

How the cultural elite defines its social status

A comparative study between the consumption patterns of young urban men and women

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media accounts satirically touched upon the consumption behaviour of contemporary young urban professionals. While their choices seem to be based on ethical values, they often signal social status. Even though the contemporary young urban professional has no intention of doing so, their ethical consumption draws symbolic boundaries and upholds a system of social stratification.

While previous research has gone in depth about social status and consumption, the role of gender has not been thoroughly explored in this context. Secondly, academic literature about contemporary young urban professionals and their lifestyles is lacking in the Netherlands. Therefore, this thesis explores the following research question: ‘How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?’.

The theoretical framework underlying this thesis is largely based on the work of Thorstein Veblen (conspicuous consumption and leisure), Pierre Bourdieu (social distinction, cultural capital, habitus, lifestyles and tastes), David Brooks (the lifestyles of the Bobos) and Elizabeth Currid-Halkett (the aspirational class). This way, social distinction and its related concepts are explained and illustrated by using examples from recent history (2000 and 2017).

A qualitative approach was used for this thesis, using purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews as a way of collecting data. The ten interviews (five with men, five with women) were transcribed and coded. The chosen method of analysis was thematic analysis.

The findings reveal that the intention of the interviewees is rarely to explicitly distinguish themselves as a status group. Rather, their habitus has resulted in a habit of consuming based on knowledge. This is visible in multiple aspects of their life: their consumption of goods, their careers, how they spend their leisure time, and more. Most of it is in service of their aspirations. However, their lifestyles and adhering consumption behaviour keep on drawing symbolic boundaries and thus uphold a system of social stratification.

While the intentions behind consuming appeared similar in this thesis, the actual goods and activities were different per gender. The men and women in this study conform to

earlier research: women tend to consume more socially and are more occupied with fashion, whereas men tend to consume more out of curiosity and functionality are more focused on activities such as sports.

Even though contemporary young urban professionals claim to consume based on their values, they have displayed that this is limited. When their own comfort is at risk, there is a boundary or excuse, meaning their actions do not always correspond with their ideals. For example, the interviewees claim to live sustainable lifestyles but fly frequently. This thesis contributes to the debate on contemporary social distinction and reproduction in the urban setting of the Netherlands and invites further research on gendered dynamics within this context.

KEYWORDS: Inconspicuous consumption, young urban professionals, gender differences, status symbols, cultural capital

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1. Introduction

It is a regular weekend morning in Amsterdam. A coffee shop has just opened its doors in an emerging neighbourhood. Customers are chatting about how they found this place on social media and wonder what type of dairy-free milk they should ask for in their coffee or matcha. Soon, the shop fills up with young people dressed in similar outfits, leaving again with freshly baked sourdough bread in their sustainable bags as they hop on their e-bikes.

These scenes entail more than simple preferences. They represent new forms of social distinction, carried out by consumption habits that function as markers of status. Sociologists like Veblen (2009) and Bourdieu (1973) have already displayed that social status is maintained through lifestyles and tastes. In recent years, these typical consumption patterns of young urban inhabitants have been exposed by multiple people and different media (Chayka, 2024). One of these media accounts is the Instagram account @havermelkelite, which emerged in 2020. The maker posts memes about the urban elite of Amsterdam, mainly about their lifestyle and consumption patterns. Worldwide accounts like this have emerged and post about the urban elite of their city (Chayka, 2024).

Jonas Kooyman, a journalist based in Amsterdam, started the satire Instagram profile @havermelkelite and interviewed the American professor of Planning Elizabeth Currid-Halkett. She wrote her book, *The Sum of Small Things - A Theory of the Aspirational Class*, about the contemporary urban elite. In her book and in the interview with Jonas Kooyman, Currid-Halkett describes how consumption patterns and status symbols change over time (Currid-Halkett, 2017; Kooyman, 2019). Where traditional elites once displayed their wealth by luxurious goods, contemporary urban elites distinguish themselves through ‘cultural signifiers’, meaning they display their cultural capital, for example, in discussions about politics (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 18). This shift raises new questions. What is prestigious today? How is this situated in the Netherlands? And what is the role of gender in this situation? Earlier research describes men and women as different consumers (Deori et al., 2023: 125; Monden, 2015; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009: 226; Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008: 495). How is this visible in the consumption behaviour of the contemporary urban elite? And does gender thus play a role in status display? In this thesis, these questions come together and form the following research question: *How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?*

This study used qualitative interviewing as the method of data collection and focuses on Dutch young urban professionals.

This research dives deeper into the consumption patterns of an upcoming status group and aims to understand how social distinction takes place through new status symbols in the contemporary urban area in the Netherlands. Also, the norms, values and meanings behind the need for social distinction are addressed and potentially updated, with a highlight on differences between genders in the research group. How does this status group distinguish itself from other groups? How consciously does this happen? And what is the role of gender in this matter? This research aims to generate a deeper understanding of these contemporary consumption patterns and the meanings behind them by comparing the findings of this research with existing theories.

2. Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework contains background theories of relevant concepts for this research and highlights previous literature about similar groups as researched in this thesis. Together, this forms a starting point to further study the consumption habits of contemporary male and female young urban professionals. In this literature section, theories about social distinction, such as those of Bourdieu and Veblen, are elaborated. Here, consumption is linked to social groups and how they use consumption to display their social status. From there on, theory about the contemporary situation in the global West follows and mentions the young urban professionals and their characteristics, especially those linked to consumption. Lastly, the differences between genders in consumption are part of this literature section. This way, the research starts from theories about social distinction, the contemporary young urban professional and male and female consumption: the three key elements that the research question contains. As most of the literature in this chapter stems from American research and little research about this specific group has been conducted in the Netherlands, a translation to the context of contemporary young urban professionals in the Netherlands will be presented as well.

2.1 Social distinction in the global West: pre-existing theories

This research is based on multiple theoretical starting points. These theories will be elaborated in this section and help to understand social stratification and status display by the means of consumption behaviour, before researching and analysing the contemporary Dutch situation. Even though this research is inductive, this section offers a theoretical context to eventually give meaning to the empirical data.

Theories about social hierarchy and class have been present for a long time. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato already wrote about similar topics back in their time. Many sociologists later added theory to this topic (Dooremalen et al., 2019: 25 & 35). Social stratification refers to the ranking of human groups within a society. These social positions tend to be visible in different ways, such as by taste and manners. The way by which people distinguish themselves within this stratification system is called *social distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984: 6). The showcasing of this social position, or status, is especially visible in consumption patterns (Kerbo, 2006).

In his work, *the theory of the leisure class*, Veblen (2009) elaborates how social stratification is maintained, how the display of status is a very conscious action, and how consumption relates to this. He studied how *the leisure class* shapes its lifestyle and what status symbols are consumed as a means of social distinction. When he speaks of the leisure class, he refers to the upper class who have the means (economic capital) for leisure. As people stay in their social circle, they do not need to overly show their wealth through leisure and consumption, as their social circle is aware of their social status. However, when they find themselves outside of their social circle, the need for visibly distinguishing themselves from lower classes and proving their status gets higher (Veblen, 2009: 123). Here, the concepts of *conspicuous leisure* and *conspicuous consumption* come into play. This type of consumption or leisure serves to display that one belongs to the leisure class. Veblen (2009: 33) defines conspicuous leisure as a ‘non-productive consumption of time’ to display a higher social position than the physical labour class. Conspicuous consumption refers to objects clearly expensive, wasteful and often impractical. In addition, the impracticality of personal ornamentation, such as long nails or high heels, displays the absence of physical labour.

Max Weber (1946) had a more detailed and nuanced take on how social stratification is maintained, compared to Veblen. According to Weber, social inequality is not only a matter of economic differences, but rather shaped by three interrelated components: class, status, and party. Class refers to a person’s economic position and access to material resources. Party concerns one’s political power and ability to influence decision-making within society. Status, in contrast, refers to social prestige and recognition, often derived from lifestyle, taste, and consumption patterns rather than wealth alone (Liberatos et al., 1988: 89; Weber, 1946, as cited in DellaPosta et al., 2015: 1484).

Weber introduced the concept of ‘status groups’ to describe social collectives that are formed based on shared lifestyles and cultural practices. These groups distinguish themselves not necessarily through economic means, but through symbolic boundaries such as taste, aesthetic preferences, and morally valued consumption. While Weber builds on Veblen’s idea of consumption as a display of social class, he broadens the framework by emphasising how cultural and political factors also contribute to maintaining social stratification (Weber, 2011: 60).

Later, Bourdieu (1984: 245) also writes about how social stratification is an ongoing phenomenon and how this process and system are upheld. In his work, he emphasises how dispositions, such as taking over the norms and values from your upbringing, determine and influence one’s taste and consumption habits. He introduces different forms of *capital* in his

essay *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction* (Bourdieu, 1973). In his book *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (1984: 114), he elaborates on these various types of capital: economic capital (financial resources), social capital (social connections and networks), cultural capital (skills, education level, knowledge) and symbolic capital (recognition and prestige). Often, the place where one is born determines the presence or absence of these capitals. These different types of capital can determine people's social position and can influence each other. For example, having a good network (social capital) can result in job opportunities, resulting in higher economic capital. Or being born into a family with high cultural capital will more likely get you a degree in higher education, resulting in recognition (symbolic capital) and a well-paying occupation (economic capital). Social status is thus not only observable by economic goods, but also by less obvious ways found in cultural, social or symbolic capital.

These types of capital (including social class and level of education) are connected to - and determine – aesthetic tastes and consumption habits (Bourdieu, 1979, as cited in Van Maanen, 2009: 53). This means that someone with high economic capital, but lower cultural capital (such as an entrepreneur with a lower level of education and no or little knowledge about arts and culture) can differ greatly in their taste and consumption from someone with lower economic capital but higher cultural capital (such as a less economically wealthy artist who is highly educated and interested in culture and literature). Yet both persons can be viewed as elite groups (in terms of social power) in society, even though they are very different types of people with different means that contribute to their acquired status.

High cultural capital is connected to the cultural elite class (that can also possess high economic capital), often possessing a highbrow taste, by which they (unconsciously) distinguish themselves from people with less cultural capital. DiMaggio (1982: 189) explains elite status cultures: *“the specific distinctive cultural traits, tastes and styles of individuals who share a common sense of honour based upon and reinforced by shared conventions.*

In this research, the focus is primarily on the cultural elites. After elaborating on who the cultural elite is, the next question is: how does the cultural elite then distinguish itself? What does this look like? Bourdieu says cultural capital can appear in different states: *embodied, institutionalised, and objectified.* By the embodied state, he means the set of (aesthetic) dispositions passed on by generations in family and school life. The institutionalised state is measurable by the level of education via diplomas, good universities, and other forms of institutionalised recognition. By the objectified state, Bourdieu refers to cultural objects, such as books and paintings (Van Maanen: 2009: 59). These possessions not

only hold economic value but also serve as symbolic value. By displaying a certain aesthetic via objects, one also suggests possessing a certain taste and thus insinuates that one belongs to a group with high cultural capital (Van Maanen, 2009: 59). In social stratification, different class positions result in distinct worldviews. And so, class subcultures display different lifestyles, tastes and consumption (Bourdieu, 1984, as cited in Kerbo, 2006: 7).

However, conspicuous consumption and leisure, which symbolise(d) high levels of cultural capital, are subject to change (Currid-Halkett, 2017:8). The status symbols that insinuate wealth or knowledge are not the same as a century ago. Western society no longer consists of the two groups that Veblen distinguished (those who carry out physical labour and those who do not). New social groups have emerged, and so have new status symbols (Allan, 2006: 43; Hanley, 2011). The next section will dive deeper into these contemporary forms of social stratification and consumption patterns.

2.2 Established status groups and their consumption

Throughout time, different social groups were established and studied by different researchers. In this section, similar groups as the research group of this study will be highlighted, to display how the ‘predecessors’ of the contemporary young urban professional distinguished themselves as status groups. From this section, it becomes clear that status groups like the one that is central in this thesis are not a new phenomenon. However, status groups adjust to their time and situation, as will become clear throughout this section.

2.2.1 Young urban professionals

In the 1980s, American journalists started to write about ‘young urban professionals’ (yup/yuppies), as a result of the increase in young people who moved to urban areas (Rottenberg, 1980). This status group consists of people in their twenties and thirties, located in an urban setting of upward mobility. They belong to the upper middle class and are academically schooled. They often work for corporate businesses and find themselves in a ‘Wall Street culture’: focused on making financial success and climbing the social ladder (Currid-Halkett, 2017:11; Kooyman, 2024: 26). The consumption behaviour of the yuppies is quite ostentatious and conspicuous. Their status display evolves around material goods such as expensive brands, cars and dinners. This corresponds with their focus on achieving financial success and displaying the upward mobility that they are in.

2.2.2 *Bobos in paradise*

About twenty years later, David Brooks (2000) saw a new social group emerge, which shows similarities with the yuppies in terms of higher education and financial means, but with a different and more reflexive way of displaying status. In his book *Bobos in Paradise*, Brooks writes about the bohemian bourgeoisie (Bobos) of the metropolises in the United States. He calls these people Bobos, because they conform to the materialistic lifestyle of the bourgeoisie (the yuppies from the 1980s) but combine this with the ethical and creative values of the bohemians (the hippies from the 1960s).

Bobos typically belong to the economic upper classes of society but feel a sense of discomfort in their economic wealth. This is because in their cultural milieu, academic and creative accomplishments are a more respected form of status display than just being able to purchase expensive goods. Bobos do not want to be perceived as ‘vulgar’ capitalists solely focused on status and money, as they perceive the yuppies from the 80s (Brooks, 2000: 80). Being materialistic is too superficial to them and does not show cultural or academic interests or accomplishments. Brooks states that, in the upcoming information society, knowledge and ideas, closely linked to cultural capital, are equally vital to belonging to the upper classes as economic capital. This knowledge is visible in the “conscious” and “moral” consumption of the Bobos: they purchase ethical or locally produced goods and eat organic and/or vegan. This demonstrates that they possess a lot of knowledge of what is healthy, ethical and sustainable. It is thus still a form of status display, just less materialistic.

To know which items can be classified as such, a lot of cultural capital is needed. Brooks (2000: 85) describes one rule of thumb that the Bobos seem to adhere to: items can still be expensive and luxurious, as long as owning them can be presented as authentic or ethical. To spend a large amount of money on a luxury item that one does not need is ostentatious, but splurging money on something that one ‘needs’ shows prestige. For example, spending thousands of dollars on a jacuzzi, flatscreen TV, or a showy boat is vulgar, but spending the same amount on hiking gear, an elevated bathroom or kitchen is prestigious, because those expenses can be qualified as necessities, authentic or ethical. The same principle goes for travelling. According to Brooks, the educated elite are all travel snobs to some extent. Their journey must be purposeful, for example, by learning something or having an emotional breakthrough. Places where vulgar tour buses full of people come to take loads of pictures are avoided (Brooks, 2000: 205).

Another trade of the Bobo is spirituality. They are not necessarily religious but occupied with wellness and self-care. This is visible in activities such as meditation, yoga and journaling. When it comes to politics, the Bobos seem to be progressive and leftish. However, this only goes so far: the boundary is having to give up their own (financial) comfort (Brooks, 2000: 225-227). The Bobos thus consume more knowledge-based, displaying a higher cultural capital than the largely materialist yuppies from the 1980s, within their comfort zone.

2.2.3 The aspirational class

In her book *The Sum of Small Things* Elizabeth Currid-Halkett (2017) writes about the 'aspirational class'. Even though she calls this group 'class', it is actually a status group, which is also situated in the bigger cities of the United States. The aspirational class can be seen as an evolved version of the yuppies and Bobos; however, there are some significant differences. They do not necessarily have the financial means of the Bobos: their economic capital would rate them as middle class, even though they earn above-average salaries. Their cultural capital would put them in a higher social position, though. They are progressive twenty- and thirty-year-olds and live in urban areas. They are academically schooled and work in knowledge-based jobs, like the yuppies and Bobos.

The aspirational class is less self-conscious in their consumption than the Bobos used to be. However, they spend a lot of money to display their social status. And they do so in a very specific way.

