Tastekeepers

Taste structures, power and aesthetic-political positions in the elites of the Norwegian cultural field

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ABSTRACT

This article presents some early results from an investigation of taste patterns in the expert and commanding elites of the Norwegian cultural field, using data from 1300 hired professionals and board members in 250 institutions in the cultural sector, ranging from the largest governmental institutions to small festivals. Using multiple correspondence analysis on preferences related to 59 artists and artefacts from literature, music, visual art and television, we identify three important axes in their taste orientation: first, an opposition between a conformist versus more oppositional position towards artists with high or medium recognition, mainly linked to age, and a second opposition between those who are more versus less positive to popular and mainstream culture (in particular, television), which corresponds to a symbolic hierarchy opposing various types of cultural administrators to artists, critics, and academics. The final axis opposes older and younger agents in their varying preferences for different generations of artists and cultural artefacts. These taste differences are then explored for links to the respondents’ use of cultural institutions, their position in the cultural field, their social backgrounds and their position-takings in aesthetics and cultural policy, suggesting a clear affiliation between taste patterns and these realms.

Keywords
Pierre Bourdieu, cultural elites, cultural taste
A NORWEGIAN CULTURAL ELITE?

The notion of a “cultural elite” has become increasingly common in Norwegian public debate (Harr and Krogstad 2011). The use of the concept, however, appears mainly mythical and – in contrast to many other countries – is almost always used negatively, referring to an unspecified group who are “arrogant, snobbish and condescending”, living in luxury “with their Chablis and their overflowing bookcases in their villas in all-white neighbourhoods”, being the antithesis of ordinary people who are “spontaneous, cheerful and authentic” (Ibid.: 7). The myths of the cultural elite are linked to the common belief among people that Norway is – and ought to be – a particular egalitarian society, both economic and culturally (Gullestad 2001).

In Norway, this debate has been less on the nature of such elites than on their existence, and has almost exclusively been about elitist (snobbish) cultural consumption (Harr and Krogstad 2011), rather than on the question of who exercise domination in the realm of cultural production, that is, who are the elites of the cultural fields and the logic of such fields (Bourdieu 1996 a).

While much work has been done on the Norwegian cultural elites in the former sense – as the cultural fraction of the dominating classes – through general studies of the relationship between social and cultural cleavages in Norway (see e.g. Rosenlund 2000; Skarpenes 2007; Gripsrud et al. 2011; Taule and Henrikсен 2012; Jarness 2013), our knowledge of cultural elites in the latter sense – as the elites of cultural fields – is much less systematic. There exist, of course, a wealth of humanistic (most often historical) studies of single, celebrated artists, art movements and the largest cultural institutions in Norway. With the exception of a few isolated studies of cultural fields, often largely qualitative (e.g. Andréassen 2006; Hovden 2008; Solhjell and Øien 2012; Rønning & Slatta 2013) little sociological work has been done in Norway on the cultural elites or the functioning of cultural fields, but instead prioritized themes like the working conditions and life situations of artists (e.g. Mangset 2004; Kleppe et al. 2010). While the Power and Democracy project (1998-2003) gave us some

1. Also notable is that this interest of the newspapers in the cultural elites is not accompanied with a similar explicit interest in other elites or classes more generally – with one exception: An account of the use in Norwegian newspapers in the period 2002-2012 show that “cultural elite(s)” was mentioned in 580 articles in the three largest newspapers (VG, Dagbladet, Aftenposten), only exceeded by “political elite(s)” (640). “Working class(es)” was in contrast mentioned in only 297 articles, and “economic elite(s)” only in 171 articles.

2. This idea which can be traced back to the country’s particular history – including a late national independence (1814/1915), the emphasis and idealisation of rural (farmer) culture in the nation-building process, the strong contra-cultural organisations in the rural areas (Rokkan 1987), and the lack of a national nobility (formally abolished in 1821). In a shorter historical perspective, it appears not coincidental that the increasing (negative) use of the concept appears in a time of rising support of liberalist populist political parties and politics (not least, in regard to the state’s support for unpopular art, like The Opera or Houses of Literature), and a growing generational gap following processes of modernity where higher education, living in a large city and not having worked (or grown up in a family with work) in farming, fishery or industry is very common experiences in the younger cohorts, but relative rare in the older ones.
knowledge of the general social characteristics of the leaders of cultural institutions in Norway compared to other social elites – being marked first and foremost by a relatively high proportion of females (second only to the political elites) and relatively low recruitment from the working classes (Hjellbrekke et al. 2007; Gulbrandsen et al. 2002), we know very little about the internal structure of the Norwegian cultural elites (a deficiency which appears to be a general problem in elite research, c.f. Flemmen 2013), not only in terms of the social composition of the various realms of art and the positions therein (e.g., artistic versus administrative positions), but also in their differences in their cultural orientations and more overarching views of the role of culture in Norwegian society. Given the centrality of the cultural elites in the classificatory struggles of cultural worth, not only inside each distinct realm of art but also in society as a whole (Bourdieu 1984), this aspect of the cultural elites appears as an object worthy of a more systematic investigation.

