There's more to food than meets the eye, or is it just a matter of taste?

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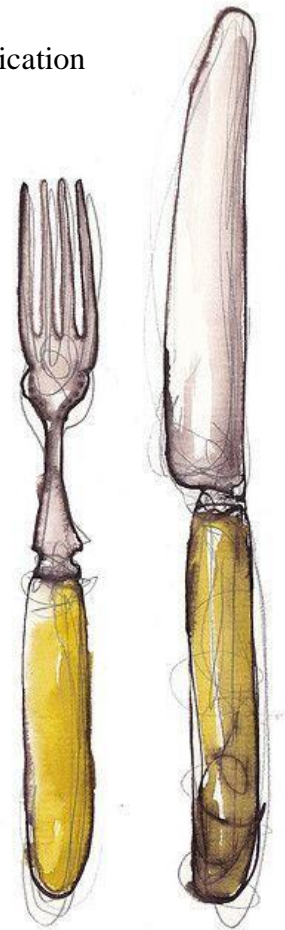
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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore how class and mobility affect meal etiquette in the Netherlands. The primary focus is on how today's class and mobility may stimulate social inequality. The impetus is the current gap in research on how class and mobility affect the cultural consumption of meal etiquette in the Netherlands. While considered a leading horizontal and egalitarian country, the growing upwardly mobile population and socio-economic developments have unclear impact on the present social stratification.

Cultural consumption necessitates a set of taught manners and rules, learned through different stages of socialization, which shapes a person's distinct set of behavior and taste. If Dutch status groups do differentiate themselves through the etiquette they observe, then each group might have its own sort of cultural capital. Class co-determines people's etiquette as etiquette can signal class; however, the relations between class and etiquette are probably made more complex by social mobility, which creates unclear boundaries by creating discontinuities between primary socialization and later influences in life.

The main questions concern the extent to which class and mobility are perceived through meal etiquette, how meal etiquette relates to the class of origin and destination, and how upwardly mobile people adapt his or her meal etiquette. Stratification is fundamental to better understand how a country operates. By understanding how class or status operates in the Netherlands, one can also better understand how, as individuals and as a group, we could facilitate communication, integration, and the transition into unknown environments. This research investigates meal etiquette amongst 14 Dutch working professionals, split into blue-collar and white-collar occupation groups. The participants were selected based on their Dutch nationality and profession type. The qualitative research approaches the participants through open-ended interviews and thematic analysis.

Keywords: *Etiquette, Food, Taste, Cultural Capital, Mobility*

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This thesis is a big milestone for me for several reasons. Attempting to understand my own social journey and Dutch heritage, (without speaking the language fluently – long story) while trying to answer a much broader question on stratification, has been a real eye-opener. Asides from providing some eye-candy for cultural sociologists, I hope that this will perhaps also raise awareness of how etiquette is not only an incredibly interesting phenomenon of cultural analysis, but can also be a catalyst for better understanding of each other as individuals and also as social groups.

1. Introduction

"The world was my oyster, but I used the wrong fork" – Oscar Wilde

It is broadly assumed that Dutch society is one of the most horizontal and egalitarian societies in the world. But is this really true? Sociologists of culture are increasingly studying food and etiquette as cultural symbols in order to better understand social stratification. Such research is important to sociologists of culture to better understand how cultural expressions and symbols, such as food etiquette and table manners, affect social stratification and social inequality in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is most probably one of the most interesting with a monarchy, which has an unusual past class formation compared to other European countries. The numerous changes in the position of the Dutch monarchy within society shifted over time: its constitutional changes in parallel to influences from other European courts make the Netherlands a unique and interesting country from a social and class perspective (Elias, 2000). As etiquette is a universal concept which humans cannot avoid in any activity, I deem it highly relevant when comparing social class and mobility. My research will contribute towards contemporary patterns of cultural symbols deriving from the social class occupied, and insight into how upwardly mobile generations handle transition from "one class to another". Etiquette and food etiquette are strong denominators that relate to the class and cultural characteristics of a person in relation to groups in society. Cultural consumption necessitates a set of taught manners and rules, learnt from relatives and close surroundings, which a person shapes into a set of distinct behavior. These cultural means, also called cultural capital, are usually perpetuated through exposure to the arts, proper manners, and a distinct notion of 'good' taste (Bourdieu, 2010). In general terms, individuals in high-ranked occupations display features which define their position in the social hierarchy; Cultural expressions are largely understood to be a consequence of these features that together mainly represent people's resources and capital. The level of cultural capital can also largely be attributed to the primary socialization through family background (Bourdieu, 2010). Etiquette, as such, is observed by people from all ranks and placements in society, therefore it has been and still is an important cultural phenomenon in the eyes of scholars. Etiquette is more than behaviour — it brought society to civilization; therefore, the historical progression from the European court era to 20th century process of civilization is argued to be an inherent part in understanding social classes (Elias, 2000; Wouters, 2011).

If Dutch status groups do differentiate themselves through the etiquette they observe, then each group might have its own sort of cultural capital. Certain scholars argue that people who are socially mobile in their lifetime change their cultural consumption to fit the group in which they belong (van Eijck, 1999). Other scholars argue that the phenomenon of mass culture, the rapid expansion and globalization of supply of cultural goods, have blurred the barriers of distinct behaviour within social groups. This is argued to be the case in the Netherlands; the post-war effect, emancipation of the core pillars, and rise of socialism have likely also been part of the blurring of barriers (Bryant, 1981). As a result, the distinction between highbrow etiquette and more 'generic' manners is increasingly difficult to draw. The weakening link between class and cultural behaviour is argued to be a part of the consequence (Beck & Sznaider, 2005; Featherstone, 1992). Class co-determines people's etiquette as etiquette can signal class; however, the relations between class and etiquette are probably made more complex by social mobility, which creates unclear boundaries by forming discontinuities between primary socialization and later influences in life.

This paper is concerned with the current gap in research on how class and mobility affect cultural consumption in the Netherlands. Stratification is fundamental to gain a better understanding of how a country operates, and by understanding how class or status operates in the Netherlands, one can also obtain a better understanding of how, as individuals and as a group, we could facilitate communication, integration, and how to transition into unknown environments. This research will use meal etiquette as a primary means of cultural consumption.

This paper is structured as follows. The theoretical framework under a literature review format explores the topics of etiquette, food, emotional management, and mobility from different angles. These topics are strongly reflected within the subject of social class and mobility in the Netherlands, and therefore will enable stronger understanding of the subjects before establishing the framework of analysis. The methodology section explains how the data and information will be aggregated and digested through thematic analysis. Both the research question and sub-question are addressed by means of qualitative interviews with Dutch participants residing and working in the Netherlands. This section also explains the choice of methodology and how the data is operationalized in the analysis. The findings section will share what has been found through the data analysis of the research, using a blend of theory and data aggregated. Finally, the discussion and conclusion will close the

research project with the key findings and takeaways for future research. In order to better clarify, this thesis will explore the following research question: *How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in the Netherlands?* and the sub question: *How does etiquette relate to class, where class is both class of origin and destination?*

2. Literature Review

2.1 Etiquette

2.1.1 Etiquette and the Civilization process

The history of manners and etiquette is considered as the backbone of stratification and social order (Elias, 2000). Etiquette is defined as a set of rules and behavioral requirements that people adopt to behave appropriately in a specific environment and adhere to rules established by members of a society group or social class (Wouters, 2011). Broad society assumptions categorize behavioral notions in opposing extreme: manners as good or bad manners, which indicate whether a person's behavior is acceptable for the specific social group to which they belong. The rise of etiquette and behavioral manners is the subject of great discussion amongst scholars and literary etiquette books since the 15th century. Researchers such as Wouters (2011), Spierenburg & Cornelis (1981) and Duindam (1995) have increased their interest in the topic of meal etiquette and manners, and emotions in parallel to the rise of social formation in the Netherlands (Wouters, 2011; Spierenburg & Cornelis 1981), inspired by the grounding works of Norbert Elias.

Norbert Elias's theory of Civilization Process, Elias (2000) introduces the founding works of state formation. He defines the notion of *civilité* as "stages in a development… a process or part of a process in which we are ourselves involved" (Elias, 2000, p 52). The manners are perpetuated as a way to maintain social order. Historically, the gradual insertion of manners and table etiquette from the table etiquette among the European royal court from the 15th to the 19th century was used for people to exhibit their class status (Elias, 2000). He uses the royal European court life as a framework to illustrate the process of civilization. the gain in power by *la noblesse* in European court occurred through their increase of rational expected behavior under the reign of the monarchy. Duindam (1995) argues that the "elevated" manners were more of a defence mechanism by the elite as a means of keeping the commoners out of mental and physical territory.

2.1.2 Etiquette in the Netherlands

The case of the Netherlands is unique from those of neighboring European countries. Throughout Europe, the historical stages of 'absolute state' were increasingly centralized by leading states and institutions, which contributed to the rise of the middle class and

modernization (Elias, 2000). These behavioral shifts, which led to the gradual formalization of manners and discipline, are criticized by sociologists and historians alike (Duindam, 1995; Spierenburg & Cornelis 1981; Wouters, 2011). Theorists such as Spierenburg and Cornelis (1981) take Elias's framework based on ideologies of interdependency and development of self-control to illustrate the class and society developments during early modern Netherlands. They argue that the ways in which cultural consumption is linked to class was different in the Netherlands than other countries of monarchy. Traditionally, the Dutch identified family names (i.e., surnames associated with old money) as primary indicators of class, whereas cultural engagements were secondary (i.e., art performance attendance, classic music concerts). Such patterns suggest that the Netherlands' class structure already ought to be treated differently than other countries.

Duindam (1995) questions whether Elias's approach to the modern European court is still applicable in today's society. By bridging the gap between the traditional literary works on manners and the modern elitist course, he argues that Elia's theory perspective on the rise of domestication in the nobility has to be examined under a new light. According to Duindam (1995), previous research provided by Elias (2000) is weakened by its lack of historical accuracy and lack of focus on power-play. In response, Duindam (1995) provides substantial evidence with updated findings on the power of *la noblesse* and their influence within European courts. The nobility was less pressured to shift its behavior but rather to increase its power through the court (Duindam, 1995). The upper nobility subsequently dominated the court and reinforced their positioning as an elite and leading example to society (Duindam, 1995). However, As also highlighted by Spierenburg and Cornelis (1981), the hierarchy of class and social importance in the Netherlands is different from other Western monarchies.

Some researchers, such as Cas Wouters (2011) see the 20th century as a continuation of Elia's work. By analyzing a series of books on manners since the 1880s, Wouters (2011) argues that society's general societal and physical codes and ideals are increasingly intertwined. This culminates in what he calls an "informalization of manners" (Wouters, 2011, p142). As a cause of the intertwined society, there are rising demands in regulating emotions and increasing social interactions. For him, the rise in Western etiquette and manners interconnects with self-regulation (Wouters, 2011). The term "controlled decontrolling" is introduced by Wouters (2011) to define the weakening of manners. He uses this term to explain a likely cause of the gradual emancipation of political and religious power structure in the Netherlands, which began from the 1950s onwards. The emancipation

of power also culminates in an "emancipation of emotions" (Wouters, 2011, p 141): the social barrier delimitations are no longer as strong as Elias' encounters of European court times.