Knowledge is power for this group, as most members are highly educated and consume based on knowledge (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 2). This means expensive items will not necessarily bring a person higher status in this group. For example, as with the Bobos, it is okay to spend lots of money on your bathroom to make it a 'mindfulness' space, but it is vulgar to spend lots of money on a flat screen tv (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 19). Consuming material goods is no longer a clear signal of one's social status, but consuming the right items or services based on knowledge is. This shift in method of sustaining social stratification is not uncommon. It is normal for a stratification system not to stay stable over time, as society and the economy constantly change (Kerbo, 2006: 9). The aspirational class thus distances itself from material goods or materialist values, but not because they are uncomfortable with wealth. Consuming based on knowledge and on a shared value system will signal one's social status to others 'in the know'.

Currid-Halkett builds on Veblen's theory about how social distinction is a conscious process, as she argues that people intentionally consume to display their social status. She also advocates for the deeper meaning behind our consumption behaviour: "Consumption is part of how we define ourselves as individuals and vis-à-vis social groups (as members and outsiders and sometimes both at the same time)" (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 3). Consumption, and social stratification, is thus two sided: on the one hand it is about belonging to a group, and on the other hand it is about distinguishing yourself from the groups that you do not want to be associated with. However, the aspirational class lacks self-consciousness in their consumption behaviour. This means they still display their social status and to what groups they belong and to what groups they do not belong, but less consciously than Veblen's leisure class (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 19). For example, their consumption behaviour is more subtle than the consumption behaviour of Veblen's leisure class, which used conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure to display their social status and economic wealth. The commodities or leisure activities consumed by the aspirational class are not expensive per se, but hold symbolic value. Consuming based on values is a much less conspicuous form of status display than consuming with the intention to actively show your social status. For example, members of the aspirational class eat vegetarian because of the health and climate benefits and not to actively signal their social status to others. For them, consumption is based on knowledge and values and less on status display. However, this subtle, unconscious and inconspicuous consumption also results in the perseverance of boundaries between the aspirational class and other status groups, as the goods that belong to this group are now based on knowledge and values and no longer on expensiveness. This makes it harder for 'outsiders' to recognise which symbols mark belonging to this status group (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 22).

2.2.4 Conclusion

Chapter 2.2 highlights different status groups throughout recent history that are relevant to this study, all following up around twenty years after the other. The yuppies were first identified as a status group in big cities in the United States. Their status was mostly supported by making a career (in the setting of Wall Street culture) and displaying this by economic wealth and material possessions. Around twenty years later, Brooks defined the Bobos. However, while also possessing economic capital, they also have high cultural capital and focus more on displaying their cultural side. That does not mean status display cannot be expensive, but it must imply culture and knowledge. Lastly, in 2017, Currid-Halkett writes

about the aspirational class, the group expected to show the most similarities with the research group, as they have been relatively recently studied. They have fewer financial means than the yuppies or Bobos but do have high cultural capital and display this in their consumption habits. A shift took place: the yuppies spent their money on material goods that displayed their financial status, such as expensive cars; the Bobos spent their money on material goods as well, but to show their cultural capital and knowledge, such as an elevated kitchen or sports gear. Lastly, the aspirational class spent their money less on expensive goods, but with the very intention of displaying richness and responsibility in terms of (cultural) knowledge, such as eating vegan or doing yoga. In the next section, the contemporary ‘evolved’ version of these groups will be discussed.

2.3 The contemporary young urban professional as a status group

After the status groups discussed in section 2.2, this section will dive deeper into the contemporary and similar status group that began to stand out in urban areas. Over the past few years, this group has gained popularity on social media, though their case in the Netherlands has not been as scientifically researched yet as the former groups. In this study, this group will be referred to as the ‘contemporary young urban professional’.

Whereas Currid-Halkett (2017: 19) argues that the consumption habits of the aspirational class are quite unconscious and inconspicuous, this might no longer be the case. Many popular satire platforms have emerged and called this group out for their specific consumption behaviour. In New York, there is the Instagram account @nolitadirtbag, in London @real_housewives_of_clapton and @socks_house_meeting, in Berlin @berlinclubmemes, in Sydney @monkeyboy.sydney, and so there are many more. According to Jonas Kooyman, creator of the similar Dutch Instagram account @havermelkelite, “In every city, you have a different niche meme account, but they all kind of resemble each other” (Chayka, 2024).

The followers of the accounts are largely part of the group made fun of. As stated in the introduction, Jonas Kooyman noticed a certain type of yup taking over city life in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He calls them the ‘oatmilk elite’. His Instagram account has over 212,000 followers and every weekend Kooyman asks his followers what their most oatmilk-elite action of the weekend was, resulting in many interactions in which people (anonymously) tell stories about their social life and consumption habits. The increasing

popularity and recognition of such social media accounts show that this 'oatmilk elite' can be seen as a status group. Their taste, consumption and practices have become widely recognisable and predictable.

Social life in the 2020s looks very different from social life in the 1980s, when the young urban professionals as a group were first characterised. And thus, this group has changed too. Whereas they still have well-paying knowledge-based jobs, the cost of living in the urban area in the Netherlands has increased largely over the past years, resulting in a higher income, but in lower purchasing power (CFO, 2024; Kooyman, 2024). Buying a house, for example, has become very challenging. Another big influence which shaped this group is the emergence of social media, making it possible to compare yourself to thousands of people at all times. Algorithms confirm our taste and will show us more similar content, based on earlier noticed preferences. One's social media feed becomes an 'echo chamber' of one's taste (Hunt, 2025: 53). Kooyman highlights the risk that this social development comes with. Because of constant confirmation of their taste and lifestyle, the oatmilk elite becomes more and more homogeneous. As Hunt (2025: 53) puts it: "While it may be visually appealing, it further narrows our exposure to new and diverse content.". This excludes others who cannot keep up with this lifestyle or those who do not have the means for this consumption behaviour (Kooyman, 2024: 34). As a result, status symbols and the consumption thereof are still visible as a part of the social stratification system today, but it has taken on different forms.

This decrease in purchasing power and increase in comparability between others by social media influence how contemporary yuppies spend their money, as status is no longer tied to wealth alone. Their consumption thus does not need to display their economic wealth, but more importantly: their cultural wealth, such as values, ethics and knowledge. Hence, their consumption behaviour becomes more inconspicuous (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 48).

This consumption happens largely through a means of utility and knowledge. Practising yoga and drinking plant-based milk are slightly more expensive alternatives, but importantly, a more informed or ethical form of consumption, displaying high cultural capital (Kennedy et al., 2018: 386). And thus, things like this have become status symbols (Currid-Halkett, 2017, p.22). Another way in which this knowledge is displayed is in their omnivorous style of consumption. This shows they know different cultures and have broad interests and knowledge (Currid-Halkett, 2017, p.53). That said, the line between inconspicuous and conspicuous consumption can blur. As Currid-Halkett (2017: 175) notes, inhabitants of cities are more likely to consume conspicuously than inhabitants of rural areas. In the fast-paced and individualistic urban life, visible markers (such as fashion, cars, bikes

and even pets) can act as an efficient way of displaying your identity and social status. Even without the intention of doing so, these visible lifestyle choices communicate belonging to a specific cultural elite.

These cultural elites, or contemporary yuppies, are the research group of this thesis. They are highly educated, have well-paying occupations and possess a lot of cultural capital. To belong to the urban elite, economic capital has become a more nuanced factor. Over the years, classic conspicuous consumption and luxury goods have decreased in how much they function as status symbols. Alternatives such as sustainable luxury, vintage clothing and inconspicuous consumption have become the new way to signal social status (Bellezza, 2022: 336). In place, a ‘shared set of cultural practices and social norms’, cultural capital, or ‘habitus’, a set of shared social dispositions, has become a more important indicator (Bourdieu, 1984, as cited in McCoy & Scarborough, 2014: 43; Currid-Halkett, 2017: 18). The contemporary yup relies more on shared values, rationality and knowledge as a shared taste. They are not impressed by material consumerism in itself, meaning one cannot buy one's way into this status group. It is about the (progressive, ethical, aesthetic, display of knowledge) meaning associated with the consumed materials: the ‘how’ and ‘why’ have become more important than the ‘what’.

2.4 Male and female consumption patterns

To analyse the lifestyles, taste and social stratification system of a group, understanding their consumption behaviour is essential. Multiple studies have shown that men and women not only consume different objects but also in different ways and for different motivations. The expectation is therefore to find gender differences in consumption practices within the group of contemporary yuppies. This section highlights the most significant differences found in previous literature between male and female consumption. It focuses on types of products, preferences in leisure and underlying motivations. Even though these insights are generalised and depend on context, they provide a relevant base for understanding how gender is influential in the consumption patterns of young urban professionals in the Netherlands.

2.4.1 Gendered consumption differences

In previous research, it was found that fashion is a big part of women's consumption, as they are more focused on their appearance than men (Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009: 226; Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008: 495). Monden (2015) found that fashion is a bigger part of women's consumer behaviour than men's. However, their motivations for dress are similar, namely, to impress others, attract admirers and for their own pleasure.

Another difference in the consumption behaviour of men and women is that women are more likely to make spontaneous purchases and shop for relational or practical purposes, meaning their consumption often serves collectives. For example, this can be gift shopping for a friend or having dinner with others. Men, on the other hand, look more for enjoyment and ways to satisfy their curiosity. They are more likely to consume technological items and are more competitive, meaning they will more often buy gadgets or games (Deori et al., 2023: 125).

Women also consume more sustainably. They are more likely to buy organic or biological products, second-hand clothing and to eat vegetarian (Marin et al., 2025; Ng et al., 2020: 319). Men, on the other hand, are less involved in sustainable consumption. This is partly because sustainable behaviour is culturally considered 'womanly' (Ng et al., 2020: 320). Moreover, men are more likely to consume something when the benefits are individual, while women are more sensitive to collective or ethical benefits (CMR, 2025).

How genders process information differs as well: women tend to seek out more product information and are more influenced by social networks and people around them, especially when shopping online. Men generally value convenience and autonomy more and are less likely to rely on the opinions of others (Yoo et al., 2017: 559). These findings show that gender not only affects the product that is consumed, but also how and why individuals consume.

2.4.2 Leisure activities

Women spend less time on leisure activities. However, they experience them more positively than men. Codina and Pestana (2019: 4) explain that women are more emotionally present during the moment, which increases their overall satisfaction. Their time perspective tends to be more optimistic and future-oriented, whereas men are more likely to dwell on past events (Codina & Pestana, 2019: 5).

In the Netherlands, leisure preferences also differ by gender. Women are more likely to engage in wellness-related activities and shopping for pleasure, while men more frequently go to sports events or participate in physical activities (CBS, 2015; Van den Broek & Keuzenkamp, 2018: 330). This suggests that not only the quantity but also the quality and type of leisure are influenced by gender.

2.4.3 Motivations

Jackson (2024) explored gender differences in motivations for consumption behaviour among Gen Z, people slightly younger than the research group of this thesis. She found that men are more likely to spend more on higher quality products or convenience (Jackson, 2024: 22). They also value achieving high social status slightly more than women (men 52%, women 46%). Both genders consider themselves more environmentally conscious than the average person, but this belief is more prominent among men (men 63%, women 57%) (Jackson, 2024: 23). This finding in particular stands out, since women actually consume more sustainably than men, as mentioned in 2.4.1.

Both men and women are influenced by social factors, but this influence appears stronger in women's online shopping behaviour (Kanwal et al., 2021: 346). Thus, gender also shapes the motivations and emotional drivers for consumption. Men tend to focus more on practicality, independence and status, while women's consumption is more shaped by social relationships, self-care and sensitivity to aesthetics. This is not absolute, but reveals a pattern influenced by cultural, psychological and structural factors (Yoo et al., 2017: 560).

While existing literature offers a broad picture of gendered consumption, there is limited research on how these gender dynamics manifest within specific, culturally situated status groups, such as the young, progressive, urban middle class in the Netherlands. This thesis will explore how such gendered logics of consumption are expressed, maintained or resisted among contemporary yuppies in Dutch cities.

2.4.4 Conclusion

The previous literature offers a broad picture of gendered consumption. However, these studies remain focused on stereotypical portraits of male and female consuming behaviour. They highlight general differences, such as women being more emotional and relational shoppers, and men as more instrumental and status-driven consumers. These studies do not

account for how gender operates within specific cultural and socio-economic contexts, such as specific status groups. Moreover, these studies leave out other important factors related to consumption, such as education, taste and lifestyles. The objective of this thesis is to fill that gap by examining how gendered consumption manifests itself within a specific status group. In this research, more factors than just gender are thus accounted for, such as their social environment. The aim is not only to understand how individuals consume differently based on gender, but also how men and women use consumption to distinguish themselves as a status group.

2.5 Research question and sub-questions

In this theoretical framework, the historical development of social stratification and associated consumer behaviour has been described. More recent research has shown that some groups have ceased to exist, like the leisure class described by Veblen (2009: 7), and new ones have emerged, like the aspirational class as described by Currid-Halkett (2017). She describes how this group sets symbolic boundaries and names examples of status symbols by which they do so.

In the past few years, this young urban professional status group has been broadly highlighted in various media. However, not much research has been conducted about this group and their consumption behaviour in the Netherlands, let alone in relation to gender. The information available on this relatively new status group, together with previous research on differences in consumption behaviour between genders, has led me to pose the research question central in this thesis:

How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?

To find an answer to the research question, the research question is divided into three smaller sub-questions to keep in mind during the interviews and analysis.

- How do the contemporary young urban professionals shape their lifestyle and taste?
- What are the current events and objects that function as status symbols for contemporary young urban professionals and why?
- How do contemporary yup men and women differ in their consumption behaviour?

It can be difficult to find answers to the questions by asking the interviewees about this directly, as they can feel like they are being framed in a way that they do not like. Therefore, questions about their dislikes in terms of consumption goods, leisure activities, places and types of people are part of the interview too.

2.6 Expectations and goals

The consumption behaviour of the young urban professional has not yet been scientifically studied in the Netherlands in recent years. This group's consumer behaviour has been highlighted by the media, more in a satirical way. Though previous literature, such as the work of David Brooks (2000) and Elizabeth Currid-Halkett (2017), are useful, they are slightly outdated and situated in the United States. This research therefore aims to update knowledge about this group and form a view on how this is situated in the context of the Netherlands. As there are many differences in the consumption behaviour between men and women, and this factor has not been thoroughly taken into consideration in earlier research on similar topics, this element was embedded in the research question. This way, the analysis will also be more precise. I expect to find objects and activities that the research group enjoys and fit their status group. I also expect men and women to give different answers and that they conform to the earlier literature discussed. I think that they consume largely inconspicuously, not with the intention to draw symbolic boundaries. I think this is more a natural or unreflexive process, which comes forth of their habitus and network autocorrelation. Because this is my expectation, I will not start by asking them directly about the meaning behind their consumption behaviour and if it is related to social status. Instead, I will ask them about other social groups and their opinions on others' consumption behaviour and trending items or activities in their social circle.

3. Research design

In this section, the method used, sampling procedure, operationalisation and the analysis process will be explained, and ethical considerations will be accounted for. This study took place from September 2024 until June 2025: a time span of 10 months in which the fieldwork was conducted from March until May 2025.

3.1 Method

To obtain a proper answer to the research question (*How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?*) it is important to dive deeper into the meaning behind the actions of the interviewees. The objective is to understand their actions and reasons behind it. Therefore, an inductive approach was deemed fit for this question, meaning this research did not engage in testing pre-existing hypotheses or theory, but rather compared the findings to existing theory and highlighted the similarities, differences and possible developments (Bryman, 2016: 23; Susanto et al., 2024).

While being aware of relevant theories in this field, the inductive approach left plenty of room for discovering additional arguments and phenomena that complemented and enriched the insights achieved in this study. Qualitative interviewing was chosen as a method of data collection for this study. By talking to different people from this social group, further questions could be asked about their lifestyles and attached consumption behaviour, and how they view this regarding themselves and others. The interviews took place in a semi-structured way to stay flexible and to be able to dive deeper into relevant answers from the interviewees. Five men and five women were interviewed in this research. The comparison between men and women was included because of significant differences in their general consumer behaviour, as described in the theoretical framework. Previous research has shown that men and women spend their money and leisure time differently (Azevedo et al., 2007; Eurostat, 2019; CBS, 2022). Because men and women differ largely in their consumption behaviour and how they spend their leisure time, this comparative factor was added to the research question. This element in this research aimed to get a deeper understanding of the differences and resemblances in their motivations behind their consumption behaviour. In the analysis, this will be related back to the theories of the theoretical framework.