To speak of cultural elites is in one sense very straightforward: There clearly exist groups who exercise various type of domination (Weber 1978) in the realms of Norwegian culture: being a member of the Arts Council, or on the jury of the most prestigious art and literature prizes, holding top administrative or board member positions in the largest cultural institutions (museums, theatres, government boards, record labels, large festivals etc.), being a recognized professor in art or a critic in the largest newspapers – those in these kind of positions are clearly better placed than others to influence what types of art and which artistic artefacts are acknowledged (or at least presented) as valuable and their chance of being seen and produced, that is, to be cultural tastemakers and gatekeepers, tastekeepers.

This, however, raises the question of elite cohesiveness. Using the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of fields (Bourdieu 1996a), we can reasonably expect the leader of the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design to hold an elevated position in a national field of visual art and therefore some weight in the debates of this particular field (e.g. on the canon of Norwegian painters). Also, we could probably with some degree of certainty expect that elites of this field will have some common interests with elites in other fields of art (e.g. on seeing culture as an important part of the curriculum of primary schools) and being divided in some questions (e.g. on the hierarchy of different art forms and schools). It is less certain, however, that different cultural elites should be considered to take part in a Norwegian cultural field of power (c.f. Bourdieu 1996b), that is, as a group of cultural elites actively united in a common struggle, rather than a looser association of elites who are mainly influenced by the actions inside their own art realms. In other words, there might be a number of national cultural elites, but not necessarily a common national cultural elite – this, however is an empirical question, not a definitional one.

The problem of borders is further complicated by a number of well-known factors, including not only the systematic vagueness and petrified social philosophy inherent in the concept of culture that separates “culture as art” from
“culture as a whole way of life” (Williams 1981; Bourdieu 1984), and “art” worlds from the worlds of cultural production lacking the aura (Benjamin 1936) of traditional artistic work (e.g. journalism), but also in the complexity of modern cultural production: As Becker (1982) points out, to make a work of art to appear as such involves an intricate division of labour, including both more central and peripheral positions. To classify the field’s borders is thus far from a simple methodological question of sampling, it is also to take actively part in (with the risk of being moved by) the fundamental struggles of the nomos of the fields in question – including the legitimate hierarchy of artistic forms, genres, institutions and artists, and on which types of agents and activities are not to be considered part of these fields (Bourdieu 1996a).

While we in this article will keep the question of the borders and cohesiveness of the Norwegian cultural elites largely unresolved, we will approach the overall problem of the structuration of these elites through a sample of 1300 professionals and board members in 250 institutions of the Norwegian culture sector. Starting with a rough sketch of the structuration of their cultural tastes (using preferences for television programs, authors, musical and visual artists) through correspondence analysis, we will then, by taste being a fait social total (Mauss 1990) of this social world, proceed to investigate how these taste differences are statistically linked to other aspects of their cultural lifestyles (in particular, their use of cultural institutions), their social characteristics (e.g. age, gender, city of residence), indicators of their position in the field (e.g. sitting on the jury for or winning prizes, the length and type of education, art type, type of organisation to which they belong, types of leadership function in these etc.), and their position-takings in questions of aesthetics and cultural policy. The research question regards thus not only how cultural tastes vary within these groups (which also relates to the larger debates about the link between cultural and social hierarchies in modern society), but also suggests a preliminary sketch of how such differences structure the Norwegian cultural field more generally, not least in their agents’ views on culture and cultural politics, and to give more insight into the nature and functioning of modern Norwegian elites. A simplified map providing an overview of some of the main structures is given in Figure 5 in the final section of this article.