It could be argued that both power and status are gained through power games using emotional manipulation and persuasion expressed through table manners. The process of informalization also calls for stronger self-control in other areas of life (Wouters, 2011). This self-control can only be achieved through knowledge of etiquette and manners, the beginning of a self-perpetuating spiral of control.

2.1.3 Literature books on etiquette and table manners

Scholarly etiquette manuals have been present in society since the European court times. Etiquette manuals, in sociological terms, are broadly defined as (1) instruction guides for people below the elite class who wish to feel superiority in their class while navigating mobility upward through "assured" manners and (2) implementing these norms is a way intended to reinforce the differences between the person executing and the author of the 'norms', subsequently turning into encoded routines (Wouters, 1995). As such, the historical development of books on etiquette and manners plays a quintessential role in educating people on their behavior, which has a suggestive impact on the class to which they belong (Abrutyn & Carter, 2014; Wouters, 1995).

Etiquette manuals still play a relevant and important role in society today. Elias (2000) and Wouters (1995) argue that etiquette draws an association between changes in one's behavior on a personal and physical level. Scholars also consider those books as key influences as to which social groups have access to this information (Wouters, 1995; Spierenburg & Cornelis, 1981). According to Duindam (1995), literary etiquette books are employed as a tool of legitimization, fortification of courtship and also give insights into courtly power struggles and socio-dynamics (Duindam, 1995). Theorists such as Spierenburg and Cornelis (1981) illustrate the influence that literary books on manners had on class and society developments during the early modern Netherlands. They recollect that many Dutch elites lingered behind, on the development of etiquette and behavior, compared to other Western European (Spierenburg & Cornelis, 1981). This is likely due to certain parts of books on etiquette which were censored in certain countries where they were distributed. For instance, French editions of certain books on etiquette included content that was edited out of

the Dutch editions of the same books (Spierenburg & Cornelis, 1981), knowing that the Dutch books were published long after the French original editions. For example, the publication of *De Civilitate morum puerilium* by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1530) targeted specific audiences such as the upper class. It was not until later that the books were made available to the middle and lower-class. For instance, the narrative and grammar used in the book makes implicit comments about a certain group of Dutch who did not know enough about manners compared to the rest of Europe (Elias, 2000). De La Salle published two versions of his book on manners. On the one hand, he dedicated his book to the Dutch *het gemeen*, meaning lower classes preferred this book. In France, his book was targeted for the middle class. In other words, literacy control teaching "good" manners to populations was very present in those times (Spierenburg & Cornelis, 1981). For Elias (2000), the editorial power held in the books on manners accentuates the division of social classes. Literature was an important component to adopting different behaviors of meal etiquette.

As analyzed in this section, the introduction of table etiquette rules, during the initial times of the royal European Court played an inherent role in social formation and civilization. Although the etiquette rules and standards are usually led by the dominating classes (as means of maintaining power and status), literature enabled other social groups to access some of this knowledge over time. Etiquette remains relevant in contemporary society.

2.2 Food

In recent years, sociologists of culture have gained interest in the role of food in society. They look at food as a form of cultural consumption to better grasp how people belong in specific social groups (Douglas, 1972; Dusselier, 2009; Harris, 1987; Horrigan, 1988; Leach, 1970; Welsh, 1981). This chapter discusses the form and the substance of food, based on the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Bourdieu.

Lévi-Strauss developed a series of works focusing on the analysis of food practices. In Lévi-Strauss's *The Raw and the Cooked* (1983), he uses a framework called the *culinary triangle* which represents a semantic field, where nature and culture play crucial roles. By looking at three distinctive parts of the cooking process, the culinary triangle identifies a correlation between the different cooking dimensions in order to identify a person's level of privilege in society (Ashley & al., 2004; Lévi-Strauss, 1983). The three cooking phases of the

culinary triangle are the raw, the cooked and the rotten. Looking at the culinary triangle from the top, the raw sits on top and the two other angles are the cooked and the rotten. In Levi-Strauss' eyes, the raw ought to be untouched by human intervention, such as garden vegetables. The cooked food is considered as processed by nature, such as the boiling of potatoes. The rotten angle is to illustrate anything that has overdone its course. The above adds an additional layer of information to determine to which class one belongs in the society structure (Lévi-Strauss, 1983).

Other researchers such as Horrigan (1988) argue that Lévi-Strauss's arguments do not represent the everyday life of people. He argues that individuals classify experiences based on opposing binaries, where the ideology of nature and culture occurs at an unconscious level. While on the other hand, Lévi-Strauss's culinary triangle fails to take these culinary cultures into account. For instance, the British and French ways of cooking meat differ significantly; meat is cooked for a longer period of time in Britain, whereas the French tend to prefer their meat *saignant*. The French and British meat cuts are differently sliced, which inevitably affects the process of cooking (for more, see the Fine Dining Lovers, 2018). Barthes (1972) sees the function of food to be more relevant than the substance. He uses coffee as an example to showcase the functional shift from the traditional morning energizing drink to a drink taken during a break (Barthes, 1972). It stands to reason that if food gains multiple purposes, it ought to be addressed through function rather than substance (Barthes, 2012).

It is therefore important to consider this *culinary triangle* framework from an intercultural perspective. Douglas (1972) questions whether it would be more relevant to focus on the commonalities rather than the differences between cultures. Both Barthes (1972) and Douglas (1972) are concerned by the lack of importance given to small scale social relations, as they "begin to see room for unpredictability, flexibility, and difference in how foodways are created to both reflect and shape human experiences" (Douglas, 1972, p 62). By using social relations as the primary way to decode manners during the meal, Douglas (1972) argues that observation is essential to help identify patterns which showcase social class or status.

In Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (2010), he investigates how food and cultural taste indicate which class one belongs to. Furthermore, he argues that the *form and substance* of food can be understood as a dependent variable which can give insight into a person's position in society. The *form* primarily addresses the

differences in income and the purchases made in order to quantitatively determine food budget expenditure. Based on the results of Bourdieu's (2010) empirical study into this phenomenon, he concludes that those who belong to higher social groups are more likely to consume refined and healthy food compared to lower social groups. The more cultural capital one possesses, the more likely the person is to consume healthier foods (Bourdieu, 2010). Engel's Law expresses that people with a lower income spend more of their overall income on food, while paying less attention to the quality and the enjoyment of the meal. (Clements & Si, 2017). From a sociological standpoint, those who occupy more privileged positions are more likely to enjoy food as a taste of luxury, whereas those with lower income see food as a necessity (Bourdieu, 2010). Therefore, scholars see food as an inherent indicator of class, but in order to make this distinction, it is important to address the food as both a substance and taste.

Although the culinary triangle presents itself as elitist and with certain methodological challenges, Lévi-Strauss does provide a literal way of establishing a "direct identity between ourselves (Culture) and our food (Nature)" (Leach, 1970:34). The legitimacy of the culinary triangle is far from perfect, however the categorizing ideology behind it still gained a lot of popularity amongst researchers over the past decades. As analyzed in this section, food is an important cultural phenomenon to better understand human relations and formations, and therefore an essential part of meal etiquette.

2.3 Emotional Management

Emotion is a widely researched notion in early sociology, mainly under cognitive and rational emotion. However, it was not until the 1970s that the study of emotion gained its distinctive subfield. Sociologist scholars (Parsons & Shils, 1962; Scheff, 1994 & 2003; Visser & al., 1984) investigate with great interest the ways in which emotion is acquired, experienced and managed daily, primarily inspired by the pioneering works of Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* (2012).

Hochschild's (2012) theory on feelings concentrates on managing emotions through impression management and body enactment. He argues we have an intrinsic ability to evaluate and understand the rules of feeling, which "are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling" (Hochschild, 2012, p55). Like social inequality, the management of emotions can also be unequal: people in blue-collar occupations may need to "sell their emotions" or behave in a

specific way towards their clients. The emotion is therefore transformed into a commodity and subsequently managed in a distinct controlled manner. Scheff (2013) argues that the primary social aspects of human emotions are shame and pride. In fact, Hochschild's account on emotions is built on "a human self-image according to which the true self of a person is hidden deep inside - one cannot be quite sure inside of what" (Elias, 2000, p 356). These forms of emotions are acquired over a period of time, and constantly evolve (Mead & Morris, (2015). Theorists such as Mead and Morris (2015) argue that the process of human development, the self, is continuously built on social experiences. As children grow in awareness of their surroundings, they build rules to better navigate through life and acquire a clearer understanding of the 'generalized other' (Mead & Morris, (2015). Based on these highly credible ideologies of the self, it is unclear how these fit in Hochschild's theory on emotion. The main weakness with this theory is that the theoretical ideas on emotion lack in relation to a "person's [past] learned self-regulation" (Wouters, 1989, p10). Hochschild's (2012) study on emotion would have benefited more if it had included wider literature on socialization.

2.4 Social Mobility

The concept of socialization, defined as the ongoing transformation of the human process, is based on the acquired awareness and values attributed to specific social agencies over the course of a lifetime (Mead, 1972). In the Netherlands, historical milestones and significant political shifts in the 20th century[1] such as the post-war effect, emancipation of the core pillars, and rise of socialism, have likely also played a part of the blurring of barriers which caused significant social shifts (Bagley, 1973; Bryant, 1981; Goudsblom,1986; Visser & al., 1984). Scholars of cultural sociology such as Lamont (1992), Knigge (2014), Brugmans (1977), Daenekindt and Roose (2014) and Van Eijck (1999) gained interest in class mobility using cultural symbols as key markers of class and points of distinction. The effects of mobility on cultural practices are researched to this day, inspired by the founding works of Herbert Mead (1972) and Pierre Bourdieu (2010).

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[1] Bryant (1981) shared a critical overview of the the Netherlands' pillarization process in the 20th century, led by religions pillars (dominated by Catholics, protestants) and socialists, had main purpose to foster emancipation within pillars, offering a supposed greater mobility within each pillar. Political upheaval from the 1960's onwards led to the di-pillarization process.

Mead (1972) introduces the functional theory of the development of self, based on the gradual increase in interdependence with one another. He argues that any form of learned skill, such as a language, is developed through interactions with others, making human interactions essential for ongoing growth (Mead, 1972). This draws parallels to Parson's (1951) theory of primary and secondary socialization. He defines primary socialization as the knowledge gained during childhood through our close relatives, and secondary socialization defined as the skills and values acquired through education and other social agents (Parsons & Shils, 1962). Both socialization processes occur during key moments where people acquire skills in order to act out their manners and expectations belonging to a specific social structure (Mead, 1972). The cultural capital such as manners and taste, gained through primary socialization, are acquired dispositions that differentiate the person from other groups (Bourdieu, 2010; Kant, 1978; Lamont, 1994). The effects of cultural practices on mobility are determined through a variety of factors, which are elaborated below.

Bourdieu (2010) argues that with regards to class position, both the social position of family of origin and the person's own individual social position are what determines the cultural practices. Sociologists such as van Eijck (1999) and Lamont and Lareau (1994; 1988) argue that if during the primary socialization phase, spent with parents and siblings, one is exposed to culture, this increases the chances of someone's interest in culture. Analyzing the socialization process of departure and arrival can help identify whether mobility occurs or not over the span of someone's life (van Eijck, 1999; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Intergenerationally is a well-known identifier of mobility (van Eijck, 1999) used to determine the different mobility trajectories over time through a person's occupational status. Subsequently, it has been established that etiquette, is explained by the social position and mobility over someone's lifetime.

