Non-verbal communication skills of clothing

A research in the creation of symbolic boundaries set up by the assessment of clothing and its relation to one's status in the nightlife scene

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Abstract

Background: Women in the nineteenth century used their clothes to convey a specific, strong and yet non-verbal message (Crane, 2012). Through their outfits, they tried to express their social standing and social role, but also give a representation of their personal character. So, without words, these women used symbols of self-expression and status (idem). Even to this day, this is not an uncommon phenomenon. That is; trying to express a specific message my means of your clothing. Yet, do we still believe, in the 21st century, that our clothes can be seen as an indicator to assess status? So much has changed over the years when it comes to the evaluation of status symbols. The aim of this research was to analyze the repertoires (symbolic boundaries) of evaluation and examine the differences in the evaluation of status based on clothing. To be more specific, the research question was in what way symbolic boundaries were created to assess status, based on the non-verbal communication elements of clothing?

Method: To answer this question two research techniques were used. First, the so-called picture sorting technique as part of the Q-methodology, which allowed for an analysis of views, experiences and interpersonal relationships people had with the people depicted in the pictures before them. The technique is based on the idea 'that the way in which participants categorize entities *externally* reflects their *internal*, mental representation of these concepts' (Fincher & Tenenberg, 2005, p. 90, as described in Lobinger & Brantner, 2020, p. 1). Secondly, after the participants distributed and therefore categorized the photos in the Q-table, they were asked to specify their choices during an interview. A semi-structured interviewing technique was used for this.

Results: The respondents clarified during the interviews that they based their decisions on different elements, but mainly on clothing. Important factors with the assessment of the clothes were the visible brands the individuals were wearing, the quality of the clothes and the idea of 'a well thought out outfit'. Also, something all respondents mentioned was the more skin the individuals in the pictures were showing, the cheaper, tackier or trashier they were. Other status indicators were believed to be accessories, tattoos and piercings, facial expressions and posture. Furthermore, there appeared to be a different assessment when it came to men vs women, as men were believed harder to 'read' making it more difficult for the respondents to judge them. lastly, one of the main factors in the assessment was social compatibility, so the level the respondents could weigh the individuals to themselves, and the sense of 'self' that was presumed to be detected. The 'truer' one would stay to themselves, the more positive the verdict was by the respondents.

Conclusion: Your outfit does convey a certain message, if the message you wanted to propagate will be received in the right way is entirely in the hands of the recipient. Clothing itself does have a 'language', a nonverbal one. The communication by clothing is through specific symbols and rules which are determined by social groups in society. This entails, not every social groups holds the same symbols, rules or codes in order to evaluate clothing. Before we even speak, our clothes already tell a tale. In this study it appeared that besides clothes, the respondents valued and used other signals as well in order to evaluate one's status. They based their decision not solely on clothes, but also regarded facial expressions, posture (pose in the picture), hair and make-up, and accessories. Lastly, social compatibility and the concept of the 'self', so staying true to yourself, was certainly essential in their assessment.

Keywords: symbolic boundaries, aesthetic judgement, status indicators, visual language, repertoire of evaluation.

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Preface

Fashion has always played a significant role in my life. From an early age I wanted to pick out my outfits myself, as I believed my mom had no fashion sense at all; making me wear a blue pants, with a white shirt, orange vest and black shoes. Of course, everything had to be the same color. So, blue pants meant a blue shirt, blue vest and blue shoes. However, my fashion sense, if I can say so myself, has grown and I happily wear more colors in an outfit nowadays. Especially now, at the age of twenty-five, I am more conscious of what I am wearing. There are several different moments I dress for, such as for work, family, meeting friends, and going out. I believe clothing has the power to convey specific messages, so I try to dress to the occasion to also communicate the 'right' message for that particular affair. Yet, I wondered, how do others receive this message? How do people create symbolic boundaries to indicate what is 'right' and what is not? Therefore, a research that looks into the evaluation repertoires based on clothing seemed a perfect fit for my Master Thesis. Also, to make it more specific I was very interested in how we evaluate or even judge others during a night out, as I believe this is a time everyone shows their true colors and puts in a lot of effort. In the eye of the receiver, do our outfits say something about us? Do we look wealthy, rich, higher educated, classy or trashy, or even friendly and sociable? This study was conducted with these questions in mind.

1. Introduction

According to Diana Crane, women in the nineteenth century used their clothes to convey a specific, strong and yet non-verbal message. Through their outfits, they tried to express their social standing and social role, but also give a representation of their personal character. So, without words, these women used symbols of self-expression and status (Crane, 2012). Even to this day, this is not an uncommon phenomenon. That is; trying to express a specific message by means of your clothing. Yet, the question is if this message will be received in the way it was intended. Do we communicate a realistic image of ourselves, do we actually say something about ourselves e.g. our upbringing, education or even wealth with the outfit we chose to wear? Clothing, or the way people dress, has according to Crane (2012), always been involved in a great deal of debate and controversy. Clothing discourses include those that support consensus to the dominant conception, implying that this is a process were symbolic boundaries are established. According to Smith (1988), each (fashion) discourse is supported by different (social) groups, setting up different types of symbolic boundaries, and expressing various visual messages with clothing behavior. Clothing can be seen as a stimuli variable, implying that clothing can have an effect on the impressions and social perception of others (Johnson, Lennon & Rudd, 2014).

This research focusses on the repertoires of evaluation based on nightlife clothing. Differences in the evaluation of status based on clothing will be analyzed and will be further explained in this paper. The main research objective in this study is how we use clothes to make an assessment and evaluate what we see (people), and the meaning we give to certain symbols. To be more specific, the focus highlights how young adults: girls between the ages of 21 and 28 years old who have graduated, analyzed and perceived people in the nightlife scene. The decision for this particular target group is based on their fascination for- and the amount of significance they attach to the choice of their outfits and those of others. The young adults in this age category are commonly trying to build a career and social circles, and therefore tend to focus more on self-representation (Daters, 1990). Considering that one of the roles of clothing is recognized by society as a communicator of information, some significant pressure is put on the choice of clothing. Since the young adolescent is in the process of building self-identity, clothing can affect and can be used to enhance important aspects in his or her development (idem). One of the central questions is how the non-verbal symbols in the form of clothing are perceived and processed by the young adults. Which inferences do they make when looking at someone's outfit about the social class someone belongs to, or what type of education the person has had, or maybe even if it is a person they could be friends with or not? For this research it is not important if these observations and motivations from the recipients are indeed correct, but how the recipients believe they are correct. So, what their judgement and their opinion is based on. The themes central in this research are the visual language of clothing, symbolic communication- and boundaries and (aesthetic) judgement.

This leads to the main research question: In what way are symbolic boundaries created to assess status, based on the non-verbal communication elements of clothing? To answer this research questions a qualitative research method was used, namely the technique of 'picture-sorting' which can be seen as a component of the Q-methodology. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews have been conducted to be able to clarify the non-verbal choices the respondents made during the picture sorting element. The technique of picture sorting and Q-methodology allowed for an analysis of the reasoning, interpretation and meaning making processes of the participants in relation to the pictures presented to them (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). After the picture sorting, the method of semi-structured interviewing was carried-out as well. These interviews were of significant importance as they brought light to the underlying ideas for the choices the respondents made during the picture sorting. This enabled me as a researcher to examine how the respondents, the young adults, organized and created symbolic boundaries based on the pictures.

In this paper you will first find more literature that addresses the main concepts in this paper: the social patterns of fashion, theories about how clothing can function as a form of communication, aesthetic judgement, symbolic boundaries, distinction and lastly the topic of conspicuous consumption will be discussed. Thereafter, the methodology will be described. This includes a description of the used qualitative method, namely the picture-sorting as part of the Q-methodology and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the sample and its context, size and procedure will be discussed. Furthermore, the concepts as stated above will be operationalized in this chapter. Lastly, the practicalities and analyses are specified. The methodology is followed by the results chapter, were the theory is linked to the results from the picture sorting and interviews. Here several symbolic boundaries, that were created by the respondents, will be discussed and analyzed. The final chapter in this paper consists of the conclusion and discussion. Here, an answer to the main research question will be presented. The final part of this paper consists of the discussion. The discussion encompasses the significance of the findings in relation to previous conducted studies on this topic and its additional value in the field of arts, culture and society and suggestions for follow-up studies around this topic.

2. Theoretical Framework

There is a lot more to our outfit and the way we chose to dress than we might imagine. Dress tends to say a lot about who we are and how we are perceived by others. It can even be seen as an art: the art of dressing for the occasion, but also as the art to stay true to oneself. The duality and also the contradiction of clothing, according to Chira (2016) lies in the need for originality by expressing our true self, but also in the need of belonging. The occasion often dictates the outfit we chose to wear, according to some this is about paying respect to the people around you and to the occasion. For instance, one does not dress in a night gown when going to a kid's birthday party. One of these occasions we specifically dress for is a night out. Especially for this research the focus lies on the perception and appreciation of night-life clothing. When we go out, we tend to dress differently than when we prepare for a working day, or when we plan on meeting friends for dinner. According to Kovac and Trussel (2015), the nightclub culture is "a particularly salient leisure destination for hedonic motivations" (p. 195). The club culture can have an important effect on young adults as they are in a setting which allows them to define themselves, their 'true self', in a context which is associated with the norms and values of how to be an adult (idem). According to some fashion magazines, blogs and websites such as 'The Trend Spotter'; there are certain codes you can follow in order to 'fit' in or dress suitably for a club night. Yet, what are these codes and how can we understand them according to sociological theorizing? Answering these questions can help us to make sense of the meaning that is assigned to clothes in the nightlife scene. According to several fashion blogs and websites, the key for dressing for a night out is finding the balance between looking elegant and fashionable and being comfortable enough to move around the dance floor. However, for a children's birthday party we dress completely different. Why do we do that, what does our outfit say about us in this context?

2.1 Role and social function of fashion

Sandra Chira conducted a study whereby she looked into "the relation between the individual identity and the way clothing expresses it into an existential space, which is dominated by the supremacy of the image" (2016, p. 85). Due to globalization, fashion is now defined as a universal concept, becoming one of the most important ways of expressing oneself in human interaction (idem). Though we might believe we dress by our own choice, Chira states that individuals are mainly manipulated to choose standardized forms or expressing one's identity by their clothing (2016). Although there is still 'free choice' when it comes to either adopt or rejects fashion trends, these trends can still be seen as 'rules'. Deviating from these rules can therefore have consequences, leading for instance to the decline of individuality in favor of belonging to the global and determined path, concerning fashion (idem). Thinking, behaving or dressing outside of these set fashion directions will often be attempted to be marginalized.

Certain contradictions seem to arise when it comes to fashion's function to communicate one's identity, due to the acceleration of the fashion trends. Though clothing and for instance accessories are seen as symbols of our identity and status, we change these elements so rapidly due to social interactions that these components lose their personal touch (Chira, 2016). Therefore, globalization can be seen as a negative component to the process of (expressing) individuality and identity, causing homogenizing and equalizing tastes and ideals (idem). This can result in the loss of the 'true' communication ability of clothing as it will communicate not information about the wearer anymore but about the manufacturers and gate keepers who decide what is in fashion and what is not (idem). Nevertheless, this personal touch Chira speaks of, will always shimmer through since personal values- and tastes and one's personality will interfere with the process when we choose which trends to follow and which ones not, by picking certain items of clothing (idem). People will decide which trend to follow by making specific aesthetic choices whereby the collective taste is combined with personal taste. The urge to belong to a specific group is also what defines us as individuals. However, due to this urge and the aspiration of acceptance within that group, people tend to suppress their own tastes and even values in sake of feeling part of a group (idem). This despite the idea that our overall image should be a representative of our personal characteristics such as our social status and age. Therefore, as stated by Chira (2016), this results in the rearrangement of the personal data to more standardized appearances that cannot directly be linked back to the wearer anymore. Clothes, accessories, hair and make-up can create an illusion as one is able to falsely represent him or herself by the means of these elements.

According to Rosenfeld and Plax (1977), clothing also has a range of different communicative functions, for instance it can say something about personal characteristics (identity). For instance, Rosencrantz (1962), found that women who are 'high in clothing awareness', were commonly from the upper social class and were therefore portraying this as well by means of their clothing. Furthermore, they belonged to many organizations, were higher educated, verbally more intelligent, and had better paying jobs. These women were even often married to men wo also belonged in the higher classes of society (Rosencrantz, 1962 ad described in Rosenfeld and Plax, 1977). Furthermore, according to Rosenfeld and Plax (1977), one of the most extensive studies in this field has been conducted by Aiken (1963). Aiken researched wearer characteristics by asking one hundred and sixty women to fill in a questionnaire and afterwards interview them (1963). The study presented the following outcomes: showing or having interest in dress correlated positively with conformity, honesty, but also insecurity and stereotypic thinking. Decoration in dress correlated positively with affability and conformity. Interest in dress correlated with self-control and positivity. A third outcome was that conformity with dress correlated with submissiveness and social conformity, which can also be related to an individual's desire to be accepted according to Taylor and Compton (1968). Lastly, economy in dress was positively correlated with responsibility, precision and efficiency (Aiken, 1963). Here we see how Aiken (1963)

was able to attribute several personal characteristics based on dress established by questionnaires and personal assessments of a hundred and sixty women.

2.1.1 Shaping the identity

Though it might be difficult due to globalization, and the increase of our ability to falsely represent ourselves, it is still believed by many scholars that clothing has an important role in the determination of our identity. Every morning we have to make the choice how we want look, and especially what we want to convey with our decision. Our occupation, age, social status, and gender are important social categories that are shaped and communicated through our clothes. According to Wiana (2016) and Davis (1984), clothing represents and adds extra dimensions to our identity. However, in our modern society, the concept of identity is also quite complicated and paradoxical. Identity can be seen as a flexible and fluid concept in a liquid society in which we need to adapt constantly as stated by Zygmunt Bauman (2000). The paradoxical element of the word can be traced back to its origins, as it stems from the Latin word 'idem' which suggests similarity. However, the concept of identity can also be linked to the ability to differentiate oneself and to be unique. According to George Simmel (1957), fashion has two purposes, that is: we all want to be part of a bigger group and fit-it, but we also want to be different and portray an image of our true self. Who we are is for a large part determined by our upbringing. For instance, our family, friends, and school play a significant role in the creation of our identity, which is also reflected in the clothes we wear. Even though the social group we 'belong' to might not be so clear visually, our clothes still have the ability to communicate our gender, age, ethnicity or class (or so we believe). However, this used to be more clear back in the days. In the past, clothing was more solidly tied to social categories than now, making social differences clearer. Think of women wearing pants, which became socially accepted around the 1960's. Before this time, pants were for men and skirts were for women, making a clear visible separation between the two genders (Winia, 2016).

Our clothes give shape and definition to the roles we are playing, such as the student, the daughter, the friend or the lover. Our clothing allows us to, in a more material way, shape and express our fluid identity. Therefore, the outfit we pick every morning, or with every different event is very meaningful. Every day, and in different context, we have to redefine who we want to be and what we want to communicate to others. Therefore, clothing is believed to have the ability to serve as a non-verbal communication means (Chira, 2016 & Winia, 2016).

2.2 Language of Clothing

"Realized or not by the wearer, fashion is an instrument of non-verbal communication" (Wiana, 2016). Though initially clothing appeared to be solely used for more simple and practical purposes (namely, to protect one's body from natural conditions such as sunlight and cold weather), it appears that it has

acquired an additional meaning. Our clothes are now also seen as a non-verbal communication instrument (idem). We see this language of clothing everywhere, think of the color blue which is used to 'identify' baby boys, or on the other hand the color pink to identify a baby girl. Also, we associate certain uniforms with certain occupations, think of a police officer. These examples show that the general principle of clothes can hardly be denied. Seeing a police uniform is immediately associated with an officer. This way, these outfits tell us something before there is even a word said. However, there are also more subtle signs clothes convey, which may be harder to read or immediately interpret. In general, fashion has the ability reflect the identity of the wearer (Wiana, 2016).

Clothing will create a particular image or idea about the wearer. Initially this image is already created when we first see or meet someone, the so called first impression. Currently, we often use our clothes and accessories as a medium to express ourselves and convey a social message by the means of symbolic instruments. The message that is transmitted through symbolic instruments can be associated with other characteristics. For example, wearing expensive brands, is associated with being rich, or wearing a nikab must mean you are religious (Muslim) (Wiana, 2016). So, we can see that the function of clothes has altered slightly as it now also can and will be linked to attitudes, character, values, social position or status (idem). This indicates that there are certain semiotics in fashion. The semiotics in fashion serve as signs in order to interpret what one sees. They can be a tool to analyze type, structure and what relation the sign or symbol has in the community (idem). However, when the observer does not have a frame of reference, these codes or symbols can be misinterpreted (Wiana, 2016).