THE DATA AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Largely guided by the field theory and empirical investigations of cultural fields by Bourdieu (1993, 1985, 1996a) and others working in this tradition (in particular, Broady 1998; Gustavsson, Börjesson and Edling 2012), our focus from the start was on the elites of the cultural field. Remembering John Scott’s (2008, p. 33) insistence that the concept of elite “is most usefully applied to those who occupy the most powerful positions in structures of domination” to us suggested that a fruitful approach would be to sample first those who held formal positions of authority and influence in the institutions regulating and expressing “official” cultural life (that is, institutions recognised by the state
and cultural field as cultural institutions). While there are many examples of recognized artists and authors working as hired professionals and leaders in such organisations, and the large variation of cultural institutions and positions in these institutions introduces a wide range of powers (i.e. types of capital) in the field – e.g. holding various gatekeeping roles (selecting what artists are introduced to a wider public, given financial support, awarded prizes etc.), being visible for peers and the general public (e.g. being the director of a recognised institution), it appeared sensible to also include board members, not only because of their formal authority in the organisations, but also to include a wider sample of positions and forms of capital in the field (as most boards are composed by an idea of making a representative – or at least varied – mix of competent, independent individuals from the field). In the typology of John Scott (2007, p. 28), expanding the typology of Pareto (the “lions” and “foxes”), we might term the cultural leaders the “bears” of this field (whose superiority is based on their occupation of the top administrative positions in an organisational structure), where the remaining sample constitute various types of expert elites (the “owls”) with specialised wisdom and control over cultural resources of signification.

Our selection of the institutions was from the outset a mix of theoretical judgements, heuristic guidelines and pragmatic choices given the availability of data and resources, done in two stages: First, the institutions perceived as most relevant were chosen, then the email-addresses of every board member and hired staff (excluding only those who appeared to hold purely supporting administrative positions, like IT technicians and accountants) was collected. The Norwegian Ministry of Culture’s lists of consultative bodies for their White Papers (NOUs) formed the foundation of our lists of eligible institutions, and were then extensively supplemented – aided by the advice of colleagues, students and cultural workers from various fields – with institutions and organisations which appeared important, usually by either a) being formally linked to the State and national cultural policy, in the 1) implementation and/or 2) evaluation of national cultural policy, in 3) allocation of state cultural funding (to organisations or individuals), or by 4) giving official information on culture and cultural policy (e.g. The Norwegian Arts Council), or, by b) orga-

3. A problem here is clearly that the role and composition of a board varies much with type of cultural organisation and art field. Board members are not only chosen for their symbolic capital in the field, but also often in their role as distinguished outsiders (that is, for their capital in other fields). In the largest national cultural institutions many of the board members are often appointed by the State, and therefore often have a large presence of such outsiders (e.g. the board of seven of the National Theatre includes three retired ex-ministers – one who is the leader – and one major industrialist), whereas this is much rarer, if found at all, in more specialised, non-public organisations (e.g. the Society of Norwegian Composers).

4. Email-addresses were collected in a variety of ways: Via the contact information online on their websites, by Google search (when only the name was known) and by direct requests to the institutions and individuals themselves. The majority of this work was done by a small group of master students at our department who participated in the construction of this questionnaire as part of a course on the cultural public sphere.
nising cultural workers and artists, and otherwise protecting their intellectual and legal interests (e.g. Norwegian Authors’ Union, GramArt), or c) otherwise playing an important gatekeeping role in what types of culture and artists are selected and presented for the mass cultural public (e.g. art galleries and museums, theatres, record companies, organisers of cultural festivals and the larger venues, Houses of Literature etc.).

While we are confident that our exploratory procedure has resulted in a quite extensive selection of the more elevated positions in the Norwegian field of culture, it is important to be aware of the biases inherent in this strategy: First, the focus has clearly been on the most traditionally recognized realms of culture (e.g. The Norwegian Tattoo Union was not selected). Second, by selecting agents that have formal links to institutions and organisations, one is clearly privileging the central over the marginal positions in these art worlds (e.g. while dancers and choreographers are numerous, there are no set designers and theatre ticket-sellers in the sample, c.f. Becker 1982), and in the case of board members, a minimum amount of social or symbolic capital is clearly required for selection. At the same time, our wide sample of institutions and organisations do include a number of positions that are unlikely to qualify for elite status in the field (e.g. organising a regional country music festival, or being a consultant in contract and copyright law in an artist’s rights organisation). Rather than make an a priori definition of who precisely constitute the elites of this field, however, we would prefer to circumvent this debate and instead pose a more descriptive question of how this sample of administrative and expert positions in the Norwegian field of culture (or alternatively, “field of cultural professionals”) is structured.

Because our lists were updated continuously, the web surveys were done in two stages – one in November/December 2012 and one in February-March 2013. In total, 1300 persons from over 200 institutions (listed in the appendix) answered the survey, giving a response rate of 42 %.  