3.2 Sampling procedure

To gather the right interviewees for this study, non-probability sampling, also known as purposive sampling, was used. A variant of this is criterion sampling, meaning all the interviewees meet some pre-established criteria (Bryman, 2016: 409). As stated in the research question, the interviewees must identify as either male or female and must meet these criteria to be considered a young urban professional: 25 – 35 years old, highly educated (a university of applied sciences degree or higher), a knowledge-based occupation, left-winged political preference, and their place of residence must be in urban areas. In this case, they need to live in the top four biggest cities in the Netherlands, which are Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht, all part of the Randstad area. Even though the term ‘young urban professional’ has different operationalisations, many definitions share the aforementioned criteria (Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek, n.d.; Encyclo, n.d.). The sampling procedure started by asking people from my network to participate. Five respondents were acquired this way. Secondly, I asked people in my network if they knew people who fit the sampling criteria, which resulted in three more respondents. To find the last interviewees, snowball sampling was used, meaning interviewees were asked to propose people from their network (who also met the criteria) to the researcher (Bryman, 2016: 409; Clark et al., 2021). That is how the last respondents, Joris and Remco, were found. Joris is the partner of Mia, and Remco is the brother of Liv. The use of snowball sampling and interviewees being part of the same network is accounted for in the results chapter. Further information about the interviewees can be found in Appendix A.

3.3 Operationalization

In this thesis, three theoretical concepts are central, namely *social status*, *consumption*, and *status symbols*. These concepts will also be discussed in this order. Social status, as explained in the theoretical framework, refers to society’s hierarchical division of groups of people (Kerbo, 2006). This is based on various factors, such as the capitals that Bourdieu (1986: 82) distinguishes. The interviewing process started with questions about the interviewees’ background, upbringing, and questions about whom they associate with and with whom they

do not. With this information, a basic understanding was formed about the status group that they are in, their cultural capital and habitus.

Consumption is the second topic. Here, close attention was paid to the extent to which the consumption behaviour is conspicuous and how it is conspicuous. This means the focus also will be on what the research group wants to signal to others and who those others are. The interviewees were asked about their likes, dislikes and how they spend their leisure time. Secondly, they were asked why they consume these items, or why they spend their leisure time the way they do, and whether their friends spend it the same way. Do they influence each other? This part focused on acquiring social status. What are their status motivations? Extra attention was paid to how the answers from men and women differ or correspond.

Lastly, status symbols came into play. Status symbols are used to make one's social position clear, where they are positioned in the hierarchy of society. These symbols could be specific objects that are consumed conspicuously, but also inconspicuously. Status symbols could also be seen in behaviour, taste and people's appearances (Goffman, 1951: 295). Men and women were asked how they display their social status. How do they know which items to consume if they wish to display what status group they are in? During the interview and in the data analysis, close attention was paid to the differences and similarities between men and women in their answers. How do these men and women display or confirm their social status? And why do they do it in the specific way they do it? Here, the expectations are that for women, fashion is a more important status symbol, which they consume conspicuously, as women are more occupied with the way they dress than men (Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009; Monden, 2025). Men are more likely to use leisure activities, such as sports, festivals or cafes, as a status symbol, as they are the bigger consumers of activities compared to women (CBS, 2015; Deori et al., 2023). The expectation is that the men in this research conform to this as well. However, even though the (conspicuous) consumption and status symbols can differ per gender, the expectation is that the meaning in this is the same for men and women, namely to assert their social status to others.

3.4 Analysis

The method used to analyse the data derived from the interviews is thematic analysis. This flexible method is fitted for qualitative research, when the objective is to recognise patterns (themes) and explore how people give meaning to their experiences or behaviour (Bryman, 2016: 588). This helps to structure the data after asking open questions to the interviewees. Secondly, it can help to highlight differences and similarities (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 97). To analyse the data derived from the interviews, I transcribed the conversations. Afterwards, the coding process started, by which I began with open coding, meaning I stayed close to the text and used concise codes. This step resulted in 671 codes, spread out over ten interviewees. After open coding, I went on with axial coding, meaning I looked for overarching codes that connected codes from the former step. In this part of the coding process, I ended up with fewer codes than in the open coding step, namely 17. Lastly, selective coding was conducted, narrowing the number of codes from axial coding down further to 4 overarching themes. The codes left after this process form the basis for my analysis. From here, the most recurring themes were defined and the comparison between men and women could start.

3.5 Ethics

Basic ethical considerations about qualitative research were considered in this research. The interviews were conducted with an open attitude from the researcher's side. This entails staying as objective as possible and trying not to ask leading questions. I tried to limit any bias. However, in qualitative research, no bias at all is impossible. The interviewees were informed on the topic via the consent form and were told that the interview would be about their lifestyle, taste and consumption behaviour. After the conversations, some of the interviewees asked more questions about the scope of this thesis, and we conversed about consumption trends of young urban elites, which were the inspiration for this thesis. The interviews were conducted in a safe and neutral environment, and before the interviews started, the interviewee were informed about confidentiality and the fact that they could withdraw their participation or data at any time. This information is also on the consent form, which they all signed and received a copy of. To protect the interviewees' privacy, their names have been anonymised by using aliases.

4. Results

In this chapter, the most relevant findings of the qualitative research into how male and female contemporary yuppies distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption behaviour are presented. The results are based on a thematic analysis of the transcripts of conversations with ten interviewees, five men and five women. In this analysis, close attention was paid to how this group expresses its identity, taste and social position in its lifestyle and consumption patterns.

This chapter connects the findings from the interviews to the theoretical framework about topics such as social distinction, status consumption and cultural capital. The results will be presented based on four themes that emerged from the last step in the coding process: (1) social background and identity, (2) work, future and money, (3) lifestyle and social practices, (4) consumption behaviour and taste. Each theme will be illustrated by quotes of the respondents and entails a reflection on differences and similarities in gender, when relevant. This chapter will illustrate who the interviewees are, what they do and what their behaviour means.

4.1 Social background and identity

At the start of the interviews, the respondents introduced themselves and shared some basic background information. To understand the consumption behaviour of contemporary male and female young urban professionals, it is important to form a clear view of their social backgrounds and upbringing. How the respondents grew up, including their education, norms, values and social networks, shapes their habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, as cited in McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). This background information of their lives influences how they see the world, with whom they identify and with whom they do not. In this section, information will be shared about the respondents' youth, family, educational background and social identification. These elements form the base of their social and cultural capital and largely determine current taste and consumption patterns.

4.1.1 Upbringing and social background

The interviews started off with the respondents introducing themselves and talking about their background. All interviewees grew up in middle to upper-middle class families with two present parents and with at least one sibling. All interviewees grew up in towns, suburbs or smaller cities, most of them situated in the Randstad (urban conglomerate in the Netherlands). Later, they moved to the cities where they currently live. Their neighbourhoods are Oud-Zuid and de Pijp in Amsterdam, Binnenstad in Utrecht, and in Rotterdam: Noord, Charlois and West. Except for the three interviewees living in Charlois and West, the respondents spoke positively about their neighbourhood and talked about how similar people live there. Joris and Mia are a couple who live together in Utrecht:

Here, within the canal circle, we barely have people with a migration history. I would almost dare to say... barely, I think, two per cent. (Joris).

Yes, actually not much at all. Mostly white Dutch people. "...” Who have highly educated parents. Those who have enough means. Just like us, basically. (Mia).

Their neighbourhood, the North of Rotterdam and De Pijp are good examples of gentrified neighbourhoods in Dutch cities (Van Engelen, 2015; Verhoeven, 2023). Gentrification is a phenomenon of ‘in-migration of middle- and upper-income households into existing lower-income urban neighbourhoods’ (Griffith, 1996: 241), meaning it becomes less financially feasible for lower-class people to keep living in their neighbourhoods, since people with more financial means are “taking over” their neighbourhood. This results in the working class moving away from their former neighbourhood and the area changing into a place more fit for middle to upper-class people. In such a homogeneous neighbourhood, taste and consumption patterns reinforce each other, as one tends to reflect the place where one lives (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 180). Dellaposta et al. (2015: 1476) call this phenomenon ‘network autocorrelation’. This is the tendency of individuals to resemble each other.

If the lifestyles in one neighbourhood become more and more similar, there is no need to show status by ostentatious conspicuous consumption; the process of status display becomes more subtle and only noticeable for others ‘in the know’ (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 22) (as explained in 2.2.3). All the interviewees live in apartments with either one or two roommates or a partner, except for Myrthe, who lives by herself. Marc is the only one who owns his apartment; the rest of the houses are rental apartments.

When it comes to how the respondents experienced their childhood, they described their youth as “prosperous”, “warm” and “loving” (Remco, Myrthe, Anouk). Parents stimulated the development of their children and had the means for this:

My parents always pushed me to do something. “...” They thought it was important. That you could play an instrument. “...” For your general development, I guess. “...” We were not allowed to play computer games or watch television for too long, for example. “...” So, we played outside, played an instrument, or did something creative. (Marc).

When asked about their norms and values, or what they find important in life, the answers were both similar and different. Most of the interviewees grew up in a Christian family and took the norms and values from religion with them, even though some of them are not religious anymore. The norms and values that are shared most are mutual respect, sustainability, personal development and ambition. Male respondents also mentioned living a healthy lifestyle, whereas none of the female respondents specifically mentioned this. And where women shared the aforementioned norms and values with the male respondents, their answers were more detailed and more social: “Treating others how you want to be treated” (Anouk), “Equal chances and treatment for everyone” (Mia), and “Loyalty” (Myrthe).

Taking over the norms and values of your parents is part of status display in a more dispositional way (Bourdieu, 1973). The shared norms and values of mutual respect, sustainability, personal development and ambition, together with their high level of education (and support in this by their parents) display a social background in an environment with lots of cultural capital. The presence of cultural capital during their upbringing is reflected in the values that all interviewees considered important: sustainability, self-development, and ambition. Valuing sustainability can be seen as a form of cultural capital, as it involves knowledge about healthy living and addressing climate change. Likewise, self-development and ambition reflect cultural capital through the acquisition of skills, higher education, and intellectual growth.

Every interviewee went on vacation at least once a year, which showcases the presence of economic capital in their families and was stimulated in their academic career. They all have a bachelor’s or master’s degree, and some of them even went to private universities (Liv, Anouk). Even though it cost some of the respondents more effort than

others, all of them have well-paying jobs across different sectors, which require academic diplomas.

4.1.2 Social identification and association

In this section, the way the respondents see themselves, who or what groups they associate with and why will be elaborated upon. At times, the interviewees found it difficult to answer such a question directly. Whenever that happened, multiple questions were asked about this topic, or opposite questions, such as what places they avoid, or with which people they do not associate.

When asked about the people they associate with, by appearance, they were described as “people who think about how they dress” (Liv). This was conceived as not expensively or ostentatiously, but “vintage or second-hand” or “Scandinavian” (Liv). Michael (male) adds to this statement as well: “I would say I identify with people who look like me. So they are young, they no longer study. They are fashionable” and “They wear nice brands, but not showy: more relaxed, laid-back but authentic”. In terms of how people live their lives and what they find important, some interviewees associate with people who care about their mental and physical health and actively spend time on this (Liv, Mia, Ian). All of the interviewees seem to associate with ambitious, adventurous and social people. As Myrthe says:

I like extroverted people [...] I like people who are curious about the world, about cultures and who want to travel. Not someone who only wants to go to an all-inclusive in Turkey. I wouldn't match with that person. [...] And my female friends all have successful careers.

From the interviewees, it became clear that the respondents preferably surround themselves with social and active people, or people “who live for experiences”, as Michael puts it. To experience something with their friends is a big part of this group's lifestyle and will be further elaborated upon in chapter 4.3.

In terms of groups within society, the interviewees identify with “highly educated Dutch people that follow the news. [People] who know about what is happening in the world and try to help. [...] The highly educated middle class.” (Joris). This seems in line with the trait of ambition mentioned earlier. Ian says:

I think, yeah, I would call it the yuppies. But then in an easy-going Rotterdam way. It is a combination. You wouldn't see me on every vintage market, but you would see me in a nature wine bar. But then again, it is a stereotype. So you do not have to do everything to be a yup. But yeah, if I think about it, I belong to that group.

When he says he is a yuppie, he does not mean the definition of the 1980s (2.2.1) but the contemporary young urban professional, as defined in section 2.3. Together with Michael, he distinguishes between the Rotterdam and Amsterdam types of people with whom they associate. They feel like Amsterdam yuppies are more intense, whereas Rotterdam yuppies are more “relaxed” (Michael) and casual.

In terms of political preferences and associations, the interviewees vote for different parties, such as “Partij voor de Dieren” (Remco), “GroenLinks”, “ChristenUnie” (Anouk) and “D66” (Michael, Ian, Louise). However, all of these parties are considered relatively left-wing and/or progressive in the Netherlands (Kieskompas, 2023). The interviewees find progressive values such as “equality” (Anouk, Myrthe, Marc) and “sustainability” (Louise, Marc) important, up to a certain point. Michael said: “On cultural values I am very left. On economic values more to the middle”. As long as it does not hurt the interviewees financially, they are left-wing and progressive, just like the Bobos (Brooks, 2000: 255-227).

To understand the boundaries better between the types of people they associate with and with which they do not, the respondents were asked about the people and places they do not associate with, dislike or avoid, and why. A significant returning answer was the group described as “tokkies” (Ian, Marc, Remco, Liv, Myrthe, Louise). Tokkies are described as people “who do not look neat” (Myrthe). They wear “tracksuits” (Marc), have “vulgar tattoos” (Liv, Ian) and have “loud behaviour” (Liv, Louise, Myrthe). They are described as people who are not ambitious, lazy, who party and are loud, who smoke and are often racist. The interviewees are not fond of these types of people and definitely do not want to be associated with this group. Some of the interviewees mentioned the political party PVV and its supporters as a group they do not identify with or want to be associated with as well (Joris, Remco, Anouk, Myrthe). When asked why, they felt that these types of people are “racist” (Mia). She says: “I just think it is important that we have an open society. With many cultures mixed. Yeah, that people are open to that. That you live with all kinds of people in one society.”

After asking the interviewees about the people they do not identify or associate with, they were asked about the places they would not go. In general, they answered with places where people come to “show off” (Ian, Michael, Remco, Liv, Anouk). The interviewees feel like people in such places are too occupied with displaying their social status. Examples of such places in Rotterdam were “1nul8” (Remco, Liv), “NRC” (Michael) and “Stadhuisplein” (Liv). For Amsterdam, Anouk said:

Places like Le Petit Café George. And the Seafood Bar. Those are kind of jet set places. Where everyone comes to see and be seen. And then they come in their Biro. Those are not the places of which I think “oh yes, let’s go there”.

As for Utrecht, Mia and Joris would not go to Neude, or to places where there are a lot of tourists. Overall, the interviewees avoid places to show off and too crowded, just like Brooks’ Bobos. Instead, they prefer more “laid-back” (Liv, Michael, Remco) or “nonchalant” (Liv) places, such as “Bar Cult and UEB” (Ian, Liv), “Rotown” (Michael), “Cabane and Arzu” (Michael), “Vis op de Dijk, DiepNoord” (Remco), “Coppi, Sation Bergweg, Matroos en het Meisje, Biergarten, Tosca” (Liv). The people there are “creative” (Liv), the food is more local, or biological, and the atmosphere is more intimate.

When you enter Keile Café, no one looks at you. No one thinks “oh look at me”, it is just a chill atmosphere. You order a beer, you sit, and all is good [...] Not such a see and be seen atmosphere. Oh no, I hate that. (Liv).

The interviewees find most of their favourite places via friends or social media. All of them use social media platforms such as Instagram to find and save places they would like to go. This could explain why multiple interviewees mentioned the same places, as algorithms keep confirming our taste, resulting in a more homogeneous social media feed (as mentioned in 2.3) (Hunt, 2025: 53).

4.1.3 Conclusion

Paragraph 4.1.1 showed that cultural and personal development were recurring themes from the interviewees' youth, displaying an upbringing in environments with high cultural capital. All respondents come from middle- to higher-class families, which corresponds with

Bourdieu's (1973) theory on social reproduction — the idea that cultural capital is passed on across generations. These shared social backgrounds shape a collective habitus that influences their current worldview.