Clothing behavior and its language has developed as a worthwhile and productive field for social research. More and more we become interested in how we can portray ourselves and how we perceive others based on the clothes we wear. According to Davis (1984), clothing and fashion are an important part of our lives. Our clothes play an essential aspect in our appearances, in the assessment of others and in what we want to communicate to the outside world. Therefore, our outfit plays a critical role in the relationships we build with others (idem). Our clothes and overall appearances can serve as a form of non-verbal communication. So, without saying anything, our clothes can speak. But what it communicates to others is not always in our hands. Through the non-verbal communication abilities of clothes, judgement and behavioral response in others is triggered (idem). According to Paul Hamid (1969) judgement, in all shapes and sizes, plays a powerful role in our social experience. Our judgement is based on the impression we derive from gestures, physique, facial expressions and style or dress (idem). The society we live in nowadays is marked by its brevity of social encounters (Davis, 1984). Impressions are made in a brief moment in time, based on small and limited signals. However, these small assessments and impressions affect our response to the observed, and often drives us to acting. The process that comes about with the impression formation, involves also the attribution of unobservable characteristics and traits to the observed. These attributes, however, often stem from the stereotypes that have previously been formed and therefore facilitate the way we will interact, respond and act towards the other person (idem). This entails that we, based on superficial impressions derived

from how someone looks in first glance, estimate how or who someone is, built on a little information and on established stereotypes we formed of previous encounters.

2.2.1 Context

In relation to the judgement and reception of clothing, the context is also an essential element to take into consideration. Due to the non-verbal communication ability of clothing, meaning is often assigned to the symbols that are found within the situation or context where the interaction takes place (Fiske, 1982; Goffman, 1959 as described in Lapitsky & O'Neil, 1991). Meaning that the surrounding or the environment one is in contributes to the meaning or the message that is assigned to the clothing message. According to Saravanana and Nithyaprakash (2016), clothing behavior is mainly determined by the situation and its fitting criteria, as there are indeed social codes when it comes to dress. For instance, when talking about formal wear, the preference is to stick to conventional dressing codes, or when one is in a more festive environment the preference lies with displaying the so-called 'oomph' factor, meaning the clothes need to trigger a certain positive emotion with the observer; astonish the observer. Also, with these festive environments it is appreciated if one sticks to iconic values, meaning you need to fit in (idem). This implies that people tend to be influenced by the social context (idem).

A study conducted by Steinhaus and Lapitsky (1986) suggests that the clothes you wear combined with the situation it is worn in, has an impact on the perceived characteristics of the wearer. Moreover, the allocated characteristics to the wearer in return are affected by the characteristics of the perceiver. Lastly, clothing determines the response in the interaction (Steinhaus & Lapitsky, 1986 as described in Lapitsky & O'Neil, 1991). Therefore, it appears according to the authors that when appearances in itself are not the main aspect the judgement is based on, judgement is depending on the symbols of appropriateness which are based on the context and the situation one is in (idem). Steinhaus and Lapitsky state: "In conclusion, not only does what a person wears influence the perceptions of dimensions of credibility, but also the appropriateness of the dress tends to be relevant to the message communicated and the response to the source" (1986, p. 33).

One of these contexts that has an effect on an individual's clothing choices and the way this is judged by the observers is the club. According to Kovac and Trussell (2015), nightclubs have the ability to reinforce hegemonic sexuality and hyper gender traits. This is emphasized by the way the visitors of that particular club dress and the reputation this context and club in itself has. Who deviates from the accepted standards of social respectability within this context, can risk to be excluded (Steinhaus & Lapitsky, 1986). The standards in the nightlife scene or clubs, are however not fixed and depend on several aspects such as the city, the age category the club facilitates to and the 'type' of club it is (in relation to music). Meaning that preparing for a night out, for this particular context and occasion, also implies considering the rules (symbolic boundaries) that are in place in this context. As stated in the research conducted by Kovac and Trussel, women describe the actions of other women in clubs often as judgmental and demeaning (2015).

"These spaces may provide a context whereby young women may experience freedom, liberation, and subvert dominant gender discourses; however, they may also be risky environments and reinforce conventional feminine ideals" (Brooks, 2008 as stated in Kovac & Trussel, 2015, p. 196).

Through the analysis by Kovac and Trussell, it became clear that especially females found that maintaining a certain image in a club or in the overall nightlife scene was very important. These women believed that the pressure of 'looking good' weight heavily in these circumstances on the meaning and overall experience of the club culture (2015).

2.3. Aesthetic Judgement and Symbolic Boundaries

The constraints there are with fashion and clothing can be mainly found in the perception of the receiver. These constraints are based on taste and aesthetic judgement. In sociology and according to Bourdieu (1984), taste is a cultural and personal choice of preference. Bourdieu stated that the legitimacy of taste is in fact determined by the ruling class. Meaning, the most influential layers in society determine what 'good' taste is, therefore acceptable, and also what can be seen as 'bad' taste and therefore unacceptable (idem). Hereby, Bourdieu in fact disputes the idea of genuine good taste, as he stated that this is solely a matter of class taste (Lamont, 2001). Simmel agreed with this idea by stating that in the end the upper classes will discard fashion when it becomes a trend with the lower classes. There is a social hierarchy with consumers, disposing taste to function as a marker of class and status (Bourdieu, 1984).

"Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6)

The word 'aesthetic' is according to Thomas Jacobsen (2010) multilayered and its meaning has experienced some change over time. Now, a set of two clusters of meaning can be identified. The first is linked to the processes of sensation as it is a product from the word 'anaesthetic' meaning an actual absence, or lack of sensation, and 'synaesthetic', the uncontrolled co-sensation. However, the second cluster is more associated with the term as described in the humanities and art history (Jacobsen, 2010). According to Immanuel Kant, aesthetic judgement is judgement based on the 'determining ground', which is based on the experience of pleasure or displeasure the subject perceives with the 'item'. "In other words, the judgement must be based on the subject's hedonic reaction to the item" (Budd, 1999, p. 295). Individuals from higher classes tend to make their aesthetic judgements based on a more distanced aesthetic disposition. While the lower classes base their evaluation and aesthetic judgement on the more popular aesthetics that causes direct forms of enjoyment (Kuipers, 2015).

Judging something has multiple requirements, one of them being that the sensation must give rise to pleasure. The human aesthetic process encompasses, among other things, "the sensation-based evaluation of an entity with respect to concepts like beauty, harmony or well-formedness" (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 184). Implying that the aesthetic judgement is based on what the perceiver sees as beauty or acceptable. Overall, the aesthetic judgement and appreciation formation have several determinants, for instance history, evolutionary, individual differences or culture (idem). Amongst, but also within, cultures there are different ideas about what is perceived as beautiful and what is not. The aesthetic processes can be examined from multiple viewpoints such as from an educational, cultural, cognitive, personal, emotional, situational or individual perspective (Jacobsen, 2006 as described in Jacobsen, 2010). In this research the cultural and social viewpoint is of main interest. There are many entities we as humans appreciate aesthetically, think of movies, paintings, sculptures, flowers, faces and many other objects we encounter in our everyday lives. The mental processes that are involved in the observation and appreciation of these entities are complex, making it generally challenging to undertake an undivided approach (Jacobsen, 2010). This undivided approach means that the evaluation process that is evoked with the aesthetic judgement is governed by several stimuli such as familiarity, appeal to the social status, artistic style and, as expected, our individual preferences and therefore might be challenging to comprehend (idem). Judgement is not solely sensory, yet also an emotional and intellectual process as well (Kant, 1790 as described in Budd, 1999).

Based on taste an aesthetic judgement, certain boundaries are set up by the observer. When judging others based on their clothes, therefore approving some while maybe disapproving others, symbolic boundaries are set up between what is considered acceptable and what not. Symbolic boundaries imply the 'lines' that define and include some people or things, while on the other hand simultaneously excluding others (Lamont, Pendergrass & Pachucki, 2001). The term refers to "internal distinctions of classification systems and to temporal, spatial, and visual cognitive distinctions in particular" (Lamont et al., 2001, p. 850). The distinctions may be expressed through cultural attitudes, patterns of likes and dislikes or practices. Symbolic boundaries play a significant role in the exercise of power and the creation of inequality (idem). Veblen was also concerned with the so-called system or mechanisms behind emerging boundaries between groups in society. According to the economist, the habits of thought play a significant and central role in these mechanisms (Lamont, 2001). With habits of thought, the classifying and demarcating processes are meant. These mechanisms are generally arranged around the idea of inferiority and superiority concerning consumption (idem). For example, 'idleness' symbolized status as it indicates a pecuniary status (idem). One must have money in order to devote so much money and time to how one looks, causing one to look idle.

Symbolic boundaries can arise within, but also between groups of people. Two influential sociologists, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, have concerned themselves with the concept of symbolic boundaries. Durkheim placed the emphasis with symbolic boundaries on the relationship between moral order and classification systems. With moral order, Durkheim implied the common public system of

perception of reality. This perception structures, organizes and regulates the relations within a community. The community or society is by Durkheim defined by its symbolic boundaries. These boundaries are based on the common believe or shared definition of the sacred and profane of akin rules (Lamon et al., 2001). Weber on the other hand, emphasized the impact of these boundaries on the construction and continuation/reproduction of distinctions. He focused on the role of the symbolic boundaries in the creation of inequality, rather than solidarity (idem). Sociologists are often interested in how precisely these symbolic boundaries are formed and set up. According to Jenkins (1996), the idea of a social identity also plays a role in the establishment of symbolic boundaries. People feel they have to be able to differentiate themselves, while on the other hand their internal identification process must be recognized by others (Jenkins, 1996, as described in Lamont et al., 2001). It has been shown that "people adapt to their environment through cognitive categorization and stereotyping… arguing that in-groups and out-groups result from this automatic process, which generates categorization by race and gender" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 170).

2.3.1 Judgement based on physical appearances

Besides clothing, other aspects such as physical appearance and beauty are important as well in the aesthetic judgement- and symbolic boundaries creation process. One's physical appearance and clothing does however create overlap when it comes to the judgement, and creation of symbolic boundaries. Physical appearance may entail a person's style but also physique. Many scholars have attempted to understand the nature of judgment and the legitimacy of physical appearances (Zangwill, 2003). Though the idea that personal traits can be visible externally presumably already dates back to Aristotle, but the idea was revived and popularized in the late 1700's (Adams, 2012). During this time a Swiss pastor published several essays about physiognomy, which entails a practice whereby the character of a person is assessed through their outer appearances, focusing on the face. The jaw, nose, and even the forehead were essential elements in understanding whether someone was in fact a smart, kind or even wealthy person (idem). However, years later these claims have (evidently) been disputed.

A more recent example is the research conducted by Giselinde Kuipers (2015) concerning the social differences in the evaluation of beauty of male and female faces in five European countries. The article investigates how beauty standards differ between people, and how these standards are related to social backgrounds of the observers and therefore create symbolic boundaries. Our physical appearance is central to how we are perceived and judged by others. "One's preferences for physical beauty serve as a means to distinguish oneself; and as criteria by which to judge others" (Kuipers, 2015, p. 39). The judgement and the appreciation of beauty is a matter of taste according to Kuipers (2015). It therefore requires cultural capital, and knowledge that varies between several social groups (idem). Our physical appearance, just like the way we dress, is often related to status. According to Kuipers, having a 'beautiful' physique enhances your social worth. This can also be seen in other studies where scholars looked into the idea that more attractive people would be more successful on a social and economic

level, than people with so-called 'average' or even 'unattractive' looks (idem). Having a light skin or being slim, are considered signs of privilege. Therefore, it is disputed that the status one derives from having a beautiful appearance, the 'aesthetic capital', can be seen as a form of symbolic capital. Over the years the systems of status, and thus how social status and identity are indicated, have substantially changed. The way we know distinction, as explained by Bourdieu, is starting to become less eminent and making way for newly, les universal and more diverse emerged means of distinction (Kuipers, 2015).

2.3.2. Gender differences

Besides clothes, expansive brands, and facial features, gender is also an important element in the process of social differentiation. Aesthetic judgement is mainly based on the evaluation of human beauty. However, gender plays a significant role in this as well. As according to Kuipers (2015), sexual attraction and desirability are also important elements. When we judge beauty, we unknowingly dispose two repertoires of evaluation, that of attractiveness versus aesthetics. With attractiveness, gender can be meaningful, as we must feel attracted to one of the genders. When we feel attracted to the other individual, we tend to rank them higher than when we do not feel any type of attraction towards that individual. Moreover, gender norms influence the evaluation by the 'rules' that have been established concerning that gender. For instance, women are often evaluated and judged by for instance men based on how feminine they are or if they seem like a 'proper' women (idem). Here, the barometer is the level of femininity, but this can also be seen the other way around where masculinity is important in the aesthetic judgement and the creation of symbolic boundaries.

2.4 Distinction

Beauty standards are however not a universally shared phenomenon. These standards even differentiate between the different levels of society. These standards have to be agreed upon, so to benefit from your looks, you do need to embody the 'right' set of agreed upon standards within the group you are part of. For instance, the standards between the dominant middle class and the working class deviate considerably (Kuipers, 2015). Though fashion trends come and go, there is always an agreed upon standard which is socially accepted. According to Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, "the success of fashion lies in the way society interprets the fashion trend and judges it" (2016, p. 2). The standards that are favored by less dominant groups in society will find- and carry worth in their surroundings, but they might be dismissed by society at large. An example of this is the gothic style, which is appreciated within the punk or goth culture, but seen by others as a denial of the mainstream standards (Kuipers, 2015; Saravanan & Nithyaprakash, 2016). Therefore, the appreciation of these standards can be seen as a matter of taste, dividing groups and creating a gap; creating distinction. Though the appreciation is

also a matter of taste, it does differ from the form of taste that is applied to, or 'used', when it comes to judging music or the arts. According to Bourdieu (1984), the appreciation of beauty, like other forms of taste, requires cultural capital. Cultural capital is seen as the cultural knowledge one needs to possess in order to examine the differences between social groups when it comes to for instance aesthetics. Furthermore, it compromises social assets which are assigned to individuals based on the idea of intellect, speech, but also the style of dress (idem). As stated before, the way we dress plays a significant role in how we are judged by others, also on a social level. Moral and social connotations are strongly connected to for instance looking 'bad' or 'beautiful', meaning it can have social consequences (Kuipers, 2015). This idea also builds further on the sociology of taste, symbolic boundaries and the theory of distinction. These days, the social segregations are becoming more complex in society. We see this with shifting class divisions whereby the more traditional distinctions now intersect with other sections such as gender, ethnicity and age (Kuipers, 2015; Saravanan & Nithyaprakash, 2016). The appreciation of one's outfit or physical physique is marked by a so-called 'double embodiment' according to Kuipers (2015), which entails that judgement based on appearance stems from embodied cultural capital. Which makes it an automatic aesthetic experience since it is an unconscious and integrated process (idem).

2.4.1 Status symbols and Conspicuous consumption

Status symbols can be seen as components that play a role in the process of distinction. When it comes to fashion, one of the status symbols nowadays are luxury brands. Luxury brands are associated, as the word might already give away, with luxury and therefore wealth. However, according to Lee, Hur and Watkins (2018), the concept of luxury brands and items has transformed over time. Luxury products used to be for- and only consumed by the privileged. Think of the royals or the nobles, who flaunted their wealth by showing these products in order to display their superiority and distinguish and distance themselves from others (Lee et al., 2018). Yet, what we can already see in theories by Thorstein Veblen about the theory of dress, is that since society and the different classes within society are mobile and therefore constantly in movement, the symbols and meaning attached to status has also altered. For instance, the power of the middle classes to purchase these status symbols, such as luxury goods, has dramatically increased over the years (Trigg, 2001). Here, the middle class too attempts to differentiate, however now it is to distinguish themselves from their own social group (idem). According to Veblen, this can be seen as conspicuous consumption as the middle-class buys these products for a different reason than necessity. As argued by Veblen, the primary function of dress is to display wealth (Trigg, 2001). This is done through the presentation of consumption patterns by the wearer. Quantity and quality play a significant role in this process. By quantity is meant that one possesses more than necessary, such as clothes, jewelry, shoes or bags. With quality, Veblen implied the expensiveness of the materials that can clearly be distinguished. Here, the comparison can be made between factory- or mass-produced products as compared to handmade products (idem). Lastly, conspicuous consumption is linked to

scarcity, as this also plays a role concerning the repute of the wearer. Clothing that is considered 'original' or shows a clear label or brand from a famous designer, appears to bear more appeal, appreciation and prestige than items of clothing that seem to be undistinguished (Trigg, 2001). Scarcity plays a role as it give the wearer the idea that he or she is more original since there are not a lot of the same products developed. The idea of having a product that 'one of a kind' is very valuable here.

However, as Lee et al., (2018), stated, the concept of luxury brands has changed. Now, luxury brands have extended to the mass markets, meaning mass production. Also, the production of imitations or counterfeits of these luxury brands has increased, making it more difficult to distinguish the originals from the replicas (idem). Amongst luxury fashion, there is a level that includes more 'affordable luxury' whereby the middle class is able to purchase the brands occasionally. These affordable luxury products are also seen as products that are targeting the mass markets. Because of this, the middle-class is provided with a larger volume of products that are affordable. The goal these luxury brands need to accomplish are twofold. First, they need to expand their market shares by targeting the mass consumers. Secondly, while doing so, they need to beware not to decrease the value of scarcity and the exclusivity of the brand and its products (idem). As the theories of Lee et al., (2018) and Veblen (as stated in Trigg, 2001), suggest luxury- or more 'know-to-be' expensive products no longer necessarily correspond to having good taste or being wealthy. This is due to the increase of mass production of these products and the conspicuous consumption patterns of the middle-class. Because of this, these status symbols that first clarified the distinction, can experience a decrease in valuation. Making the wearer of these luxury products look less credible when it comes to actually showing off wealth but shifts to presumably giving a false representation (Lee et al., 2018; Chira, 2016).