2.4.1 Upsides and challenges of upwardly mobile

Since the 1940's, the socio-political shifts in the Netherlands led to further accessibility to education, and the industrialization to an increase in clerical and bureaucratic professions (for more, see van Dijk & al., 1984). The subsequent increase in social mobility induced unraveling changes in consumption patterns. Durkheim (2014) approaches the analysis of increasing social mobility as something which leads to an emancipation of different levels of society; it feeds the middle-class strata a new desire to replicate new forms of "aristocracy". The subsequent periods of socialization in different socio-cultural contexts,

led to a 'broken' trajectory, and can be beneficial for those who are more upwardly mobile. According to an empirical study by van Eijck (1999), the blurring boundaries between the highbrow and popular culture are caused by more heterogeneous social groups. By investigating the patterns of cultural consumption and mobility through a national cluster sample of 3227 Dutch respondents, van Eijck (1999) validated that changes in mobility had an effect on levels of highbrow consumption; that the upwardly mobile new middle class are less strictly ordered with highbrow consumption. If this is the case, the increase in the middle class may suggest that more people consume popular culture, individually adopting a more omnivorous behavior (Beck, 1992; Bourdieu, 2010; Featherstone, 1992; Van Eijck, 1999).

Beneath the surface, the effects of greater mobility are also detrimental. For instance, someone who is upwardly mobile among immobile upper-class friends may have more difficulty to navigate the same social milieu with ease and self-confidence. For example, Dutch people who are upwardly mobile are less likely to engage in highbrow as they are afraid to not fit the mold (van Eijck, 1999). Bourdieu (2010) reinforces this by arguing that the differences in manners indicate the differences in how capital was acquired, and the disparity in cultural capital highlights differences between the classes. He believes "the differences in trajectory are very strongly felt" (Bourdieu, 2010, p 629). Daenekindt and Roose (2014) report that cultural preferences are more likely linked to secondary socialization, causing socially mobile individuals to overact their part in order to fit in. Those who come from homes with higher levels of social capital have a tendency to navigate education[2] more easily, one of the foundational pillars of human civilization (Bourdieu, 2010). By enacting the symbols of manners as markers of class, the "real" differences are naturalized in how manners were acquired -- This reinforces the ways of marking distances with those that "do not belong" (Bourdieu, 2010).

2.4.2 Mobility in other forms than class

Sociologists such as Chan and Goldthorpe (2007) and Durkheim (2003) argue that different forms such as status and religion also play an important role in shaping someone's social formation. While Bourdieu (2010) amongst other sociologists speak of class, Chan and

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[2] In Bourdieu and Passeron's *Les Héritiers les étudiants et la culture* (2016), the authors investigate social mobility in education by looking at a sample of French students to determine whether family background impacts educational success. They argue that the French legitimized educational system is better internalized by children from homes with higher cultural capital. The distinction influencing success is arguably caused by the French 'legitimized' system and further fed by the children with higher cultural capital, who also possess similar behavior to their school professors.

Goldthorpe (2007) argue that cultural consumption is more tied to status than class. They make an important distinction between class and status, and argue that generally, the economy is divided into class (rather than status) distinctions, whereas cultural consumption is more related to status and honor. Religion, understood as a system of rights and beliefs sustained by collective consciousness, is bounded together by a unified system (Durkheim, 1995). Durkheim (2003) argued that religion is solely a product of society. Religion is also classified into social relationships and segments of society which are represented through symbols and organized into different groups and structures (Durkheim, 1995). The enacted rituals of religion during the meal (i.e., saying grace before a meal) could be considered as etiquette. The externalizations of relationships and those bound together by what is sacred, is ultimately formed into different groups and led by the more influential groups (Durkheim, 1995). It could be argued however that with the de-pillarization process in the Netherlands, these boundaries are disappearing (Bourdieu, 2010; van Eijck, 1999).

2.5 Conclusion literature review

In this chapter, etiquette, food, emotional management, and mobility have been established as powerful factors of social stratification caused by cultural expression of food etiquette. It has also been established that there is a gap in the research concerning the 21st contemporary class and mobility comprehension in the Netherlands, which I intend to fulfill. In order to get a better understanding of the current stratification in the Netherlands through the expression of cultural symbols such as etiquette, I argue it is important to take a fresh outlook on today's contemporary society. By exploring how class and mobility are affected in the Netherlands through table and food etiquette, I intend to find that there is a presence of class distinctions through specific etiquette behavior – especially from those who work in white-collar professions. I also expect to find a difference between upwardly mobile- and already established white-collar individuals through taste and etiquette. In order to understand how the cultural expressions of etiquette contribute to the broader social class, this study will use qualitative interviews to better identify and answer the research question: *How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in the Netherlands?* and the sub-question *How does etiquette relate to class, where class is both class of origin and destination?* In the following section, the methodological choices and operationalization will be explained, ensuring the feasibility and validity of this investigation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Choice of method

This research and literature review is concerned with the ways in which class and mobility in the Netherlands is shown through meal etiquette. To carry out this analysis, I collected 14 interviews (*length 33-59min, av. 44 min*) of 14 respondents (*age 24-74 years, av. 43*) with Dutch nationality, who work and reside in the Netherlands. The objective is to examine a thematic content analysis of the collected data in order to identify the *raison d'être* behind the participants' responses on meal and etiquette, and their belonging to a specific class or mobility. By way of explanation, this research explores how the cultural theories of food, etiquette, and behavioural management can be applied to mobility and social stratification. By comparing two different interview groups, I identify socialization patterns, tastes relating to food form and substance, and emotion restraint and management, all relevant and theoretically effective in addressing contemporary social inequality in the Netherlands.

The most effective way to do this is through qualitative analysis of interviews, which has been identified as an opportunity to unravel potential new insights with little past qualitative methodological research (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2013; Galletta, 2013). These quantitative methods have taught us a lot about taste and stratification; however, interviews can add detail not typically found in survey data. First and foremost, to ensure a well-prepared interview which sets participants' expectations, and to foster the success of a casual conversation while also steering it in the desired direction, I created a topic guide (see Appendix A) based on the key themes addressed (Gaskell, 2011). In order to grasp a better understanding of the underlying patterns behind each participant's responses and emotions, I decided to conduct a deeper reflection on the meaning-making of each interview (Galetta, 2013). The expectations of this were to identify additional layers of understanding of their underlying emotions, meaning making and reasoning of their perspectives on food etiquette and manners (Galetta, 2013). Furthermore, I decided to conduct open-ended qualitative interviews to allow for more conversational discussions with the participants, hoping to build trust with them and allow them to open up 'spontaneously' rather than decisively, while also allowing time for deliberate development toward a deep exploration of the subject matter (Flick, 2013; Galletta, 2013).

3.2 Data collection & Ethics

The data collection for my research was mostly conducted using Zoom, due to the Dutch pandemic sanitary measures. The respondents were found through purposive sampling (*collection February – May 2021*). It was initially planned to find participants through convenience sampling only, however the blue-collar respondents were invariably challenging to find. The first call to action shared on social media, notably LinkedIn and Instagram, received substantial attention. Subsequently, this secured approximately 50% of interviews (see original social media posts in Appendix B). The remaining participants took part in the research through snowball sampling.

The criteria used to select the participants during the purposive and snowballing sampling were (a) respondents who held Dutch nationality, (b) whose primary residence and profession were in the Netherlands. The respondents were divided into two sampling groups based on their profession title, and the sampling division was made based on the conceptual framework based on the European Socio-economic Classification (National Survey, N/A; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007). The participants are segmented by their profession title into two different groups: the higher profession group (white-collar) and the lower profession group (blue-collar) (graph available in Appendix C). I deemed profession group as a grounding dependent factor to identify the participants' similarities and differences in cultural expressions of food etiquette, and a way of establishing whether they were socially mobile or not. These two factors are essential to help answer the research question. The table below illustrates the different occupation types, their common term and employment status (full profession list available in Appendix D).

To ensure anonymity of the data and conform to ethical standards, all transcripts were anonymized by providing nicknames to participants, and all participants read and consented to the *Erasmus University Consent and Ethics Form*. In this present study, Dutch participants from different provinces of the Netherlands were interviewed. The working participants practised an array of professions which created a productively diverse sampling group. The fourteen Dutch participants selected for my study, categorized into two main professional groups, also provided their nationality, background educational attainment, parents' professions, and place of birth. (Full participant profiles available in Appendix E).

Table 1

Participants List and information

Pseudonym	Profession	Age	Nationality	Birth Place		Religion
Blue-collar participants						
Penny	Film Assistant	37	Dutch	Vlaardingen	South Holland	Protestant
Raj	Cheesemonger	27	Dutch	Gouda	South Holland	No
Amy	Shop Assistant / Maker	37	Dutch	Vlaardingen	South Holland	No
Howard	Navy Officer	24	Dutch	Enschede	Twente	Yes
Leonard	IT Tel Com Assistance	55	Dutch	Roermond	Limburg	Protestant
Bernadette	Social Assistant	48	Dutch	Ter Aar	South Holland	No
Sheldon	Crane Operator	67	Dutch	Westwoud	North Holland	Protestant
White-collar participants						
Lily	Cultural Funding and Marketing	32	Dutch	Nieuwerkerk	South Holland	No
Robin	UN Management Assistant	59	Dutch	Eindhoven	North Brabant	Catholic
Ted	Programme Manager	30	Dutch	Zevenaar	Gelderland	No
Marshall	Lecturer & Laboratory Manager	62	Dutch	Sleen	Drenthe	No
Quinn	Conservator & Teacher	74	Dutch	Hilversum	North Holland	Protestant
Victoria	Online Editor	24	Dutch	Voorburg	South Holland	No
Barney	Trader	26	Dutch	Noordoostpolder	Flevoland	No

3.2.1 Data Coding thematic analysis

I decided to adopt the thematic analysis approach, using the *Atlas.ti* software as a coding analysis tool. The choice of analysis tool was based on its intuitive features which allowed me to efficiently identify and structure the different thematic dimensions and methods of visualization under the coding procedure thematic guidance by Ayres (2008). Using this approach, I did three rounds of coding to first label my data, then categorize it into sub-themes and finally to shape it into broader themes (see Appendix F). It made most sense for me to duplicate sub-themes into two sections to split the results of the blue-collar and white-collar participants. This allowed me to easily navigate within sub themes and directly visualize the number of mentions and quotes in an efficient manner to write up my results.

3.3 Operationalization

The research in this present paper aims to answer the research question: *How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in The Netherlands?* To best address the research question, the concepts and codes were operationalized based on (a) understanding (a) the meaning-making of good and bad etiquette, (b) the daily habits concerned with purchasing, preparing, and serving the meal, (b) meaning-making on emotions concerned with food etiquette and hosting, (d) mobility between point of departure and destination. These concepts were developed into a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix A).