Paragraph 4.1.2 further illustrated how this background translates into identification: the interviewees associate themselves with relaxed, ambitious, and adventurous people with similar values and upbringing. They clearly prefer laid-back and nonchalant places over show-off venues. The people who frequently visit such flashy places are also those with whom the interviewees do not want to identify or associate. This observation aligns with David Brooks' (2000) description of the Bobos and Currid-Halkett's (2017) aspirational class, who reject being seen as vulgar, materialistic, or obsessed with wealth. Here, the interviewees actively draw symbolic boundaries between social groups.

The topics discussed in this section — the social background and current identification of the contemporary yup — form a solid foundation for finding the answer to the research question. The way in which this status group shapes and maintains itself is rooted in shared class backgrounds and a collective habitus that ultimately influences taste, lifestyle and consumption, as tools for social distinction. No clear differences between genders were found in this section. Rather, all the interviewees share similar backgrounds and associate with similar people. The next section will dive deeper into the contemporary daily lives of the interviewees and their perspective on the future.

4.2 Work, future and money

While the previous section examined the social and cultural background of the interviewees, this section elaborates on their contemporary lives in terms of career, future dreams and their notions of money and expenses. This chapter explores how work, ambition and financial behaviour and awareness function as tools of symbolic differentiation. In addition, attention is paid to the extent to which the respondents are conscious about signalling status in these aspects.

4.2.1 Career

In this phase of their lives, the interviewees are focused on choosing a career path, trying out different things and developing themselves. All of the interviewees have finished their studies and started working between one and eight years ago. They share similarities; work must contribute to a better world and must be meaningful; it has to give them a feeling of satisfaction. Joris recently switched jobs:

That is why I started looking for something else, more involved with our society, and purposeful. [...] Do I just do it for the salary? Or is there more to it? [...] So I applied at the Ministry of Defence. So I can help keep people safe.

Mia and Michael work for non-profit organisations that help victims of environmental crimes and refugees. “I think it is important to use marketing for a good cause” (Michael). Remco also works in marketing, but for a natural plant pest control company. He found it via LinkedIn: “It was based on my interests, working in green, in the sustainability sector.”. Anouk works in sustainability too, but more on the corporate side. She works for an innovation agency which helps businesses create sustainable strategies and positive social impact. “I wanted an organisation that creates change, impact. No hierarchy, a smaller organisation, I wanted projects.”

Feeling like they contribute to positive social or environmental change is important to the interviewees, and they do so in their ways. A difference found here is that men have more technical jobs, such as engineering, development, and are focused on generating revenue (marketing, sales). Whereas the women have jobs where they are mostly involved with people and their stories, such as a youth counsellor, a connector, or a writer.

Their salary leaves them with a disposable income, yet they do not consider themselves high earners or rich. They all spoke more about their career purposes and the importance thereof than about the salary they earn. This confirms the increasing role and importance of cultural capital and the decreasing role of economic capital for this status group. Their objective is not to create an economically and materially rich life; rather, they create positive impact and keep on learning. Earning high amounts of money while doing so, however, is not a problem. This corresponds to what Brooks (2000: 49) wrote earlier and what he calls ‘incidental money’. Earning high amounts of money while pursuing your creative (or, in more recent cases, sustainable) vision is more prestigious than earning high amounts of money as a banker, for example. Even if the banker earns a higher salary. Therefore, having

an occupation which can be qualified as ethical, in the sense that it contributes to sustainability or societal matters, can be seen as a status symbol for contemporary young urban professionals. However, this trait is more likely to be known solely by people in their network, and not directly visible to others, and so it creates another symbolic boundary between social groups.

4.2.2 Future dreams

The interviewees were asked about where they see themselves in five to ten years and if they had any specific future goals. Most of the interviewees could not answer this question directly. After some reflection, their answers can be divided into three overarching themes: (1) career, (2) adventurous ambitions, and (3) relational and housing goals.

In terms of career, the interviewees displayed the ambition to further develop their skills and grow into positions that challenge them and where they can create “more positive impact” (Michael). Louise, Liv and Remco have the goal to keep doing what they do, but to become better at it and add more dimensions. Myrthe even showed the wish for another study, but finds it too expensive, as she is saving money to buy a house as well. Anouk would like to have her own company one day: “I would want a ‘change brand’. I would want to bring something to the market that improves the current situation”. She mentioned a brand that inspired her:

I like Marie Stella Maris. They donate 50% of their sales to countries with water issues. Yet, they appear very luxurious. People often don't know how sustainable they are and how much they donate. [...] I think that is a good brand strategy. [...] Focus on luxury, attract people with lots of money, make impact without bragging about it.

The topic of career overlaps with the second topic of adventurous ambitions: some of the interviewees want to work abroad, like Ian, Joris and Mia. Liv is moving to Indonesia for a year to work remotely. From there, she wants to travel to Australia and Sri Lanka to surf in the mornings and work in the afternoon and evenings. Joris and Mia are a couple but differ in their adventurous ambitions: Mia wants to stay in Europe and do “something meaningful”, whereas Joris wants to go outside of Europe, also to discover nature and “climb mountains”. This urge to travel and discover the world was a shared factor among almost all of the

interviewees. However, for one, this could be to go on vacations, and for others to work and live abroad for longer periods of time.

Lastly, the interviewees displayed relational ambitions, such as starting a family one day, but that is a long-term goal. Rather, in the near future, they want to have freedom in their career and use their free time to spend it with loved ones. Eventually, most of them want to buy a house, but this has become relatively difficult for young people without loads of savings or help from parents. It is debatable whether owning a house can be viewed as a status symbol. On the one hand, in the Randstad, buying a house has become something almost only accessible for the economically wealthy (Boelhouver, 2019). On the other hand, buying a house is perhaps a pragmatic goal shared by most young persons, not only this status group (Bast, 2023). The interviewees who work the longest indicated having this goal the most (Myrthe, Remco). Louise and Anouk plan on staying in Amsterdam, but buying a house there seems unrealistic. Remarkably, none of the interviewees actively spoke passionately about materialistic goals (except for buying a house), even when they were asked about it.

Economic success is not an objective in itself for the contemporary young urban professional. Rather, they focus on personal development, gaining experiences and spending time with loved ones.

4.2.3 Economic position and perception of money

As addressed in the theoretical framework (2.3), the contemporary yup is elite in terms of cultural capital, but not (or less) in terms of economic capital. Even though their future looks bright with them having well-paying occupations and a high educational degree, they are not considered financially rich (yet). The increasing costs of living, like rent, groceries and (the possibility) of buying a house affect this group as well, as it decreases their purchasing power. In the interviews, the topic of money and expenses was discussed with the respondents. In general, they are not super aware of their expenses, most likely because they earn good salaries. However, since goals such as buying a house have become so unreachable for starters nowadays, compared to the past forty years (Huijben, 2024), saving money for such big expenses is not a priority for most of the interviewees: “I do not feel like saving for a house that I would never be able to afford.” (Anouk).

The most recurring expense that the interviewees claim to spend more money on than average is going out for food and drinks, followed by going on vacation. “I eat out often: going for coffee, just having lunch somewhere, getting some groceries.” (Liv), “Normally, we

go out for dinner really often.” (Mia and Joris), “If I do not pay attention to it, then I easily spend 300, 400 euros per month on going for dinner” (Ian). Ian adds: “If the price quality ratio matches, I think it is absolutely worth it.”. Louise too spends more than average on going for food or drinks but adds an interesting thought: “In Amsterdam it is normalized. I cannot speak for everyone here, but I spend more money on it than people on the other side of the country (who do not live in cities).”. However, even though the interviewees are aware they might spend more on this than the average person their age, they feel like it is worth it. They live in the moment and for experiences or are not focused on their income and expenses: “In this moment I like it, and it fits with my lifestyle. I think it’s an experience.” (Louise); “I would still go if I had little money, money returns, the experience doesn’t.” (Liv); “I do not really pay that much attention to the amount that enters and exits my bank account.” (Michael).

Besides groceries and eating out, most women indicated spending more money than average on clothing. They stressed that these expenses involve second-hand or quality clothing and not quantity or fast-fashion items. Men, on the other hand, indicated spending more than average on sports gear, such as Stox, expensive running socks. They too said to spend more money on average on their hobbies, like “fixing my motorcycle” (Joris) and “plants and books” (Remco).

Some of the female interviewees said to spend less than average on make-up, and in general, some of the interviewees indicated to pay less rent than average in this phase of their lives. Other than that, the interviewees found themselves “average” (Liv, Remco, Ian) in their expense patterns, or “above average” (Louise, Joris).

Overall, most interviewees are not focused on saving a lot of money, but rather live in the moment and spend money on experiences, such as going out for dinner or travelling. Activities like these correspond with the lifestyles of the contemporary young urban professional and how they like to spend their time with loved ones. They reflect positively on these expenses: “I make these decisions myself, I know it makes me really happy” (Anouk). “Because it [vacation] makes me the happiest.” (Myrthe). Another insight is that their expenses are focused on quality or knowledge: quality food and fashion and investing in their personal development or health.

4.2.4 Conclusion

Where section 4.1 provided a view of the background of the interviewees' lives, this section displayed the current life purposes, future ambitions and reflections on the financial situation of the interviewees. The contemporary young urban professional shows a strong desire for meaningful work and contributions to society. Instead of aiming for economic success, they strive for personal development and occupations that are in line with their values, such as sustainability and social justice. As mentioned in 4.2.1, their careers thus function as a status symbol within their social network, besides providing them with an income. It displays the extent to which they are involved with issues such as society, sustainability and personal development. Even though in this section there are more similarities between the sexes, some subtle differences are visible. Men often work in commerce or technical positions, whereas women work more in social sectors. Future goals were rarely materialistic. Rather, the interviewees would like to make a career which creates impact, allows one to live abroad and spend time with loved ones – in line with Currid-Halkett's findings about the aspirational class (2.2.3) and Brooks' finding about the Bobos (2.2.2), where working from a vision based on cultural capital is more prestigious than pursuing a career based on economical motivations. As the future goals of the interviewees do not necessarily include economic success, this becomes visible in their current expenses. According to themselves, they spend more money than average on experiences as going out for dinner and vacations. Differences in gender were that women spend more on clothing, and men more on hobby items, corresponding to earlier research (Deori et al., 2023: 125; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009: 226; Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008: 495). Even though the interviewees could mention more facets that they spend above average amounts of money on, most of them consider their overall expenses as average. Most of the interviewees thus do not feel economically wealthier than others.

4.3 Lifestyle and social practices

The lifestyle of the respondents was a large recurring theme in the interviews. They explained in detail how they live their lives, why they do so in that way and were critical of some groups with different lifestyles. Lifestyles are shaped by habitus. Habitus consists of the dispositions that people 'inherit' or develop due to their social background and milieu (Bourdieu 1979, as cited in Otte et al., 2019: 1). This includes taste, behaviour and ways of thinking and is in

large part shaped by people's upbringing and social class. In section 4.1, elements of the social background of the interviewees were presented and discussed, which provides a general view of the habitus of the interviewees. In this chapter, the lifestyles and social practices in which their habitus and background have resulted will be presented and discussed. Three themes recurred significantly in the interviews, and are thus central in this section: relationships, hobbies and health.

4.3.1 Friendships and social structures

A large part of the lifestyles of the interviewees consists of social activities. All interviewees spoke passionately about their friendships and clearly showed how important these relationships are to them. All women have strong individual friendships: "I am super close. Those are valuable individual friendships." (Myrthe). In contrast, only some of the male respondents have these. The research group aligns with prior studies about friendships, which state that women find same sex, individual friendships more valuable than men do (Elkins & Peterson, 1993: 506). Men tend to view friendship as a 'side by side' relation, where they do things together with friends, focused on the activity. Women, on the other hand, tend to see friendships as a 'face to face' relationship. They are focused on each other and talk intimately (Winstead, 1986: 81). Most of the interviewees have friend groups, but those relationships are more superficial. The answers to how similar or different these friends are, were diverse. Ian, Remco, Myrthe, Anouk and Louise said they have a wide variety of friends. Some of their friends are completely different from them. For example, they are "not highly educated" (Ian, Louise), are "more alternative" (Remco) or more "right-wing" (Myrthe), when it comes to politics. On the other hand, Marc, Joris, Michael, Liv and Mia stated that their friends are similar to them and did not mention anything about large differences. They are "highly educated" (Marc), "into sports" (Joris), "relaxed" (Michael, Liv), "know what is going on in the world" (Mia) or "creative" (Liv). Even though her friends are very diverse, Myrthe mentioned that her friends all share a passion for travelling and for fine dining.

From this section, it becomes clear that both genders conform to earlier research conducted on gender and friendships. Men tend to have more friend groups, with whom they do stuff together. Women tend to have more individual friendships, focused on emotional bonding and less on undertaking activities together. A similarity is that some of the interviewees, both men and women, have a very omnivorous taste in friends. This fits with the adventurous and culturally broad mindset of the contemporary young urban professional.

4.3.2 Leisure time and hobbies

A big part of the interviewees' leisure time consists of undertaking social activities together with their friends. Especially going for drinks, lunch or dinner was mentioned as favourite activities; however, women went more into detail about this than men and mentioned more specific places they like to go with their friends. They too mentioned being more into cultural activities, such as going to museums (Anouk, Mia). Next, doing sports together with friends was mentioned as a favourite shared activity, but here the men went into more detail. They like to do sports such as tennis, running, bouldering, volleyball, soccer and tennis with their friends. Lastly, the genders shared similar answers when it came to bigger events, such as going to festivals: most of the interviewees like to go from time to time.

As for individual hobbies, sports were a big recurring theme again. Especially sports such as running (Ian, Joris, Michael, Mia, Anouk) and ClassPass group lessons such as yoga, pilates or rocycle (Myrthe, Anouk, Louise, Liv) were mentioned multiple times. ClassPass is a wellness platform that offers monthly subscribers access to different studios, gyms, beauty salons and more (ClassPass, 2025). The platform is popular among female interviewees and their friends. Anouk says: "In the evening, when I feel like yoga or rocycle, or boxing, I just book the class that I feel like in that moment.". Louise adds: "I have ClassPass, so those are all kinds of trendy classes: rocycle, pilates, velo.". She also noticed that similar people follow these classes: "In a rocycle class, you see duplicates of yourself around you. Because those are also people who go at six, after work. Those who live in the city and find it important to move their bodies after work.". This phenomenon that Louise noticed can be related back to the literature from the theoretical framework (2.2.3), where Currid-Halkett (2017: 22) explains how consumption based on knowledge (in this case: taking a sports class is healthy) is inconspicuous consumption. In addition, Louise lives in a gentrified neighbourhood. As explained by Dellaposta et al. (2015: 1476) and Currid-Halkett (2017: 180), people in such homogeneous neighbourhoods start to resemble each other.

This type of consumption is based more on knowledge: moving is good for your health, and not with the objective of displaying status. However, because this consumption is not such a clear signal, compared to a designer bag for example, it is harder for 'outsiders' to recognise this as a consumption good to which a certain status is attached - resulting in maintaining, if not strengthening, the boundaries between status groups (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 50).

Veblen (2009: 28) explains how the leisure class spent its time unproductively, as they had the means to abstain from labour. He called this *conspicuous leisure*. Doing productive work, in the time of Veblen, was a mark of inferiority, and the absence of such was considered superior. However, Currid-Halkett (2017: 98) noticed an important shift. The aspirational class spend their leisure time ‘usefully’ or culturally. Getting a higher education degree or actively being occupied with your health (for example, by playing sports) are now needed for upward mobility and considered useful, in contrast with Veblen’s time. This productive spending of leisure time is noticeable as well in the lives of contemporary young urban professionals. Their leisure time consists of doing something that can be defined as ‘useful’ or cultural, like sports, gaining (cultural) knowledge by going to museums and by reading books, shopping sustainably at the local market or in vintage stores, going to music festivals or travelling.

Many of the interviewees spoke passionately about travelling and exploring different cultures. All the interviewees, except for Louise, have travelled a lot to other continents, especially to Africa, South America and Asia. Some of the interviewees even studied or worked abroad (Ian, Liv, Joris, Anouk). In Africa, Michael and Myrthe both spent a period there to do charity work.

I went to Kenia and Uganda for half a year. I volunteered at a charity there, they helped refugees by offering them education. [...] I contributed by writing the newsletter, doing their social media, to eventually get funding from Europe.
(Michael).