3. Methods

For this research the technique of picture-sorting, based on the Q-methodology, was used. This technique allowed for an analysis of views, experiences and interpersonal relationships people have with the people depicted in the pictures before them. Picture-sorting is, according to Lobinger and Brantner (2020), a way of using visuals, to study mental concepts of the participants. It allows for a sight in the interpretation and meaning making process of the participants in relation to the images (idem). The main aim of this research, by using this technique, is to identify how young adults, between the ages of 21 and 28 years old, organize and create symbolic boundaries based on the pictures showing people who are going out. It was therefore used to study the respondent's point of view. By examining how people think about a certain topic, and to look for patterns between the participants viewpoints, subjectivity can be researched (idem). The technique was useful for me as a researcher to be able to describe and understand how the symbolic boundaries, based on the non-verbal communication abilities of clothing, were being established.

The technique is based on the idea 'that the way in which participants categorize entities *externally* reflects their *internal*, mental representation of these concepts' (Fincher & Tenenberg, 2005, p. 90, as described in Lobinger & Brantner, 2020, p. 1). For this research the focus was to examine the process of categorization, as this is a cognitive mechanism used daily on which our interpretation, decision making, judgement, and evaluation rely (idem). Normally, cards with statements written on them are used for this method. However, in this case, as stated before, pictures instead of statements will be used. Pictures can be processed differently than texts, as they are believed to be more closely related to emotions (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). Besides logic, emotions are an important component in the formation of judgement and the creation of symbolic boundaries. By letting the respondents sort the pictures, the results or so-called 'silent answers' represent visual data which can be analyzed and interpreted (idem). It allowed the participants to express themselves and show their reflection on issues in a non-verbal way. However, verbalization was not completely avoided. To be able to assist the unwritten or verbal interpretations, this method was combined with the method of interviewing. After the participants had sorted all the pictures in the scheme, they were asked to explain their motives. By doing so, the participants were even more triggered to think about the choices they made, since they were asked to explain them afterwards during the interview. They had to put into words what they were thinking.

According to some previous studies the success of the picture-sorting method can be found in its simplicity. More so, it is believed to be very stimulating, playful and therefore an enjoyable procedure for both the researcher as the respondents (Jedeloo & van Staa, 2016; Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). Additionally, participants in these types of studies tend to sort the tasks quick and almost without considerable cognitive effort (Peter et al., 2008). During this research, this turned out to be exactly that,

an informal, playful and easy way for the participants to give a glimpse in their train of thought. Though some respondents expressed a feeling of resistance as they were bluntly asked to judge the people in the photographs. However, during the interviews they seemed to have lost this sense of having to hold back on their judgement.

3.1. Q-methodology

The picture-sorting technique can be seen as a component of the Q-methodology. Similar like the picture-sorting technique, the Q-methodology is about revealing opinions and attitudes towards a particular topic. The human subjectivity and the self-referential meaning and interpretation are central here (Stephenson, 1953). This implies that the focus of the method lies with discovering what the respondents find meaningful as one solely gives meaning to those things or phenomena that are in fact important to oneself (idem). In this case, it was examined what the respondents considered important in the field of clothing to assess status. Overall, the Q-method is used to research values, beliefs and the perspectives of the participants, and allows the researcher to identify groups who seem to share opinions or actually have an opposite opinion and spot the similarities but also the differences between these groups. With a Q-method study, a set of topics is introduced to the respondents, they are asked to rank these topics based on their individual preferences and to explain their ranking choices. For this research however, the participants are presented with a set of pictures instead of topics. They have to rank these pictures based on three questions or statements, hereinafter named *statements*. Namely, they are asked to rank them based on how wealthy they believe the people are, how trashy or tacky, and if they want to rank them based on their 'friendship chance'. The goal is to figure out the supposed 'thought patterns' (Jedeloo & van Staa, 2016). According to Q-methodologist Steven Brown, this type of research is not about the number of people being studied, but about its '*representation of different points of view about the topic of study'* (Brown, 1980, as described in Jedeloo & van Staa, 2016, p. 6). It can therefore be seen as a study with the main aim of achieving and exploring the established patterns in relation to the theme of this research: the creation of symbolic boundaries to assess status.

3.2 Steps

There are several steps that need to be taken with this methodology; the first step is to set the so-called 'concours', secondly to establish the q-sample, third to select the respondents, the next step is to collect the data and lastly, to analyze this data. The first step: the concours, entails establishing the subject of the research and collect information about what people say about this topic. Here, the subject is the establishment of symbolic boundaries based on the aesthetic judgement of clothing.

3.2.1. Q-set

The next step was to create the Q-sample or Q-set. This is done by collecting information and previous conducted research outcomes about the topic of interest, in this case data concerning the establishment of symbolic boundaries based on the aesthetic judgement of clothing was collected. As can be seen in the previous chapter; the Theoretical Framework, literature based on aesthetic judgement, the non-verbal communication capability of clothing, status features, sociology of taste, distinction, and symbolic boundaries served as a base for the qualitative field research. Additionally, pictures of people going out were collected. These pictures were taken in clubs around Rotterdam and The Hague. For example, in Rotterdam the venues Bird, Roodkapje, Now&Wow, and Vila Thalia were used for the sample. In the Hague the venues PIP Den Haag, Club Westwood and Millers were used. The decision for nightlife was based on the idea that people tend to put more effort and focus on their looks when going out (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). In this research the Q-sample was based on an unstructured approach, implying the aim of selecting a representative, yet not an automatically exhaustive, set of statements and pictures.

The Q-set consists of eighteen women and twelve men in the nightlife scene. The decision for this uneven number was based on the fact that there are overall more women than men in the Netherlands (www.cbs.nl). To be more specific, in Rotterdam there are also more women than men living in the city. For every hundred women between the ages of 20 to 25, there are 95 men (Kooyman, 2012). The same goes for The Hague, in 2018 there were living 17.074 men in the city compared to 18.272 females (Dollen, 2018). Therefore, the decision was made to also use more females in the pictures than men. This way a more representable image or idea was depicted of the nightlife scene, where the respondents also take part in.

3.2.2. Respondents

The third step was to select the respondents, in Q-terms this group is called the P-set. For this qualitative research a non-probability form of sampling was used, namely purposive sampling. Purposive sampling entails that the selection of units, in this case people, had a direct relevance to the research and were not chosen at random. The goal of this form of sampling was to examine the participants, or units of analyses, in a strategic way in order to assure the relevance of the sample to the research question. Purposive sampling did not allow me, as a researcher, to generalize the outcome of the research to a population (Bryman, 2012). Yet, in this research not being able to generalize did not matter, as the focus group was very specific and therefore not a representative of a bigger group/ population. Namely, for this research the P-set or the sample, consisted of women in the age category of young adults. Yet, to demarcate this group a little further, the P-set consisted of young women that met the requirement of being graduated and were between the ages of 21- and 28 years old. The decision for this target group, concerning their age and the demarcation, as was previously stated, was based on their fascination for- and the amount of significance they attach to the choice of their outfits and those of others. Since the young adolescent is in the process of building a self-identity, clothing can affect and be used to enhance

important aspects in his or her development (Daters, 1990). According to Saravanan and Nithyaprakash (2016), this age group allocates more time to their public appearance. The primary reason for their strong fashion concerns can be found in the identity creation which is influenced by peer influence and hero worshiping (idem).

Furthermore, the decision was made to demarcate it to graduates, which was based on their consumption patterns. They are less dependent on their parents; often moved out of the family house and therefore make more deliberate choices when it comes to their consumption pattern (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). Furthermore, the participants were all from the so-called middle class. Making it very interesting to see what they believe is are indicators of status. The respondents have made clear in advance what they have studies, what kind of jobs they have, and what kind of environment they come from. The decision for this particular target group was based on the idea that they would have strong opinions concerning clothing, since they are also in the mists of developing themselves, their careers, and have developed a clear image of what they believe is right and what is not concerning how one looks. The intention with this group is to see how they, a comparable/ homogenous group, will react and operate. The participants were all raised in the Netherlands, so differences in cultural background and language did not play a role and made the conversation flow going. In the section four of the appendix you can find an overview of the characteristics of the respondents.

3.2.3. Data collection

The participants of the P-set are asked to sort the pictures and place them in the Q-sort table, see figure 1 in section two of the appendix. This table has a pattern of a quasi-normal distribution (Jedeloo & van Staa, 2016), and imposes the participants to make choices and weigh the pictures and their relation to the statements against each other. Therefore, the pictures cannot be viewed and analyzed individually, but gain meaning through the relationship with each other (idem). The resulting order, after the distribution of the photos, showed how strong their relation was to the statements in relation to the other photos (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). After the participants distributed and therefore categorized the photos in the Q-table, they were asked to specify their choices in the form of an interview. The interviews enabled me, as the researcher, to gain the most information for the interpretation of the results. Since the element of picture sorting is a process whereby the respondents reflect on the statements internally (Fincher & Tenenberg, 2005), it was important to gain an insight in this process. For example, they were asked to clarify on what they based their decisions when asked to sort the photos on 'being wealthy' or not. Moreover, how they identified tacky or trashy people and why they did not consider these people classy? The questions that were asked can be found in chapter 1 of the appendix: The Interview Guide. Asking questions was fundamental for the description, interpretation and identifying the factors found in the analysis. However, these questions were asked after the respondents categorized the pictures three times, since there were three statements asked allowing them to re-organize the pictures before them. This implies that the respondents had to re-think their decisions, which might not be based on systematic

and well thought analyses. However, this also implied that their decisions were presumably first based solely on emotions and feelings. In our everyday lives judgement is also primarily based on this, the feeling the perceived transmits to us.

3.3 Interviews

As mentioned, the respondents were asked to clarify their choices during an interview. A semi-structured interviewing technique was used for this. The technique allowed a flexible approach since I, as the interviewer, was able to respond to the direction the interviewee took the interview (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, a semi-structured interview guide was prepared (see appendix 1). This implied that a list of questions was established concerning their views and opinions regarding the people on the photos and their clothes, as can be seen in the interview guide. However, these questions allowed a great deal of flexibility for the interviewee, as they were not set in stone. There was space created for the participant to pursue topics of her interest. As will be explained in the following chapter: 'Results' as well, the interviewees tended to focus also a lot on facial expressions (attitude) and the posture of the people in the pictures. A 'good' face or a good pose made a lot of difference for the respondents. Which was interesting as it showed that the focus did not solely lie on clothing when it comes to the aesthetic judgements.

Before the first interviews, a pilot interview was conducted. This interview was organized to see how well the interview would flow and to see what might need some extra attention and improvements (Bryman, 2012). During this pilot interview, it became clear that the picture sorting plan needed to be adjusted. Initially, the idea was to let the participant lay out the pictures over each other after every statement was asked. However, this turned out to be confusing for the respondents. Therefore, the method was slightly changed whereby the respondents had to remove the pictures they categorized, with every statement. Meaning they started with a 'clean' Q-table with every statement. The technique turned out to help ground the interview questions. It helped the interviewee, and me as the interviewer, to give a more meaningful context for the interview and the following discussion. Furthermore, it stimulated the interviewee to engage on a more visual level with the questions they were asked. For instance, all of the interviewees kept referring and pointing out to the pictures to accentuate her answers. In the results and appendices, the real names of the respondents can be found. Before the interview permission was asked to use their first names instead of inventing them, which was approved by all respondents

3.4 Operationalization

Before the picture-sorting and interviews could be organized, it was important to transform the relatively vague concepts important in this research, into precise and observable notions (Babbie, 2016). One of the main concepts is that of *symbolic boundaries*. As stated before, symbolic boundaries can be defined

as the "lines that include and define some people, groups and things while excluding others" (Epstein, 1992, p. 232, as described in Lamont et al., 2001, p. 850). The term was mainly shaped by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, but further developed by other sociologists such as Thorstein Veblen and Mary Douglas. Durkheim emphasized the relationship between moral order and classification systems, while Weber emphasized the impact of these boundaries on the construction and duplication of distinctions. These distinctions can be expressed through attitudes and practices and patterns of like and dislike (Lamont, et al., 2001). Symbolic boundaries will be measured by looking at signs or guidelines that are being established of what is acceptable and what is not concerning clothing. Are there for example certain rules established of what is considered classy and what is trashy? What are the components when someone is considered wealthy or indigent?

Aesthetic judgement is an important element in the formation of symbolic boundaries. According to Immanuel Kant, aesthetic judgement is judgement based on feelings, and therefore subjective. This form of judgement is, among other things, concerned with what is observed to be beautiful and what not. Though challenging since its subjective nature, this phenomenon can be measured by analyzing the construction of validation during the interviews (Budd, 1999). The effect this construction of validation has is categorization (Lamont & Molńar, 2002). For this study the focus lies on how the participants construct categories based on the aesthetic judgement of the clothes they see depicted in the pictures.

Additionally, the concept of *status* is fundamental in this research. Though status is subjective, meaning it is a personal allocation, it can be measured by establishing guidelines that indicate a higher or lower status. Thus, these indicators might be; presumed education level, income, occupation, and relationships. Which is determined by looking at how condescending or respectful the respondents speak about this with regard to the people they see in front of them in the pictures. However, how these indicators are *identified* can vary greatly. For instance, status can be measured by analyzing one's income and education levels in order to place them in either a higher, middle, or lower level of society. The aim of this study is to see how the participants of this research allocate status based on clothing depicted in pictures.

3.5 Analysis

After the respondents sorted and categorized the pictures and the interviews were conducted, these interviews were thematically analyzed. The way the respondents formed and explained the symbolic boundaries based on clothing in order to assess status, was examined. In order to analyze the transcripts of the interviews, a code list was set up (see appendix 6). In this code list can be seen that codes such as; education, occupation, overdoing, men vs. women, status symbol, posture, facial expressions, external care, personal connection and tattoos/ piercings were used in order to analyze the transcripts.

These codes were important in order to be able to arrange, and re-arrange, the content of the interviews in a systematic order. The coding scheme can be found in appendix 7. Lastly, the resulting coding map can be found in appendix 8. This so-called codifying process enabled for the data to be grouped and linked, in order to solidify meaning and explanation (Bryman, 2012).

3.6 Practicalities

The interviews were organized in an open, neutral and informal space, implying not a classroom or any 'official' environment. This ensured a comfortable environment where the participants felt the opportunity and possibility to speak freely. Mainly, the houses of the participants were used to organize the interviews. Also, an office space was used to organize some of the interviews. In consultation with the participants a fitting day and time was set.

A recording device was used during the interviews. Since with this method processes whereby meaning is constructed was being studied, it would have been challenging for me, as the interviewer, to remember the conversation in order to analyze in afterwards. Nevertheless, one of the limitations that was taken into account beforehand, was that there is a possibility that the participants display socially desirable answers due to their knowledge of the recording (Bryman, 2012). This effect is however inevitable but was taken in consideration by keeping the conversation as personal and buoyant as possible. During the interviews a small set of notes was made during the process. These notes were beneficial to ask follow-up and explanatory questions. Lastly, pictures of the Q-table were made after each division of the pictures based on the statements (see appendix 5: Outcome Q-table). Since the respondents had to reorganize the picture with the three different statements, this was useful for them during the second part of, the interview, to see how they organized the pictures with the other statements. This helped the interviewees with the justification of their choices.

3.7 Limitations

Though some possible limitations were taken into consideration before the actual picture-sorting and interviews were organized, such as the possibility that the respondents would give 'desirable' answers during the interview since they knew they were being recorded. Also, during this research, the respondents were asked to 'bluntly' judge the people they could see in the pictures. The idea that this might be hard for the respondents to do when asked, since it is commonly an internally and not verbal process, was taken into consideration. However, there were still some limitations worth mentioning that were not predicted. One of these limitations experienced was that the interview element did not last as long with the participants as expected. Overall, the recorded interviews took around 25 to a maximum of 45 minutes each. An explanation is that during the picture sorting component some of the participants

already clarified their choices while making them. However, during this time the recording device was off. Nonetheless, during these times notes were made of what the participants were explaining and sharing about the choices they were making. Secondly, a small misstep was made with the sampling of the pictures. Two of the pictures, of the people who are going out, are of men who seem to not fit the age category of the respondents themselves. Therefore, the respondents experienced some difficulties with associating themselves with these two men. While association was a fundamental component during the categorization or distribution of the pictures based on the statements.

4. Results

The main research objective in this study was how we use clothes to make an assessment and evaluate what we see (people), and the meaning we give to certain symbols. How are certain symbolic boundaries, that divide us from one another, set up? To what extent does our clothing aesthetics based on their non-verbal communication skills, demarcate symbolic boundaries? These questions were leading in this study and investigated by means of a picture-sorting technique and interviews. In this chapter, the outcome of the picture-sorting and the ensuing interviews will be discussed.

Before the picture-sorting element started, the respondents were asked to explain how they prepared for a night out. This question was asked to 'warm' them up a little, but also to use as a starting point during the discussion/interviews. After that, the respondents were asked to categorize thirty pictures of people who were 'clubbing' or going out, in the Q-table based on three statements presented to them. The first statement being if they could categorize the people in the pictures based on how wealthy they appeared. Secondly, if they could categorize the same set of pictures based on how trashy or tacky the people appeared to be. Lastly, if they could divide the same people based on the idea of friendship, meaning if they believed they could be friends with the people in the pictures. With the first statement, the respondents placed the people they believed to be the wealthiest in +4 and the person they believed to be the least wealthy in -4. During the second statement they placed the people they believed to be the tackiest or the trashiest in +4 and in -4 was the person they believed to be the least tacky. With the final classification, the respondents placed the person they believed they could be friends with in +4 and the individual they believed they could absolutely not be friends with in -4.

