sources may cause more difficulties. For the present purposes, the main variable of concern is occupational information, which relies on employers' report of employees. Compared to self-reported occupation, it may be that employees themselves have clearer notions of suitable occupational titles than employers. As I note in *Mobility closure (article III)*, in particular, the trajectories that display discontinuous and fragile attachment to the upper class over time might be vulnerable to erroneous reporting to the registers. This type of class career is also arguably the most vulnerable to misclassifications in the ORDC class scheme. A large part of the Norwegian workforce works in the public sector, for which a coherent classification scheme of occupations has not been implemented by Statistics Norway, which means that the team developing the class scheme has manually sorted thousands of occupational codes into the different classes. As I note in *Mobility closure*

(*article III*), however, while such caveats may have contributed to more heterogeneity in the sequences analysed, these deficiencies should be expected to have underestimated, rather than overestimated, the association between different class destinations and the origin space constructed.

Another caveat with occupation-based classifications of class is that some occupational titles are fairly vague and are difficult to sort hierarchically. The occupational title of “consultant,” for instance is hard to classify, and it is difficult to assess the level of homogeneity of work associated with such titles. Finally, the relative income boundary that vertically differentiates the economic fraction in the ORDC scheme inevitably incorporates a level of arbitrariness into the continuation of individual class affiliation over time. Whether discontinuous and short spells of economic upper-class affiliation should be analysed as *class mobility* is therefore somewhat questionable, although this economic differentiation taps into what I suggest may denote *temporal logics* as a class ceiling mechanism and therefore contributes to existing research on class inequality within elite occupations (Friedman, Laurison and Miles 2015, Laurison and Friedman 2016).

7 Summary of articles

In this chapter, I offer a brief review of the three articles. The aim is to highlight how they relate to each other and how, in combination, they seek to push conceptual, empirical and methodological boundaries in the field of class mobility in general and studies of upper-class formation in particular.

Enduring contexts: Segregation by affluence throughout the life course

Published in *The Sociological Review* 2018, 66(3): 645–64.

This paper deals with “spatialized” processes of inequality and explicitly argues for the need to study concentration of affluence alongside concentration of poverty. The theoretical point of departure is that research on spatial inequalities – whether in the body of work highlighting sentiments of class belonging or research on neighbourhood effects – relies on time as a key mechanism in linking social and spatial inequality. Curiously, however, temporal unfolding and life-course dynamics remain largely underexplored in the literature on spatial inequality.

Drawing on Patrick Sharkey’s notion of “contextual mobility,” this paper traces the level of affluence in residential areas for three successive cohorts on a yearly basis, from leaving the parental home in 1989 to 2012. Studying the Oslo region (Oslo and the surrounding county of Akershus), I employ a SA to construct a typology; the neighbourhood trajectories are differentiated between two types that are dubbed

“modest affluence” and “modest poverty,” whereas nearly 1/3 of these life stores are characterized by either “dense poverty” or “dense affluence.” A number of interesting features of this typology are then highlighted. First, the differences between these neighbourhood careers become intensified over time. Second, each type is clearly related to the parental home environment; 50% of the “dense affluence” type grew up in the top quintile, and 37% of the “dense poverty” type grew up in the bottom quintile of the neighbourhood distribution in 1989. These findings thus contribute to nuancing existing research that highlights an intergenerational transmission of neighbourhood poverty (Sharkey 2008), as I find persistent reproduction within areas of affluence.

I then analyse how these different types of neighbourhood contexts are “spatialized” in the Oslo region. Strikingly, I document that the “dense affluence” cluster is particularly located within confined parameters while the neighbourhood type of “dense poverty” consists of residential trajectories that spread out through the region to a much larger extent. I then analyse the level of yearly segregation between individuals who are characterized by different contextual careers. Here, I find that individuals who persistently live in very affluent surroundings are the most spatially isolated and are increasingly so over time. The “dense poverty” type, on the other hand is the least isolated. These results, then, contribute to nuancing the notion that the poor are spatially entrapped in urban centres whereas the affluent are spatially mobile. Rather, I highlight that my results suggest that the affluent employ strategies of spatial withdrawal into specific localities and that the mobile existence on the part of the disadvantaged is likely to reflect the expulsion of the urban poor, not only partly due to increasing housing prices in the urban centre but also due to a lack of public housing.