However, most of the travel purposes of the interviewees were to discover other cultures and explore the world. They like to go “backpacking” (Ian), “surfing” (Ian) and “relax” (Ian, Marc, Louise) and to go “road tripping” (Marc, Liv). However, all the interviewees noted that the combination of such activities and varieties of vacation is the most appealing to them. The combination of city trips, relaxing beach vacations, backpacking, winter sports and hiking is what keeps it exciting for them. “It differs a lot” (Liv), “I just check [...] What do I need right now?” (Myrthe).

Travelling far often goes hand in hand with getting on a plane. Most of the interviewees touched upon this struggle without being asked about it. They know flying harms the environment, which strikes with their values and many aspects of their lifestyle. However, some of them try to downplay the effect and make an excuse for it, as travelling is

also very important to them. Marc said: “I would like to go to East Asia. Then you have to fly. But it’s only once, so it has less impact. But my standard yearly vacations, I try to plan by train.”, and Mia said:

The trip we did last year, I was ashamed of flying to be honest. I really felt like ‘oh, what I’m doing now is really bad for the climate’, but I had never seen more of the world than Europe. Oh never mind, I have been to America. But I thought ‘I deserve this now’. I am making excuses for my actions, I know. But I find it important to explore other cultures. What does it take?

Lastly, Anouk said: “I like vacations where I have to take the plane”, meaning she likes to travel far. “But 9 out of 10 times I feel guilty about it.”. Travelling to far destinations is thus in contrast with the desire of being sustainable and an ongoing struggle for the interviewees. However, the interviewees try to reason why it is still okay for them to take the plane and go on their trips. A possible explanation for the interviewees reasoning of them “deserving it” (Mia), could be a feeling of entitlement or reward: a feeling of living sustainably or being useful or caring enough for others or the planet, in the way that they deserve to ‘take’ a little as well, or ‘earn’ to have an exception on living sustainably. This ‘moral licensing’ (Lasarov & Hoffmann, 2018: 46), or ‘moral compensation’ behaviour, as the Swedish environmental psychologist Patrik Sörqvist calls it, maintains unsustainable behaviour, as people constantly make excuses for their unsustainable actions, by making another sustainable decision. This way, making unsustainable choices can be ‘justified’ (Hoving, 2019; Lasarov & Hoffmann, 2018: 46).

4.3.3 Physical and mental health

As made clear in section 4.3.2, living a healthy lifestyle is important for the contemporary young urban professional. Especially Ian, Joris and Mia were occupied with this, since they were training for a half or full marathon during the period when the interviews took place. For Ian, this meant not drinking any alcohol for six weeks:

This is very yuppie. I am running a marathon in thirteen days. Since March 1st I quit drinking [alcohol]. It is for my performance at the marathon. I have to say I do not miss a lot, so I think in the future I will drink less than I did before.

This quote shows that living a healthy lifestyle is, in some cases, consciously connected to being a contemporary yup by the interviewees; however, the consumption or participation is still foremost based on knowledge and not on status display.

When it comes to food consumption in relation to living a healthy lifestyle, multiple interviewees shared their diet preferences. When there were strong preferences, they were mostly based on environmental considerations, and health was a secondary benefit. For instance, Mia and Joris explained: “We always eat vegetarian. We rarely eat meat. Just because it is better for the environment. So we do it out of principle.”. Michael, Marc, Anouk and Louise said to eat little to no meat, or to have been a vegetarian for a while, for environmental reasons as well.

Even though living a healthy lifestyle is important to the interviewees, drinking alcohol is a weekly habit in their lives. Especially when they go out for drinks with their friends: “Most of my friends like to drink. But they are also focused on living a healthy lifestyle.” (Liv). However, none of them seem to attach much value to the alcohol itself, but to the social occasions and places where it is consumed. Many of the favourite places mentioned by the interviewees were bars, such as “Biergarten” or “Cult” (a wine bar). These places hold a status of knowledge, culture and speciality, as their menu largely consists of speciality beers and nature wines.

Mental health was another topic in the interview guide, but only women were actively occupied with this topic (and with spirituality). “I try to do yoga twice a week. Meditation I used to do a lot. Journaling, I try to do every week. I like those things.” (Liv). “I did many yoga retreats [...] I love yin yoga and often do sleep meditations before I go to sleep.” (Anouk). In their research, Park et al. (2015: 463) found that most yoga practitioners were white, highly educated women who hold a high socioeconomic status. Currid-Halkett (2017: 22) adds that such choices to practice yoga instead of another sport are a more informed choice, rather than an expensive one. This confirms again that acting on information (rather than on expensiveness) is a marker of status. However, retreats such as the ones that Anouk did, are quite costly (Currid-Halkett, 2017: 107). In addition, modern organisations (such as those where the majority of interviewees work for) increasingly offer mental and physical health programs to their employees to keep them motivated and prevent sickness (Amri, 2024: 1012).

When asked about being spiritual, many interviewees had a Christian upbringing, except for Ian, Remco and Liv. Mia, Joris, Anouk and Louise still identify as Christians, whereas Ian, Marc, Michael, Remco, Liv and Myrthe identify as atheists.

Health is an important issue for the interviewees. They live healthy lifestyles, in which they work out, eat healthy, but do not fully restrict themselves (except for drinking alcohol before the marathon). Motivations to live such a lifestyle are based on the knowledge that it is good for them and the environment. As for the gender differences, women showed a deeper interest in mental health-related activities compared to men. They do things such as meditation, journaling and yoga. However, as explained in 4.3.2, they use platforms such as ClassPass to book yoga classes, which come with a price tag. These ‘silent’, costly activities signal status to others within the same group, but are unclear for outsiders. Currid-Halkett (2017: 50) even goes as far by naming this inconspicuous consumption ‘the source of the new class divide’.

4.3.4 Conclusion

Section 4.3 provided insights into the important themes of the interviewees’ lives. First, the interviewees spoke about their friendships and how valuable these are to them. Corresponding with earlier research, this study shows how women tend to have deeper individual friendships, whereas men often are part of friend groups. These groups are more superficial than the individual friendships of women and are more focused on doing activities together, such as sports.

From friendships, they went on to a second theme which plays a large part in how they spend their leisure time: their hobbies. The female respondents showed more interest in cultural activities and could easily name their favourite places. They were interested in sports; however, the male interviewees were more passionate about this. Some of the female interviewees use ClassPass, a subscription for their workouts and notice similar women using this as well, further strengthening symbolic boundaries between social groups. All the interviewees showed a passion for travelling. However, travelling by plane is something they struggle with, as it clashes with their values of caring about the environment and living a sustainable lifestyle. However, it does not stop most of them from travelling, as they use living a sustainable lifestyle as an excuse to make up for their flights’ emissions.

Lastly, health is a big part of this group’s lifestyle. They are conscious about what they consume. Some of the interviewees – both male and female - eat biologically or are

vegetarians for health and environmental reasons. Investing in mental health is something that only the women of this research group were focused on.

Another insight from this subchapter is that leisure time must somehow be productive. It must contribute to their health, knowledge, personal development or, in short, their aspirations. This is visible in their motivations to travel, drink nature wines or speciality beers and to practice yoga. The next section will dive deeper into the actual consumed materials of this research group.

4.4 Consuming behaviour and taste

This chapter provides detailed examples of what the consumption behaviour of the contemporary young urban professional looks like. In the former chapters, their social background, values and lifestyle have been discussed. This section will highlight exact objects, brands and types of consumer goods. Section 4.4.1 will dive deeper into food consumption, as this is an important part of the lifestyles of the studied group. Secondly, 4.4.2 will provide detailed information about fashion consumption and taste, as this is how people visually signal their style to others. To explore the taste of the contemporary yup, specific examples and brands are mentioned. However, understanding how and why these examples are consumed is just as important for this study. Therefore, consuming motivations will be highlighted as well, with attention to gender-related differences and similarities.

4.4.1 Food

Following a healthy lifestyle, with room for sports and eating enough fruits and vegetables, is a basic requirement for the contemporary yuppie. A significant finding is the shared passion of all the interviewees for going to restaurants, coffee shops and bars. At those places, they like to consume drinks such as nature wines. Ian says about this:

I like it especially because it is so different from normal wine. First of all, it is sustainable of course. What I like about this product is that it is not mass-produced. There's not 20.000 bottles that all contain the same taste. I like that it is more unique, and that not everyone likes it.

Ian also talks about his favourite coffee shop Urban Espresso Bar West (UEB). The coffee there is more expensive than other coffee shops, but he says he knows that he is also paying for the skills of the baristas, the special coffee beans and the atmosphere. This distinctive taste of Ian corresponds with his background in working in cafés and restaurants, and his passion for speciality products in the food and drinks sector.

Just like Brooks' Bobos and Currid-Halkett's aspirational class, the interviewees are sensitive to healthy and sustainable food and beverages. Liv gives another example of what kind of milk she prefers in her cappuccinos:

I like both [cow's milk and oat milk]. [...] Then I heard oat milk was healthier, so I thought 'let's drink oat milk'. But now, I hear cow milk is healthier, because it is closer to nature. So now I am drinking cow milk again. I don't know exactly. Yeah, just whatever is the healthiest, I follow.

Besides consciously consuming less meat, some of the interviewees have also become more aware of pesticides and thus started eating more biological. Health and environmental benefits played a role in this, too. Michael and Remco often go to the Rotterdamse Oogstmarkt, a biological market in the North of Rotterdam. According to Michael, it is "mega yuppie". Remco eats biologically whenever possible. About the Rotterdamse Oogstmarkt, he said: "The atmosphere is laid-back, a little alternative. People with a disposable income go there [...] and people who only want to buy biological food." Remco would like to eat more seasonal and local food. Mia preferred this as well: when asked about her favourite dining places, she answered: "A Thai restaurant, but also those special restaurants that cook seasonal vegetables. I like to try things out and change things up."

The principle of convenience was mentioned by some respondents as well. Myrthe loves cooking, but only when she has time. If she does not have time, eating sustainably becomes a lower priority. Joris, Anouk and Michael shared this preference for convenience. For example, Joris buys biological food whenever it is on sale, or lower in price to begin with. Anouk and Michael use an anti-food-waste app 'Too Good to Go'. It saves them money and helps them determine what to cook. Sustainable and healthy options are favourable for this group, especially when these options are also more convenient or affordable. What stands out in the lifestyles of the contemporary yup is that living up to their values knows limits: they want to eat sustainably but this must be convenient; they rather not take a plane, but

sometimes they ‘deserve it’ and want to see the world; they are left-winged and value equality, until it affects their financial situation, just like the Bobos. This raises the question: is this group actually guided by their ethical morals, or are these morals part of how they want to be perceived, both by themselves and others? This may be an unconscious process.

Similar boundaries have been found before. Schuman and Bobo (1988: 276) argue that highly educated people often express “ideological sophistication rather than egalitarian commitment”. This suggests that while the privileged group sees the importance of supporting equality, they often don't follow through when it could come at the expense of their own advantage. Similarly, Bekkers (2024) found striking ideals and actions in the situation of increasing the number of asylum reception centres in the Netherlands. Many people showed positive attitudes towards this at first instance and voted for political parties that shared this attitude. Strikingly, they did not want these centres in their cities. This is called the ‘Not In My Backyard’ (NIMBY) effect and displays a similar situation of theoretical support for social issues but lacking in action when there is a risk of losing own comfort and privileges. Kooyman (2024: 101) and Latronico (2023) both write about similar situations in their books, describing contemporary yuppies who post their ethical consumption on social media, while frequently flying or engaging in superficial activism. While these sources are not based on academic research, they provide a contemporary cultural context when interpreting the ambivalent consumption patterns of the status group in this study.

4.4.2 Fashion

How one can signal to others to what social group they belong, without speaking or doing anything, is by one's appearance. The interviewees were asked about their taste and their consumption habits in fashion. A clear gender difference was that men go for quality, even if this costs more - “I rather buy something more expensive and of good quality” (Marc), “I rather buy something that is good. That was part of my upbringing” (Joris) - and are not super expressive in their fashion taste. Men like it “casual, no flashy colours” (Ian). This corresponds with the findings in 2.4.3, where Jackson (2024) found that men are 9% more likely to pay for quality than women. Lastly, the male interviewees like basic brands, and dislike shopping in typical fast fashion stores such as H&M, Zara or Primark. Instead, they shop clothing from “basic” brands such as “COS, Samsøe Samsøe and Arket” (Remco).

Where the male respondents were focused on quality, the female respondents displayed a bigger passion for shopping second-hand or vintage. After reading an article about

the consequences of the fashion industry on the environment as well as on people, Mia even did not buy new clothes (except for underwear and socks) for a whole year, in line with Jacksons' (2024) finding where 78% of young women stated to put others' needs before their own (compared to 67% of men) when talking about their consuming motivations. When not bought in physical second-hand stores, clothes are bought online "I buy most clothes on Vinted" (Anouk). In their research, Cervellon et al. (2012: 969) found that consumers of vintage clothing are often highly educated and have relatively high disposable incomes. The educational part can be accounted for in two-fold. First, knowledge about unique vintage items requires a level of historic and artistic fashion interest. Second, these consumers know their ecological footprint is smaller in consuming vintage items instead of new items. This knowledge is attached to cultural capital (Jens, 2005: 182). In addition, Cassidy and Bennett (2013: 240) found two other factors related to consuming vintage clothing, namely the influence of social media and the desire for authenticity or individuality. These two factors were mentioned by the female interviewees as well, as they admitted having been influenced by social media at times and to admire people who have an authentic fashion style. This corresponds with the finding of Jackson (2024), where she found that young women prefer photo and video-based social media platforms, whereas men prefer text-based social media platforms.

A shared opinion between genders was their taste in what they dislike. All interviewees responded similarly: ostentatious or clear fast fashion brands are a no-go for this status group. Examples were "Zara" (Remco, Anouk, Joris), "Primark" (Ian, Remco) and "The Sting" (Liv). The longing for authenticity and dissociating from the mainstream brands is found as well in earlier research. Michael (2013: 172) argues in her research about hipster culture, that authenticity has become a symbolic way of dress. Rejecting the mainstream is part of this subculture: hipsters want to distinguish themselves, but within recognisable boundaries for other hipsters. This insight was visible as well among this research group: the contemporary young urban professional showed their aversion towards mainstream brands and fast fashion, yet their style is still basic and follows trends (buying specific brands or buying vintage clothing) that are popular within their status group. Marc even described his taste as "hipster". This authenticity in fashion styles displays the presence of cultural capital and contributes to visualising social positions (Michael, 2013: 178).

This section displays gendered differences in the consumption of fashion. Men favour high quality, even if it is expensive. Women, on the other hand, would rather shop second-

hand than men. They are also more sensitive to being influenced by others in their fashion consumption. However, the women from this study seem to be aware of this.

4.4.3 Conclusion

Within section 4.4, the taste of the contemporary young urban professional has been researched and described. Their consumption behaviour shows a strong orientation towards cultural capital and distinction by drawing symbolic boundaries. Consumption choices around food and fashion are not random, but hold deeper values such as sustainability, authenticity and health. The interviewees spoke effortlessly about these decisions, as if logical to everyone. This insinuates a lack of awareness of their consumption motivations. Health, sustainable and local production considerations clearly guided the food consumption of the interviewees. Food consumption is such a large part of their lifestyle, also because of the social aspect. They preferably visit their favourite places with friends and see other 'members' from their status group there. When it comes to fashion consumption, similar patterns appeared: mainstream, ostentatious and fast fashion do not fit their consumption patterns. Instead, they buy quality basics (men) or vintage clothing (women). Even though there are some differences, both men and women desire to consume morally yet tasteful. Consuming this way is not only in line with their internalised values but also serves as a means of distinction from other social groups. In doing so, expressing identity is a bigger priority than simple pleasure. The contemporary young urban professional consumes things because of their values, aligning with earlier research of Bourdieu's taste distinction, Brooks' Bobos and Currid-Halkett's aspirational class. Food and fashion are two clear symbols, signalling who the members of this status group are, and who they are not.