4.1 Clothing

As stated before, the respondents were asked with the first statement if they could categorize the individuals in the photographs based on their level of wealth. The respondents clarified during the interviews that they based their decisions on different elements, but mainly on clothing. Important factors with the assessment of the clothes were the visible brands the individuals were wearing, the quality of the clothes and the idea of 'a well thought out outfit'. For instance, with the noticeable brands that could be identified in the photos, such as Daily Paper, Off White and Luis Vuitton, that are commonly known to be expensive or more luxury brands, were by most respondents not identified as status symbols. On the contrary, some respondents believed the individuals wearing these brands probably had to make a lot of effort to even be able to afford it, making it a reversed status symbol. A common thought among the respondents was that the individuals in the pictures that were clearly wearing famous brands, were trying to communicate a specific message with their outfit choice. That was, according to some respondents, to show others that they have spent a lot of money on their outfit and live this luxury lifestyle, while this probably was not the case. This notion can be related to the

theories of Lee, Hur and Watkins (2018) and Veblen (as described in Trigg, 2001), whom stated that the concept of luxury brands has transformed. These brands used to be associated with the privileged, the wealthy. However, over the years the middle-class seems to now also have the funds, power or ability to purchase and 'flaunt' these luxury products. Hereby, they try to differentiate themselves from others within their own social class. Moreover, according to Lee et.al., (2018), the luxury products and brands have adapted to this notion by extending their business and entering the mass markets. Hence, making the products more assessible, also for businesses who copy these brands. This resulted in the increase of counterfeits, making the original products less credible for their authenticity and originality (idem).

Though brands were not directly associated with wealth, more traditional symbols of formal clothing for (especially) men were. Examples of traditional formal clothing that were associated with wealth were the blazers, blouses and suspenders, seen with some of the men in the pictures. For example, the man in the blazer with a pocket square (N. 30 as can be seen in appendix 3) was by almost all respondents (82%) placed in the higher category of wealth, as can be seen in appendix 5. When asked how that decision was made, the respondents explained that they linked his jacket with the matching pocket square to the concept of wealth. Wearing a jacket with a pocket square was associated with a traditional formal outfit; a suit. According to the respondents, suits cost quite a lot of money, implying that this man must be able to afford it when he decides to wear it when he goes out for a night. Furthermore, the men wearing blouses were overall higher ranked when it came to be resembling a prosperous individual. However, an interesting outcome during the interviews was that almost all the respondents did not believe that the people they classified as wealthier, and therefore placed on the right side of the Q-table, were indeed automatically wealthy in 'real' life. Some of these people were believed to give a false representation of their wealth. The money they might possess was allocated to their parents, or even non-existent. The idea of presenting a false representation of one's wealth can also be associated with Thorstein Veblen's theory, namely, conspicuous consumption. According to Veblen this term refers to the buying of expensive, recognized luxury brands, to display wealth rather than to actually buy 'necessary' products that the consumer truly needs. The individual can therefore be seen as a flashy consumer, who tries to cultivate or achieve a high social status (Trigg, 2001). Similarly, to the theories of Veblen, the respondents in this research presumed that the consumption patterns, which they based on the clothing of the individuals, of these individuals was used to signal status rather than legitimately portraying status.

4.1.1 Quality

One of the most notable comments was by one of the respondents who said she looked at the fast-fashion and slow-fashion concept. Slow fashion can be seen as a counter move towards fast fashion. Slow fashion stands for sustainable, fair, organic, and 'green' clothing. An overall term that is used for clothing that has been produced in a more ethical way. On the other hand, there is fast fashion, a term which originated in the 70's, when the production of clothes was outsourced to developing countries,

such as in Asia. Here, clothing was manufactured fast, under poor working conditions and then shipped to Western countries (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). According to one of the respondents, she based her idea of an individual being trashy or not, on the clothing she judged as fast fashion. This respondent claimed, which was supported by the other respondents, that fast fashion is cheap, therefore making the wearer cheap. This decision was based on the clothes and the fabric they believed it was made of. According to these respondents, the people who were 'clearly' wearing quality, were the ones who were less trashy, or cheap, than the individuals wearing for instance synthetic clothing. As argued by Veblen ([1899] 1994, as described in Trigg, 2001), quality plays a significant role in the consumption patterns to portray wealth. When the quality and the expensiveness of the fabrics or products overall can be distinguished, and the distinction can be made between hand-tailored and mass production items, the wearer gains more status (idem).

Looking at the females, one of them (N.7) was placed by all respondents between +2 and +4 in the Q-table with the first statement. This decision was based on her facial expression, make-up and posture, but mainly on her outfit and the quality it appeared to be made of. According to the respondents N.7 mainly expressed her wealth by the outfit she chose to wear. The quality of the jacket was assumed to be very high, thus expensive. Looking at the outcomes of the interviews, more respondents looked at the quality of clothes during their assessment. When the individual seemed to be wearing higher quality clothes, as in nice fabrics, they were placed more positive in the Q-table. It appears that the respondents believed that wealthier people would express their wealth more likely through subtle indicators such as nice quality clothes, than by wearing for instance expensive brands.

Approximately half of the respondents also made a clear division between the individuals by categorizing them as for instance 'hipster' and 'mean stream people'. With this they also made the division based on the (presumed) quality of the clothes. When the clothing appeared to be for instance 'vintage', more positive connotations were allocated to that person. When these respondents believed the individual was wearing clothing that was in style in this particular period of time, they were allocated fewer positive connotations. According to Chira (2016), differentiation between wealthy and less wealthy individuals can be determined by the inability to keep up with fashion trends. For instance, vintage clothing is seen as an expression of the social reality that goes beyond the superficiality of fashion (idem). As stated by Chira, this says something about the financial (economic) status of the wearer. However, since vintage, or outdated clothing has become increasingly popular over the years, this might not be the case anymore. The majority of the respondents did believe that the individuals who were presumed to be hipsters, were less wealthy, but also less trashy. While the individuals wearing items that can be seen to be 'in fashion', were presumed more tacky or trashy. Nevertheless, as stated before there was a clear division concerning the respondents themselves, in their assessments. The other half of the respondents actually placed these hipsters in lower ranks of the Q-table. They stated that people who are able to stay with the fashion trends, are more groomed, fashionable and therefore classier (which was the opposite of trashy).

4.1.2 Showing some skin and staying true to oneself

As previously stated, before the respondents had to categorize the pictures, they were asked the question how they dress for a night out. This question was intended to loosen up the respondents and create a more informal and casual atmosphere by asking a personal yet open question. Almost all of the respondents replied that they do want to dress a little more sensual when they go out, showing more skin than usual. For instance, by wearing a 'see through' top, or a top with a little more cleavage. Some even claimed to have a separate wardrobe for solely clothes they can wear when going out. Nevertheless, something all respondents mentioned was the more skin the individuals in the pictures were showing, the cheaper, tackier or trashier they were. This is reflected in the choices they made as portrayed in the Q-table outcomes (appendix 5). Here, we see that especially the individual N.10 was placed for 73% on the right-hand side of the Q-table, indicating she was perceived to be tackier. According to some respondents, this was mainly based on her dress choice. The woman in the picture is wearing a tight lilac dress with a deep v-cut. With most respondents, modesty appeared to be an important element when being classy, something the individual N.10 lacked. Also, because of her dress, the respondents attributed even more characteristics to her. A common believe was that this woman (N.10) was pretentious. Yet, not only her dress attributed to this idea, also her overall posture and facial expression were of great influence.

According to Kovac and Trussell (2015), clubbing can have a psycho-social effect on young adults, as it allows the youngster to 'redefine their sense of self'. A club has the ability to provide a context where especially young women feel more freedom and experience even liberation. The subjects in the research conducted by Kovac and Trussell explained that getting ready for a night out becomes a whole ritual, whereby presenting an alternate form of the self, or a more desirable form of the self by means of altering the physical appearance, becomes important (idem). Likewise, with the respondents in this research, the main objective of getting ready for a night out was to create the image of being classy and not trashy. Looking classy was defined as presenting yourself as 'sexy' by dressing a little more scantily, but in a more sophisticated way. Something some of the individuals in the pictures did not adhere to according to the respondents. Showing too much skin and therefore being too revealing with your outfit, was negatively interpreted by the respondents in this research. Though it became clear that preparing for a night out was different than preparing for a working day, not all respondents felt the need to conform. One of the respondents stated that she did not dress differently when going out and felt that there was no pressure to dress a certain way when she went to a club. Though the majority of the respondents did state that dressing for a night out was a special occasion, they believed you should always dress and be the person you are. They emphasized the notion of staying true to oneself strongly.

4.2 Status indicators

4.2.1 Accessories

A similar outcome as with the expensive brands was identified when it came to jewelry, like gold necklaces. Gold, long associated with prosperity, luxury and wealth (Blumberg, 1974), seemed to have lost its symbolic power with the young adults in this research. Since ancient mythology, gold has been a symbol of power and riches. According to Holland (2005), the worldwide fascination with gold led to an international acceptance of its worth, and therefore became accepted as a means of exchange or money. In the 19th and 20th century, gold was considered the most powerful representation of wealth (idem). However, this notion appears to have altered slightly with the respondents in this research since golden jewelry was still seen expensive but 'made the wearer also cheap'. When we look at the Q-table outcome (appendix 5), we see for instance that individual N.17 was positioned for 64% of the time on the negative (left) side of the Q-table. This implies that the majority of the respondents believed, even with all the golden necklaces he is wearing, he would not be wealthy.

Females wearing jewelry and other accessories were generally placed in the positive (right) side of the Q-table, indicating the respondents did believe these people were overall wealthier than the individuals with less (visible) accessories on the left side of the Q-table. However, wearing too much jewelry was seen as an indicator of less wealth. This can be seen with the woman N. 16, who is wearing quite outstanding- and a noticeable amount of jewelry. N.16 was for 55% of the time placed on the negative side of the Q-table, implying the respondents believed she would be less wealthy. Though 55% is just slightly the majority, N.16 was an individual that was mentioned specifically multiple times during the interviews. Some respondents claimed that less was indeed more in her case. Trying too much, or as some of the respondents stated: "too many bells and whistles can make an individual tacky".

4.2.2 Tattoos and piercings

As expected, visible tattoos and piercings did not go unnoticed by the respondents, and therefore also played a role in the assessment of the individuals in the pictures. There is still a lot of controversy when it comes to tattoos and piercings, which can also be seen with the outcomes of the interviews. Though we see a growing appreciation towards (visible) tattoos, for instance on social media, with celebrities, and on television, this was and still is not always the case (Sanders & Vail, 2009). Though its popularity has grown, tattoos still have a certain stigma. A common misconception is that body modifications, such as tattoos, are for the lower classes. Yet, tattoos have been around for decades and within a small period of time, have been rapidly growing in popularity in the modern western culture (Broussard & Harton, 2018). According to Miller, McGlashan Nicols & Eure (2009), stereotypically tattoos were associated with the lower- and working classes, the troubled youth and even gangs. However, we do see a shift in this perception as now also higher educated and wealthy individuals decide to get a tattoo (idem). During the interviews in this study, it appeared that the respondents could be divided into two groups. On the

one hand, the majority of respondents allocated having tattoos not particularly with being less wealthy, or trashy. Namely, as stated by one of the respondents:

"a tattoo is not a 'cheap' feature to get. On the contrary, tattoos are actually very expensive, implying the person must have money to afford it" (Petry, personal communication, April 29th, 2020).

Remarkably, the respondents that stated they believed the individuals with tattoos and piercings were not less wealthy and did not find them tacky or trashy at all, were also the ones who believed the individuals wearing (observable) luxury brands were giving a false representation of their wealth. Here the concept of trashy appeared to be to follow the masses, so what is accepted on a larger scale, which was believed to be trashier. These respondents placed the individuals wearing these brands more negatively in the Q-table and the individuals with tattoos higher in the table. The respondents who were more positive about tattoos and piercings appeared to value the idea of individual expression more, ranking them higher and cared less about more traditional status symbols, such as the luxury brands. However, on the other hand, the rest of respondents asserted that the people with tattoos must have been less educated and trashier. The respondents who expressed a more negative opinion towards visible tattoos, were also the ones who assigned modesty as a strong value. Also, this fraction of the respondents were also the ones that rated luxury brands more positive than the other half of the respondents. Furthermore, they also appeared to have a stronger opinion towards more 'outspoken' individuals. Making the saying 'less is more' an important criterium for them.

According to Johnson (2007), there is no particular group or type of person that gets a tattoo. We cannot determine a set age, gender, upbringing, education, prosperity or even personality to explain or even assure the type of personal that would get a tattoo (idem). There have been various studies conducted in the perception and appreciation towards tattoos in society. Tattoos are commonly seen as a unique aspect of the 'self' (Kang & Jones, 2007). Especially young adults tend to have the urge to express this 'self' in different ways, one of them being through tattoos and piercings. This group is in the midst of developing themselves and are in search of their independence. Body modifications seem to have the power to symbolize this 'sense of the self' (idem). In this study, this idea of portraying one's 'self', also by means of tattoos and piercings, was an important point of discussion with the majority of the respondents. Some respondents believed the people with tattoos and piercings would rather remain true to themselves, rather than adhering to the more common 'way' of doing and being. Therefore, making them less trashy or cheap. For instance, individual N.26 was for the main part placed in the negative, left side of the Q-table. According to 64% of the respondents this was due to her outfit, posture and 'body accessories' or tattoos. However, 37% of the respondents that actually place this individual (N.26) on the positive side of the Q-table, stated that tattoos actually cost quite a lot, which implies you have to own money in order to spend it. Furthermore, they believed this individual was more herself, being less mainstream and showing her 'true colors', which was an appreciated idea.

Chira (2016), also researched this sense of self, and staying true to one's identity. Due to, among other things, globalization, fashion and its trends are rapidly changing. We change the symbols that should represent our identity so fast, that these symbols could lose their personal touch. This can create a negative effect on the process of (expressing) individuality, homogenizing and equalizing our looks, and even taste. However, what we do see with the younger generation: the young adults, is that they are trying to gain this sense of self by not only the way they dress, but also by the way to decorate their bodies. "People will decide which trend to follow by making specific aesthetic choices whereby the collective taste is combined with personal taste" (Chira, 2016), for instance by the means of tattoos and piercings.

4.3 Facial expressions and Posture

Besides clothing and accessories (also tattoos and piercings), another important element in the assessment of the individuals depicted in the pictures appeared to be one's facial expression and posture. During this research quite a similar outcome was detected as with the study by Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017). This study from the University of Toronto researched how financial differences can be shown through facial expressions. The researchers found that their target group: 'students', were for 68% accurate when it came to their predictions of the economic status of the individuals in the pictures. According to the study the students were most accurate when the individuals in the photographs depicted neutral expressions and were showing their whole face. This outcome indicated that the students made the distinctions based on subtle signs of emotions that can be linked to prosperity (idem). For example, individuals that seemed stressed, were linked to the idea of being financially insecure and unstable. While a smiling individual on the other hand, was associated with having a more positive cash flow. According to some of the respondents in this research, the people that were posing in the pictures, were seen as affluent. These individuals were depicting a particular 'money pose', trying to show off their prosperity. Similarly, when asked the second statement, if they could distribute the pictures in the Q-table based on how 'trashy' the individuals appeared, facial expressions were influential in the assessment. However, unlike the research from Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017), the majority of the respondents in this research did not allocate wealth with the people in the photographs who were smiling. Here, the respondents believed that the individuals that were actually showing a more positive attitude and portraying positive emotions, were more likely to *not* have a lot of money. According to some respondents, these people embodied the idea of not caring too much about how they looked, but their main motivation to go out was to have fun. Here, it appeared that the respondents in this research believed some forms of wealth can be in the way of happiness. Individuals that were categorized as being wealthier, were believed to show off their so-called wealth during this night out. However, there was one respondent that made similar comments as can be seen in the study by Bjornsdottir and Rule

(2017). Namely, she stated that she believed that the people who looked happier and more relaxed in the pictures were actually the ones who presumably had more money to spend.

"The people that look more stressed, are probably the ones with less money. They must realize going out is an expensive activity. They are probably also having less fun because of that" (Zilver, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Besides wealth, the respondents were also asked if they believed the people in the photographs that were placed on the right (positive) side of the Q-table, were higher educated or had a better job than the people on the left side of the Q-table. Therefore, a difference was suggested between economic and cultural capital. This question was asked since some of the respondents already allocated different characteristics to the individuals based on how they looked, during the interviews. As we for instance saw with the women N.10, who was believed to even be more pretentious than others based on her outfit choice and facial expression. According to Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017), by looking at someone's clothes and their face, people tend to also attribute more characteristics to what they are perceiving. For example, looking 'rich' inclines people to attribute more positive qualities such as intelligence, creativity, and diligence to the people they perceive (idem). Even social class is believed by the researchers to be written on someone's face (idem). According to the majority of the respondents in this study, the people who were perceived to be less fortunate based on their facial expression, were also the ones who were probably higher educated. So, the individuals who were flaunting more obvious status symbols (although the status of these symbols can be questioned), were presumed to be less educated. Which is in contrast to the outcome of Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017). This decision was based on the idea that most of them were probably still students, thus having less good paying jobs and probably having more debt. Furthermore, by the majority of the respondents, the individuals who were believed to be less wealthy were most probably also the people who were the 'kindest' and the ones they could be more easily friends with. This was also linked to the facial expressions and the way the individuals posed for the picture. The main argument for this idea was based on the belief that these people, though less wealthy, would stay truer to themselves. They were believed to be at the club to see friends, have a drink and enjoy the company of others. The individuals presumed to be wealthier, based on their pose and facial expressions, on the other hand, were also the people who were assumed to be less friendly. To sum up, the respondents expected the less wealthy individuals, based on their facial expression and posture to be higher educated and more sociably oriented.