I suggest that the strategic withdrawal of the affluent may be enabled by a dual process of closure; on the one hand, I point to drastic deregulatory measurements of the housing and credit market during the period of study that – in tandem with growing economic inequality – intensified “affordability” as a dominant principle for moving. On the other hand, I draw on qualitative work on symbolic boundaries between Norwegian residential areas to argue that the differences between residential trajectories may be sustained through informal closure mechanisms that anticipate class belonging.

In summary, the article reveals a systematic relationship between social space and physical space that may have implications for topics such as processes of classed

belonging (Benson 2014, Benson and Jackson 2013, Savage 2010b, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2005, Watt 2009), differential association and homophilous interactional patterns (Bottero 2004, Bottero 2009, Bottero and Prandy 2003), symbolic boundary-drawing processes (Lamont and Molnár 2002), and the mapping of distinct “lifeworlds” over biographical time (Atkinson 2010, Atkinson 2017c). Above all, this paper offers a novel demonstration of the endurance of contextual privilege over the life course.

Upper-class trajectories: capital-specific pathways to power

Published in *Socio-Economic Review*'s special issue “Elites, economy and society: New approaches and findings” 2018, 16(2): 341–64.

This paper argues that the sociological emphasis on class formation processes complements economists' mapping of top-level income and wealth shares. The paper seeks to bring together the joint sensitivity to time that unites different sociological approaches to class analysis, pointing to how temporal unfolding is evident in the works of Erik O. Wright, John Goldthorpe and Pierre Bourdieu. Despite the centrality of these ideas to class formation processes, a point of departure for the article is how such dynamism remains relatively underexplored to date.

This paper's empirical focus deals exclusively with the issue of intragenerational mobility by analysing individuals who become affiliated with the upper class at least once in their career. Exploiting the richness of Norwegian registry data, three research questions concerning i) the level of upper-class stability ii) class fractional circulation, ii) and life-course variation are pursued. The latter is analysed by analysing 21 birth cohorts in a 10-year panel, capturing different stages of the life course. By employing SA and the ORDC class scheme, I document that there are important variations in the level of stability in upper-class careers; whereas approximately half (averaged across the cohorts) experience relatively stable upper-class affiliations, there is also considerable vertical mobility in the career trajectories. There is a clear distinction between those who experience short-range career mobility – i.e., between the upper middle class and the upper class – and those who experience more long-range career mobility. These patterns of vertical mobility notwithstanding, the persistency of horizontal mobility patterns in structuring the careers is striking; horizontal movements between the economic and the cultural class fractions are indeed “deviant,” as Bourdieu

(1996a) remarked. The patterns of circulation that emerge seem primarily confined to trajectories between the economic and the balanced fraction or between the cultural and the balanced fraction. Fractional crossovers from the cultural to the economic fraction or vice versa are not persistent.

Regarding life-course variation, the analyses document that similar typologies are elicited for each cohort; all seem differentiated by three stable upper-class careers in each class fraction and two types of short-range mobility between the upper class and the upper middle class in the economic and the balanced domain, and each cohort exhibits one heterogeneous career type that is predominantly engaged in the lower regions of social space and less stability at the top. The only apparent exception to this cross-cohort similarity is a relative lack of vertical mobility within the economic fraction among the younger cohorts; only from age 34 and older are careers reasonably differentiated between short-range mobility between the economic upper middle class and the economic upper class and stable affiliation with the latter.

Studying the sub-population of individuals who are at some point affiliated with the Norwegian upper class serves to highlight the limitations of restricting the analysis of class mobility to “access.” Indeed, important variations seem to pattern work-life mobility patterns, even within the upper class. Given the differentiation of stable trajectories from the more mobile careers, this paper suggests that the upper class in Norway is patterned by the formation of *capital-specific upper-class cores* that cement durable mobility barriers along the principle of capital composition and that serve to divide – rather than unify – the Norwegian upper class.

This article not only points to how the sociological interest in group formation processes complements economists’ mapping of concentrated affluence but also teases out important avenues for sociological studies of class mobility. First, it serves to illustrate the usefulness of studying intra-class dynamics by highlighting forms of capital and class fractions; however, it demonstrates how time should be equally acknowledged. As seen, a growing body of research demonstrates the usefulness of studying class fraction – including in Norway (e.g., Flemmen et al. 2017); however, this work is often limited to analysing point-in-time notions of class destinations. This article demonstrates that merely registering “access” leaves important temporal dimensions undiscovered; everybody studied in this article gains “access” to the upper

class, but some enjoy durable affiliations, while others remain “on the fringes of power.” Second, a related issue concerns the Goldthorpean notion of occupational maturity.” While the cross-cohort differences indeed suggest that there is more “shifting around” early in the life course and that there is more career stability in the older cohorts, every period in the work life seems temporally differentiated. Importantly, the notion of occupational maturity neglects a key difference between stability and long-range career mobility in mature careers. In turn, relying on notions of “occupational maturity” could overestimate the level of “societal openness” in accessing the top. This issue is even more evident in light of the findings in *Mobility closure*, where the temporal differentiation of upper-class careers is shown to be stratified by class origin and “inherited” forms of capital.