3.3.1 Interview Questions

Based on the previously established theoretical framework and methods, this study aims to find the underlying structural meaning through the meaning of how the respondents express their experience of etiquette and manners because etiquette and manners are socially constructed product. Therefore, focusing on the experience of the participant. The interview guide was structured in a way to progress from high level discussion into deeper conversation with the participants. In order to ease into the discussion, the interview guide began with standard personal information questions in order to get better acquainted with the participant. It continued with questions about daily habits to do with food etiquette and meal consumptions. For better understanding of each participant's dining habits and expressions of food etiquette, questions were asked, for instance, such as the following: *How and where do you spend most of your meals before COVID? In a normal weekday situation (prior to lockdown) how many times a week do you (or someone of your family cook)? How many times a week do you order takeaway? What is your favorite cuisine genre to cook?*.

The second section aimed to dig deeper into the participant's thoughts, meaning making and feeling regarding dinners and lunches at home. In order to receive optimal answers, the following questions were asked: *Can you tell me what a weekday/night typical meal is like in your home? How strict was your education around table manners as a child? Can you give examples of what were important values to your parents in terms of manners*?.

The third section aimed to gain a better understanding of the respondent's meaning-making and the level of importance placed on dining etiquette for themselves and people around them. The following questions were asked: *When you have people over for lunch or dinner, could you run me through a sequence of preparation for this dinner? Do you pay*

close attention to other people's behavior when they come over to your place? If so, can you give me an example? Are there any behaviors that others may do during the mealtime that you find annoying or offensive?

The fourth section aimed to understand the importance a participant placed on the ownership of crockery, and also establish how they acquired the crockery and the level of aesthetic knowledge they possessed on the subject matter. For this, the following questions were asked: *What sort of cutlery, plates and glasses do you own? When did you purchase it? Do you pay attention to the different crockery or cutlery brands? Do you use different cutlery and glass sets for special occasions?*

On the assumption that, by the end of the interview, a certain degree of intimacy and trust had been gained with the interviewee, the final section aimed to understand the meaning-making and the ways in which the respondent managed his or her emotions. Although the management of emotions is a recurring theme throughout all aspects of the interview, this section aimed to grasp the level of emotional repression participants engage in when hosting guests to earn membership to a specific social group The following questions were asked: *How would you describe your general emotion when hosting people for dinner at your place? Would you adapt your behavior or 'manners' to fit a specific eating context (at home, at friends, at work)? Do you ever feel judged when eating?*

3.3.2 Data coding

Once the interviews were finalized and transcribed, the concepts and codes were created based on the literature and thematic analysis. There are additional codes which emerged during the analysis coding process, marked with an asterisk. The overarching concepts, stated in the table below, were taken from the literature review and theory on thematic analysis, whereas the codes were created during the thematic analysis process. The five key themes were Etiquette, The Meal, Crockery, Emotion Management and Mobility. To facilitate the reading of the findings, each sub-theme is composed of a tree code which gives an overview of findings within each sub-theme. The blend of visual illustration and written explanations has been done to better tailor my findings to cultural sociologist's' preferences. This does not necessarily mean that all of these ideas have been used as codes, but they are used as keywords to illustrate the main findings (full code tree can be found in Appendix H).

4. Findings

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between food etiquette as a cultural expression through class distinction and mobility, answering the question: *How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in the Netherlands?* In order to answer this question, this study also aimed to answer the following sub-question: *How does etiquette relate to class, where class is both class of origin and destination?* To answer the research question and sub-question, I analyzed the results of 14 open-ended qualitative interviews with questions on participants' habits, emotions, and ownership of food etiquette and crockery. The respondents were selected based on their profession within the European socio-economical classification system and split into blue-collar and white-collar professions.

Before continuing, it is important to highlight that for the purposes of my analysis, I assumed that etiquette is a vehicle towards mobility. Based on the theoretical framework under a literature review, scholars such as Elias (2000) amongst others, allude to this. Furthermore, the term in my section is strictly a matter of the labelling adopted when creating thematic analysis themes, not a matter of passing judgement on one group or the other. It has also got to be understood that etiquette and mobility do not always necessarily go hand in hand. The respondents' results in the thematic analysis will illustrate both arguments in the following.

Through thematic analysis, I found six overarching themes: *Etiquette, Food, The Meal, Crockery, Emotional Management* and *Mobility.* The reasoning behind these overarching themes is that it illustrates participants' perceptions and positioning vis-a-vis etiquette, confirming that etiquette is a cultural consumption. The personal interpretations of etiquette and the descriptions of daily habits around food etiquette played an important role in helping to identify trends that answer the research question.
I singled out *food* as a theme to better distinguish the broader sociological theories. I also chose *food* as a separate theme, because it provided stronger insights into the participants' economic and capital relations. The *meal* theme focused more on the daily practicalities of the participants and traditional ways of preparing and serving the meal. The third theme, *Crockery,* provided insights into the participant's aesthetic- and behavioral choices. *Emotional management* included how the participants changed, shifted, or suppressed their emotions through etiquette, which suggestively affected the class or status which were symbolically enacted. The last theme, *mobility*, drew on the different concepts discussed

above and analyzed how etiquette when seen as a cultural behavior caused socialization and adaptation in the Netherlands.

4.1 Etiquette

Etiquette, understood as a practice of behavior and beliefs around food and dining, encapsulates different levels of understanding. The following section set out to identify the main trends and findings of etiquette and how this relates to the bigger definition of the participants in a social setting (i.e., class or status). The frequent mention of etiquette throughout the interviews illustrated how important it is in the eyes of all participants. The white- and blue-collar participants reported different types of importance on etiquette. On average, white-collar participants mentioned their views on etiquette 27% more than blue-collar participants; and white-collar participants also spoke about general manners twice as much as blue-collar participants.
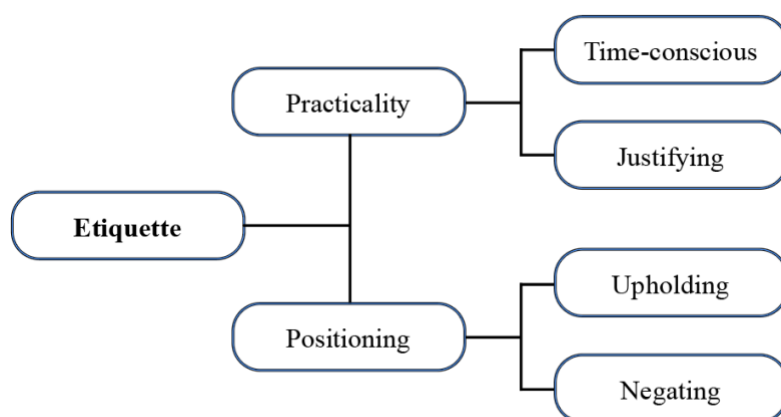
Table 2

Percentage Spoken about etiquette

Category	White-Collar Participants % Importance	Blue-Collar Participants % Importance
Etiquette	63.2	36.8

Figure 3

Tree signifier of Etiquette

From this analysis, it became clearer that the way in which participants interpreted etiquette disclosed something about how they define themselves in a class context. By accounting for both the etiquette and socio-historical experiences reported by all participants, the results suggested that the specific notions of courteous and cultural norm play a noticeable and important role among Dutch participants.

4.1.1 Defining etiquette – Position versus practicality

The first part of the analysis consisted in understanding what people understood and defined as etiquette. The two main findings contrasted participants' understanding of etiquette as the *positioning of self*, versus the *practicality of the meal*. The notion of courteous manners was more explicitly depicted in an eloquent and outspoken way amongst white-collar participants. The courteous manners through personal regulation of social interactions and emotion, were identified in the respondents' different modes of communicative language.

> I admit that most of my friends have excellent table manners. But sometimes I meet people and I look at them and think, this is not very pleasant to look at. (Quinn, white-collar, Conservator and Teacher)

This quote demonstrates that Quinn is part of a class that likely possesses impeccable table manners. On this basis, Quinn reported a strong opinion on what she considered table manners and noticed when people did not behave well. Through her identification of impeccable manners with her friends, she further positioned herself as a force of strength and critique of other people's table manners. This is reflected in broader comments made by white-collar participants, which also differ by using lengthier phrases and words to describe how one should behave, should, do, or should speak.

Amongst blue-collar participants, eating food was often related to moments of lack of time and daily practical matters. Rather than discussing in detail how they should eat, it was insightful to notice that overall, blue-collar participants took a more practical approach to eating in general, leaving behavior as a secondary thought. Most blue-collar participants emphasized the topic of time management when they shared their eating rituals. For instance, the notion of time at which food should be eaten, the practicality or speed at which the food should be cooked.

I cook for myself and want it to be quick and tasty. (Amy, blue-collar, shop assistant)

This comment shows how Amy attributed more importance to the practicality of dinner than to manners. First, she mentioned the speed at which food should be cooked. She then expressed that it must be tasty and flavored too. This recurrent finding amongst blue-collar participants suggests that they not only place etiquette as a secondary thought, but they also relate the process of eating with time-sensitivities and practical flavor.

Based on the sole purpose of identifying how both groups of participants define etiquette, the respondents illustrated contrasting language. On etiquette, white-collar participants used cautious affirmative positioning language while blue-collar participants emphasized more practical straightforward language. From analysis, the differing views on what is considered most important in manners and values may ultimately pertain to class. To better understand the motives behind these definitions of etiquette, the next section addressed the participant's likes and dislikes of etiquette.

4.1.2 Expressing likes and dislikes - Negation versus Justification

The expressed likes and dislikes of table manners to maintain cultural norms and social order resonates strongly with Bourdieu's (2010) arguments of elitist negations of others. The legitimization of one social position by reinforcing the 'undeniable' superiority is accentuated through 'elevated' taste in cultural or consumption forms (Bourdieu, 2010). White-collar participants reported specific terminology to disparage anyone who does not abide by their personal understanding of themselves with their 'own' level of manners.

I would find it difficult to have a very close friend who would have no manners. Because every time we would sit down to eat, which you do often with a close friend, it would just go straight through my bone marrow. (Robin, white-collar, UN Management Assistant)

This example highlights the negation through Robin (white-collar, UN Management Assistant) who expressed difficulty in eating with anyone who, in her opinion, did not possess any manners. As an interesting parallel finding, the justifications of manners were strongly echoed in my study. Those belonging to a blue-collar profession focused on 'trying'

to maintain manners. Almost all blue-collar participants illustrated their stories in which they felt a need to justify when they considered themselves 'out of manners'. For instance, Howard (blue-collar, Navy Officer) explained he would normally try to keep his manners, while he has an awareness of eating with a knife and fork.

> I just try to eat with my knife and fork and yeah, only, when I'm eating a hamburger because that's not doable with a knife and fork. Normally I would try to keep my manners. (Howard, blue-collar, Navy Officer)

This excerpt highlighted the need to justify why Howard (blue-collar, Navy Officer) did not uphold his manners to the desired standard. First, he explained how he should usually eat with a knife and fork, and second, he justified his decision for not eating a burger with his knife and fork by affirming that he tried to uphold his manners. Although the Dutch may not approve of eating a burger with bare hands, this participant does. Other blue-collar participants illustrated similar justifications, which suggests a lack of knowledge in regard to what is expected as standard social behavior.

The secondary socialization, skills and values gained through professional occupation amongst other socialization agents, transpired from analysis (Parsons & Shils, 1962). Three participants illustrated enforcement of rules and traditions through their time living in a fraternity or in the army. In these environments, the respondents experienced that they received distinct education on specific etiquette and behavioral rules.