4.4 Men vs Women

The pictures presented to the respondents were depicting two genders, namely men and women. During the interviews, it appeared that there was a difference in the assessment of these two genders when it

came to assigning wealth or categorizing them as tacky or trashy. One of the respondents explained that for females it is a lot easier to 'look wealthy or classy', but on the other hand it is also very easy do look tacky in a split of a second.

"This is due to the endless possibilities women have in contrast to men when it comes to dressing up and accessorizing. However, these endless possibilities are not socially accepted by all groups in society. For example, a choker is not seen as a classy necklace by all, as some find it a tacky form of jewelry" (Isabel, personal communication, April 24th, 2020).

A striking similarity detected when looking at the Q-table outcomes (appendix 5) with the second statement, is that mainly the females were placed on the right side of the Q-table, implying that the respondents believed these were the 'trashiest' individuals. According to one of the respondents, this is due to the idea created around women who dress a little more exposed than others. She stated:

"You see this a lot on social media and with popular television shows like Temptation Island, women parading around in bikini's and acting tacky. These shows create this image of women who, if they dress and act like this, are cheap" (Sophie, personal communication April 23, 2020).

Moreover, it appeared to be easier for the respondents to 'read' the females than for them to read the men. According to one of the respondents, women commonly put a little more effort in their outfit when going out, making it easier to read since there is indeed *more* to read. Looking at the motives the respondents gave concerning this division between men and women, it appears that men are more often given the benefit of the doubt. Another respondent claimed it is very hard to judge a guy based on how trashy or tacky he is on the pictures since "he has not yet opened his mouth". According to this respondent, she could judge men based on their way of speaking, not particularly based on how they dress, as they tend to make smaller and less visible (fashion) mistakes than females. With the women depicted in the pictures, this respondent had no problem when it came to categorize them based on how tacky or trashy they were.

"Women use jewelry, work with layers in their clothes, and other accessories, all aspects which can be judged more easily. Furthermore, women tend to be more nuanced, yet also more active with what they want to radiate. Men seem to be less concerned with what they communicate with their clothing to others "(Isabel, personal communication, April 24, 2020).

So, interestingly, men appear to be more difficult to judge, since there is less to judge. In this research the men were often given the benefit of the doubt. With the females, it appeared to be easier for the respondents to judge them. This might be due to fact that the respondents in this study have more female

friends than male friends, making it harder for them to judge the males since their frame of references is limited. With the third statement, if the respondents believed they could be friends with the individuals, this also became clear. The majority of the individuals that was placed on the right side of the Q-table with this statement, were females. Indicating the respondents believed they could be more easily friends with these females, than with the men. According to Davis (1984) our clothes play a significant role in the relations we establish. In a way, we chose people that feel or seem relatable. With first impressions, which tend to last, this is mainly based on clothes. So, since the respondents in this research did not have a lot of friends from the opposite sex and thus did not establish relations with many males (on a friendly base), it might be explainable why they had more difficulty examining the male individuals.

4.5 Social Compatibility and the 'Self'

During the assessment of the individuals in the pictures, one of the main elements was if the respondents could weigh the people in the pictures up against themselves. Therefore, social similarity or compatibility appeared to be an important factor in the assessment and establishment of symbolic boundaries. According to the respondents, the closer the people in the pictures appeared to stay true to themselves and therefore to them (the respondent herself), the easier it would be for them to imagine for instance a possible friendship. As the respondents themselves explained that when they themselves dress for a night out, they want to 'stay true to who they are'. The closer they believed the individuals were to themselves or their own circles or friend groups, the more positive as in higher educated, creative and diligent, the person in the picture was believed to be. This outcome can be linked to the Social Judgement Theory, whereby a 'relationship' is established with the decision task environment, the so-called ecology, of the respondent (Cooksey, 1996).

Noteworthy is that with all three statements, the notion of the self was very important. The idea of staying 'true' to oneself was for most respondents leading in their assessment. As it was already briefly touched upon in the previous sections of this chapter, the more the respondents believed the individuals were depicting their 'true' colors, the higher they were ranked in the Q-table. Though the respondents might not agree with all fashion choices the individuals made for their night out, they acknowledged and appreciated the individuals when they seemed to deviate from the so-called 'norm'. This notion can be linked by the theory of Kuipers (2015), whom stated that especially younger people tend to combine more traditional highbrow- and popular culture, having more international tastes, but also attach great value to 'authenticity'. When an individual would seem 'dull' or more mainstream looking at their outfit, the respondents were not to positive about this individual. Here, the notion as stated by Chira (2016) of 'free choice' appeared to be very important. The respondents acknowledged that there are certain rules or more standardized forms to express yourself, depending on what the 'trend' is, but the people that seem to deviate from these rules or standards, were appreciated more. When the

respondents believed the person in the photographs was presenting a true form of the self, the individual was more positively judged. For example, individual N.16 was not ranked very high in the Q-table when it came to assessing wealth, but the respondents did give her credits for her authenticity. The majority of the respondents believed this was the way she would also dress in her daily life, giving her more appreciation since she stayed true to herself.

Lastly, the location or the particular club the respondents believed the photographs were taken played a role in this notion of portraying the 'self' as well. As stated by Steinhaus and Lapitsky (1986) the clothes you wear combined with the situation it is worn in, have an impact on the perceived characteristics of the wearer. Moreover, the allocated characteristics to the wearer in return are affected by the characteristics of the perceiver. According to the respondents, the club people chose to go to says a lot about the person as well. Therefore, it can be said that there is a difference when it comes to symbolic boundaries based on the club as well. Some clubs are by the respondents seen as a scene where people just go to, to show off or give a false representation of themselves. The motives of these individuals for going out were questioned, as the respondents believed these people must have been in the club to show others how good they are living. So, there was a division made to going somewhere for yourself or going to a particular club for others or for the 'idea' or status that club has. Here, the saying 'see and be seen' seemed appropriate and of importance to the respondents. Furthermore, if the respondents believed these individuals were going out in similar clubs they would go to, they allocated more positive characteristics to the individuals. Strong interpersonal connections are established by social similarity and propinquity (Reagans, 2011). The individuals in the pictures were all of a similar age as the respondents which made it easier for them to connect, as long as they appeared to be in similar contexts as the respondents could find themselves wondering around in.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Your outfit does convey a certain message, but whether the message you wanted to propagate will be received in the right way is entirely in the hands of the recipient. Clothing itself does have a 'language', a nonverbal one. The communication by clothing is through specific symbols and rules which are determined by social groups in society. This entails, not every social groups holds the same symbols, rules or codes in order to evaluate clothing. Before we even speak, our clothes already tell a tale. Generally, we develop all sorts of ideas about someone's class, occupation, or even personality solely based on how the other looks. For example, when we see someone in a blazer with a pocket square, we allocate this with 'wealth', the notion of a 'suit' is hereby a status symbol. Yet in this research expensive brands, meaning brands that are seen as a 'luxury' product, are not seen as an indicator of wealth anymore. The respondents in this research rather attributed these goods to individuals that falsely represented themselves making these symbols into reversed status symbols. Also, showing too much skin was commonly allocated with being tackier in contrast to wearing a well put together outfit of (presumably) nice quality. In a way, our clothes have the potential to signal some form or idea of status to others. It seems that quality of the outfit plays a significant role in this process, but also the accessories someone has, the attitude an individual adopts, and the facial expression play an important role in the assessment of status on first glance. When looking solely at clothing, keeping 'in fashion' is commonly linked to people with a higher status. This is due to the idea that to keep 'in fashion' you have to be able to afford it. Therefore, the way you dress or present yourself overall, can be used to show off your wealth and status (conspicuous consumption). According to one of the respondents however, these people, who were clearly on track with the newest fashion trends, were also the people she presumed tackiest. According to this respondent, fast fashion does show off someone's wealth, but does not specifically mean she presumes these people to have a higher status in society. On the contrary, she believes these people will probably be less educated and shallower than the people wearing slow fashion items.

Besides clothing, we tend to also decorate our bodies and outfits a little more when going out. Make-up and accessories were also significant components in the categorization and assessment of the individuals in the pictures. These decorations can contribute to the overall message you want to radiate. However, it can also have a negative effect on the interpretation. Wearing too much or too striking jewelry, had a negative effect on the perception. Also, with commonly known status indicators such as gold, were in this research not allocated to prosperity. On the contrary, the respondents believed these people were more likely to be less wealthy and also tackier. Furthermore, as expected, visible tattoos and piercings did not go unnoticed by the respondents, and therefore also played a role in the assessment of the individuals in the pictures. There is still a lot of controversy when it comes to tattoos and piercings, which can also be seen with the outcomes of the interviews. In this research there was a clear division when it came to the appreciation of tattoos. On the one hand, the respondents believed the individuals

with tattoos were more likely to have money, since they are not cheap to get. Also, these individuals were believed to be more friendly and 'true' to themselves. This idea of staying true to oneself was an important measuring tool when it came to evaluate if someone was trashy/tacky and if the respondents believed the individual would fit in their own social circles. Nonetheless, these individuals were also seen as trashy, lower educated and presumably less approachable by some of the respondents.

A striking outcome was that the respondents in this research found it more difficult to assess and judge the men in the pictures. They believed women were easier to read since there is indeed *more* to read. When women go out, they tend to dress differently than going for instance to a job interview. Clothing is scarcer, hair and make-up is exaggerated, and more jewelry is often added to the outfit. Even most of the respondents themselves stated that they have specific clothes they would wear for a night out. For the men it was more difficult for the respondents to judge them solely on the clothes they wear, while this was not an obstacle with the women depicted in the pictures. This might be due to the fact that the respondents in this research are more acquainted with their own gender. They stated they have more female friends than male friend, making their frame of references more limited. With the third statement, if the respondents believed they could be friends with the individuals, this also became clear. The majority of the individuals that was placed on the right side of the Q-table with this statement, were females. Indicating the respondents believed they could be more easily friends with these females, than with the men.

The respondents in this research tended to categorize the individuals in the pictures by comparing them to themselves and their own social circles. The closer the individuals in the pictures were presumed to be to the respondent themselves the higher (more positive) they were positioned in the Q-table with the different statements. If the respondents believed these individuals were going out in clubs they could find themselves in as well, the individual would be placed higher in the table. Same goes for whenever an individual in the pictures was wearing clothes or jewelry the respondents could see themselves wearing. Social similarity therefore appeared to be playing a role in the assessment. Here, also the notion of the *self* was very important. The idea of staying 'true' to oneself was for most respondents leading in their assessment. Though the respondents might have not always agreed with the fashion choices the individuals in the pictures made for this club night, they acknowledged and appreciated the individuals when they seemed to deviate from the so-called 'norm'.

In conclusion, to answer the main research question: In what way are symbolic boundaries created to assess status, based on the non-verbal communication elements of clothing? We can state that though clothing is the first perceived and noticeable element to judge, judgement and assessment of status goes way further than the image created, or message communicated by clothing. the respondents in this research gave meaning to different types of symbols in order to estimate the individuals. To assess status, appearances or one's social circle, there were several aspects that came into play. So, besides clothing, jewelry, hair and make-up played a significant role as well. However, one's posture and facial expressions were key as well. Lastly, social compatibility was crucial. One

needs to be able to relate or feel connected in any way to other in order for them to judge them more positively.

Discussion

After conducting the interviews it appeared that there are so many more perspectives that would be interesting to investigate some more. For instance, ethnicity, and what role it played in the assessment by the respondents. For this research, with the photographs that were selected for the picture-sorting element, there were two different genders depicted (male and female), the age division of these individuals was between 21 and 30 years old, and lastly, the individuals were from different kinds of ethnicities. The goal with selecting these pictures was to represent the night life of The Hague and Rotterdam, since the respondents go out themselves in these two cities. However, ethnicity did not seem to play a role for the assessment of status with the respondents, as none of the respondents mentioned it. However, it seems almost unlikely that ethnicity did not play a part, how unpleased that might sound. It could have played a positive or negative role in their judgement, but simply did not came to light.

Another, quite surprising outcome was that gender did play a role in the assessment of status. Before conducted the 'field' work, I did not expect that gender would play a role. There is not a lot of previous literature on the differences in judgement and assessment of status based on the two genders; male and female. In this research the respondents appeared to focus more on the women when it came to allocate wealth, assessing if the individuals were tacky or trashy or not and if they believed they could be friends with the individuals. For instance, one of the respondents believed this could only be assessed in 'real life' with the men. For the men it appeared the respondents needed more information about the individual in the pictures in order to judge them based on the statements. Assigning certain characteristics based on the pictures of them men showed to be more difficult. When looking at previous conducted studies, there cannot be much found on this topic either. So, for a follow up research it would be interesting to see what would happen if the individuals in the pictures would solely consist of men. Would other type of symbolic boundaries arise, or would a similar outcome be detected since the female element (females in the pictures) would be taken away. Furthermore, it would be interesting to dive a little deeper in the idea that it appears to be easier to judge women than men. Would this be the same if the respondents would not solely consist of females, but if there would also be male respondents participating? Initially, the idea for this research was to organize focus groups consisting of men and women. Hereby, there would be a similar set-up, as they would be also asked if they could categorize pictures placed before them, based on the levels of wealth. However, this initial plan would focus more on the differences between men and women when it came to the establishment of symbolic boundaries. Would there be a difference in the assessment when the composition of the group would change? Yet, due to circumstances, the outline and method of the research needed to be adjusted. Thus, for a follow-

up research, it would be interesting to look a little deeper in the differences between men and women when it comes to the creation of symbolic boundaries based on status.

Lastly, the topic of context or location was briefly touched upon in this research. Some of the respondents mentioned that they based their decisions also on the presumed location the pictures were taken. According to these respondents, this also plays a significant role in their assessment. For instance, one of the respondents claimed that based on her idea of the club were the photograph must have been taken, she allocated the characteristics to the individuals in the pictures. If she believed the picture was taken in a club where she could also go to, or could see herself go to, the assessment was more positive. However, when she believed the photograph was taken in a club, she could never see herself or any of her friends go to, the individuals were allocated more negative qualities. It would be interesting to delve a little deeper into the notion of the power or effect the reputation of a club has as well.

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Appendix

1. The Interview Guide

With this methodology the research question: 'In what way are symbolic boundaries created to assess status, based on the non-verbal communication elements of clothing, by young adults?' will be answered. To do so, the participants are asked to rank pictures according to the predefined sorting criteria, which are based on status indicators. These status indicators entail for example; age, education, income, upbringing and social life. To make these indicators testable, some questions will be set up. By doing so, the respondents are able to arrange the pictures based on the questions that are asked. After all the pictures are laid out in the sorting scheme (see figure 1) based on the different statements are presented, the respondents are asked to clarify their decisions, stimulating the interview element of the method. Establishing the rankings with the pictures implies that these pictures are not rated individually yet stand in relation to one another (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020).

Procedure

The process will go as follows: several statements/ questions will individually be presented to the participants. With every statement they are asked to place the pictures in the Q-sort table (as seen in figure 1). By placing the pictures in this table, the participants are asked to weigh the pictures and their connection to the statements against each other. As can be seen in figure1: the Q-sort table, placing a picture in -4 implies the participant strongly disagrees with the relation of the picture to the statement. On the other hand, placing on of the pictures in the +4 box of the figure, will indicate they strongly agree with the picture's relation to the statement. These statements will be presented individually, which gives the respondents the opportunity to 're-locate' the picture in the Q table. However, to not lose track of the changes, the same picture will be printed out multiple times. The participant is therefore able to lay them over each other and enabling them to make different rankings based on different criteria.

One of the pitfalls that needs to be taken in consideration with the analyses of the results is that the participants might get the feeling that they are being tested on their consistency of arranging the pictures. However, the process of the creation of symbolic boundaries based on the pictures, by arranging them, is being tested. How do the participants create boundaries that indicate status, based on the photographs and therefore the clothing they see before them? An advantage of this method on the other hand is that judgement, which is established by the creation of symbolic boundaries, based on the assessment of clothing is one of the most promising techniques that can be used to identify these symbolic boundaries (Adams, 2012 & Kuipers, 2015). Arranging pictures, based on a personal consideration, is perceived as a safe way of expressing one's opinion (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020; Jedeloo & van Staa, 2016).