5. Note that this sample is only one of several samples in a larger survey project on the Norwegian cultural field that now involves over 5000 respondents. The same questionnaire has been administered at a later date to cultural journalists in the press, the national association of critics, cultural administrators in the counties and municipalities, and members of various artists’ and cultural workers’ organisations. A similar questionnaire was also used for surveying the members of the Norwegian Storting (the national political assembly), political and administrative leaders in the State departments (Hovden and Knapskog, 2014) and county politicians. This questionnaire was, again, a modification of one used earlier in studies of the cultural life of students in Bergen in 1998 and 2008 (Gripsrud et al. 2011) and Oslo in 2011.

6. This percentage must be considered rather conservative, as we must expect that the widespread use of having multiple email-addresses (private, work related, organisational) in our population (where holding a variety of jobs and organisational associations are very common), and our – undoubtedly – frequent failures to identify and rectify this in our lists no doubt means that many persons have been counted twice – or more – in our population estimates.
THE SPACE OF CULTURAL TASTES

For the construction of a space of cultural tastes, preferences concerning 42 artists (from literature, visual art, and music) and 17 television programs were selected as active variables in the correspondence analysis. These variables – only a small selection from the 600 available in the survey – were a considerable mix of artists and programs chosen to appeal to a high degree of varied tastes, mixing not only different schools and genres, but also artists (and programs) of various age, gender (profile) and nationality, with various degrees of mass appeal versus restricted appeal, etc. Details on the active 118 modalities in the selection of individuals and the statistical model for the analysis is given in Text box 1.

Text box 1: The analysis of correspondences (MCA)

59 variables were chosen as active variables in the MCA.


Television programs7 (17): X-factor, Skal vi danse <Dancing with the stars>, 71° nord <wilderness reality competition>, Dagsgrevyen <news, national public broadcaster>, Nytt på nyt <Have I Got News for You>, Skavlan <talkshow, originally hosted by the national public broadcaster>, Norge Rundt <“feelgood” reportages from the districts>, Friends, Desperate housewives, Senkveld <talkshow, hosted by commercial broadcaster>, Sopranos, Seinfeld, TV2-nyhetene <news, commercial broad-

7. While one might, from a statistical point of view, disapprove of the introduction of television programs into an analysis which otherwise consists of artists, it seemed to us important to include this, both for its centrality in most peoples life (if only measured in time used) and to provide a wider selection of categories from popular culture.
The 59 Likert-variables, which originally included six response categories (like very much, like somewhat, neither like or dislike, dislike somewhat, dislike very much, unknown) were recoded to dummy variables: like (like very much or somewhat) and do not like (the remaining responses), resulting in 118 active categories (modalities). In the resulting map in figure 1 these two categories are displayed for each variable with a plus and a minus sign.

Of the 1300 respondents available, 267 did not answer any of the chosen variables, and 373 lacked answers to one or more, leaving 660 persons for the final analysis. The resulting 118 categories and 660 individuals were subjected to a multiple correspondence analysis (Burt), resulting in the following eigenvalues and explained variance for axis 1-4: .0079 (45%), .0058 (33%), .0011 (6%), .0003 (2%).

The first axis (not shown) of this space appears superficially to be simply an axis of positive versus negative/neutral attitudes, dividing those who prefer many versus fewer of the artists and television programs, regardless of the type of art realm, artist or program involved – e.g. opposing people who say they like both the pop music of Marit Larsen and the electronic avantgarde music of Arne Nordheim from those who neither like Virginia Woolfe or Skavlan (the largest Norwegian talk show). The fact that the most positive are more often female, older and holding master- and PhD-degrees (usually in humanistic disciplines) brings to mind the well-known argument that cultural omnivoriness and univorishness is replacing class-based cultural antagonisms (Peterson 1992 and Peterson and Kern 1996, for some later discussions and objections, see Prieur and Rosenlund et. al 2008 and Warde and Gayo-Cal 2009). To see this axis as simply expressing differences in “cultural openness” – even disregarding the methodological problem of the inherent bias in the selection of such variables (is our assortment too popular, too academic, too male, too old etc?) – is, however, mistaken. While the axis captures a general positiveness to our selected categories, a closer reading of the explicative categories shows not only that attitudes to the television programs is largely irrelevant to the formation of the axis (which is very strange if it really measures omnivorism),

8. This results from a problem with high falloff rates in the later parts of the survey, indicating a problem with survey length. While one might have chosen to retain some of these 373 individuals for a specific MCA (La Roux and Rouanet 2004: 203), we abandoned this idea due to worries about the effect this would have, as this meant that the questions about musical artists would have been answered by most respondents (being one of the first questions in the survey) whereas non-drama television programs, coming late in the survey, would be answered by only the most diligent, and in this way introducing an unwelcome factor into the analysis.