For example, Leonard (blue-collar, IT Assistant) illustrated that during his compulsory officer training, he had to obey very strict rules. They were drilled to behave in very specific ways with cutlery; every time someone put his fork facing upwards when dining, anyone who noticed would scream at the top of their lungs. The significance behind this specific behavior, he explained, is that putting a fork facing upwards would 'call the demons out'. This suggests that the secrecy of knowledge and passing on of unspoken rules may strengthen communities through actions rather than speech. The notions of tradition are not only instilled during the primary socialization phase but also in a particular context of learning and development, notably in higher education environments or workplaces.

The importance behind the socialization (i.e., when welcoming guests) showed discrepancy between white-collar participants and blue-collar participants. White-collar

participants illustrated more thought-through dinners, by expressing their stronger attention to etiquette and upholding their manners. Furthermore, they were more prone to negate others who did not possess similar etiquette. On the other hand, blue-collar participants treated etiquette as more of a practical aspect to the dinner. For instance, blue-collar participants reported they were more likely to eat within a specific timeframe. They paid less attention to table manners and expressed to be less comfortable exerting etiquette during the meal.

This section from analysis confirms that food etiquette is perceived as a form of cultural expression based on belonging to a social class through communicated shared symbols. It also suggests that etiquette is generally acquired through the primary stages of socialization.

4.1.3 Upkeeping etiquette in the name of cultural norms

Upkeeping etiquette in the name of cultural norms, defined as the culture and society manners by which a person establishes identity in a given socio-cultural group, is often echoed in this research (Douglas, 2018; Bourdieu, 2010). Regardless of social mobility, respondents elaborated on their behavior and manners through describing their origins to reveal their wider national identity; in this case being the Netherlands. This echoes with Douglas' (2018) beliefs that manners and rituals allow society to remain ordered and avoid breach of integrity with culture. The importance of maintaining traditional manners from analysis was particularly stressed amongst white-collar participants. These findings aligned with Douglas' (2018) theories on using the maintenance of tradition in order to keep up social order within specific social groups. This recurrent discovery echoed among multiple participants, mainly on the topic of how people were socialized in specific social groups.

> Last week I was in Holland and I had asparagus three times, and every time we discussed whether we would eat them by hand or cut them up. And the proper thing to do is to have your asparagus with your hand and put it on your fork. And of course we didn't. But we said, well, that's the way we had to do it. So that was so you don't do it anymore, but you still do it for fun sometimes. So that was asparagus. But that's very special..... I only remember a quote of my daughter who went to eat at her boyfriend's house. And there were people who were very on manners, and she calls asparagus and didn't know you had the asparagus in your hand on your fork. That's why we're so aware of it now. And she didn't do it and oh, she didn't marry the guy. Did your

mother teach you how to eat asparagus? And that was quite a shocking thing because she had not been taught how to. (Quinn, white-collar Conservator & Teacher)

The eloquence and deliberate manner in which Quinn (white-collar Conservator & Teacher) described the art of eating asparagus suggests that she received extensive food etiquette education during her childhood years. Quinn's friends were also just as interested in the etiquette of eating asparagus the "proper way" and finished by saying, "and of course we did". This section from analysis suggests that etiquette potentially remains a way of upholding class or status within society.

4.1.4 Religion and etiquette

Participants illustrated routine around the meal showed potential correlation between the participant's religious belief and etiquette during the meal. The tight schedules and dinner rituals shared by religious participants fit in well with Durkheim's (1995) system of rights and beliefs sustained collective consciousness in a unified system. Religion is viewed as a product of society (Durkheim and Marxist perspective) to enforce rules and traditions. The five participants who received a religious upbringing suggest a correlation between religious upbringing and a systematic method of behaving around the notions of food etiquette and eating at a table.

I am raised Catholic. So my whole village was that way. We eat at six o'clock sharp every day. And it was more or less the same stuff. But I get a little bit of meat, not too much. And of course, the table and we would cook every day and my sisters too. (Sheldon, blue-collar, Crane Operator)

This quotation exemplifies two recurrent findings amongst respondents with a religious background. First, the participant's religious aspect linked to the village community and eating ritual seemed responsible for the norms of behavior. Second, the felt restriction of food recalls biblical connotations of not eating or consuming too much pleasure: life was about working hard, and not doing too much (Durkheim, 1995; Weber, 1978). The Netherlands played an important role in strengthening the bible-belt. Despite the de-pillarization process, as discussed in the literature review, the respondent's stories align with religious traditions. Speaking of traditions, the Netherlands' long-standing expression of 'doe normaal, dan doe je

al gek genoeg' which literally means 'just be normal, that's already crazy enough!' is used multiple times by participants during the interviews. Although this could be interpreted with sensitivity, analysis suggests there is more to that expression. Leonard, for example, recalled 'doe normaal' six times during the interview.

> We grew up being just doing everything what you do, do it in a normal way… you can play but can't play with your food, just the normal things. (Leonard, blue-collar, IT assistant)

This quotation suggests potential correlation between this expression as a behavior order and religious standpoint. Although respondents are not necessarily religious anymore, they seemed to keep rigid timing and eating habits while alluding to their religious upbringing. From analysis, it could be argued that religion ought to be considered as another dimension just as important as class and status.

Etiquette revealed discrepancies between the white- and blue- collar Dutch citizens, not always pertaining to social class. Initial findings suggested a discrepancy between the extent to which blue-collar and white-collar participants are socialized when it came to etiquette. Analysis suggested that the notions of etiquette played a more important conscious role in the eyes of the white-collar participants as they put their knowledge into practice – something which most blue-collar participants did not necessarily seem to possess; therefore, they could not enact. This confirmed the understanding of food etiquette as a form of cultural expression, through which, belonging to, a certain social class is communicated through the shared understanding of symbols. Blue-collar participants brought up in a religious context may behave in a more regimented manner; this may partially explain why certain blue-collar participants act in more restrained manners.
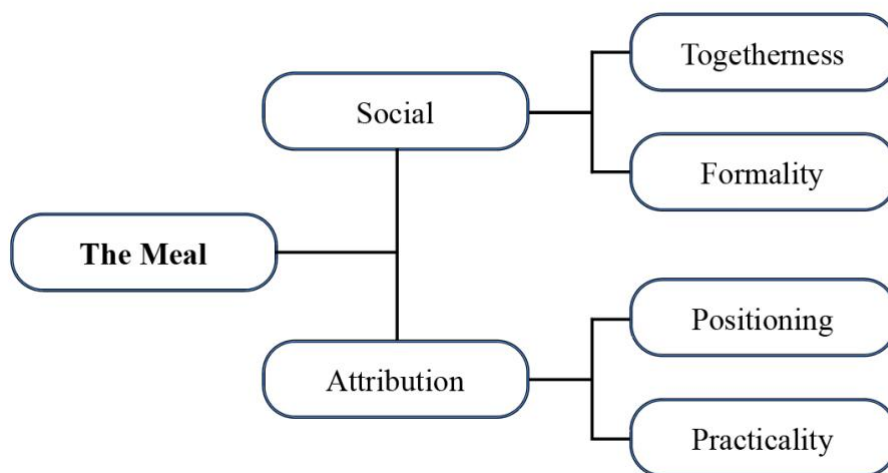
4.2 The meal

The meal, defined as any aspect of the process which contributes towards filling people's stomachs (Lévi-Strauss, 1983), sets out to dissect the following sub-themes: the social importance around the meal, the cultural knowledge of the meal, as well as the

preparation of the meal. The importance of the meal is self-evident due to the high number of times the meal was mentioned amongst participants.

Figure 4

Tree signifier of The Meal

The social importance during the meal, was expressed by both groups as an important feature of the meal. White-collar participants reported their meal from a substantially elevated aesthetic. They did so by distinctively describing knowledge and shared understanding of their cultural norm ideals. Blue-collar participants identified the meal as a matter of practicality and togetherness. Although the leisure importance of food is equally important to both professional groups, the essence behind it differs greatly. The subtle differences and similarities amongst how the participants describe their understanding of having a meal, reveals a lot about the meaning they attribute to their, and others', behavior and what that represents.

Table 5

Percentage mention on the topic of the meal

Category	White-Collar Participants % Importance	Blue-Collar Participants % Importance

Defining well prepared meal	68.2%	31.8%
Defining social importance meal	48.2%	51.7%

The social importance of a meal was mentioned in a higher frequency amongst blue-collar respondents, whereas the white-collar participants primarily spoke about its formality. The social importance heavily highlighted by all blue-collar participants suggests a link between their sense of timing and practicality often related to the laborious nature profession. Half the number of blue-collar participants illustrated their importance of having dinner with their family, as those three possessed unusual working hours.

The traditional sandwich lunch is a good example which encapsulates the contrasts in serving the meal between both Dutch working groups. All participants but one ate sandwiches for lunch, however differed when it came to the lunch location and the speed at which the food is eaten. White-collar participants consumed their lunch meal sandwiches together with colleagues or family members. Blue-collar participants explained that their profession made them eat on-the-go, or sometimes they did not eat at all. Robin (white-collar, UN Management Assistant) explained that during lunch at work, she meticulously sets up the table before all staff members eat their sandwiches.

> I used to, at the office, lay the table, put bread and cheese and ham on the table, and we all sat down and had a bread sandwich… we did eat together. (Robin, white-collar, UN Management Assistant)

Although lunch in the Netherlands is considered informal, the sense of elaborate preparation rituals around such a "simple" meal highlights discrepancies between both working groups. It is possible to argue that the importance of serving a well-prepared meal plays a more conscious role in the eyes of white-collar participants, as they are focused on giving a good impression in the eyes of others by providing what should be, in manners and in etiquette of the meal.

4.2.1 Preparing the meal

Two findings stemmed from the preparation of the meal. The first finding identified that most white-collar participants defined the meal as ways which suggest that they use the meal to

play part in impressing others as well as defining themselves. For example, Barney (White-Collar, Trader) emphasized he loves to share some ingredients he bought from a specialized market. He also took time to share where the products came from.

> I always like to share some ingredients that we use with the guests. As I do like what I said to buy some special ingredients, things that you cannot buy in the supermarket. So, yeah, my emotion is enthusiastic and trying to share as much as possible with the guests that we have. (Barney, White-Collar, Trader)

The quote by Barney illustrated knowledge of where to purchase specialized food products and ingredients. Two participants illustrated the importance of behaving formally whilst serving the meal, which suggestively highlighted the importance of how they wanted to be portrayed by their guests.

The second finding identified discrepancies between time allocated to the preparation of the meal and the use of language when explaining the thought process of preparation. Half the number of blue-collar participants explained that they eat on a strict time constraint.

> As a hairdresser, I wouldn't eat lunch at all. No breakfast, no lunch, no time for it. (Penny, blue-collar, Film Assistant)

This comment illustrates the purchasing habits of a quick lunch may allude to a distinct class belonging.

Social togetherness versus superficial positioning are the two values attributed to the meal between white-collar and blue-collar. Both working groups suggest a discrepancy of motivation behind and values attributed to the meal. From analysis, blue-collar participants relate the meal to something social or practical. The idea of togetherness, strongly echoed amongst blue-collared participants, suggestively overshadowing any other aspects of the meal. The social importance heavily highlighted amongst all blue-collar participants suggests a link between the sense of timing, practicality, and a laborious nature profession. In contrast, the importance of preparing and serving a well-prepared meal amongst white-collar participants suggested that they are more focused on the superficial aspects of the meal, especially when showcasing this to their guests.