The questions/ statements for the categorization of the pictures are:

1. This person is rich/ wealthy (NL: Zou je deze personen kunnen rangschikken op hoe rijk/welvarend ze zijn?)

2. This person is tacky (NL: Zou je dezelfde mensen kunnen indelen op hoe ordinair ze zijn?)

3. I could be friends with this person (NL: Ik zou wel vrienden met deze persoon kunnen zijn)
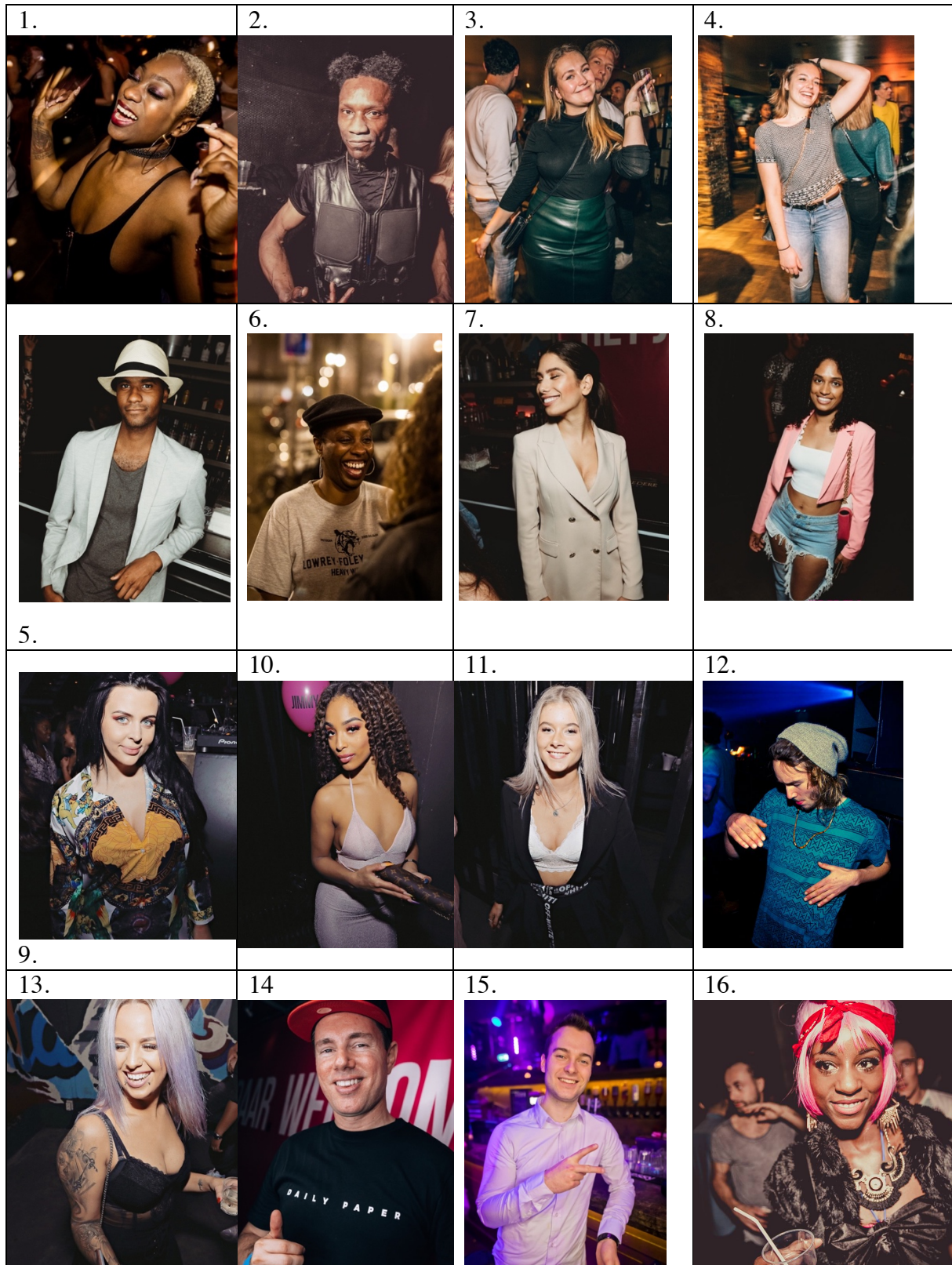

Interview questions:

English	Dutch
1. - What did understand with the term rich/ wealthy? - What do you think the people on the right side (+) are "rich" with? - What did you base this idea on?	1. - Wat verstond jij onder welvarend? - Waar denk je dat de mensen aan de rechter kant (+) 'rijk' aan zijn? - Waar zou je dit aan af kunnen lezen? / waar lees jij dit aan af?
2. - Where did you base the 'tacky' aspect on? - Why do you classify this as tacky and not as classy? - Based on clothing, how would a "classy" person dress in the nightlife?	2. - Waar heb jij het 'ordinaire' op gebaseerd, kijkend naar de foto's? - Waarom classificeer je dit als ordinair en niet als 'classy'? - Op basis van kleding, hoe zou een 'classy' iemand zich kleding in het uitgaansleven?
3. - Why could you be friends with these people, who are on the right side of the Q table? - And why not necessarily with the people on the left? - How did their clothes influence your choice? - Are you able to compare/link these people to you, if yes in what way?	3. - Waarom zou je vrienden met deze personen kunnen zijn, die aan de rechterkant van de Q-tabel staan? - En waarom niet per se met de mensen aan de linkerkant? - Wat voor invloed had de kleding van deze mensen op jouw keuze? - Hoe ver staan deze mensen van jou af denk je? Waar ligt dat aan?
- What role did the clothes play concerning your choices in classifying them in this way? - What other elements were important?	- Welke rol speelde de kleding van deze mensen op jouw keuzes om ze op deze manier in te delen?
- What do the people on the right / on the left have in common? - Which people are very likely to interact / get along?	- Wat hebben de mensen aan de rechterkant/ aan de linkerkant met elkaar gemeen? - Welke mensen zullen zeer waarschijnlijk met elkaar omgaan/ met elkaar kunnen stappen?
- How do you dress for a night out? - What are you paying attention to? - What do you pay attention to in others?	- Hoe kleed jij je voor een avondje uit? - Waar let je op? - Waar let je op bij anderen tijdens het uitgaan?

2. <u>Q-table</u>

value	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4

strongly disagree   *strongly agree*

Figure 1. (Peter, Visser & de Jong, 2008).

3. Pictures for Q-table – picture sorting

Individuals will be referred to in text as e.g. N.1, N.3 etc.

1.	2.	3.	4.

	6.	7.	8.
5.			

	10.	11.	12.
9.			

13.	14.	15.	16.

17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.
25.	26.	27.	28.
29.	30.		

4. <u>Overview of Respondents</u>

Respondent	Age	Gender	Education	Residence	Background	Occupation	Place of going out
1. Lisa	24	Female	College education	Leidschendam	Dutch	Police officer	The Hague
1. Sophie	24	Female	College education	Utrecht	Dutch	Healthcare	The Hague / Utrecht
2. Suzanne	23	Female	University	The Hague	Dutch	Marketing	The Hague
3. Veerle	24	Female	College education	Voorburg	Dutch	Logistics	The Hague / Breda
4. Luca	26	Female	University	Rotterdam	Dutch	Education	Rotterdam
5. Klaske	26	Female	University	Rotterdam	Dutch	Healthcare	Rotterdam
6. Isabel	26	Female	College education	The Hague	Dutch	Arts	The Hague/ Rotterdam / Delft
7. Anjani	25	Female	College education	Haarlem	Dutch	Politics	Haarlem / Amsterdam / Rotterdam / The Hague
8. Petry	23	Female	College education	Rotterdam	Dutch	Healthcare	Rotterdam / Amsterdam / Gouda
9. Zilver	22	Female	College education	Rotterdam	Dutch	Arts	Rotterdam
10. Marlous	25	Female	University	Delft	Dutch	Marketing	Delft / Rotterdam / The Hague

5. Q-table outcome

1. Lisa
2. Sophie
3. Suzanne
4. Veerle
5. Luca
6. Klaske
7. Isabel
8. Anjani
9. Petry
10. Zilver
11. Marlous

*Statement 1: +4 wealthiest, -4 least prosperous.
 Statement 2: +4 most tacky, -4 least tacky
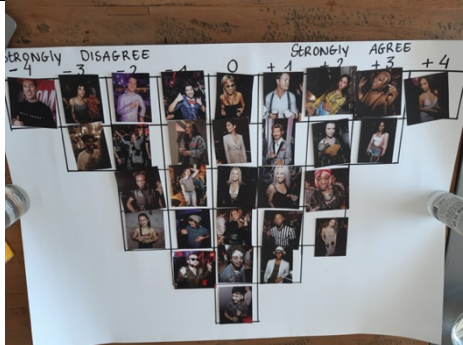 Statement 3: +4 easier to be friends with, -4 less easy to be friends with.

*Respondents 6 and 7 categorized the individuals with the second statement the opposite way. For them + was least tacky, and – was most tacky.
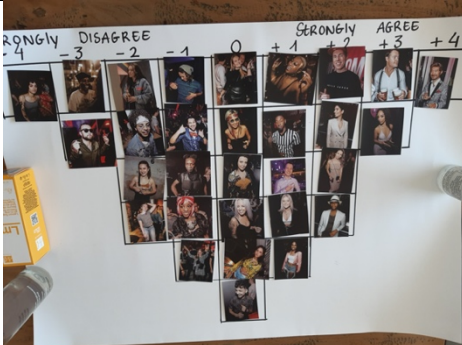
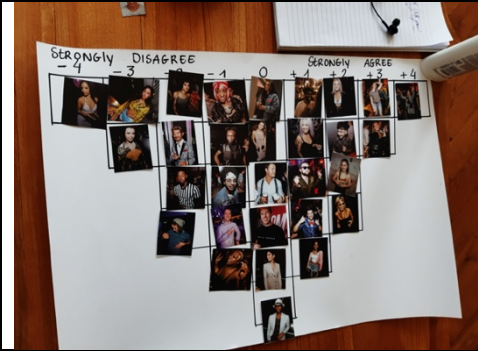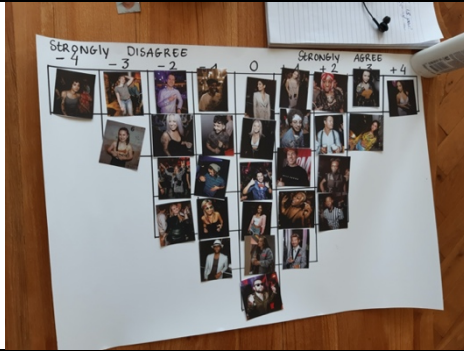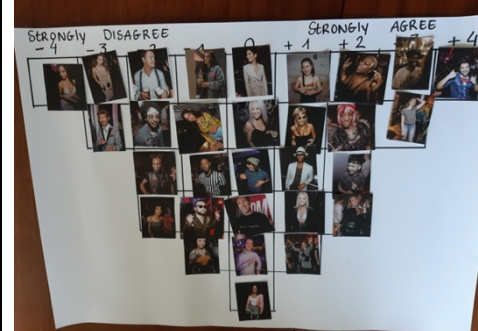| 1. Zou je deze personen kunnen rangschikken op hoe rijk/welvarend ze zijn?	2. Zou je dezelfde mensen kunnen indelen op hoe ordinair ze zijn?	3. Met deze persoon zou ik wel vrienden kunnen zijn

1.
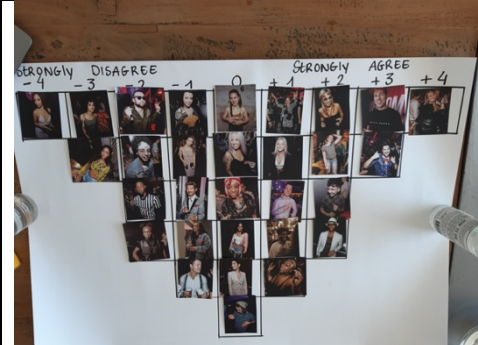
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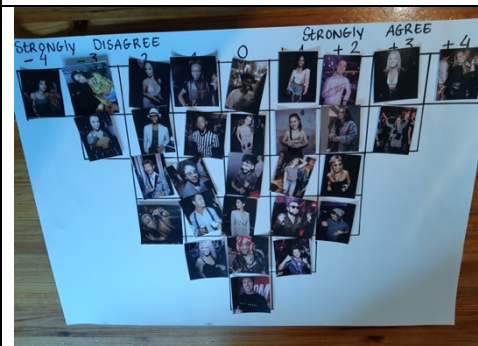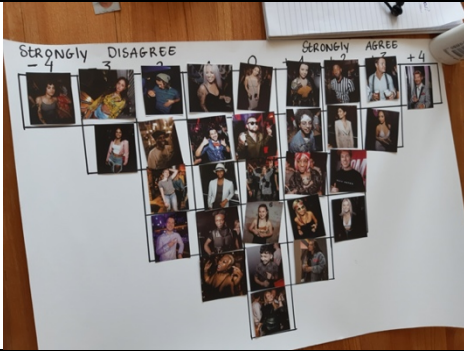
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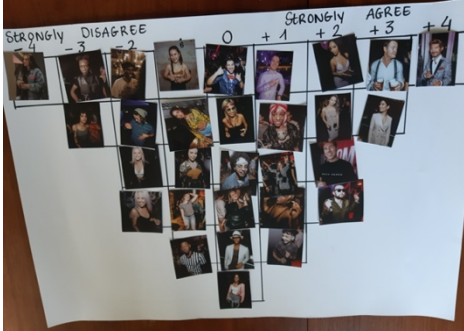
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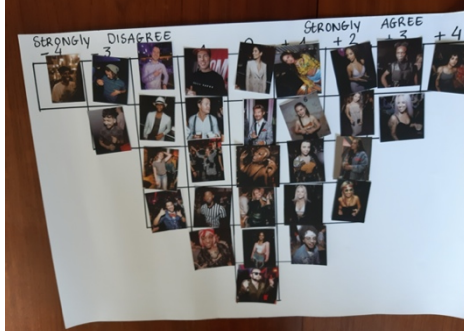
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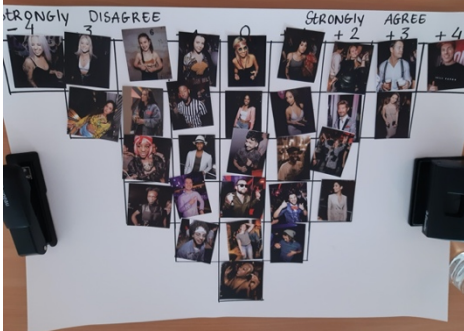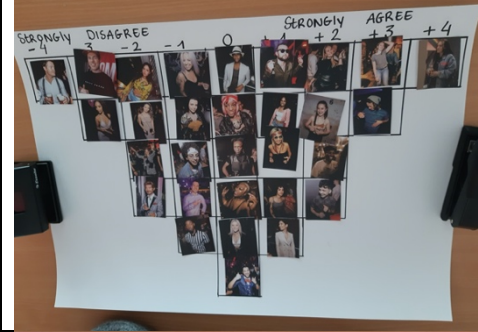
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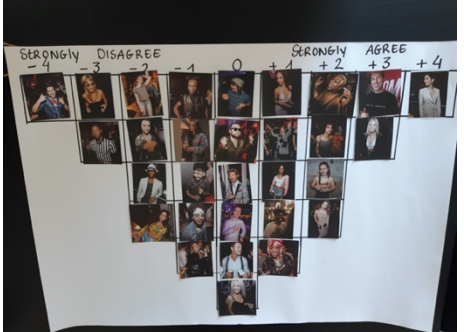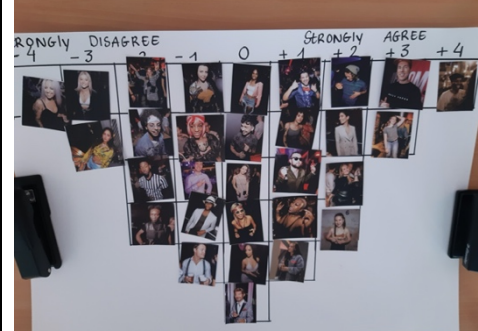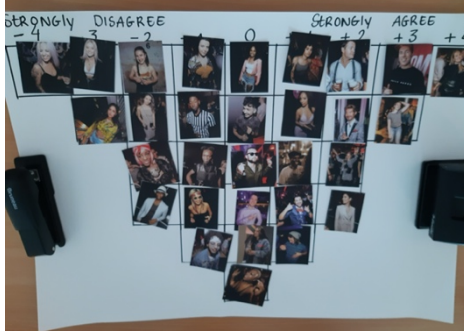
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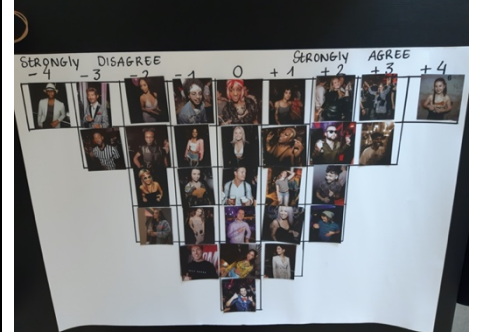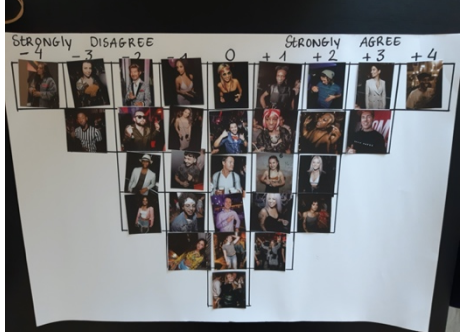
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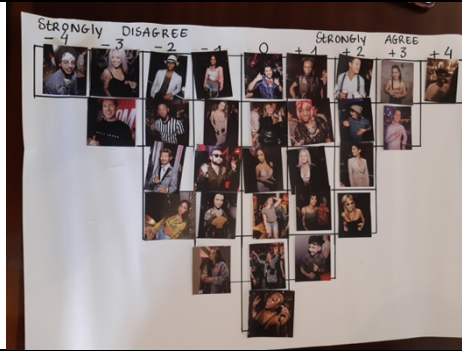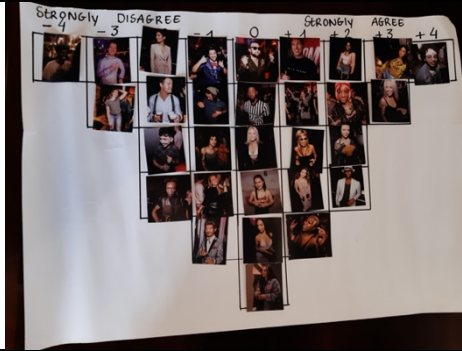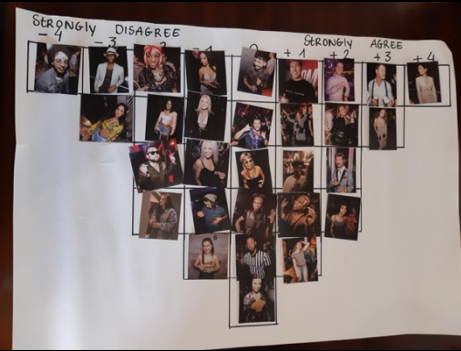
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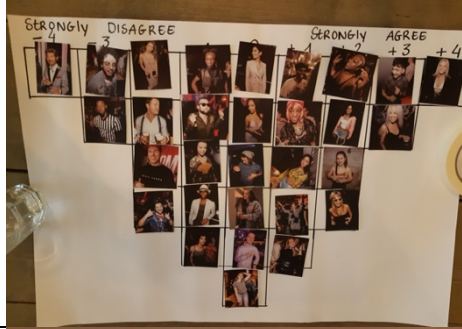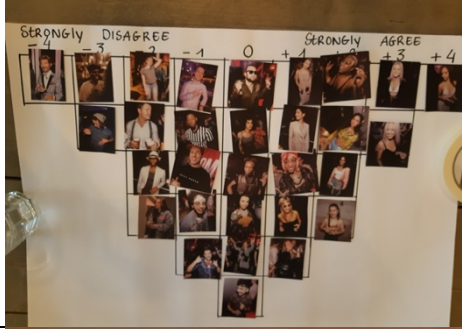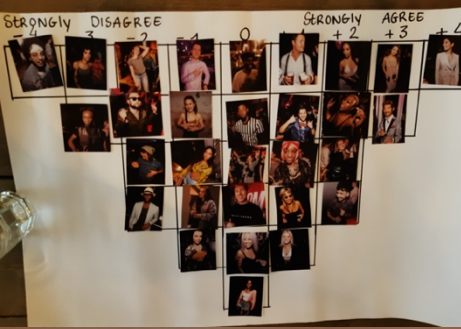
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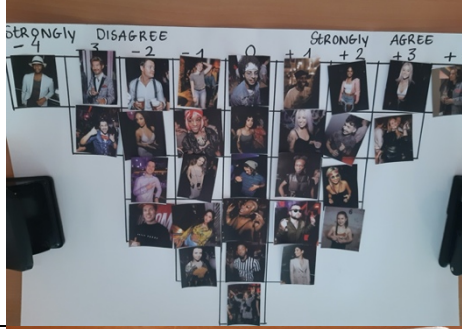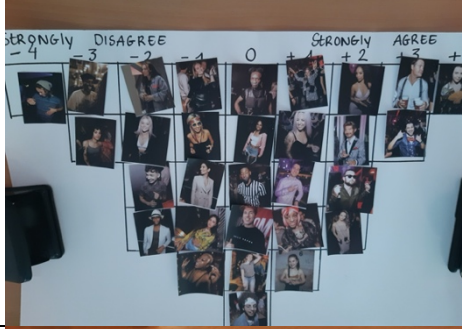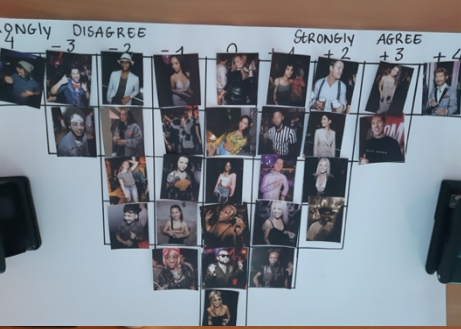
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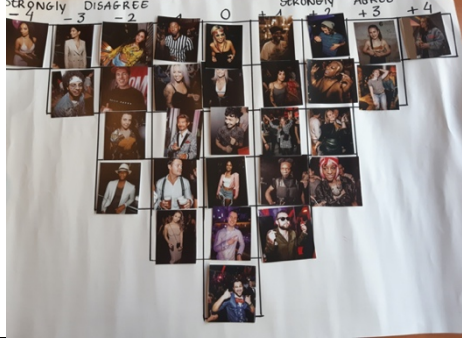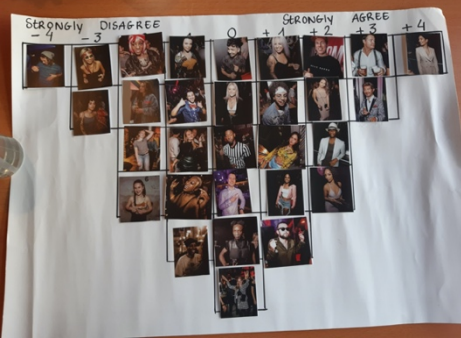
6. Code list