9. Explicative categories are those which are most important for the axis orientation, in our case chosen as having an absolute contribution above average (c.f. La Roux and Rouanet 2004). Explicative categories for axis 1 are as follows: Left side (all positive, sorted by contribution from larger to smaller): Wassmo, Sitter, Allende, Breivik, Ørstavik, Mutter, Kielland, Flogstad, Dolven, Buen, Bremnes, Pettersen, Finne, Kundera, Woolf, Nordheim, Solstad, Hovedscenen, Krogh, DDE. Right side (all negative/neutral, likewise sorted): Sitter, Hamson, Pettersen, Allende, Krogh, Solstad, Mutter, Flogstad, Bremnes, Wassmo, Breivik, Kundera, Woolf, Kielland, Nordstoga, Nordheim, Kafka, Vigeland, Dali, Bernhoft, Ørstavik, Buen, Dolven, Skavlan.
and is mostly concerned with those artists/authors who are most likely to conform to traditional notions of what constitute “great artists”. E.g. in the music variables, the controversy – with the exception of the mature singer-songwriter Kari Bremnes – regards not the popular artists, but an avant-garde pioneer (Nordheim), a traditional folk musician (Buen-Garnås) and a classical violinist (Mutter). Similarly, in the realm of literature, the controversy is not found in the varying appreciation of the popular crime writers (Guillou, Lindell), but in the appreciation of the more “serious” writers (e.g. Woolfe, Kundera, Pettersen, Ørstavik, Solstad, Fløgstad). Rather than reflecting omnivourness versus univourness, it therefore seems more correct to describe this axis as one that – borrowing the terms from Olivier Donnat (1994) – opposes conformism to non-conformism in regard to conventional cultural hierarchies. Most likely this is partly due to a mixture of generational differences in the appreciation of traditional artists (c.f. Donnat 2013, Gripsrud et. al 2012) and an age hierarchy in the field where the younger respondents are also more likely to be active in popular or performing forms of culture (e.g. film, popular music, dance), and also more likely to work in symbolically subordinate positions (e.g. being consultants rather than independent artists). While the statistical strength of this axis is precisely this ability to sum up many very different statistical associations, the compounded nature of this opposition suggest the need for further analysis of this opposition. For this reason, we will in the following parts of this article mainly focus on axis 2 and 3, where age and field position reappears as important structuring elements of the oppositions.

The second axis (the horizontal opposition in Figure 1) in the correspondence analysis appears mainly to separate the agents who prefer more of the listed television programs (left side) versus those who more often prefer the listed visual artists and authors (right side), while the musical artists are more dispersed, reflecting the schismatic nature of this latter domain by its mix of artists from genres with the highest and lowest legitimacy (e.g. classical artists and popular folk-rock musicians). That this opposition is mainly related to artistic and cultural legitimacy is also suggested by the fact that the artists preferred by those on the left side of the map, regardless of type of art, usually combine popular appeal with lower artistic recognition, and work in the lower genres inside each field (e.g. the realist painter Vebjørn Sand, pop artist Celine Dion and crime writer Jan Guillou), who are opposed to artists and authors like Jackson Pollock, Arne Nordheim and Georges Perec.
Figure 1: The space of cultural tastes (active categories in black). MCA, axis 2 and 3. Categories with contributions above average are printed in bold for axis 2 and underlined for axis 3.
This split is further diverged by the third axis (the vertical dimension in Figure 1), which separates older from more contemporary art, artists, schools and genres. In the realms of visual art, for example, this axis opposes preferences for older painters and older schools – like Christian Krogh (naturalist), Inger Sitter (modernist painter), and Ferdinand Finne (painter of aquarelle landscapes and still life), from those who prefer the younger avant-garde artists like Bjarne Melgaard, Anne Katrine Dolven (known for her video art and untraditional public sculptures), or the pop art of Hariton Pushwagener. It should be noted that the age of the particular school or genre (e.g. the medium, typical motives and techniques in the case of visual artists), and the time of the artist’s entrance to the field – which is, of course, statistically linked to the age of its typical audience – here appears more important than the artist’s biological age, seen for example by the placement towards the older (south) region of this map of relative young musicians in traditional genres (e.g. popular folk-rocker DDE, or the trumpet soloist Tine Thing Helseth).