4.3 Food

The third main theme that was found through thematic analysis is food. Although food is similar in some ways to *the meal*, I decided to make food a separate theme as the parameters of food provide a different angle on class and social importance. Food is evidently an important aspect of selecting and serving the meal. It also plays an important role in illustrating elements of class and mobility, when addressing purchasing habits and food preferences. From analysis, two sub-themes emerged within the overarching theme: *Food preferences* and *food purchasing*. The primary objective was to understand the respondent's meaning-making of their purchasing habits and how both purchasing, and preparation of food encapsulates elements of mobility and/or class.

4.3.1 Food preferences

From analysis, there is a clear discrepancy between blue- and white- collar food preferences. Participants all expressed either traditional Dutch or more diverse food preferences. White-collar participants generally expressed a like for all genres of food, whereas blue-collar participants held true to their nation with a typical Dutch food preference.

Table 6

Food taste shift of white-collar participants with blue-collar parents

	Parents' collar occupation		Childhood Food Preferences		Adult Food Preferences	
	Blue	White	AGV	Omnivorous	AGV	Omnivorous
Blue-collar participants						
Penny	X		X			X
Raj	X			X	X	
Amy	X		X		X	
Howard		X	X			X
Leonard	X			X	X	
Bernadette	X		X		X	
Sheldon	X		X		X	
White-collar participants						
Lily		X	X			X
Robin	X			X		X
Ted	X		X			X
Marshall		X	X			X
Quinn		X		X		X
Victoria	X		X		X	
Barney	X		X			X

The table above suggests that white-collar participants are more likely to acquire broader omnivorous tastes than blue-collar participants. As children, all participants recalled that their regular childhood meals mainly consisted of potatoes and other starchy-related ingredients. Approximately half participants, white- and blue- collar confided, explained that their parents adopted the Dutch governmental dietary portioning advice called the *aardappel, groente en vlees* (potatoes, vegetables, and meat). Food preferences tend to be expressed by the participants who are upwardly mobile, than those who are not. Participants from blue-collar parents who are also blue-collar participants are less likely to have been exposed to a more omnivorous environment than those who are upwardly mobile.

It has to be noted that geographical location plays an interesting part in these findings. Participants brought up in rural Netherlands all illustrated that they lived off local produce, originating from the local farms or their own grown vegetable gardens. As a contrast, participants brought up in a Dutch city expressed that their parents paid more attention to getting enough food intake and getting the food on the table, rather than eating local products.

My parents made a lot of typical Dutch dishes, like potatoes, vegetables, meat often. I'm actually rarely eating, potatoes. I'm sometimes eating Stamppot. Yeah. And that's

what I sometimes make for myself, or baked potatoes. But I rarely eat full potatoes and we at home did a lot. (Ted, white-collar, Programme Manager)

This quote highlights the conscious food preference shift Ted had made compared to his childhood. This example further supports the argument that the shift in culinary food preferences and/or diets seems to be more prevalent amongst the participants whose parents occupy a white-collar profession, or the participants who are upwardly mobile. This shows a pattern that more upwardly mobile individuals from blue-collar parents are more likely to acquire more diverse culinary taste than those who are not. All participants come from different geographical regions – something ulterior to class or mobility which may affect the results.

4.3.2 Food Purchasing

The purchasing of food can, to a certain extent, provide insight on a person's economic capital. The expressed economical ideas in relation to purchasing food by Bourdieu (2010) do not necessarily resonate with the present findings. Participants attributed their store purchasing habits as a daily important chore, as most of them cook on a daily basis.

I don't do the big shopping anymore because [his] wife goes every day to the shop to see what we're going to eat that day. (Leonard, blue-collar, IT Assistant)

While all participants showcased a tendency of cooking on a daily basis, they showed discrepancies in the motive behind it. White-collar participants depicted their daily purchase more on the spur of the moment, based on the mood and desire of the moment. Blue-collar participants elaborated more on the location where they get their products from as well as the price it cost. Again, the sense of practicality prevails amongst blue-collar participants. Half of the blue-collar participants illustrated that they tried to purchase more from the local market[3] as they found it cheaper than eating out or purchasing food from the grocery store. The dissonance with Bourdieu's (2010) food and profession empirical study may be caused by the recent shift in the food chain industry: general tendencies increased accessibility to diverse

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[3] A public place with stalls selling produces. In the Netherlands, it is often run by farmers on a regular weekly basis. *Dutch*. Markt. (https://www.hollandsemarkten.n)

foods through a more globalized food market, and for broader audiences at a more affordable price[4].

4.4 Crockery

Crockery has experienced unprecedented change over time in terms of its purpose and how it has been acquired. In this research, crockery plays an important role in illustrating elements of personal ownership, and in using crockery as a symbol belonging to etiquette. Participants generally acquired their crockery through purchasing or inheritance. Although I expected at least for some to share that they received crockery as a wedding gift, nobody did.

The conversation around crockery illustrated that those bought up by white-collar parents tend to have more knowledge on crockery. Blue-collar participants tend to place less importance on crocker, although blue-collar participants who married a white-collar participant expressed that they gained in knowledge about more refined crockery.

Table 7

Percentage mention on crockery

Category	White-Collar Participants % Importance	Blue-Collar Participants % Importance
Defining crockery	55.3%	44.6%
Defining crockery ownership	65.5%	34.3%

The table 7 shows that white-collar participants talked about crockery ownership almost twice as much as the blue-collar participants. From analysis, there seems to be a divide between the white-collar participants who own extensive crockery sets and who own practical crockery. The two white-collar participants, Quinn and Robin, owned extensive crockery sets and illustrated similar views. Quinn (white-collar, Conservator & Teacher)

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[4] Netherlands Nielsen Dutch Food Retail Report 2019 shows Affordability as one of the key foodservice drivers.
(https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/report/downloadreportbyfilename?filename=Retail%20Foods_The%20Hague_Netherlands_6-26-2019.pdf)

illustrated stories about her vast crockery collection, which extended from Italian Venetian Cartier crystal glasses down to British blue handle kitchen cutlery. In terms of silverware, she owns Dutch silver inherited from her parents. Robin (white-collar, UN Management Assistant) reported over five different types of dinnerware material she owns, she emphasized the importance of 'good quality' stainless steel, as well as her -silver and family crystal.

> plates.. and normal glasses are nothing fancy. (Robin, white-collar, UN Management Assistant).

Some white-collar and blue-collar participants took a more practical approach to crockery ownership. Their crockery was acquired through popular retailers such as IKEA, Hema, or online discount retailers. Multiple participants spoke of a "functional" set of crockery. For instance, Ted (white-collar, Programme Manager) got his crockery from IKEA during his studies and decided to keep them as they are still functioning, and he has:

> nothing to complain about [as it is a] more functional thing than an aesthetic thing. (Ted, white-collar, Programme Manager)

One cannot help but notice those who were single at the time they purchased their crockery were more likely to focus on function than aesthetics. Aside from this, the notion of taste acquired between the primary or secondary socialization was noticeable amongst participants. All blue-collar participants who married a white-collar participant expressed they gained knowledge about more refined crockery.

4.4.1 Inherited Crockery

One unexpected finding is that there does not seem to be a link between class and inherited etiquette. Participants from both profession groups spoke about inherited crockery. From analysis, more blue-collar participants inherited crockery from family members than white-collar participants. While inherited ownership remains more or less the same amongst both occupation groups, the meaning making of inherited crockery seems to be different.

4.4.2 Aesthetic Choices

The aesthetic choices and preferences are often acquired during periods in which a lot of socialization takes place (Bourdieu, 2010). The findings from my research confirms this; most blue-collar and white-collar participants expressed that they acquired a certain taste during their years of primary education. The language used to define what is good or bad crockery shows discrepancies between both participant groups. In this instance, both participants did not want to make use of "proper" aesthetic choices, yet their reasoning is different. While Quinn (white-collar, Conservator & Teacher) claimed she was often "too lazy" to use her silverware, Sheldon (blue-collar, Crane Operator) communicated that he does not like silverware at all.

Two types of aesthetic groups were found amongst participants: those who expressed a distinguished aesthetic taste, those who focused on the practicality of crockery and those who expressed distinguished aesthetic taste acquired second-hand crockery shops.

> I have an aunt living in the south of France close to Bordeaux. And we would always go to like those flea markets… I bought them all from the market. They were so beautiful, I love it. Yeah. It's the last best place. I got some fake *Galio* I was just thinking of the name but that's also the with a little fly, right. (Penny, blue-collar, Film Assistant)

The quote by Penny (blue-collar, Film Assistant) exemplifies two recurrent results. The first one is that the acquisition of taste was most likely acquired during primary socialization. Penny's taste is brought about by her early years spent with her parents and family, as she pays more attention to the genre of crockery she acquires and describes in detail how much she loves French plates and cutlery styles. The second recurrent finding is that the ownership of nice crockery is subsequently made easier, although the aesthetic taste and knowledge of it, as data shows, may be obtained through means of socialization. Penny experienced this through ownership and acquisition becoming more widely available to the population through car boot sales, flea markets and second-hand shops.

4.4.3 Setting the table

The setting of the table, and the location where people dine, enables deeper reflection on participant's knowledge of etiquette by using crockery as a symbol. This unexpected finding would suggest the following discrepancy within the white-collar participants; those who

shared refined language on etiquette earlier, may be those who are part of, what van Eijck (1999) describes as, the *new middle class.*

> It can also be that we just do it quickly and make the plates already in the kitchen and then just, only sit at the table and eat it. (Barney, white-collar, trader)

The comment by Barney (white-collar, trader) illuminated that putting all the pans on the table is not only more luxurious, but it also reinforces the ideals of putting all the pots and pans on the table. It could be suggested that this is a "new" adopted behavior for the Dutch *new middle class*. There were equally other participants from blue-collar professions who also put all the pans and pots on the table. This suggests the motive of both primary socialization and historical national context.

While aesthetic dispositions are mainly developed through primary socialization, the one noticeable difference amongst participants is the idea of quality. The aesthetic choices of crockery were found to be mainly acquired through childhood upbringing. These results were surprising, as there were mixed levels of knowledge and importance paid to crockery across both professional groups. One third of the participants expressed interest and knowledge towards crockery and acquired this knowledge through their parents and childhood. This being said, the white-collar participants generally expressed a stronger need to illustrate their possession by mimicking the people within their social group. The other two thirds of participants expressed that they valued practicality over aesthetics. The overall findings on crockery ownership and acquisition suggests that the primary socialization process is the main influencer of taste.

4.5 Emotional Management

Emotion management, understood as a transformed commodity into controlled managed emotions, illustrated strongly through participants (Hochschild, 2012). The management of mental emotional and physical behavior, exerted since the early court times as a form to gain power and status, was also strongly echoed in this study (Elias, 2000). White-collar participants mentioned the subject of managing emotions almost a third more than blue collar participants. To better understand how emotional management affects the class and mobility

of participants, these findings will address the commodified emotion (Hochschild, 2012) and repression of emotion through the act of hosting guests or having a normal dinner at home.

Table 8

Percentage emotion management

Category	White-Collar Participants % Importance	Blue-Collar Participants % Importance
Managing emotions	42.3%	57.9%
Suppressing emotions	46.6%	53.3%
Consciously Adapting	79.4%	25.9%

4.5.1 Managed Emotion

The commodified emotions were strongly noticed through white-collar respondents. They expressed a significantly higher ability to emotionally adapt with ease.