Mobility closure in the upper class: assessing time and forms of capital

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As with *Enduring contexts*, the contribution of this paper is methodological in addition to bridging knowledge gaps. The main point of departure for this article is linking intragenerational careers to “inherited” forms of capital. Therefore, the aim is to tap into the problematic of establishing the relationship between class *origins* and class *destinations* while at the same time remaining sensitive to temporal dynamics and different forms of capital. More specifically, I suggest a strategy for both acknowledging class destinations as a sequence of events and simultaneously elucidating a relational structure of differences in class origins that may stratify them.

I analyse the four cohorts that become affiliated with the upper class at least once in their mature careers (ages 38–50). The research strategy consists of a two-step procedure. First, I reveal the divisions in the origins of the upper class based on 14 indicators of “inherited” capitals that pertain to parental and kinship ties. Importantly, I strive to assess temporal dynamism with regard to inherited capitals by constructing sequence typologies whenever permitted by the data. Using MCA, I then uncover a geometrical representation of difference in the origins of the upper class. I then project intragenerational destination careers onto the space. I follow the design in *Upper-class*

trajectories and construct intragenerational careers using SA but pool the cohorts (given that they are close in age and still consist of a restricted number of cases) and allow slightly more detail than in the cross-cohort analysis.

The results regarding the “origin space” show that, first, the upper class is differentiated along overall capital volume – i.e., distinguishing between “the newcomers” and “the established.” Second, the origins that pertain to the economic domain are opposed to the origins in the balanced and cultural fraction. Projecting the destination careers onto this origin space shows that there is a statistical relationship between the two. Although there are many exceptions to the mean patterns, I reveal that the newcomers are more likely to have a biographically late arrival in the upper class and/or fragile affiliation with the upper class. The newcomers are also more likely to have had work-life experience in the lower regions of the social space. Conversely, the established are more likely to experience stable affiliations with the upper class. Moreover, the established seem internally divided; the established hailing from origins in the economic domain are more likely to experience stable careers in the economic upper class, whereas individuals hailing from privileged origins outside of the economic domain are more likely to have stable attachment to the cultural or balanced fraction of the upper class.

I suggest that these findings engender important implications for the study of class mobility. First, the temporal differentiation between the newcomers and the established attests to the limits of assessing “societal openness” based on snapshots in time. Even among the sub-population that becomes affiliated with the upper class in their mature careers, there is important temporal variation that stratifies privilege. I suggest that this phenomenon partly reflects that the newcomers are more likely to be recruited to positions that are of limited tenure – such as politicians or senior officials in interest organizations – or seem more likely to have “worked up the ladder” within technical work, but it may also denote a failure to secure prolonged success within the business world. Extending the notion of a “class ceiling,” I argue that this result has important implications for future work; the temporal logics of class ceiling mechanisms may contribute to nuancing sociological knowledge of inequalities at the top. Which, in turn, suggests an enduring importance of class origins across the life course.

Second, picking up on the suggestion of capital-specific class cores in *Upper-class trajectories*, I emphasize that the established are not united in one integrated upper-class core but, rather, are engaged in fraction-specific domains. This emphasis, in turn, points to the relevance of adding temporal sensitivity to studying the accumulation of different forms of capital. The suggestion of *capital-specific upper-class cores* taps into the lifelong accumulation of specific forms of capital and demonstrates the usefulness of adding biographical sensitivity to the study of the dominant class.

8 Avenues for future research

The upsurge in public interest in elites or the upper class during the last decade is reflected in important studies on top-level income and wealth shares (e.g., Atkinson and Piketty 2010, Piketty 2014). Arguably, the sociological tradition of class analysis – with its study of group formation processes – has surfaced to a lesser extent. In this dissertation, I have pointed to how experience is at the crux of engendering group formation in class analysis and how this phenomenon, in turn, entails *biographical accounts* of class inequality. Drawing primarily on the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu, I have identified three elements of class formation – time, space and forms of capital – that seem implicated theoretically but remain analysed to a lesser extent empirically. I have proposed empirical designs that help tap into these dimensions by stressing how the latter two are reliant on the former.