We can thus coarsely identify four directions in this space of tastes constructed by axis 2 and 3: contemporary literature and modern art/music (north-east) and traditional legitimate art and music (south-east), which together make up the sector of high cultural legitimacy in this map, but are split between adherence to legitimate newcomers and the older canons, or, to use the typical terminology of Pierre Bourdieu, invoking Max Weber’s sociology of religion (Bourdieu 1987; Weber 1988) – between the orthodoxa and heterodoxa of the relevant art fields. The left side of this space – the sector of lower cultural legitimacy in contrast, are split between preferences for older genres of popular music (like folk-inspired types of rock and country music) and popular literature (south-west) from preferences for television, film and newer popular music (north-west). Similar oppositions can be seen in the placement of the most frequently mentioned favourite artists from the open questions in the questionnaire (the grey categories in Figure 1).

TASTES AND DISTASTES

Our analysis so far has a particular weakness: by only coding preferences as positive or not, it does not separate between abhorrence, ignorance of, or a neutral attitude towards an artist or a television program. A well-known argument from critics of Bourdieu’s work, however, is that the elitist types of cultural distinction shown in Distinction – where Bourdieu famously remarked that tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, “disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance … for the tastes of others” (Bourdieu 1984) – are being replaced by cultural tolerance, and that the relation between the elites and the lower classes is no longer so much one of mutual avoidance and an asymmetric relation of respect for the tastes of the upper classes, but rather one of various degrees of cultural omnivorousness and univorousness – a view in particular associated with the aforementioned work of Petersson and Kern (1992, 1996). Even if we, in this case, are dealing with a quite homogenous sample
of the population and therefore should expect the class-related taste antagonisms to be weaker, they are indeed present: artists and television programs liked by those on the left side of the map are often disliked by those placed on the right side (the pole of high symbolic capital), and vice versa (examples for musical artists and authors are given in Figure 2). As a general rule, those who say that they like many of the “higher” or “lower” artists/authors are also likely to dislike more of those on the other side, suggesting that the horizontal axis, which is linked to the volume of one’s symbolic capital in this space (that is, of peer recognition), is also one of taste polarisation, not only of liking versus neutrality or ignorance. Lower-status cultural categories (associated with the left of this map) are also somewhat more likely to be negatively perceived than the other way round, suggesting the continued relevance of traditional cultural legitimacy. For example, controlling for age and gender, persons saying that they like Wayne Shorter are almost twice as likely (as those being neutral or negative) to say they dislike popular “death punk” band Turboneger, but those who say they like Turboneger are not more likely to dislike Wayne Shorter than those who are neutral or negative to the band. Disdain, however, is not always cultural snobbism, as distastes are usually mutual, and in some cases, go the other way (e.g. those who like rural song writer Odd Nordstoga, for example, are much more likely to dislike Hieronymous Bosch than the reverse). Not unexpectedly, the most polarised cultural preferences are also those placed furthest apart on the map, and are linked to well-known cultural antagonisms – e.g. the opposition between a taste for the most traditional or legitimate artists versus everything associated with popular, rural culture and the most popular mainstream forms of television culture.

10. In a Norwegian context, similar arguments have been voiced by Skarpnes (2007).
11. Note that polarisation in the case of the active variables appears lowest for the musical artists, higher for literature and highest for the visual artists, meaning that likings for “higher” artists most often are accompanied by expressed dislike for the “lower” artists. While this might be due to an inherent bias in the list, it would not be unexpected that the higher the status of the art form in this space, the more contested is its separation between valuable/enjoyable and less valuable/enjoyable forms.
+ = like, 0 = neutral, – = dislike, DK = unknown. Categories <2% are removed from the maps to increase legibility. The number of disliked “low” and liked “high” artists suggest the overall polarisation of the categories 12.

Figure 2a and 2b: The space of cultural tastes. Supplementary categories: preferences for musical artists and literary authors. MCA, axis 2 and 3.

THE FIRST HOMOLOGY: USE OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Looking at their placement in the space of tastes sketched out in Figure 1, we can, as should be expected, see that the use of cultural institutions (Figure 3) is closely related to cultural tastes. Thus we see for example that art institutions, houses of literature, non-popular forms of music, literature, and film are more commonly reported as visited on the right side, and the left side has a greater adherence to popular music or jazz festivals and musicals. Where the younger respondents more often mention film, festivals, popular music concerts, and films, the older respondents more often report having attended local theatres, festivals and institutions showing classical or traditional art and music.

