

Summary

This thesis focuses on the Norwegian cultural upper class. While social scientists in recent decades have shown a renewed interest in both elites and the cultural basis of social inequality, these interests have seldom intersected to spark an interest in the *cultural elite*. The thesis contributes with new knowledge to the literature on elites and upper classes, both empirically and theoretically. It is demonstrated that cultural class fractions not only tend to seek out the same areas of residency; they also possess a relatively clear elite awareness. The thesis also contributes more specifically to the field of 'cultural class analysis' by conceptualising cultural capital as a broad resource that goes beyond mere cultural consumption and is anchored in cultural fields. It is shown how the cultural upper class is engaged in both negotiations of identity and in struggles over moral, cultural and economic value. Questioning the notion of 'disinterested' cultural producers, this research sheds new light on some of the intersections that exist between economic and cultural capital in cultural fields, specifically, and in contemporary class structures, more generally.

In studying the Norwegian cultural upper class a mixed-methods approach is employed, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. By exploiting comprehensive registry data and a Bourdieu-inspired occupational class scheme, a cultural capital-rich fraction of the upper class is singled out. This cultural fraction can also be seen as encompassing the 'top players' of a cultural *field*. This class scheme is further utilised in the recruitment of interviewees. In an attempt to capture different positions within the cultural upper class, three professional occupational groups were strategically chosen. A total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted with humanities professors, cultural directors or editors and well established actors. In line with recent developments in qualitative class analysis, both 'class subjectivities' and 'struggles over value', as well as internal differentiation were central aspects in the analysis of the interviews.

The thesis consists of an introduction that elaborates on some of the theoretical and methodological approaches used in the four papers. Two of them were based on qualitative and two were based on quantitative methods. The following summarizes the main findings in each article:

In the first article, the development of spatial class divisions in Oslo is explored by taking advantage of the registry data. The analysis covers both vertical segregation, between the upper class and the working class, and horizontal segregation, between class fractions possessing high levels of either economic or cultural capital. The results show that the level of vertical segregation is severe and has increased between 1970 and 2003. Also moderate and slightly increasing levels of horizontal segregation are documented. While the cultural fraction often resides together with the economic fraction in areas with few working class neighbours, the different forms of capital also seem to have a spatial basis.

In the second article, the comprehensive registry data is utilised to scrutinise the interconnections between cultural and economic capital. Taking as point of departure common descriptions of the cultural field as an 'economic world reversed' where people are disinterested in money, it is asked whether class origin affects economic rewards within the cultural field. The analysis shows that class reproduction follows a resource specific logic also within the cultural upper class; those with economic class origins receive considerably higher incomes than others.

The opposition between cultural and economic capital is further pursued through the qualitative material in the third article. In light of the increasing influence of economic logics across societal areas, it is asked if and how the old antagonism between culture and commerce is played out in a contemporary cultural field. The analyses show that while this demarcation of culture and money does seem to be somewhat bleary, it is also subject to vigorous struggles over value and legitimation. Money in itself is not denounced, it is rather the motivation to earn it that function as the constitutive limit in the moral economy of the cultural elite.

The fourth article uses qualitative data by focusing on class subjectivities within the cultural upper class. It is shown that the interviewees display a relatively clear awareness as a 'cultural elite', but also that this awareness is connected to egalitarian sentiments that restrain how this can be voiced in public.