Summary of results

Chapter 4 offered an in-depth look at the most recurring themes that emerged from the interviews. The lifestyles, values, ambitions and consumption patterns of the contemporary young urban professional were central. Through their social background, education, career choices, current taste and lifestyles, it becomes clear how their consumption habits came to be and are used as a means of social distinction. While living ethical and knowledge-based lives, there are boundaries and contradictions in the behaviour of the contemporary yup. These insights lay the groundwork for the final chapter, which will answer the sub-questions and, in turn, the research question posed in this thesis.

5. Conclusion

This thesis evolved around the research question ‘How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?’. Chapter 2 provided relevant theories and literature to form a well-informed base primary of the empirical research. In Chapter 3, methodological considerations for this study were presented. In chapter 4, the findings from the interviews were presented and discussed. Based on thematic analysis, four larger themes emerged from the data, which became the sections of chapter 4.

To find an answer to the research question, three sub-questions were established. ‘How do the contemporary young urban professionals shape their lifestyle and taste?’ is the first one. First of all, the interviewees showed similar values to the Bobos and the aspirational class. These include personal development, sustainability, ambition and left-winged morals and were already present in their prosperous childhoods. Together with their high levels of education, this shapes their habitus. In turn, these inherited ways of thinking, tastes and behaviours shape their lifestyles.

In their daily lives, the interviewees all have a career they enjoy, in which men lean more towards technical or corporate jobs, and women slightly more towards social occupations. Both genders claim to work from their internal values. They stressed the importance of useful work, meaning they contribute something to the world or develop themselves. Even though all interviewees earn good salaries, money was never the incentive for their careers. Their meaningful, knowledge-based jobs function as a status symbol, as these signal their social status and values. However, this is only visible to others they know and not clearly visible to ‘outsiders’. Whereas positions that are held by economically wealthy people with lower cultural capital might be more visible as they make more money and consume more conspicuously (for example, expensive cars), these creative or sustainable careers of the research group are viewed as more prestigious in this status group. The lifestyle and taste of the contemporary young urban professional are thus shaped by their social background (education, upbringing, habitus) and maintained by their careers. How they express these lifestyles is visible in how they spend their money on leisure and consumption goods, which leads to the next sub-question: ‘What are the current events and objects that function as status symbols for the contemporary young urban professional and why?’. Three themes recurred in the conversations among the interviewees about leisure: friendships, health and travelling.

Friendship plays an important role in the lives of the interviewees. The interviewees showed slight differences in the activities they do with their friends. Women spoke more about cultural activities, such as going to museums, whereas men preferred sports activities more often. However, both sexes shared the passion for going out for drinks or food. The genders agreed on the types of places they prefer, just as they similarly disliked the same types of places. The places they go to are described as 'laid-back'. These places often include seasonal food, vegetarian menus, speciality beers and coffees or nature wine. Places they would rather not go are described as 'show-off places'. These places are crowded, and the people who go there care about ostentatious status display. Likewise, the interviewees do not identify with those types of people, just like the Bobos and the aspirational class. Instead, they identify with highly educated, authentic, adventurous and ambitious people. Shifting away from Veblen's leisure class, and similar to the Bobos and aspirational class, the contemporary yuppies spend their leisure time in a way that can be classified as 'useful' or 'instrumental'. Most things they do serve their aspirations. For example, they play sports to stay fit, go out for food at healthy places or to learn about speciality drinks, or travel to learn about culture.

Most of the interviewees think of themselves as healthy and sustainable consumers. This shows in their food consumption: multiple interviewees expressed eating less to no meat, or biological out of environmental and health considerations. The interviewees were asked to reflect on their expenses. All of them concluded that they spend more than the average person on food. However, they reflect on these expenses positively. It brings them a good time with friends, health benefits, knowledge and experience. No clear gender differences were apparent in the consumption of food. Besides spending loads of money on food, sports is also a costly part of the interviewees' lives. The men in this study said to spend on sports gear, such as running shoes and socks. Women, on the other hand, more often have a costly subscription such as ClassPass.

Lastly, the interviewees like to spend their leisure time travelling. This passion was shared among all the interviewees, regardless of gender. This aspect of leisure time can also be classified as 'useful', as they gain new experiences and explore new places, just like how the Bobos and the aspirational class view travelling. Like splurging on food and sports, the interviewees spend virtuous amounts on travelling and vacations. The contemporary young urban professional is focused on short-term pleasure, rather than saving money for their future and long-term goals. In addition, their focus is on experiences instead of material goods.

Just like the values of the contemporary young urban professionals underlie their careers, leisure time and food consumption, so they do in their fashion consumption. A

difference between genders is that men consume quality products and buy less. Women, on the other hand, consume more sustainably in the sense that they buy second-hand or vintage clothing, which is also associated with higher education, a disposable income and authenticity (Cervellon et al., 2012: 969). The female interviewees also said that they were influenced by social media at times in their clothing purchases. Algorithms confirm our taste and thus result in further strengthening symbolic boundaries between social groups.

To conclude, the contemporary young urban professionals consume based on their values. Leisure time is in service of their aspirations, and consumption must be ethical. Displaying their social status and possession of high cultural capital is not the objective; however, this happens as an inevitable side-effect of their inconspicuous consumption. They visit similar places, shop sustainably, practice certain sports and dislike the same places and people. The status symbols of the contemporary yup are thus not necessarily set objects or places, but rather they are decided by the motivations behind consuming. However, there are some overarching categories in which the interviewees feel comfortable consuming, such as sustainable and quality fashion; seasonal, vegetarian and biological food and speciality cafes; health-related expenses such as ClassPass; and travelling. These places of consumption (cafes and sports classes), together with social media algorithms and gentrified neighbourhoods, contribute to the confirmation of their taste and lifestyles. They thus function as ‘echo-chambers’ and are part of the network autocorrelation process, in which people start to resemble each other (Dellaposta et al., 2015: 1476; Hunt, 2025: 53).

Throughout this study, special attention was paid to differences in consumption patterns of the contemporary yuppies. In this paragraph, the last sub-question, ‘How do contemporary yup men and women differ in their consumption behaviour?’ will be answered. In general, the interviewees conformed to earlier research conducted on gendered consumption behaviour. The women in this research showed to consume more socially, whereas men showed to consume more for individual purposes, corresponding to earlier research (CBS, 2015; Deori et al., 2023; Monden, 2025; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009; Piamphongsant & Mandhachitara, 2008). This is visible in their consumption of fashion. For example, women more often buy second-hand clothing because of ethical reasons. The female interviewees are also more likely to spend money on mindfulness-related objects and activities, such as yoga, just like earlier research confirms (Park et al., 2015: 463; Yoo et al., 2017: 560). The male interviewees, on the other hand, practice a wider variety of sports. Examples named were ‘tennis’, ‘soccer’, ‘running’, ‘volleyball’ and ‘bouldering’. Even

though the actual consumed goods or activities might differ per gender, the motivations of the contemporary young urban professional did not show many differences.

This thesis concludes that the contemporary young urban professionals distinguish themselves mostly by inconspicuous consumption. Cultural capital and knowledge have become a more and more important factors for belonging to this status group. Economic capital and ostentatious consumption, on the other hand, have decreased even more in their importance for gaining prestige. The female respondents showed to consume more socially and to be more sensitive to being influenced. This is sometimes visible in their social media-inspired fashion consumption. Likewise, some of the women in this study visit sports classes where they find ‘duplicates’ of themselves. These taste-confirming places, on- and offline, further strengthen the existing symbolic boundaries between groups. Especially the women from this study seem to contribute to this, though they did not express any intention to do so. However, both genders in this study draw symbolic boundaries in multiple ways. For example, they live in gentrified neighbourhoods and go to or avoid similar places, which results in network autocorrelation (Dellaposta et al., 2015: 1476).

Although the interviewees displayed little to no intention of distinguishing themselves as a status group, the increase of their inconspicuous consumption actually draws symbolic boundaries more than conspicuous consumption does. This inconspicuous consumption and lifestyle (such as their careers, sustainable consumption and places they visit) is hard to recognise for people not part of this status group. Their lifestyles and consumption patterns sometimes conflict with their ideals of wanting an equal society: they work for organisations that help minorities, yet they (unconsciously) uphold a system in which minorities cannot see the behaviour of ‘higher rank’ social groups. They eat and dress sustainably, or work for a sustainable organisation, but keep travelling by plane. This contradiction in values and behaviour is only recognised by the interviewees to some extent. Unconsciously, they do not completely live up to their values and uphold an unequal social system. Just as the research of Schuman and Bobo (1988: 276) shows, this status group also shows “ideological sophistication rather than egalitarian commitment”, meaning that this group only lives up to their ideals, until they meet a boundary of having to give up their own comfort. In addition, it can be questioned how sincere their values are. Consuming based on knowledge is part of this status group, and thus, one has to consume ethically to signal their status to other group members. Eventually, their ethical consumption patterns, which they claim are based on their ideals, simply also function to fit in with their group, even if this is an unconscious process.

Limitations

This thesis answers but also raises questions about the consumption behaviour of the contemporary yup. Further research could find more detailed answers about the motivations behind their consumption and the extent to which it is sincere based on ideals. However, such research calls for a complicated approach, as asking respondents directly about their sincerity could result in dishonest answers. Secondly, as this study contains ten interviewees and has a qualitative character, further research could explore a similar question with a more statistical approach. For example, the attitudes of the contemporary young urban professional could be measured towards their consumption behaviour and motivations. Thirdly, non-academic sources inform about contemporary yuppies on a large scale. Examples of books and Instagram accounts were mentioned. Further research could investigate these sources and add an academic dimension, and compare this status group over different countries and over different economies and cultures. Lastly, this research used a binary approach to gender. It solely focuses on cisgender men and women, excluding the experiences of people who identify differently or are not cisgender men or women. This research therefore does not capture the full spectrum of gendered consumption. Future research could use this wider and more detailed approach in addition to this thesis.

The reliability of this qualitative research is limited, as there is a chance of bias and subjectivity. Therefore, if this research were conducted again, even with the same interview guide, the results might differ. In addition, the number of interviewees was limited (10) and consisted of only white people, most of whom live in Rotterdam. If this research were conducted again with different interviewees, the results might also differ. On the flipside, the interviews were coded, and multiple quotes of the respondents were used to illustrate findings, strengthening the argumentation and increasing the verification of my interpretation.

In terms of validity, this research scores better. However, there is a chance the respondents felt like they had to give socially acceptable answers. Secondly, only reflecting on behaviour has been researched in this thesis, not the actual behaviour itself, which could gain other or additional insights relevant to the research question. This research scores better on validity in terms of the use of former research. First, the theoretical framework offers relevant literature to work with in this thesis. Secondly, the research group was clearly defined and all interviewees fitted well within this group. Lastly, the interviews were rich in information and provided enough data to compose this research, if not more, and find an answer to the research question.

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Appendix A: Interviewee information

	Ian	Marc	Joris	Michael	Remco	Liv	Mia	Myrthe	Anouk	Louise
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	29	25	27	26	30	27	25	28	26	26
Education	BA (AS)	MA	BA (AS)	MA	BA (AS)	BA (AS)	MA	BA (AS)	BA (AS)	MA
Place	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Utrecht	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Utrecht	Rotterdam	Amsterdam	Amsterdam
Ethnicity	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch
Occupation	Sales advisor	Game and app developer	Engineer	Online marketeer	Online marketeer	Freelance journalist	Policymaker	Youth counsellor	Connector	Finance consultant

Appendix B: Interview guide

How and why do female and male young urban professionals in the Randstad distinguish themselves as a status group by their consumption?

Themes

1. Social position
2. Consumption
3. Status symbols (this theme is incorporated in the former two in the interview guide)

Sub-questions:

1. How do the contemporary young urban professionals shape their lifestyle and taste?
2. What are the current events and objects that function as status symbols for the contemporary young urban professional and why?
3. How do contemporary yup men and women differ in their consumption behaviour?

Interview guide: Young urban professionals in the Randstad and status consumption

Introduction:

- Thank you for participating in this interview. The goal of this research is to get a deeper understanding of the consumption patterns and lifestyles of young urban professionals in the Randstad. We will talk about topics such as your likes and dislikes, what is important to you and how you spend your leisure time.
- Your responses will be anonymized, and you can skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering. Can you please read the consent form and sign it if you are okay with the conditions listed?
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Theme 1: Social position

Personal and demographic background

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
 - Age
 - Profession and careerpath
 - Education
 - Living situation
 - Relationship status
2. Can you tell me about your upbringing?
 - Location
 - Family situation

- School
- Parents education/occupation

Social environment

3. How would you describe your family?
4. What does your friend group look like?
 - What do you do together?
 - How do you know each other?
5. What other people do you spend a lot of time with?
 - Colleagues
 - Other communities (sports, studies)
6. With what kind of people do you associate?
 - Social demographic factors
 - Occupations & social class
 - To what kind of places do these people go?
 - What do they enjoy?
 - How do you recognise these people? Trademarks.
 - What kind of people do you think are cool?
7. With what kind of people do you not want to be associated with? What kind of people do you avoid?
 - Social demographic factors
 - Occupations & social class
 - To what kind of places do these people go?
 - What do they enjoy?

Identity

8. Can you tell me what is important to you?
 - Norms and values (from upbringing?)
 - Political parties/ideologies
 - Religion / spirituality
9. What do you hope for in your future?
 - What are your goals?
10. What do you like to do in your free time?
 - Hobbies (sports/creativity/partying/traveling)

- What do you do with your friends?
 - To what places do you go?
11. What does your ideal weekend here in [city] look like?
12. What kind of vacation do you like?

Theme 2: Consumption

13. What kind of coffee do you like?
- Favourite places + why
 - Can you describe the kind of people that go there?
 - Why do they go there?
 - Price
14. What kind of fashion brands do you like?
- Examples
 - Why
 - How does it make you feel
 - Why do people purchase this brand?
 - What kind of people purchase this brand?
15. What kind of food places do you like?
- Favourite places (bakeries, restaurants, bars, cafes etc.)
 - Do you go often?
 - Type of food: e.g. vegetarian/vegan/biological.
 - Price
 - What kind of people go there?
 - Why do people go there?
16. To what kind of events do you like to go?
- Why
 - Do you go with friends?
 - How does it make you feel?
 - What kind of people go there?
 - What kind of people do not go there?
 - What kind of events do you not like?
17. If you had to describe the places you like with just a few words, how would you describe them?
18. How or where do you find places, brands or activities that you like?

19. What is on your wishlist?
 - Activities
 - Clothing
 - Food places
 - Housing
 - Traveling
20. On what kind of things do you spend more money than the average person and why?
 - How do you reflect on these expenses? Is it worth it?
21. To what kind of things do you spend little money and why?
22. Do you think you spend more money than the average Dutch person your age?
23. Has your lifestyle changed over the past few years?
 - Are there things you used to find important and now not anymore?
24. Do you think your lifestyle is going to change over the upcoming few years?
25. Do you avoid certain products or places?
 - Where would people never find you? Why?
 - Where wouldn't you go for dinner or coffee? Why?
 - Where wouldn't you shop clothing? Why?
26. Are you influenced by others in what you consume?
 - How do you perceive others?
27. What is luxury for you?

Ending

- Thank you for your time and insights. Anything else you would like to share on this topic?
- Questions or comments about the interview?