So it's when you sit down with some new people, you try to look on what is, what is nice for them, how how do they like to have their dinner, let's say, and then I try to get along with it. (Barney, white-collar, Trader)

This quote by Barney (white-collar, Trader) further supports the suggestion that white-collar participants manage their emotions in order to fit in a specific setting, and also make the other individual at ease.

4.5.2 Suppressed Emotion

Respondents from my research often reported high levels of suppressed emotions. They repressed emotions to keep out of conflict or to emphasize their belonging to a social group. Most white-collar participants in this study articulated a strong sense of managing their emotions based on what they knew but more importantly to maintain their social class and status. Repressed emotions reported by blue-collar participants is slightly higher than white-

collar participants, they found it hard to adapt or repress their emotions to fit different settings.

> I changed my behavior towards my partner because he likes to have his cheese on a cheese plate, and I couldn't care less. (Quinn, white-collar, Conservator & Teacher)

This comment shows that Quinn adapted her behavior as a deliberate act towards her partner. This further suggests that the white-collar participants suppress their emotions in order to maintain their sense of belonging to a social group.

> It is much easier for me if I, let's say, my brother is also in Amsterdam, but I have dinner with him, only. Or if let's say, friends from where we were born. Uh, then it's much easier to have talks about everything. But with people from a very different background are also called it sensibilities here and there. (Sheldon, blue-collar, Crane Operator)

These quotes transpired unease to repress emotions. These findings suggest that blue-collar participants tend to adapt less easily than white-collar people in different environments.

4.5.3 Consciously adapting

The ability to adapt is often based on the premise that one has been taught how and what, during the primary socialization years (Bourdieu, 2010; Parsons & Shils 1962). Blue-collar participants show a significantly higher percentage of consciously adapting than the white-collar participants. Overall, blue-collar participants who were exposed to situations out of their normal comfort zone continuously tried to adapt in order to fit different contexts and also have a tendency of feeling judged, more often than white-collar participants.

> Sometimes you do and you don't see how it affects other people if you don't know them that well. It happens. But I try not to do that, of course… But after this, my wife tells me these things… sometimes I don't see it even. She says, "why do you say that all the time?. (Sheldon, blue-collar, crane operator)

When the queen comes, she has to adapt in our way. Yeah. (Bernadette, blue-collar, Social Assistant)

Bernadette is adamant how people ought to behave to her surroundings, and shares the fact that she would not adapt to anyone else. The findings above can therefore suggest that the management of emotion differs between blue- and white-collar participants through their process of socialization, level of strictness, and exposure to the level of bureaucracy in a profession. This section cannot be fully answered without taking a deeper analysis of mobility as a theme.

Findings illustrated a potential association between having more knowledge of etiquette and being conscious of the choices made concerning etiquette. This was a meaningful difference between the research groups; in order to belong to their social class or group, white-collar participants proactively make conscious decisions concerning etiquette three times more than blue-collar participants . The discrepancy between the socially mobile white-collar participants and the blue-collar participants suggests that the managing of emotions can also be acquired at a later stage in life through big corporations and environments with clear rules and hierarchies.

The findings revealed that blue-collar participants are more likely to manage their emotions concerning etiquette, arguably because they were not exposed to etiquette at an early stage. In addition, the findings suggest that this is related to the discomfort blue-collar participants often felt in settings where rules and manners need to be followed.

4.6 Mobility

Mobility is one of the most important and underlying themes throughout the findings of this research. Mobility, defined as the progression of education and occupational status which affects cultural practices, is widely observed throughout these findings (van Eijck, 1999). The participants' behaviors enabled me to identify which "class" they belong to. By using the participants' occupational status and their parents' occupational status as a base for understanding the mobility patterns, together with the insights on their food etiquette cultural patterns, I was able to identify how the cultural patterns illustrate mobility.

4.6.1 Socialization

White-collar participants with parents from blue-collar professions tended to overact their part in order to fit in. Furthermore, both upwardly mobile white-collar and other white-collar workers are found to have a particularly negating use of language towards those who do not conform to their standard of cultural behavior.

> I know for example that if you say smakelijk eten (enjoy your meal) that is really impolite in higher classes, and smakelijk eten is something that my father used to say to us. So, I know that when I am at Charlotte's, she will cringe when I say it. So, yes, she has told me clearly to stop this and I have tried. I still sometimes do it wrong. I mean... I guess that's getting less and less because people don't really seem to care anymore, which I find sad. (Robin, white-collar, UN Management Assistant)

This quote exemplified the idea of "social exposing" *cultural otherness* to potentially feel more powerful. When the transgressor identifies foreign behavior, it tends to negate it through social alienation. Despite all criticism, this example by Robin showcases signs of upward mobility.

4.6.2 Adaptation & shift in etiquette

Until now, white-collar participants expressed more importance on etiquette and also possessed an ability to navigate food etiquette with ease and poise. However, white-collar participants who are upwardly mobile showed that they did not necessarily feel at ease.

> I can see it as an obstacle. OK, and my dress has to be this, well I have to wear kind of dress and shoes and then it can be like, um. Uh, I think I'll maybe I'm going to be judged, so let's try not to let that happen. (Lily, white-collar, Cultural Funding & Marketing)

This comment emphasized the argument that although upwardly mobile white-collar participants in this research possess similar ranks to the already established white-collar participants, the adaptability levels of upwardly mobile participants are possible however their hesitative behavior and confidence is a barrier to fit comfortably into their new

environments. White-collar participants from blue-collar parents may need to over-emphasize their act in order to feel like they belong to a different social group.

Another interesting finding is that blue-collar participants who married white-collar partners experienced an increase in knowledge on etiquette or table manners. By adapting to their surroundings, through both socialization and increased emotion management, they gained more knowledge on food etiquette and the behaviors of their new social group.

Despite similar professions, the upwardly white-collar people express their newfound status to match other white-collar people. The fact that etiquette is an expression of membership to a social class is recurrently confirmed throughout the findings. For the most part, there are clear cut disparities between white- and blue-collar participants' etiquette behavior which is reflective of their secondary socialization process. What is interesting to note, is that while all white-collar participants are of similar class or status ranks, their behavior is also the same although those who come from blue-collar parents express themselves more strongly. Thus, the findings suggest that the upwardly mobile participants enact etiquette in order to ensure that they belong to their 'newfound' class or status.

The expression of etiquette during the mealtime and through specific taste plays a quintessential role in class, and is especially noted for those who exhibit mobility in their lifetime.

4.7 Summary of findings

This study aimed to inquire on meal etiquette as a cultural expression of class and mobility in the Netherlands. This chapter includes a discussion of the findings related to the literature on etiquette from the European court period until today, the management of self, the cultural dispositions based on mobility, and what implications this may have on the class and mobility of working professionals in the Netherlands. Because the findings reveal behavioral differences among people who are upwardly mobile and those who are non-mobile, I will reflect briefly upon the effect of upwardly mobile people in the Netherlands to further illustrate the implications of the findings from this study for further research. To conclude, I will address the limitations of the study, as well as areas for future research.

This chapter comprises findings, discussions, and future research opportunities to help answer the following research question and sub-question:

(RQ): *How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in the Netherlands?*

(Sub RQ): *How does etiquette relate to class, where class is both class of origin and destination?* The rise in stratification, identified through the theory of civilization, the management of emotions, and food etiquette led to the following four themes: (1) how the rise of etiquette and interdependence led to the division of labor, (2) how the management of emotions is contributing to class and mobility, (3) how food cooking choices may distinguish which class one belongs to, (4) and how social mobility caused cultural food practices to shift. These factors are likely impacted by a person's primary socialization, their education on manners and etiquette, their mobility over the years, and the acquisition of new cultural food practices gained over time. All of these factors contribute towards how people from different working professional groups (white- and blue-collar) illustrate their food etiquette, which in turn shows which social group they belong to as well as how upwardly mobile people manage to gain new manners and preferences around food etiquette.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore and examine how meal etiquette affects class and mobility in the Netherlands, focusing on a sociological theoretical framework as well as qualitative interviews with Dutch residents. In the final section of this study, the following central question will be answered:

How do class and mobility affect the etiquette of the meal in the Netherlands?

Due to the exploratory nature of the research question, the historical relationship of existing literature on food etiquette, social stratification, management of emotion, and mobility, needed to be established. This provided a theoretical framework and further installs relevance for this study. Etiquette happens because of class and social mobility. The theoretical framework has established that, as a cultural expression, etiquette can provide distinct insights into social stratification. This is specifically relevant in the Netherlands as the recent growing upwardly mobile population and socio-economic developments have unclear impact on the present class and mobility.

Throughout the research paper, meaningful relationships between the theoretical framework and the qualitative interviews gave context for discussion and analysis on how class and mobility affects etiquette as a cultural expression. The thematic analysis and interpretations of findings provided greater understanding of the meaning and impact of etiquette for Dutch inhabitants. The interpretation of meal etiquette as well as intergenerational development illustrated by the participants illuminated the current social stratified dynamics in the Netherlands. The main themes interpreted in this research resulted in the following concluding findings.

The first finding is that the more upwardly mobile Dutch citizens (i.e., white-collar professionals that were raised by people categorized as blue-collar workers) place more importance on food etiquette. The likely cause of this perpetuating physical and emotional over-exertion of etiquette is key for upwardly mobile people to feel part of their class of arrival. This finding suggests that the theoretical grounding works of Van Eijck (1999) investigating the impact of mobility through social individuals' cultural practices, proved very relevant and well fitted for this research. The qualitative methodology used during this paper also allowed to identify the importance of etiquette in the daily lives of both white- and blue- collar participants, and how the manners were enacted.

The second finding, a building block from the first one, identified that the more upwardly mobile Dutch citizens (i.e., white-collar workers raised by people categorized as blue-collar workers) are more likely to assign signifiers of status to food purchasing and consumption behavior. These participants managed to learn about food etiquette from secondary socialization and show comfort in their newly acquired skills. The pioneering views of Elias's (2000) Civilization Process through etiquette, and notable to the interdependence as a key factor for the formation of social classes, fulfills a foundational argument in this research. These findings suggest that, in general, it is possibly related to the fluidity of Dutch society.

5.1 Limitations

Most of the limitations of this study stem from the short period of time in which the research process took place. Due to this constraint, I was unable to collect a bigger sample of participants which would have increased credibility and transferability. Another limitation is that I was unable to test the regional differences within the Netherlands. As established in the literature review and reflected in the findings, the differences between Dutch cities are quite significant. Finally, I was unable to use a more refined notion of class due to the low number of respondents. While these are current limitations to this study, they offer opportunities for future research.

5.2 Further Research

As previously established, the notion of class in the Netherlands in this study, is split into two professional groups (white- and blue-collar). The opportunity to further segment these samples into wider groups using more national centric data is the next evident step to delve further into understanding social stratification in the Netherlands. This may require specific partnerships and collaborations with governmental agencies and offices, which could also contribute to more advanced research on social inequality in the Netherlands. So far, the notion of etiquette and religion combined in contemporary research is quite limited. A deeper analysis on the effect of religion and class through the use of food etiquette is another branch which could help understand better contemporary links between cultural practices and mobility in the Netherlands.