Thus, the general aim of this dissertation is to add biographical sensitivity to the mapping of upper-class formation by exploring patterns of intra- and intergenerational mobility and patterns of contextual mobility in urban space. The analyses suggest important variations in the biographies of the dominant class in Norway. Whereas “the newcomers” are more likely to experience work-life careers that feature fragile affiliations with the upper class or biographically late arrival at “the top,” “the established” seem more likely to experience stable upper-class affiliations in their work careers. “The established,” meanwhile, are internally divided in their personal and parental attachment to upper-class fractions, suggestively cementing capital-specific upper-class cores that are characterized by the lifelong accumulation of different types of capital. Moreover, I have pointed to how one’s classed experiences are additionally

embedded in space and that physical space serves to secure social closure on the part of the affluent through strategies of spatial withdrawal over the life course. In summary, this dissertation reveals important temporal, spatial, and capital-specific properties in the lives of the Norwegian upper class.

The analytical interest in class formation processes as derived from mobility closure, as well as neighbourhood segregation as a source of the proximate structuration of class (Giddens 1981), rests partly on the theoretical assumption that such conditions facilitate the homogenization of experiences. Moreover, such homogeneity is anticipated to facilitate affinities in dispositions and social behaviour such as class endogamy, friendship patterns, and taste and ideological affinities, transforming class into socially identifiable groups.

However, the assumption that the divisions in upper-class biographies along temporal, spatial and capital-specific properties become manifest in different position-takings that serve to further stratify social behaviour is not investigated in the current study. A move to follow up the present findings would thus be to analyse whether the temporally patterned “space of positions” – the objectivity of the first order, to paraphrase Bourdieu – translates into a “space of position-takings” – and thus the objectivity of the second order. Indeed, guided by the structural properties of class trajectories that are revealed in this dissertation, problems related to a “biographical illusion” (Bourdieu 2000a) – i.e., analysing each biographical account idiosyncratically and decoupled from its relational structure of other biographies – may also be circumvented. Therefore, given the study at hand, a fruitful avenue for future research would consist of analysing whether individuals who are affiliated with the Norwegian upper class display divisions along outlooks, preferences, likes and dislikes and so on, following the biographical differences documented, i.e., between (i) “the unstable newcomers” and “the stable established” and – among the latter – between (ii) capital-specific class cores, and (iii) differences due to spatial withdrawal over the life course.

While surveys allow approaching such questions, these data often rely on a sample of the population and thus famously struggle to analyse a privileged minority in a society; in sampled surveys, the dominant class is often just represented by a handful of cases or is completely absent in the sample (Savage 1997, Savage and Williams 2008a). These matters become even more pressing, considering that a key point of

departure for such a study would entail analysing the subdivisions herein. Thus, qualitative approaches seem to be more preferable extensions of the present study. Qualitative approaches to life stories and narrative accounts (see e.g. Barrett 2015, Bertaux 1981, Bertaux and Thompson 1997a) may be fruitful alternatives to consult. Alternatively, data on position-takings may be obtained by collecting data extracted from official sources such as organizational archives, news outlets, company websites etc. following the tradition of French prosopography (e.g. Broady 2002). For instance, Lebaron and Doga (2016) have analysed how differences in the biographies of central bank managers are associated with divisions in their publically voiced stances towards monetary policies.

The theoretical emphasis placed on time in this study also points to other avenues for future research. In particular, the temporal differentiation within the upper class calls for further study into the reproduction of privilege spanning longer periods and multiple generations. Rather than tracing the statistical likelihood of accessing the top at one point in time, the results suggest paying attention to the ability to retain advantages over time and across longer time frames. Moreover, it would be interesting to analyse how societal institutions enable or constrain the transmission of class privilege from a historical perspective. Considering the suggestions of capitalist dynasties that endure over time in Nordic countries (Björklund, Roine and Waldenström 2012, Hansen 2014), studying wealth inheritance and wealth accumulation seems particularly pertinent. Uncovering the processual nature of class privilege thus seems key to analysing whether and in what ways capitalist dynasties coexist amid egalitarian societal features.

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Article I: Enduring contexts: segregation by affluence throughout the life course

Article II: Upper-class trajectories: capital-specific pathways to power

Article III: Mobility closure in the upper class: assessing time and forms of capital