Appendix C: Code book

Open codes

1. Social demographic information IAN
2. career
3. future
4. living situation
5. hobbies
6. finances
7. friends
8. omnivorousness taste
9. favorite places
10. important to them
11. social environment
12. sustainability
13. food and drinks
14. fashion
15. dislikes
16. identity
17. health
18. future
19. spirituality and mental health
20. religion
21. future goals
22. interests
23. travel preferences
24. backpacking
25. wintersports
26. surfing
27. specialty coffee (place)
28. prefers laid back atmosphere
29. willing to pay more for quality
30. dislikes too crowded and chaotic
31. fashion taste is casual and basic
32. Same taste in fashion as 'finance bro's'
33. food preferences
34. likes fresh food
35. likes to try new things
36. goes out for dinner often
37. likes festivals
38. into house / techno music
39. events
40. works and workouts more and parties less
41. Highly educated, mid twenty year olds go to house/techno festivals
42. wouldn't go to apres-ski festivals
43. wouldn't go to metal festivals
44. actively searches for new places to eat or drink
45. actively uses social media
46. social media purposes
47. saves money for moving
48. expensiveness
49. Spends more money than the average person on workout gear and going out for dinner
50. amount of money spend on going for dinner per month
51. too much alcohol is a waste of money
52. spends less money than the average person on housing and groceries.
53. reflects on expenses
54. thinks his expenses are average for his age
55. started living more consciously
56. quit drinking alcohol
57. dislikes fast fashion
58. thinks Carhartt is too 'yuppie' and alternative
59. actively wouldn't buy
60. does not think he is alternative
61. drinks mature wine
62. dislikes fashion that is thrasy, shows a lot of skin or is 'tokkie'
63. dislikes too much self-tan
64. dislikes too many tattoos
65. definition of 'tokkie'
66. is easily influenced by friends in his consumption
67. is not into micro trends or hypes
68. defines luxury as not having to think about money
69. highly educated LIV
70. works in media
71. loving upbringing
72. parents occupation
73. experienced youth as prosperous
74. went on multiple vacations a year
75. spontaneous, creative and loving friends
76. activities with friends: coffee, lunch, parties and festivals, vacation
77. prefers meeting 1 on 1 over a group
78. likes to spend time alone
79. values personal freedom
80. doesn't like too many people
81. associates with people who value their appearance but not want to show off with brands
82. likes scandinavian fashion
83. associates with people who value (mental) health
84. associates with open minded people
85. associates with creative people
86. recognizes people like her by appearance
87. Influencers she likes
88. places avoided
89. Tokkies are disliked
90. places tokkies go to
91. is not materialistic
92. votes for leftwinged, progressive parties
93. becomes more interested in politic / societal matters
94. is atheist
95. values mindfulness, selfreflection and self development
96. practices yoga
97. wants to live abroad
98. Likes to travel
99. ideal weekend
100. dislikes 'show off' places
101. dislikes 'show off' people
102. atmosphere is important
103. favorite fashion brands
104. works from coffee places
105. goes to the same places as vegans
106. does not only go to 'expensive' dinner places
107. wishlist
108. likes wine bars
109. prefers more intimate events
110. goes to other cities
111. prefers activities/memories over material goods
112. becomes digital nomad
113. likes to discover new cultures
114. is interested in aesthetics
115. is influenced by others
116. enjoys summer
117. spends more money than the average person on food
118. spends more money than the average person on eating and drinking out
119. spends more money than the average person on clothing
120. spends more money than the average person on skincare
121. spends money easily
122. does not know if her expenses are average
123. act now and no stress mentality
124. claims not to care what people think of her
125. is motivated and wants to be productive
126. has less but better quality friendships than earlier in life
127. wants to develop in yoga
128. interested in mindfulness and spirituality
129. dislikes 'show off' fashion brands
130. dislikes posh fashion brands
131. associates show places with show off brands
132. is influenced by friends
133. social media is not super influential in her consumption behavior
134. bought clothing via ads on social media
135. defines luxury as sharing a good time at home with people you love in good health
136. does gardening on balcony **REMCO**
137. likes to play soccer
138. lives together with girlfriend
139. works in plant pest control
140. works in marketing
141. works in an environmentally friendly business
142. wants to work in sustainability
143. Bikes a lot on his electric bike
144. loving upbringing
145. prosperous upbringing
146. highly educated
147. has a wide variety of friends
148. friends are not the same type of person as respondent
149. likes to have such different types of friends
150. has a good connection with his colleagues
151. works in a left winged organisation
152. identifies with soccer fans
153. does not identify with tokkies
154. does not identify with gothics
155. does not identify with metal lovers
156. does not identify with pv'ers
157. gets along with different types of people
158. likes sports
159. likes to read
160. likes to go to the market
161. likes to be outside
162. likes to draw
163. likes to go out for dinner
164. likes smaller and more intimate restaurants
165. likes sustainable restaurants with a local menu
166. dislikes large-scale places
167. disliked restaurant
168. dislikes large/unpersonal food chains
169. likes alternative/vegetarian places
170. different tast than parents
171. prefers more intimate restaurants over posh restaurants
172. parents did enjoy posh places
173. norms and values
174. votes for left-winged parties
175. would like life to be more local
176. weekend plans are soccer, beers in the sun, reading, listening to music, cinema and gardening.
177. enjoys the local biological market (Rotterdamse Oogstmarkt)
178. attaches value to local, environmentally friendly, sustainable and high quality products
179. goes to the same places as high earners, who like a laid-back atmosphere and biological products
180. eating biological products is important
181. eats biological
182. Shops groceries at Albert Heijn
183. Shops vegetables at the Oogstmarkt or at a local farm
184. shops for quality
185. likes different types of vacation
186. likes quality basics in fashion
187. does not consume a lot of fast fashion
188. does not wear flashy brands
189. taste in music events changed from bigger events to more intimate events
190. enjoys laid-back events
191. wants to go to more events
192. spends more money than the average person on groceries
193. spends more money than the average person on plants
194. spends more money than the average person on books
195. goes for dinner at least once a month
196. spends less money than the average person on clothing
197. thinks his expenses are average
198. lifestyle changed over the past few year
199. enjoys personal development
200. placed avoided
201. does not think he is easily influenced
202. luxury is relaxing with people you love in the sun
203. wants a dog
204. lives in Amsterdam with best friend **ANOUK**
205. Works for a strategy agency
206. Lived in Ridderkerk, Doorn and Amsterdam
207. Studied Fashion Business at a private university
208. has a student loan dept

209. works for a sustainable and innovative organization
210. had a burn-out and depression
211. study mates easily find jobs
212. important in work
213. traveling was intense
214. lived in Australia
215. traveling boosted her confidence
216. is single
217. christian family
218. loving upbringing
219. parents are open and caring
220. talks with her mom about sex
221. journey of faith
222. only has friends who are girls
223. has friend groups and individual friendships
224. friends from university work in Amsterdam and or in fashion
225. likes to go for drinks in Amsterdam with her friends
226. visits museums
227. goes to cafes or restaurants
228. has a good connection with colleagues
229. has an intimate work environment
230. does recycle
231. does not like to plan when she works out
232. does yoga and boxing
233. has classpass
234. sports
235. ran 1/4 marathon in Rotterdam
236. wants to be viewed as kind, open and honest
237. thinks of herself as privileged
238. examples of white, educational and last name privilege
239. acknowledges problems but is not occupied with it throughout the day
240. social circle is Amsterdam Zuid/Oud Zuid
241. places in Amsterdam where friends live and work
242. starts to look more into cultural activities
243. places she visits in the Pijp
244. favorite places in the neighborhood
245. favorite places are expensive
246. goes for drinks or coffee more often than for dinner
247. loves confident people
248. pays attention to people's outfits
249. buys most clothing second hand on Vinted
250. likes the fashion brand Ganni, COS and Laagam
251. does not like that she still wears fast fashion
252. thinks shopping sustainably is important
253. realization of why sustainability is important
254. buys sustainable home products
255. likes to travel but is ashamed of flying
256. sustainable brands and products
257. buys bedding, bags and shoes new
258. sustainable groceries
259. uses anti food waste app
260. tries to eat biological and vegetarian
261. dislikes very right winged people
262. does not want to be friends with people who care a lot about status and money
263. does not want to be associated with voters of Trump or PVV
264. places disliked in Amsterdam
265. dislikes poch places
266. norms and values include treat others how you want to be treated and respect
267. wants to make positive impact
268. social environment is not involved with sustainability
269. wants social environment to be more occupied with sustainability
270. raises awareness among friends and family about sustainable choices
271. does not like politics and is left winged
272. does yoga and spirituality/religion
273. did yoga retreats
274. wants to stay in Amsterdam
275. wants her own positive impact business
276. future goals
277. inspiring brands
278. hobbies
279. likes relaxed far away vacations
280. festivals she likes
281. likes happy house festivals
282. description of tokkie
283. does not associate with tokkies
284. sometimes goes to the same places as tokkies
285. inspiration for new places
286. uses social media
287. wishlist things
288. travel destinations on her wishlist
289. wants golden jewelry and burberry sunglasses
290. wants experiences rather than material goods
291. spends more money than the average person on rent, clothes, vacations
292. spends less money than the average person on health insurance, groceries, transport
293. wants to eat more local, but other than that wants to keep the same lifestyle
294. defines real luxury as a relaxed vacation at the beach
295. is confident, but can be insecure in her job
296. lives in Utrecht with partner **MIA & JORIS**
297. Carreer
298. hobbies include running, cooking, music and traveling
299. works for a non-profit organization
300. loving upbringing
301. Lived in The Hague and Zoetermeer
302. christian family
303. prosperous upbringing
304. knows friends from kindergarten
305. learning and being active were motivated in youth
306. activities with friends include sports and drinking beers
307. has one friend group
308. has more individual friendships
309. was a member of a student association
310. progressive upbringing: people follow news, talk about worldly issues and are focussed on career
311. omnivorous taste in friends, but are all progressive
312. very different friends
313. is focused on career and intellectuality
314. balance between work and hobbies is important
315. Work needs to contribute to a better world
316. identifies with progressive-liberal people
317. identifies with highly educated people who follow news
318. identifies with people who make positive impact and with the highly educated middle class
319. likeminded people are focused on living healthy
320. eat vegetarian for the environment
321. have Albert Heijn Premium, so they can buy biological products on a discount
322. Do not associate with right-wings people, PVV voters
323. do not associate with racists, close-minded people and anti-democrats
324. thinks the multicultural society is important
325. Utrecht is a very progressive city
326. Neighborhood exists of highly educated left-winged elites
327. neighborhood exists of rich white people
328. identifies with cultural and economical highbrow people
329. votes to create a better life for other people
330. girlfriend motivated boyfriend to vote for more left-winged parties
331. wants everyone to have the same opportunities
332. wants to converseate with people who have different stances
333. feels privileged and attaches value to equality
334. attaches value to mutual respect
335. do not really have a plan for the future
336. would like to live abroad
337. wants a challenging job where she can learn a lot
338. reads and listens to books
339. wantt o climb mountains
340. like camping, active vacation, explore culture and preferably without going on a plane
341. is ashamed of flying, but wants to see other cultures and nature
342. is not really ashamed of flying
343. want public transport to be cheaper, so it becomes a favorable option instead of flying
344. like to cook
345. like to go cycling
346. hobbies include bird watching and building/fixing things
347. places they go to in Utrecht
348. likes to go to museums
349. likes historical and classical art
350. does not like to go to neude. It is too touristic
351. likes intimate bars better
352. places avoided
353. dislikes dutch folk music
354. Likes laid back music in bars
355. goes to dutch folk bars with his friends, but does not like to listen on his own
356. Like bars with different types of people
357. Likes music performances
358. listen to different music genres
359. only buys secondhand clothing
360. fashion taste is trendy and clean
361. only buys sustainable clothing
362. dislikes Zara, because people consume high pace
363. willing to pay more for quality
364. likes surfing clothing style
365. likes authentic clothing styles
366. spends more money than the average person on sportsgear
367. spends more money than the average person on car and motorbike
368. spends less money than the average person on clothing
369. spends more money than the average person
370. lifestyle change over the past few years: eating more vegetarian
371. lifestyle change over the past few years: more focus on health
372. go out for dinner often
373. go to different types of restaurants
374. pays attention to what she consumes
375. focus on mental health
376. takes time for herself
377. not focused on mental health
378. does christian mindfulness
379. is influenced by friends but is aware
380. is not so much influenced by others in her consumption behavior
381. defines real luxury as spending time with loved ones in good health without financial worries
382. real luxury is also being able to share with others and having healthy people around you
383. lives in Rotterdam north **MICHAEL**
384. works for a non-profit organization that helps refugees
385. works in Amsterdam
386. plays volleyball
387. does charity work
388. comes from a big christian family
389. is homosexual and struggled with this during puberty
390. would have liked a more scientific school with a more worldly focus
391. studies
392. did charity work in Africa
393. wanted to do an international study
394. joined a student association
395. loving and progressive parents
396. environment accepting homosexuality
397. stepmother has second hand design fashion store
398. loving upbringing
399. did not really learn how to be assertive
400. has more individual friendships
401. friends are same type of people
402. friends are intellectual and grew up as christians
403. likes to meet up at home, go for a drink, go to the cinema or to the club
404. works fulltime
405. relationship with co-workers is important
406. goed to openminded festivals
407. is online marketeer
408. likes to do new things
409. self-development is important
410. identifies with young stylish people
411. Amsterdam young elites are too much
412. identifies with the 'havermelk elite' but is more relaxed
413. is open to others
414. identifies with people who are social and live for experiences
415. is creative
416. does not associate with intense people who do drugs, gossip about each other and are focused on looks
417. does not associate with shallow people
418. does not like techno festivals

419. does not like show-off places
420. is not into drugs
421. norms and values include considering others and the environment
422. convenient consumption behavior
423. buys vintage and second-hand clothing
424. was vegetarian
425. making impact starts with yourself
426. follows news and politics
427. reads newspaper NRC
428. votes for left-winged progressive parties
429. is very left-winged
430. future goals
431. wants to make impact and look out for family and friends
432. likes to spend time at home
433. likes the funky house clothing store
434. likes running
435. likes club Ferry
436. goes to places in Rotterdam Noord for food and drinks
437. uses Too Good To Go
438. likes to go on vacation but is not a real globetrotter
439. likes to plan out things
440. clothing brands he likes, preferably buys them second-hand
441. clothing brands he likes are for richer people
442. wants to be seen as fashionable but not as elite
443. rather wears a clean shirt than a shirt from a brand he does not know
444. does not want to be dressed in something tacky
445. does not like PME Legends and clothing store The Sting
446. does not have a lot of clothes
447. does not like prestigious, expensive restaurants
448. likes intimate atmosphere places
449. likes authentic places
450. likes gay-parties
451. likes to get cheese at the biological market in Rotterdam Noord
452. likes events that bring cities together
453. goes to other cities for parties
454. does not want to be targeted on instagram
455. always reads reviews or asks friends before going somewhere
456. is not focused on his finances
457. spends more money than the average person on conveniences
458. spends less money than the average person on traveling, rent, owning a car and clothing
459. is less materialistic than the average person
460. still thinks as if he has less budget
461. thinks his lifestyle is going to change by spending more money on new items and going out for food /drinks
462. does not come in Rotterdam South or west, likes North
463. places avoided: 1nu18, because the crowd has a different lifestyle
464. people who go to 1nu18 care about looks, showing-off, are less educated
465. likes more intimate laid-back places
466. defines real luxury as owning a vacation house with a jacuzzi and a garden
467. defines real luxury as owning designer clothing and drinking cocktails
468. likes espresso martinis
469. drinks cocktails, even though it can be expensive
470. is not a real foodie
471. drinks oat milk cappuchinos at work in Amsterdam
472. does not pay so much attention to eating healthy, but does pay a lot of attention on working out
473. has own apartment in Rotterdam West **MARC**
474. Works as a game/app developer
475. studies
476. likes to work out
477. likes to go to cafes
478. makes music
479. likes to go running or bouldering
480. likes to go to festivals
481. likes to play boardgames
482. christian background
483. prosperous upbringing
484. parents thought it was important that he could play an instrument
485. pushed to develop talent
486. parents occupation
487. highly educated friends
488. friends like to party
489. has friend groups and individual friendships
490. activities with friends
491. omnivorousness music taste
492. does not like tacky music
493. associates with left-winged alternative people
494. associates with people who do not judge and are open minded
495. feels privileged and belongs to higher class
496. students are often left-winged and alternative
497. alternative people like rotown
498. sees other yuppies in the boulderinghall. It is expensive.
499. goes to a restaurant at least once a month
500. recognizes similar people by their fashion style
501. has hipster style
502. is inspired by his parents
503. does not associate with low-income people
504. places avoided
505. does not like places where less intelligent people go who are jugy and drink a lot
506. does not like show-off places
507. norms and values include equality and taking care of the environment
508. did not fly and eat meat for climate change
509. is not really politically involved but votes for left-middle parties
510. does not follow the news a lot because it is depressing
511. does not like PVV
512. is not focused on mindfulness or spirituality
513. wants to move in the future
514. wants to go to italy and japan
515. travelled a lot
516. likes to do roadtrips and citytrips
517. does not have a favorite coffee place
518. tries to eat healthy
519. is too lazy to cook
520. willing to pay more for quality
521. buys second-hand clothing
522. recycles old clothes
523. spending a lot of money on drinks is a waste
524. was thought not to waste money
525. does not like tracksuits
526. does not like 'tokkie' clothing style
527. is influenced by friends in activities but less in materials
528. defines real luxury as a day off and being able to do what you want: coffee somewhere and going bouldering.
529. works as youth counsellor **MYRTHE**
530. likes social activities
531. intense job
532. moving is too expensive
533. is single
534. loving upbringing
535. christian background
536. middle class family
537. different type of friends
538. has more individual friendships but also groups
539. has a lot of friends
540. goes for food/drinks or does sports with friends
541. likes to play games or go out for drinks
542. likes to go to new places
543. likes shared dining
544. favorite places
545. likes food festivals
546. likes social people who are ambitious
547. associated with adventurous people
548. friends are successful
549. friends have above average income
550. friends like to travel
551. vacation has to be adventurous
552. does not like mass tourism and all-inclusive places
553. many friends have classpass
554. in rotterdam her friends go to the same places
555. nice places in Rotterdam
556. uses social media for inspiration and to share own life
557. all friends like luxury dinners
558. likes different fashion styles
559. does not want to be viewed as superficial, simple
560. does not want to be viewed as a tokkie
561. does not like people who are not willing to work
562. does not like misogynistic people
563. does not like racists
564. does not like homophobic people
565. does not like close-minded people
566. tokkies are loud, have tattoos, do not look neat, are racists, vote PVV
567. does not want to be associated with PVV voters
568. is left-winged
569. respects people who work hard
570. defines tokkies
571. norms and values include honesty, humor, loyalty and respect
572. financial certainty is important
573. biggest passion is traveling
574. likes planning vacations
575. feeling of freedom when traveling
576. travel wishlist
577. does not like spiritual activities
578. likes yoga
579. wants to study more
580. busy social schedule
581. likes techno and house music
582. dislikes dutch singers
583. likes festivals that are nearby
584. went to big international festivals
585. likes that everything is possible at festivals
586. only likes cooking when she has time
587. pays attention to eating fruit and vegetables
588. drinks oat milk cappuccino
589. wears fast fashion
590. used to shop sustainably, not anymore
591. sustainable choices have to be convenient
592. struggles with consuming sustainable
593. tries new sustainable products
594. is ashamed of flying so much, but because of friends and family
595. thinks bigger instances should deal with climate change instead of individuals
596. traveling is selfish
597. spends more money than the average person on gifts, dinners and traveling
598. likes luxury dinners and wines
599. spends less money than the average person on make-up
600. lifestyle did not change past few years
601. does not think lifestyle will change in next 5 years
602. is flexible in where to go with friends
603. does not like people who feel like they are better than others
604. brands disliked
605. buys trending items
606. is not sensitive to influences of others in fashion style
607. is influential when it comes to places to eat
608. interior is important in restaurants
609. places avoided
610. favorite places
611. defines real luxury as being able to travel, to have enough money
612. feels bad for poor people
613. feels privileged
614. feels guilty for complaining sometimes when others are in worse circumstances
615. finance consultant at big corporate **LOUISE**
616. moved from Rotterdam to Amsterdam because of commute time
617. lives with friend
618. enjoys work
619. does fun things with colleagues in Amsterdam
620. has classpass
621. likes roecycle, pilates
622. busy schedule
623. associates with young urban dutch people
624. associates with highly-educated people with well-paying jobs
625. similar people go to terraces, festivals, sport classes
626. finds copies of herself in sports classes
627. went to DGTL
628. Amsterdam is expensive, not accessible for everyone to live there