This research has revealed the importance of meal etiquette as an inherent part to get a better grasp of the ongoing stratification in the Netherlands. The socio-economic development which occurred in the Netherlands over the last century affected class and mobility. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Today, the Netherlands is more diverse than ever. One way to navigate these changes is to use the qualitative method I applied in this present research, which consisted of understanding people's perspective on etiquette within different occupational groups. This type of research could contribute towards informing the government and social institutions on development of social stratification. If the Netherlands strives to continue its journey towards a more horizontal and egalitarian society, then the rules of etiquette and the understanding of the present living population in the Netherlands, must not be taken for granted.

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Appendix A

Topic Guide

Topic	Question prompts for respondents
Personal Information	● Nationality
	● Gender
	● What year were you born
	● Number of years residing in the Netherlands
	● Place of birth
	● Profession
	● Parent's professions
	● Current status situation. Please select of the options below:
	○ Single ○ Married ○ Other AND
	○ Independent ○ Parent ○ Care-Taker
	● Maximum study obtained. Please select one of the options below:
	○ VMBO ○ HAVO ○ VWO ○ MBO ○ HBO ○ WO ○ Master ○ Research Master ○ PhD ○ Other (please specify)
Getting to know the respondent, as well as his/her habits around eating and etiquette of serving the dinner.	● How and where do you spend most of your meals before COVID? Do you eat alone/ with friends and/or family?
	● In a normal weekday situation (prior lockdown) how many times a week do you (or someone of your family cook)? How many times a week do you order takeaway?
	● When you eat at home, where do you usually eat? (dining table, in front of tv)

	● What is your favourite cuisine genre to cook?
The respondent's thoughts, meaning, and feelings regarding the idea of dining at home and investigate the impactors.	● Can you tell me what a weekday/night typical meal is like in your home? ● How does it compare to when you were a child? ● How strict was your education around table manners? Could you give an example of what was important values to your parents in terms of manners? Name three values? ● How do your meals differ between home and work? Cite some examples if possible
The respondent's feelings regarding dinning etiquette for themselves/ People around them.	● When you have people over for lunch or dinner, could you run me through a sequence of preparation for this dinner? ● Do you pay close attention to other people's behaviours when they come over to your place? If so, can you give me an example? ● Are there any behavior that others may do during the mealtime that you find annoying or offensive?
The respondent's importance to ownership and use of crockery.	● What sort of cutlery, plates and glasses do you own? When did you purchase it? ● Do you pay attention to the different crockery or cutlery brands? Can you name a few? ● Do you use different cutlery and glass sets for special occasions? What are these occasions? (Define what a special occasion means to you)
The respondent's Managing of emotions.	● How would you describe your general emotion when hosting people having people over for dinner at your place? as in , they prepare the meal, clean the house beforehand, make sure to have wine, etc?)When does it vary? ● Would you adapt your behavior or 'manners' to fit a specific eating context (at home, at friends, at work)? If so how? ● Do you ever feel judged when eating the etiquette? Why? ● Do you have any particular likes or dislikes around table manners or etiquette?

Appendix B

Social media post - LinkedIn

Kimmy Colombo
Master's Candidate of Art, Culture & Society at...
3mo • Edited • 🌐

Dear LinkedIn network & beyond,

Are you living and working in The Netherlands? For my master thesis, I am looking for Dutch residing participants occupying a blue-collar or white-collar job to take part in a 45-minute virtual interview.

Your contribution will not only be greatly appreciated but is also an inherent contribution towards my research project around #food (preparing/ordering, serving, amongst other habits). I cannot say more as I do want to create biases prior interviews, however, I can explain the entirety of my research after your participation of course. By participating in my research project, you will enter a draw to win a 40 euro voucher to use on Bol or Amazon.

If you are able to make some time you can get in touch with me via LinkedIn or email
(584072kc@student.eur.nl). Thank you very much in advance for your help!

Best regards,

Kimmy Colombo

MA Student Art, Culture & Society
Erasmus University Rotterdam

#recruitingparticipants #help #masterthesis
#university #qualitativeresearch #participants
#bluecollar #bluecollarjobs #corporatejobs
#whitecollarjobs #netherlandsjobs

Appendix C

The European Socio-economic Classification (Iser, N/A)

ESeC Class	Common Term	Employment regulation
Group 1 – white-collar ocupations		
Large employers, higher grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations	Higher salariat	Service Relationship
Lower grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations and higher grade technician and supervisory occupations	Lower salariat	Service Relationship
Intermediate occupations	Higher grade white collar workers	Mixed
Small employer and self employed occupations (exc agriculture etc)	Petit bourgeoisie or independents	-
Self employed occupations (agriculture etc)	Petit bourgeoisie or independents	-
Group 2 – blue-collar occupations		
Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations	Higher grade blue collar workers	Mixed
Lower services, sales and clerical occupations	Lower grade white collar workers	Labour Contract
Lower technical occupations*	Skilled workers	Labour Contract
Routine occupations*	Semi- and non-skilled workers	Labour Contract
Never worked and long-term unemployed	Unemployed	-

Appendix D

Operational categories and sub-categories classes

Analytic classes		Operational categories and sub-categories classes
1,1	L1	Employers in large establishments
	L2	Higher managerial and administrative occupations
1,2	L3	Higher professional occupations
		L3.1 'Traditional' employees
		L3.2 'New' employees
		L3.3 'Traditional' self-employed
		L3.4 'New' self-employed
2	L4	Lower professional and higher technical occupations
		L4.1 'Traditional' employees
		L4.2 'New' employees
		L4.3 'Traditional' self-employed
		L4.4 'New' self-employed
	L5	Lower managerial and administrative occupations
	L6	Higher supervisory occupations
3	L7	Intermediate occupations
		L7.1 Intermediate clerical and administrative occupations
		L7.2 Intermediate sales and service occupations
		L7.3 Intermediate technical and auxiliary occupations
		L7.4 Intermediate engineering occupations
4	L8	Employers in small organisations
		L8.1 Employers in small establishments in industry, commerce, services etc.
		L8.2 Employers in small establishments in agriculture
	L9	Own account workers
		L9.1 Own account workers (non-professional)
		L9.2 Own account workers (agriculture)
5	L10	Lower supervisory occupations
	L11	Lower technical occupations
		L11.1 Lower technical craft occupations
		L11.2 Lower technical process operative occupations
6	L12	Semi-routine occupations
		L12.1 Semi-routine sales occupations
		L12.2 Semi-routine service occupations

		L12.3 Semi-routine technical occupations
		L12.4 Semi-routine operative occupations
		L12.5 Semi-routine agricultural occupations
		L12.6 Semi-routine clerical occupations
		L12.7 Semi routine childcare occupations
7	L13	Routine occupations
		L13.1 Routine sales and service occupations
		L13.2 Routine production occupations
		L13.3 Routine technical occupations
		L13.4 Routine operative occupations
		L13.5 Routine agricultural occupations
8	L14	Never worked and long-term unemployed
		L14.1 Never worked
		L14.2 Long-term unemployed
*	L15	Full-time students
*	L16	Occupations not stated or inadequately described
*	L17	Not classifiable for other reasons

Appendix E

Overview Participants

Pseudonym	Profession	Age	Nationality	Birth Place		Mother Profession	Father Profession	Qualification	Religion
Blue-collar participants									
Penny	Film Assistant	37	Dutch	Vlaardingen	South Holland	Set Designer	Artist	MBO	Protestant
Raj	Cheesemonger	27	Dutch	Gouda	South Holland	Clerk	Farmer	MBO	No
Amy	Shop Assistant / Maker	37	Dutch	Vlaardingen	South Holland	Entrepreneur / Maker	Entrepreneur / Maker	HBO	No
Howard	Navy Officer	24	Dutch	Enschede	Twente	Lean Management (self-employed)	Policy Making at the Ministry of the Army	HBO	Yes
Leonard	IT Tel Com Assistance	55	Dutch	Roermond	Limburg	Stay-at-home mum	Ship worker	MBO	Protestant
Bernadette	Social Assistant	48	Dutch	Ter Aar	South Holland	Farmer	Farmer	MBO	No
Sheldon	Crane Operator	67	Dutch	Westwoud	North Holland	Farmer	N/A	MBO	Protestant
White-collar participants									
Lily	Cultural Funding and Marketing	32	Dutch	Nieuwerkerk	South Holland	Nurse Lecturer	Nurse Lecturer	MA	No
Robin	UN Management Assistant	59	Dutch	Eindhoven	North Brabant	Stay-at-home mum	Entrepreneur (Self-Made)	BA	Catholic
Ted	Programme Manager	30	Dutch	Zevenaar	Gelderland	Primary School Teacher	Builder	MA	No
Marshall	Lecturer & Laboratory Manager	62	Dutch	Sleen	Drenthe	Nurse/Housewife	Policeman	PhD	No
Quinn	Conservator & Teacher	74	Dutch	Hilversum	North Holland	Freelance Teacher	Banker	BA	Protestant
Victoria	Online Editor	24	Dutch	Voorburg	South Holland	Music Teacher	IT Assistant	MA	No
Barney	Trader	26	Dutch	Noordoostpolder	Flevoland	Assistant	Baker	MA	No

Appendix F

Code book

Code	Sub-code	Example
Etiquette	-Defining Etiquette (good/bad) -Practical Etiquette -Time Conscious -Mindful Etiquette -Upholding Etiquette -Negating Etiquette -Religion	I admit that most of my friends have excellent table manners. But sometimes I meet people and I look at them and think, this is not very pleasant to look at. (Quinn, white-collar, Conservator and Teacher)
The Meal	-Prepared Meal -Social Importance -Necessity -Togetherness -Formal Meal -Practical Meal -Strategic Positioning	I think it's nice to have a moment and one moment in the day that we're all together, and have dinner and it's nice to chat and so. (Sheldon, blue-collar, Crane Operator)

Food	-Food Preference -Defining food (healthy/unhealthy) -Defining food (good/bad) -Food purchasing habits	George really likes to cook but like to do it like good. So when I cook it's mostly something just easy or not that long because it's also during the week. So you don't want to eat too late. And when George cooks in the weekend sometimes he is like oh about like a giant peace of lamb, i'll marinate it for six hours. (Lily, white-collar, Cultural Funding and Marketing)
Crockery	-Defining Good/Bad Aesthetics -Crockery Ownership -Crockery Inheritance -Setting the Table	With pots, for example, it needs to be lasting for years. I don't want something that can break, plastic stuff that will melt in pots like spatulas made from plastic. It's like why you do it, you know. You're using heat, it's not good. What would be perfect for me is like pots and pans that last a lifetime. (Penny, blue-collar, Film Assistant)
Emotional Management	-Managing emotions -Suppressing emotions -Trying to adapt -Struggling to adapt	I do judge, but I don't always say it's mostly the saying. I mean, I have my opinions, but unless they are my kids, then then I won't say and I won't say much. unless it's repeated or on purpose. (Leonard, white-collar, IT Assistant)

| **Mobility** | -Shift in behavior
-Acquired new table manners
-Shift in etiquette
-Shift in diet | For example, with a napkin. My first response isn't to put it on my lap, I check if someone else does it. But if I'm at my home and someone does that, I don't. Yeah. I'm not going to follow. OK. I don't notice it. Yeah, yeah. |