In order to analyze the interviews, a coding list was set up. The codes used were:

Code	Explanation
Education	Classification based on believed education level
Miscommunication (false representation)	Classification based on individual conveying a conceiving message
Occupation	Classification based on believed occupation
Men vs women	Differences between men and women when classifying
Status symbol	Classification based on 'traditional' status symbols, jewelry, brands etc.
Tattoos/ piercings	Classification based on body modifications
Facial expression	Classification based on facial expressions (happy, smiling, sad etc.)
Posture	Classification based on the attitude, posture and pose
External care	Classification based on make-up, hair, nails etc.
Overdoing	Classification based on being 'too much' or not
Image	Classification based on how they 'see' the other person (respondents make a storyline)
Personal connection	Classification based on how close the individual was to the respondent (social circles and self)
Location	Classification based on the type of club
Thought through	Classification based on matching outfits, well put together
Quality	Classification based on materials

Self	Classification based on staying 'true' to oneself. True image depicted
Age	Classification based on age

Codes in second part of interview:

Code	Explanation
Purpose	Classification based on the purpose the individual chose the outfit (location, context)
Interpretation	Classification based on levels of interpretation
Miscommunication / false representation	Classification based on individual conveying a conceiving message
External care	Classification based on make-up, hair, nails etc.
Fashionable	Classification based on the quality and well thought off outfit
Posture	Classification based on the attitude, posture and pose
Self	Classification based on staying 'true' to oneself. True image depicted, or tried to depict
Status symbol	Classification based on 'traditional' status symbols, jewelry, brands etc.
Facial expression	Classification based on facial expressions (happy, smiling, sad etc.)

7. <u>Coding scheme</u>

Wealthy Comments	Code	Tacky Comments	Code	Compatibility Comments	Code
Hoe meer mensen laten zien (meer lichaam/bloot), hoe minder welvarend het overkomt	Overdoing	Ordinaire voornamelijk gebaseerd op mimiek	Facial expression	Door kleding krijg je wel een beter beeld met wie je dan te maken hebt	Image
Uiterlijke kenmerken en verzorging ook belangrijk	External care	Kleden bloot, is weer ordinair	Overdoing	Zegt iets over je persoonlijke 'staat' en hoe je je voelt. Maar ook hoe je in het leven staat	Image
Kleding is belangrijk wanneer er meer van afhangt. Je wilt gezien worden en hebt meer te bewijzen. Soort van status waardig te houden	Proving something	Te veel toeters en bellen	Overdoing	Keuzes gebaseerd door de kleding en foto's tegen zichzelf af te zetten, dus wat zou ik zelf wel aantrekken en wat niet	Personal connection
Kleding helpt erbij om deze groepen te herkennen	Social groups	Snelle jongens, snel geld verdienen: komt door de merkkleding	Status symbols	Kijkt ook naar waarom zou iemand naar de kroeg komen?	Location
Maar uitstraling is wel belangrijker, kleding zegt wel iets over of iemand het waard vindt om iets uit te stralen	Posture	Classy is meer doordacht	Thought through	Jezelf identificeren met de ander	Personal connection
Bijvoorbeeld studenten kunnen minder en minder snel kleding van goede kwaliteit veroorloven	Occupation	Poseren voor de foto heeft ook veel effect	Posture	Zichtbaar genieten, als dat zo lijkt, kan ik er eerder vrienden mee zijn (houding is dus belangrijk)	Posture
Wanneer iemand er in pak bijloopt denk je wel al snel oh die heeft een goede baan en heeft waarschijnlijk meer dingen op orde	Status symbols	Merkkleding negatief effect	Status symbols	Open houding of niet	Posture
Persoonlijke verzorging heel belangrijk, hoe meer hoe beter. Je moet geld hebben om je goed te kunnen verzorgen, dit is dan een teken van welvarendheid	External care	Ingetogen	Image	Hebben mensen plezier	Image
Is niet echt af te lezen, maar als iemand 'mooie' kleding aan heeft lijkt het wel zo	Quality	Degelijk en eigenwaarde	Image	Nu in hokjes geplaatst meer op basis van uiterlijke verzorging	External care

Mooi pak bijvoorbeeld: kenmerk van ik heb geld en wil dit ook laten zien	Status symbols	Blootheid is heel leidend	Overdoing	Gebaseerd op hoe ze op de foto staan/ uitstraling. Niet eens per se op basis van kleding.	Posture
Apart eruitzien of juist heel gewoontjes, is ook niet welvarend	Image	Piercings ook ordinair	Tattoos/piercings	Toch wel mede dankzij kleding kan iemand een stuk liever en toegankelijker eruitzien, waar je dan eerder op zou afstappen	Image
Ligt ook aan de uitstraling	Image	'Eigen' stijl is ook minder ordinair	Image	Leuk op een foto staan/ houding is van groot belang	Posture
Goedkope kwaliteit	Quality	Tatoeages aan de andere kant weer niet ordinair	Tattoos/piercings	Lijken mensen die wel gek willen doen	Image
Gouden kettingen staan juist niet voor rijkdom	Status symbols	Classy, is wanneer iemand zich meer kleed als zichzelf, dus minder toeters en bellen dus. Zelfverzekerdheid straalt ook 'classy' uit	Overdressing	Links staan de mensen die zichzelf te serieus nemen, is ook ordinair, is niet lachen, lijken geen plezier te hebben.	Image
Persoonlijke verzorging, bijvoorbeeld een nette baard zegt ook heel veel	External care	Mannen kleden zich vaker wat simpeler en lijken er minder over na te	Men vs, women	Sommige mensen lijken veel bevestiging nodig te hebben, op basis van de kleding en gezichtsuitstraling	Facial expression
Voornamelijk gekeken naar kleding, merkkleding houdt in dat je veel geld hebt en dus welvarend	Status symbols	Natuurlijke make up is ook wat minder ordinair	External care	Soort zoekt soort, dus met wie ik me kan identificeren.	Personal connection
Hipster types: hebben waarschijnlijk minder geld. Hipster, is skater look, wijde kleren bijvoorbeeld.	Occupation	Voornamelijk gebaseerd op uitstraling.	Posture	Vrolijkheid van kleding en mensen is ook belangrijk	Facial expression
Welvarend is colberts, blouse, pak	Status symbols	Maar ook te veel bloot is ordinair	Overdoing	Wanneer je meer van jezelf laat zien, dus minder gemaakt, eerder vrienden kunnen zijn. Minder zo van 'kijk mij', de anderen hebben meer schijt eraan	Overdoing
Lichaamshouding ook belangrijk	Posture	LV-tas is te veel van het goede, qua vragen om aandacht.	Status symbols	Merkkleding is van betere kwaliteit	Status symbols

Hangt veel samen met of mensen arrogantie uitstralen. Wat heel duidelijk te zien is door de gezichtsuitdrukkingen	Facial expressions	Dure merken worden eerder als ordinair gezien	Status symbols	Wordt heel persoonlijk en kijkt ze heel goed naar de kleding	Personal connection
De man met de bretels lijkt uit een goed gezin te komen, door zijn kleding en houding	Status symbols	Ook het poseren lijkt heel veel over iemand te zeggen, hoe ordinair iemand is	Posture	Hipster is positief	Occupation
Rijkdom, goede baan en goed betaald wordt en daardoor ook duurdere kleding heeft. Hoge sociale economische status. Afgelezen van de kleding, bijvoorbeeld de blazer	Status symbols	Make-up	External care	'Ziet er aardig uit'	Facial expression
Houding zegt ook veel, bijvoorbeeld de welvarende mensen komen ook autoritair over	Posture	Normale' mensen: boeit hen niet zo veel hoe ze eruitzien, meer casual, minder ordinair	Overdoing	Hou niet van Daily Paper mensen	Sttaus symbols
Mensen op de foto's die er wel chique uitzien, iets zakelijks aanhebben, zijn zelfverzekerd, staan hun mannetje. Maar zullen wel waarschijnlijk een goede baan hebben	Status symbols	Neutrale zone, is wat ik ook aan zou doen en daardoor niet zo ordinair	Personal connection	Eerder gekeken naar zou ik dit zelf ook aantrekken? Zo ja, ga ik dan ook op dezelfde plekken uit?	Personal connection/ location
De wat meer opgedofte mensen ook welvarender. Buiten geld: ook rijk aan vrienden kunnen zijn	Overdoing	Bijna alleen maar vrouwen bij de ordinaire kant > mannen toch minder snel ordinai, Komt ook door de media	Men vs. women	Zelfde kledingsmaak, zelfde plek uitgaan, vrienden kunnen zijn want zelfde interesses	Personal connection
Excentriek jasje, dat zijn bepaalde types, meestal wel wat welvarender	Status symbols	Ordinair: strakke kleren en bloter, meer make-up en haar verzorgd	External care/ overdoing	Hipsters, niet te veel make-up, maar wel moeite doet, vintage kleding (leuke kleding, geen trui), niet per se mensen die bijvoorbeeld een cocktailjurk aantrekken.	Occupation
Blanke mensen al sneller kakker en gekleurde mensen al sneller neutraal	Image	Komt arrogant over, maar misschien zijn ze wel heel onzeker.	Image	Hipster zijn wat relaxter, wil wel dat mensen je ook daadwerkelijk associëren als een Hipster. Niet te veel moeite doen, is wat meer eigen	Occupation
Gaan kijken naar merken en kleding, kwaliteit	Status symbols/ quality	Bij de mannen: hangt veel af of ze denkt dat ze geld hebben of niet, dan zijn ze ook sneller ordinair	Men vs women	Kijkend naar haar eigen vrienden en zichzelf, meer arty-farty, geen geld maar komen wel rond. Mensen die meer in de culturele sector	Personal connection

				zitten zijn wat meer tevreden met zichzelf. Minder geld maar wel tevreden.	
Zaten ook wel duidelijk studenten bij, types met een bijbaantje, maar wel geld > in de neutrale zone	Occupation	Maar toch zijn vrouwen sneller ordinair > te veel bloot	Overdoing	Mensen die er wat duurder en chiquer uit willen zien vinden geld en werk heel belangrijk. Minder om plezier etc.	Overdoing
Haar mooi, make-up en mooi jasje, zal wel duur geweest zijn	External care	Wanneer ze glimlachen lijken ze toch minder ordinair	Facial expression	Kan minder met mensen omgaan die meer op geld letten.	Overdoing
Daarna hoe de kleding zit (kwaliteit)	Quality	Classy is meer stijl uitstralen en klasse. Bijvoorbeeld een colbert, haar netjes in een knot	Status symbols	Gekozen door te kijken naar nuchtere mensen en over de top	Image
Zegt niet per se wat over iemand, maar ze willen er wel wat mee uitdragen. Laat wel aan anderen zien dat ze veel geld hebben uitgegeven aan een kledingstuk. Maar je kan ook heel lang hebben gespaard. Maar ze willen dit wel uitdragen	Miscommunication	Ordinair: temptation island mensen = de mensen die er bloot uitzien, zoeken de camera op, veel aandacht besteed aan het uiterlijk	Image	Niet: wat oppervlakkiger, noemt het ook 'hollanders', dus de cultuur van het studeren en zuipen. Moet net wat apparter of specialer zijn.	Image
Meisje met spijkerjasje, werd eerst als fancy gezien totdat ze de lippenstift zag	External care	classy > zien er 'nuchter' uit	Overdoing	Aan de rechterkant, zijn die meiden, waar ik mezelf wel in zie. Apartere mensen ook, past beter bij mijn vriendengroep die ik nu al heb	Personal connection
Eerst zag ze er een beetje casual uit, maar ze heeft toch weer zo veel moeite gedaan met haar make-up, koppel ik aan ordinair, wat ik ergens weer associeert met minder welvarend.	External care	Leeftijd speelt ook wel een grote rol	Age	Zien er aardig uit, door de uitstraling	Facial expression
Kijkt ook naar waar ze denkt dat mensen uitgaan om het welvarende te beoordelen.	Location	Schaarser geklede vrouwen zijn eerder ordinair	Overdoing	Heb gekeken naar hun uitstraling, vrolijk, is leuk.	Facial expression
Zegt ook wat over de mensen., bijvoorbeeld strakke jurkjes i.p.v. T-shirts horen bij elkaar. Kleding wordt wel aangepast op de locatie lijkt het	Thought through Location	Minder ordinair, lijken mensen die lekker zichzelf zijn	Self	Wat ze zelf aan zou kunnen doen of wat ze haar vrienden wel ziet dragen	Personal connection
Op de toko in Rotterdam, bij de eigen studentenvereniging	Location	Willen vast heel aantrekkelijk worden gevonden, lopen er niet in hun dagelijks leven zo bij. Ze willen iets uitstralen	Overdoing	Kan mannen minder goed onderscheiden	Men vs women
Doet minder moeite voor de outfit	Effort	Uiterlijke verzorging als in haar en make-up ook wel heel belangrijk	External care	Toch maakt kleding niet zo veel uit om met iemand bevriend	Miscommunication