12. Following the example of Rosenlund et.al (2008), we have counted as “low” the artists/programs that are liked more often by those placed towards the left of the map in Figure 2 (the pole of low symbolic recognition), whereas “high” artists/programs are placed on the other side. Thus musical artists Shorter, Cicada, Buen, Waits, Nordheim and Mutter are counted as “high”, and Bremnes, DDE, Dion, Kristoffersen, Turboneger, Larsen, Bernhoft and Nordstoga as “low”. For authors the selection of “low” authors is smaller, and is clearly biased towards female artists (Allende, Lindell, Guillou, Wassmo), while Kafka, Hamsun, Flogstad, Woolfe, Kundera, Alighieri, Perec, Orstavik, Pettersson and Solstad are coded as “high”.
MCA, axis 2 and 3. Institutions are coded as visited if visited in the last 12 months, festivals if visited in the last three years. The frequencies of visits are for the last 12 months before the survey. Most common institutions/festivals visited in larger/bold type.

Figure 3: The space of cultural tastes. Supplementary categories: use of cultural institutions.

THE SECOND HOMOLOGY: HABITUS, CAPITAL AND POSITION IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE

The space of cultural tastes has also systematic links to the social characteristics of the agents and their position in the field of culture (Figure 4). The probability for displaying the most legitimate types of taste is highest for those who say they work in the field of literature, art and classical music, and themselves are either self-employed artists, academics or working in the specialist press, and lowest for those who work in cultural administration and the most mainstream cultural fields (e.g. contemporary popular music and television production). A similar difference can be seen between those in the most administrative type of positions and other types of work which are very distant to the traditional charismatic ideals of artistic production (e.g. working in organisations concerned with artists’ royalties) vis-à-vis those in positions which are infused by the power to judge and classify, and thus influence the *nomos* of the field, what and who is seen as worthy (Bourdieu 2001), through their writings in scientific journals, in the spe-
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cialist press, and the debate sections of the national newspapers, their participation and presentations on national and international conferences on cultural matters, and their membership in various juries and committees.

Figure 4: The space of cultural tastes. Supplementary categories: indicators of field position, social indicators and inherited capital. MCA, axis 2 and 3. Categories in capital letters shows type of organisation/work.

This **symbolic hierarchy** corresponds to a social hierarchy. It is, first of all, a **gendered hierarchy**, where the general placement of the females towards the upper left of the map, which reflects both their lower mean age and their general stronger adherence to less recognised forms of taste, also illustrates their generally subordinate position in the cultural field. Thus, we find that in the areas of literature, visual art and non-popular forms of music (jazz, classical), close to half of our surveyed males are over 50 years of age, but only one in five of the females, whereas the age difference is less marked in more mainstream sectors. This, however, appears to differ by art field. Females in our sample are for example less likely to be leaders in areas of “general culture” (often important governmental agencies), visual art, theatre/dance and non-popular music, but just as likely as males in the realm of literature and film. Women are also more likely to have a master degree, but are not more likely than men to hold a master degree in the performing arts.

One’s placement in this space of tastes is also an expression of one’s **inherited privileges** (one’s original class position), which in this privileged field can be seen in differences between those having parents with a master degree versus
only a lower university education, and between those having parents marked with medium versus higher levels of cultural capital, seen not only in their occupations and types of education, but also by the respondents’ report of them as having an interest in classical music, older Norwegian literature, theatre etc.

**TABLE 1. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS, AND INDICATORS OF SOCIAL INHERITANCE AND FIELD SPECIFIC CAPITAL, (N=1300)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ART FIELD (SELF-REPORTED)</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=20</td>
<td>N=101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born &lt;1960</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born 1970-</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grew up in a major city</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... Oslo</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... Other large city</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller town</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Master/PhD</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% PhD</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. edu (2)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other human. edu</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social inheritance (indicators for father)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. master degree</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. no higher edu.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. interested in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... classic literature</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... classical music</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... visual art</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... theatre</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of peer recognition and position in the field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National prize</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National jury</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat. scholarship committee</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim and Tromsø. (2) Only professional-type educations.

The map also shows a marked opposition between the centre and periphery, which separates those working in the larger towns in Southern Norway, in particular Oslo, reminding us that “the capital is the source of capital” (Bourdieu 1999), not only politically, but also in cultural matters, reflecting the very uneven geographical distribution of the largest cultural institutions.
THE FINAL HOMOLOGY: AESTHETICS AND POLITICS

As is to be expected, one’s position in this space of tastes – and everything it signifies through its statistical link to variations in class backgrounds and educational career, of type of work, of the realm of art to which one primarily belongs, one’s use of cultural institutions etc. – is also linked to different position-takings in the realm of aesthetics and cultural policy, as suggested by some of the attitude questions shown in Figure 5, which also sums up some of the main structures of Figure 1, 3 and 4. Thus we see that those groups with the lowest class backgrounds (placed towards the left on this map) are not only have a greater preference for mainstream culture, but also for various forms of cultural populism, e.g. agreeing more often in that artistic institutions are too “elitist”, and seeing the popular appeal of an artist as an indicator of their artistic merit.

At the same time, their greater chance for seeing the quality of an art work in terms of its purely aesthetic qualities (more often seen as given by “eternal norms”), is in contrast to those on the artistic side (the right), who more often see the quality of art as also including critical and moral qualities (in other words, a difference between a traditional aesthetic in the vein of Kant, contrasted to, say, Brecht, where the value of an artwork is largely found in its relation to and relevance for the world outside). Such aesthetic differences are linked to political differences, both more general (between preferring mainstream/moderate political parties on the left and smaller socialist parties on the right of this map) and on political questions more specifically related to culture. Those on the left thus more often agree that the cultural institutions should cooperate more with the private sector, and are more positive to privatisation of the national public broadcaster (NRK). At the same time, the elites of this field (the right side of the map) appear internally divided not only by the classical genres in art and music (bottom) versus newer genres within art and literature more generally (top), but also in their varying acceptance (left-right) of works of popular cultural culture as legitimate forms of art (e.g. action movies and video games).
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Figure 5: The space of cultural tastes. Summary map, including aesthetic and political position-takings as illustrative categories. MCA, axis 2 and 3.

The correspondence analysis of cultural tastes of these Norwegian cultural professionals thus suggest not only that the variations of taste appearing in this field are much better described as a compound of many cultural antagonisms (in conflicting attitudes to the most celebrated artists, to a popular-mainstream artists and works, to cultural objects of various age etc.) rather than a situation of omnivorness versus univorness (Peterson & Kearn, 1996). It also shows a series of expected affinities between their cultural tastes, their respective field of art, and their most frequently visited cultural institutions. Furthermore, it demonstrates a homology between their tastes and their habitus (that is, their general cultural tastes also varies according to their initial class position), their tastes and their overall position in the field of culture (between a dominated versus dominating position, related to different levels of peer recognition, that is, the internal symbolic capital), and as just pointed out, their more general views of aesthetics and cultural policy. By this logic, the symbolic elites of this field appears characterised with a certain cultural conservativeness: they are not only marked by their personal taste for traditional elite culture, use of elite institutions and a certain antagonism towards popular culture, but also by themselves working as artistic specialists in the fields most clearly linked to traditional elite culture – classical music, visual art and literature (theatre and dance are interesting exceptions to this), and are in these respects directly
opposed to the plebeians of this field, the general administrators and those working in supporting institutions (e.g. interest associations, artists’ rights organisations). The administrative leaders of the cultural institutions, while as a group occupying a more median position, are clearly a very disperse group, divided by the great differences in the symbolic and strategic importance of the institution and organisation in question. This also emphasises the strong organisational nature of this field: contrary to the myth of the “isolated genius”, the myriad of smaller and larger institutions, organisations and festivals of culture – in each and every realm of art – means that symbolic capital, recognition by one’s peers in this field, as a rule, appear to be combined – and supported by – some type of administrative power over them.

The fact that this simple analysis of taste differences has brought out these structures and homologies, and in the process also suggested a simple, but not implausible model of the capital structure of the Norwegian cultural field, clearly suggests that very familiar cultural antagonisms and their well-established links with social struggles in larger society are integral to the structuration of this field of tastemakers. At the same time, the analysis needs to be further refined and expanded. As noted, our preliminary analysis only concerns a restricted selection of individuals in the field of culture (board members and hired professionals of institutions), and our results should be checked for both ubiquity and variation through similar analyses of more specific groups (e.g. only artists, collectively and separate by art field), and the inclusion of new groups in the analysis (e.g. members of artists’ organisations, critics etc.). Many questions remain: Are e.g. the divisions we have found general structures, that is, observable in every art field with only minor variations, or are they less relevant for the struggles in the specific artistic fields? And how does the relations we have suggested – between artists and critics, artists and administrators, the high and the low, the young and the old, men and women – vary within each subfield? The answers hold not only a promise for a better understanding of the uniqueness of each social realm of art, but also the form and autonomy of a national field of culture, and the link between this world and other social worlds.

**APPENDIX 1. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS IN THE SAMPLE**

BIBLIOGRAPHY