				te kunnen zijn. Zou de vriendschap niet kunne beïnvloeden	
Mensen aan de pluskant zijn wat meer uitgesproken mensen, ook war schaarser, waardoor lichaam, make-up en haarstijl meer opvalt. Uitstraling en voorkomen is nu heel belangrijk bij deze mensen	Overdoing / posture	Piercings en tatoeages minder welvarend	Tattoos/piercings	Meer op houding.	Posture
Bij de vrouwen kan ze makkelijker zien wat voor types het zijn dan bij de mannen, mannenkleding in het algemeen, kakker, casual or urban en bij vrouwen, casual, casual-chique etc. is meer variatie.	Men vs women	Houding > geposeerd is ook al sneller ordinair	Posture	Blije mensen zien er ook comfortabel uit (alsof ze zich fijn voelen).	Facial expression
Vrouwen kunnen makkelijker spelen met kleding.	Men vs women	Ligt voor een groot deel aan het materiaal (synthetisch	Quality	Of deze mensen op mensen lijken die ik ken, dus uit eigen kring	Personal connection
Vrouwen zijn wat genuanceerder, meer bezig met hoe ze zichzelf willen uitdragen. Mannen hebben er minder lak aan denkt ze.	Men vs women	Te shiny, of gelikt is al sneller ordinair. Kleding kan er dan goedkoop en ordinair uitzien	Quality	Als je er niet per se uitspringt, is het prima. Niet te veel niet te weinig.	Overdoing
Merken die heel erg opvallen, niet dragen omdat het dan opvalt en dat andere mensen het dan mooi moeten vinden	Status symbols	Merken en materiaal, maar ook wat er duurzamer uitziet. Wat er duurzaam uitziet zijn minder ordinair, denken wat meer aan de wereld. Bijvoorbeeld vintage kleding	Quality	Ziet er lief uit, toegankelijk, niet schreeuwerig.	Facial expression Overdoing
T-shirts van Dior zijn helemaal niet beter dan een shirt van de zeeman. Alleen om het merkje erop	Status symbols	Fast-fashion is al sneller ordinair.	Quality	Zijzelf de kleding aan zou kunnen doen	Personal connection
Sommige dure merken zijn wel van betere kwaliteit	Status symbols	Wat niet ordinair is als je lekker jezelf bent	Self	Bepaalde soort types	Image
Wie zou er een rondje kunnen betalen? Wie heeft zijn best gedaan met de kleding? Wie draagt er goede kwaliteit? Wie kijkt er van ik heb het naar mijn zin of...?	Quality/ facial expressions	Rechts is niet gelijk meer classy dan de mensen aan de linkerkant, je kan er namelijk makkelijk chique uitzien (goedkoop chique). Je kan er kort heel chique uitzien, dus kan dat niet in verhouding met elkaar zetten.	Miscommunication	Niet te 'blended' zijn/ vanille, dat is weer saai.	Overdoing
De mensen die er gestrester uitzien hebben ook minder geld. Uitgaan is toch een periode waar je veel geld in een keer uitgeeft	Facial expression	Ordinaire kleding is vaak wel heel duur	Quality	Niet mensen waar ze snel mee om zou gaan en komt ze ook minder snel tegen	Location

Meest gekeken naar kleding, maar ook naar het haar, haar verzorging kost ook veel.	External care	Uitgaansoutfit staan hoger	Location		
Maar ook de nagels en make-up. Als je meer van dit alles hebt, kost ook meer	External care	Keek eerst naar de outfit, maar hoeft niet per se zo te zijn	Miscommunication		
Maar te veel van alles, ziet er juist weer goedkoop uit.	Overdoing	Bij de mannen bijvoorbeeld, oudere man die jong doet, andere heeft een clownspak, die dronkenzuipen tot ze erbij neervallen	Men vs women		
Met heel weinig geld kan je er alsnog rijk uitzien. Dus het hoeft uiteindelijk niet zo te zijn	Misconception	Bij +2, zijn wel de mensen die hun best hebben gedaan, maar dan aan de status kant	Effort		
Kwam door het geblondeerde haar, gezichtsverzorging, houding, hij heeft centjes, maar geeft het op een ordinaire manier uit	External care Overdoing	Te veel status uitbeelden is ook ordinair	Overdoing		
Jongen heeft veel biertjes in zijn hand, ziet eruit als een student die wel geld heeft	Occupation	Minder ordinair, zijn meisjes die juist weer niet te veel hun best hebben gedaan. Lijken eerder te komen om te kletsen en te dansen. I.p.v. zien en gezien worden	Self		
Eerder de ouders geld zouden hebben dan het meisje zelf	Miscommunication	Mannen niet zo snel ordinair, vrouwen sneller wanneer ze bloter zijn. Uitgaan in een strakke jurk of bh is al sneller ordinair.	Men vs women		
Iemand die heel erg met de mode meegaat.	Image	Waarom mannen minder snel ordinair: lijken minder ordinair, gedragen zich misschien wel ordinair.	Men vs women		
Wel een goede baan hebben	Occupation	Mannen kunnen verder niet heel veel van zichzelf laten zien qua kleding, zoals wij vrouwen dat kunnen.	Men vs women		
Een relaxte outfit. Associeert ze hier met welvarend	Self	Vond het lastig om ze in te delen, uiterlijk zegt niks over hoe ordinair iemand is, gedrag wel. Maar dat kan je niet zien op de foto's	Behavior		
Rijk aan vrienden waren	Image	Vooral mannen zijn lastig te lezen via de foto's, kan pas beoordelen wanneer ze hun mond opendoen	Men vs women		
De studentjes: geld van de ouders en stufi,	Miscommunication	Legt de link tussen welvarend en ordinair al gelijk heel snel	Overdoing		
Zien er zelfverzekerd uit. Uitstraling is hierbij heel belangrijk. Je kan er	Image	LV tas: misschien is hij wel echt, maar waarom moet je er zo patserig mee doen? Eerder ordinair	Status symbols		

makkelijker uitzien alsof je veel geld hebt.					
Beetje status uitstralen, zullen ze ook niet zo snel denken dat je misschien minder geld hebt. Zonder dat je het misschien echt hoeft te hebben	Image	Vindt mensen ook 'saai'	Facial expression		63
Linkerkant: hebben minder hun best gedaan op hun uiterlijk, of dragen wat ze misschien dagelijks zouden dragen	Thought through	Meisje met piercings in haar gezicht	Tattoos/piercings		
-4 is een jongen die niet zo veel geld heeft, maar wel heel erg naar zijn zin heeft daarom heeft hij de attitude dat hij het goed voor elkaar heeft	Image	Jongen met goud is gewoon een nee	Status symbols		
Bij -3 en -2 jongens, hebben de jongens weer te veel hun best gedaan, om status uit te stralen. Weer net een stapje te ver	Overdoing	Tatoeages, kost ook wel wat	Tattoos/piercings		
Rijk en gelukkig	Image	Ook de 'blootheid 'speelt weer een factor.	Overdoing		
Geven om kleding	Status symbols	Schreeuwerig	Overdoing		
Materiaal is belangrijk	Quality	Sieraden lijken goedkoop, bontjas in een club	Overdoing		
Past ook allemaal bij elkaar	Thought through	Dus kan nooit echt zijn.	Overdoing / miscommunication		
Ze stralen ook een soort klasse uit	Image	Is niet de functie			
Houding en kleding	Posture	Scheuren in je broek, te veel kleuren, te veel sieraden. Maar ook de uitstraling	Overdoing		
Mensen aan de linkerkant zijn mensen die meer dragen wat ze lekker vinden zitten. Zij voelen zich daar het beste in maar is niet iets wat ze zelf ook aan zou trekken. Voor uitgaan helemaal niet	Self	Heeft ze het idee dat ze echt draagt wat ze zelf leuk vindt.	Self		
Denkt alleen wel dat de mensen aan de rechterkant niet per se rijker zijn, vinden kleding gewoon belangrijker en er daarom meer aan uitgeven	Misconcention	Minder voor de anderen dus. Ze is lekker zichzelf.	Self		
Bij uitgaan kleden mensen zich niet per se zoals ze normaal gesproken zouden misschien een vertekend beeld	Misconcention	Niet te veel niet te weinig qua kleding.	Overdoing		
Linkerkant mensen: deze mensen hebben zich gekleed zoals ze zelf fijn vinden.	Self	En een leuke lach, ziet er vriendelijk uit.	Facial expression		
Aan de rechterkant willen ze meer pronken. Terwijl ze het	Miscommunication	Dus ze kijkt ook naar houding	Posture		

misschien helemaal niet hebben of zijn (met wat ze laten zien)					
Carnavals pakje, zal wel niet superslim zijn denkt ze dan. De jongen met goud en krullen, kijkt niet zo snugger.	Education	Laagdrempelig, schreeuwt niet, wel aandacht aan besteed maar niet te veel.	Overdoing		
Terwijl de vrouw in het mantelpakje, denkt dat zij wel een goed stel hersens heeft. Ze ziet er slim uit	Education	Uiterlijke verzorging is ook wel belangrijk, verzorgt haar etc.	External care		
Maar LV-tasje vrouw: lijkt ordinair, dus niet zo slim.	Education				
Juist hoe meer gouden kettingen, hoe minder geld op je bankrekening (hoe meer om je lichaam, hoe minder op je rekening). Ook wel heel ordinair	Status symbols				
Wel een rayban, maar waarschijnlijk het enige wat hij heeft want hij doet hem op naar de club	Status symbols				
Gezond, intelligent, rijk eruitzien	Education / image				
Kleding is hierbij ook wel heel belangrijk	Thought through				
Schreeuwerige kleding is te veel (zoals bij de jongen met goud). Heel veel proberen te laten zien.	Overdoing /overdressing				
Mensen die welvarend zijn zullen ook niet al te gek doen, qua kleding en in het leven.	Overdoing				
Sommige mensen werken voor het uitgaan, welvarende mensen niet. Daarom gaan die mensen wat patseriger gekleed.	Occupation				
Vooral gekeken naar accessoires en kleding	Accessories				
Niet te veel poespas	Overdoing				
Ook veel gekeken naar het materiaal (stof).	Quality				
Bretels associeert ze met geld, Jort kelder, studentenvereniging. Zelfde met bloesjes.	Status symbols				
LV tas: Zo'n tas is best wel prijzig, zou je in eerste instantie denken ja die is wel welvarend. Maar waarom investeert ze het geld niet in iets beters? Welvarend associeert ze ook met intelligentie. Bijvoorbeeld een	Status symbols				

Chanel tas kopen, is veel betere kwaliteit					
Zelfde als met de jongen met goud, het schreeuwt zo.	Status symbols				65
Ook omdat er zo veel namaak is, als je er mee gaat schreeuwen verkleint het de kans dat ze denkt dat ze echt rijk zijn	Status symbols				
Welvarendheid baseert op intelligentie	Education				
'Simplicity is key'. Dus hoe soberder je eruitziet, hoe minder je het uitmaakt, dus hoe welvarender je bent. Want het maakt je niet uit	Overdoing				
Welvarendere mensen zijn ook hoger opgeleid en hebben een betere baan	Education Occupation				
Mensen aan de linkerkant denkt ze ook dat ze eerder studenten zijn en een bijbaantje hebben	Occupation / education				
Studentenvereniging en dat is wel sowieso ook duur	Occupation / education				

Role and importance clothing in general, comments	Code
Kleding heeft wel een doel	Purspose
Kleding zorgt wel voor de interpretatie van iemand	Interpretation
Maar kleding zegt niet per se iets over iemand. Je kan op basis van kleding niet iemand in een hokje stoppen. Het hoeft niet te kloppen	Miscommunication
Heeft ook veel te maken met je eigen persoonlijke smaak > hoe je oordeelt	Interpretation
Status wordt gebaseerd op: opleidingsniveau, werk, woning. Kleding is daar geen factor van. Kwestie van smaak. Persoonlijke verzorging is eerder een indicator. Is echter wel maar hoe je 'verzorging' verstaat	External care
Wanneer mensen gewoon ok geld uitgeven aan kleding en leuke combinaties maken, ben je wel heel bewust bezig met hoe je eruitziet. En wat je wil overdragen naar anderen	Fashionalble
Heel veel moeite doen, maar denkt niet dat ze er in het dagelijks leven dan ook zo uitzien	
Maar zegt dit ook wat? Geloof het niet. Maar aan de andere kant, het kost wel geld dus moet je het wel hebben. Echter, aan de andere kant kan het ook zo zijn dat je er wel heel lang voor hebt gespaard. Dus het is moeilijk om te zeggen, zou je meerdere foto's moeten hebben.	Miscommunication
Heeft uiteindelijk het meest gelet op hoe ze naar de camera keken en wat voor kleding ze aan hadden.	Posture
Meer van eigen stijl, draagt wat ze leuk vindt. Anderen kunnen hier wel invloed op hebben	Self

Merkkleding > verschrikkelijk als mensen daarmee opscheppen. Wil je alleen maar uitstralen dat je geld hebt, mensen vinden het alleen mooi omdat het geld uitstraalt. Vaak over de top	Status symbols
Leuk om te zien hoe mensen kleding gebruiken om hun eigen emoties, persoonlijkheid en gemoedtoestand naar buiten te tonen	Self
Zegt het wat over de status? Nee. Kan wel samenhangen, want je kan bijvoorbeeld geen dure kleding kopen als je geen goede baan hebt. Maar aan de andere kant heb je ook mensen die veel sparen	Status symbols
Je opvoeding heeft wel veel invloed op je kledingkeuze	Self
Zonder achtergrond, baseer je al sneller je oordeel op kleding	Interpretation
Uitgaan: wel meer mensen die extra hun best hebben gedaan en er misschien door de weeks niet zo bij lopen. Bij de minder welvarende mensen wel minder, zullen er sneller zo uitzien	Miscommunication
Hoe meer zelfvertrouwen hoe meer men er beter over na gaat denken en wil je jezelf er meer mee laten zien	Self
Zegt ook wel wat over de persoon en dit wil/draag je ook uit naar anderen. Kleed zich wel voor de gelegenheid, op werk kleedt ze zich een stuk zakelijker. Denkt dat ze dan wel meer serieus wordt genomen	Purpose
Denk niet dat je veel kan aflezen qua kleding. Iedereen kleedt zich anders dan wanneer hij of zij naar werk gaat.	Miscommunication
Zegt niet zo heel veel over iemand, kan ook een hele show zijn. Gaat meer over of je ok bent met jezelf. Je kan wel je persoonlijkheid laten zien, maar ze denkt wel dat mensen ook zich kleden om aan anderen iets te laten zien	Miscommunication / interpretation
Ja kleding zegt wel wat over de persoon. Mensen die duidelijk dure kleding aan hebben, merk te zien, die willen ook heel graag wat uitdragen en mensen die hetzelfde merk dragen, maar niet om het merk zegt ook weer wat. Kopen om het merk of om de kwaliteit.	Sefl / status symbol / interpretation
Je kan wel aan haar aflezen hoe ze in haar vel zit op basis van haar kleding	Self
Heeft twee kanten, misschien doen mensen voor hun gevoel wel heel erg hun best maar is het mijn stijl niet.	Interpretation
Beoordeelt niet zo snel op basis van kleding. Zoals ze het nu moest doen, dan doet ze het wel. In het dagelijks leven doet ze dat niet zo snel.	Interpretation
Merkkleding: als mensen een merk dragen willen ze dat ook wel heel graag laten zien	Status symbol
Je kan jezelf ermee camoufleren. Je status, hoe je je voelt etc. Om te verbloemen wat je achtergrond is.	Miscommunication / false representation
Hoe groot rol van kleding in mijn keuzes? Heel groot. 70% en de andere 30% was het gezicht. Mooie mensen ook beter beoordeeld.	Facial expression
Make -up en uitstraling is ook wel heel belangrijk. Maar kan elkaar ook tegenwerken.	Facial expression / posture
Moet je ook kleden naar het moment.	Purpose
Opvallen is niet het doel, maar ze wil wel kleden naar het moment	Purspose
Meer zichzelf wanneer ze in haar vrije tijd is	Self
Wat zegt haar kleding over zichzelf, naar anderen? Bij welke groep je hoort, karakter, wat ze interessant vindt. Wil ze ook uitstralen. Ze wil er ook laagdrempelig uitzien	Self

8. Coding Map

Creation of symbolic boundaries

The Self
- Individuality
- Overdoing
- Miscommunication
  - Fals representation

Men vs women
- Men: difficult to read
- women: more options

Status Symbols
- Traditional symbols
  - Blouse, suit, jacket, pocket square
- Expensive brands

Posture
- Posing
- Spontaneous

External care
- Make-up
- Nails
- Hair

Facial expression
- Happy, positive emotions
  - Wealthier
- Attitude

Location

Clothing
- Quality
  - Materials / fabric
  - Fast- or slow fashion
- Thought through
  - Matching