628. Amsterdam is expensive, not accessible for everyone to live there
629. everyone in Amsterdam looks alike
630. Rotterdam is more diverse
631. Amsterdam is not representative for the actual society
632. trending items are leopard print pants, blazers and adidas samba's, uniqlo bags
633. is sensitive to trends
634. does not associate with alternative people
635. does not associate with gothics, emo's or tokkies
636. people show bits of their life by their outfits
637. went to a concert but did not like the audience. They dress provokingly, are more aggressive and loud
638. norms and values include working hard, being independent, taking care of loved ones, being reliable and honest
639. is not politically involved
640. votes for left-middle parties
641. is progressive
642. wants to stay in Amsterdam
643. feels like friends are ahead in life
644. career goals
645. likes going for dinner or drinks with friends in the sun
646. lives in de Pijp
647. Likes to go to the Jordaan or West
648. likes cozy places with good quality food and drinks
649. favorite places
650. does not like show-off places
651. places avoided
652. ideal weekend: sports class, getting coffee and pastries, going to the terrace
653. ideal vacation is warm and sunny
654. travel wishlist
655. wears fast fashion
656. considers sustainable options, but does not really buy it
657. does not eat a lot of meat, does not have a car
658. is influenced by instagram and friends
659. uses social media
660. spends more money than the average person on going out for dinner and drinks
661. people in Amsterdam go out for food more often
662. spending money on experiences is worth it
663. tries to pay attention on how much money she spends on food and drinks
664. does not think she spends less money than the average person on some things
665. thinks she spends more money than the average person because Amsterdam is an expensive place to live
666. does not own a lot of designer stuff
667. lifestyle won't change as long as she lives in the city
668. is very rational
669. goes to church
670. has nothing with spirituality except for religion
671. defines real luxury as not having to think about finances, being able to buy nice stuff and to go on vacation whenever you feel like it

Axial codes

- 1. Lifestyle transitions**
 - 198. lifestyle changed over the past few year
 - 370. lifestyle change over the past few years: eating more vegetarian
 - 371. lifestyle change over the past few years: more focus on health
 - 600. lifestyle did not change past few years
 - 601. does not think lifestyle will change in next 5 years
 - 667. lifestyle won't change as long as she lives in the city
- 2. Definitions of luxury**
 - 68. defines luxury as not having to think about money
 - 135. defines luxury as sharing a good time at home with people you love in good health
 - 202. luxury is relaxing with people you love in the sun
 - 294. defines real luxury as a relaxed vacation at the beach
 - 381. defines real luxury as spending time with loved ones in good health without financial worries
 - 382. real luxury is also being able to share with others and having healthy people around you
 - 466. defines real luxury as owning a vacation house with a jacuzzi and a garden
 - 467. defines real luxury as owning designer clothing and drinking cocktails
 - 528. defines real luxury as a day off and being able to do what you want, drinking coffee and bouldering.
 - 611. defines real luxury as being able to travel, to have enough money
 - 671. defines real luxury as not having to think about finances, being able to buy nice stuff and to go on vacation whenever you feel like it
- 3. Financial situation**
 - 6. finances
 - 47. saves money for moving
 - 48. expensiveness
 - 49. Spends more money than the average person on workout gear and going out for dinner
 - 50. amount of money spend on going for dinner per month
 - 51. too much alcohol is a waste of money
 - 52. spends less money than the average person on housing and groceries.
 - 53. reflects on expenses
 - 54. thinks his expenses are average for his age
 - 117. spends more money than the average person on food
 - 118. spends more money than the average person on eating and drinking out
 - 119. spends more money than the average person on clothing
 - 120. spends more money than the average person on skincare
 - 121. spends money easily
 - 122. does not know if her expenses are average
 - 192. spends more money than the average person on groceries
 - 193. spends more money than the average person on plants
 - 194. spends more money than the average person on books
 - 196. spends less money than the average person on clothing
 - 197. thinks his expenses are average
 - 208. has a student loan dept
 - 366. spends more money than the average person on sportsgear
 - 367. spends more money than the average person on car and motorbike
 - 368. spends less money than the average person on clothing
 - 369. spends more money than the average person
 - 456. is not focused on his finances
 - 457. spends more money than the average person on conveniences
 - 458. spends less money than the average person on traveling, rent, owning a car and clothing
 - 459. is less materialistic than the average person
 - 460. still thinks as if he has less budget
 - 461. this ks his lifestyle is going to change by spending more money on new items and going out for food /drinks
 - 523. spending a lot of money on drinks is a waste
 - 524. was thought not to waste money
 - 532. moving is too expensive
 - 572. financial certainty is important
 - 597. spends more money than the average person on gifts, dinners and traveling
 - 599. spends less money than the average person on make-up
 - 291. spends more money than the average person on rent, clothes, vacations
 - 292. spends less money than the average person on health insurance, groceries, transport
 - 660. spends more money than the average person on going out for dinner and drinks
 - 662. spending money on experiences is worth it
 - 663. tries to pay attention on how much money she spends on food and drinks
 - 664. does not think she spends less money than the average person on some things
 - 665. thinks she spends more money than the average person because Amsterdam is an expensive place to live
- 4. Health and physical activity**
 - 13. food and drinks
 - 17. health
 - 230. does recycle
 - 232. does yoga and boxing
 - 233. has classpass
 - 234. sports
 - 235. ran 1/4 marathon in Rotterdam
 - 243. places she visits in the Pijp
 - 244. favourite places in the neighbourhood
 - 245. Favourite places are expensive
 - 321. have Albert Heijn Premium, so they can buy biological products on a discount
 - 386. plays volleyball
 - 518. tries to eat healthy
 - 620. has classpass
 - 621. likes recycle, pilates
 - 472. does not pay so much attention to eating healthy, but does pay a lot of attention on working out
 - 476. likes to work out
 - 587. pays attention to eating fruit and vegetables
 - 588. drinks out milk cappuccino
- 5. Social identification and association**
 - 16. identify
 - 81. associates with people who value their appearance but not want to show off with brands
 - 83. associates with people who value (mental) health
 - 84. associates with open minded people
 - 85. associates with creative people
 - 123. act now and no stress mentality
 - 124. claims not to care what people think of her
 - 125. is motivated and wants to be productive
 - 152. identifies with soccer fans
 - 179. goes to the same places as high earners, who like a laid-back atmosphere and biological products
 - 236. wants to be viewed as kind, open and honest
 - 237. thinks of herself as privileged
 - 238. examples of white, educational and last name privilege
 - 316. identifies with progressive-liberal people
 - 317. identifies with highly educated people who follow news
 - 318. identifies with people who make positive impact and with the highly educated middle class
 - 319. likeminded people are focused on living healthy
 - 328. identifies with cultural and economical highbrow people
 - 410. identifies with young stylish people
 - 412. identifies with the 'havermeik elite' but is more relaxed
 - 414. identifies with people who are social and live for experiences
 - 415. is creative
 - 442. wants to be seen as fashionable but not as elite
 - 493. associates with left-winged alternative people
 - 494. associates with people who do not judge and are open minded
 - 495. feels privileged and belongs to higher class
 - 496. students are often left-winged and alternative
 - 497. alternative people like rotown
 - 547. associated with adventurous people
 - 569. respects people who work hard
 - 612. feels bad for poor people
 - 613. feels privileged
 - 614. feels guilty for complaining sometimes when others are in worse circumstances
 - 623. associates with young urban dutch people
 - 624. associates with highly-educated people with well-paying jobs
 - 625. similar people go to terraces, festivals, sport classes
 - 626. finds copies of herself in sports classes
- 6. Relationships and collective consumption**
 - 7. friends
 - 66. is easily influenced by friends in his consumption
 - 75. spontaneous, creative and loving friends
 - 77. prefers meeting 1 on 1 over a group
 - 126. has less but better quality friendships than earlier in life
 - 132. is influenced by friends
 - 147. has a wide variety of friends
 - 148. friends are not the same type of person as respondent
 - 149. likes to have such different types of friends
 - 201. does not think he is easily influenced
 - 211. study mates easily find jobs
 - 222. only has friends who are girls
 - 223. has friend groups and individual friendships
 - 225. likes to go for drinks in Amsterdam with her friends
 - 240. social circle is Amsterdam Zuid/Oud Zuid
 - 241. places in Amsterdam where friends live and work
 - 268. social environment is not involved with sustainability
 - 304. knows friends from kindergarten
 - 306. activities with friends include sports and drinking beers
 - 307. has one friend group
 - 308. has more individual friendships
 - 311. omnivorous taste in friends, but are all progressive
 - 312. very different friends
 - 355. goes to Dutch folk bars with his friends, but does not like to listen on his own
 - 379. is influenced by friends but is aware
 - 380. is not so much influenced by others in her consumption behavior
 - 400. has more individual friendships
 - 401. friends are same type of people
 - 402. friends are intellectual and grew up as christians
 - 403. likes to meet up at home, go for a drink, go to the cinema or to the club
 - 488. friends like to party
 - 489. has friend groups and individual friendships
 - 490. activities with friends
 - 527. is influenced by friends in activities but less in materials
 - 537. different type of friends
 - 538. has more individual friendships but also groups
 - 539. has a lot of friends
 - 540. goes for food/drinks or does sports with friends
 - 548. friends are successful
 - 549. friends have above average income
 - 550. friends like to travel
 - 553. many friends have classpass
 - 554. in rotterdam her friends go to the same places
 - 557. all friends like luxury dinners
 - 602. is flexible in where to go with friends
 - 606. is not sensitive to influences of others in fashion style
 - 607. is influential when it comes to places to eat
 - 643. feels like friends are ahead in life
 - 645. likes going for dinner or drinks with friends in the sun
- 7. Political preferences**
 - 92. votes for leftwinged, progressive parties
 - 93. becomes more interested in politic / societal matters
 - 174. votes for left-winged parties
 - 271. does not like politics and is left winged
 - 329. votes to create a better life for other people
 - 330. girlfriend motivated boyfriend to vote for more left-winged parties
 - 331. wants everyone to have the same opportunities
 - 332. wants to converse with people who have different stances
 - 426. follows news and politics
 - 427. reads newspaper NRC
 - 428. votes for left-winged progressive parties
 - 429. is very left-winged
 - 509. is not really politically involved but votes for left-middle parties
 - 510. does not follow the news a lot because it is depressing
 - 511. does not like PVV
 - 568. is left-winged
 - 639. is not politically involved
 - 640. votes for left-middle parties
 - 641. is progressive

8. Travel habits, preferences and experiences

23. travel preferences
 98. Likes to travel
 213. traveling was intense
 214. lived in Australia
 215. traveling boosted her confidence
 255. likes to travel but is ashamed of flying
 279. likes relaxed far away vacations
 288. travel destinations on her wishlist
 340. like camping, active vacation, explore culture and preferably without going on a plane
 341. is ashamed of flying, but wants to see other cultures and nature
 342. is not really ashamed of flying
 438. likes to go on vacation but is not a real globetrotter
 515. travelled a lot
 516. likes to do roadtrips and citytrips
 551. vacation has to be adventurous
 573. biggest passion is traveling
 574. likes planning vacations
 575. feeling of freedom when traveling
 576. travel wishlist
 594. is ashamed of flying so much, but because of friends and family
 596. traveling is selfish
 653. ideal vacation is warm and sunny
 654. travel wishlist
- ## 9. Lifestyle exclusions
15. dislikes
 30. dislikes too crowded and chaotic
 42. wouldn't go to apres-ski festivals
 43. wouldn't go to metal festivals
 57. dislikes fast fashion
 59. actively wouldn't buy
 60. does not think he is alternative
 62. dislikes fashion that is thrasy, shows a lot of skin or is 'tokkie'
 63. dislikes too much self-tan
 64. dislikes too many tattoos
 65. definition of 'tokkie'
 80. doesn't like too many people
 88. places avoided
 89. Tokkies are disliked
 90. places tokkies go to
 91. is not materialistic
 100. dislikes 'show off' places
 101. dislikes 'show off' people
 129. dislikes 'show off' fashion brands
 130. dislikes posh fashion brands
 131. associates show places with show off brands
 153. does not identify with tokkies
 154. does not identify with gothics
 155. does not identify with metal lovers
 156. does not identify with pvvers
 166. dislikes large-scale places
 167. disliked restaurant
 168. dislikes large/unpersonal food chains
 187. does not consume a lot of fast fashion
 188. does not wear flashy brands
 200. placed avoided
 261. dislikes very right winged people
 262. does not want to be friends with people who care a lot about status and money
 263. does not want to be associated with voters of Trump or PVV
 264. places disliked in Amsterdam
 265. dislikes poche places
 282. description of tokkie
 283. does not associate with tokkies
 322. Do not associate with right-winged people, PVV voters
 323. do not associate with racists, close-minded people and anti-democrats
 350. does not like to go to Neude. It is too touristic
 352. Places avoided
 353. dislikes Dutch folk music
 411. Amsterdam young elites are too much
 416. does not associate with intense people who do drugs, gossip about each other and are focused on looks
 417. does not associate with shallow people
 418. does not like techno festivals
 419. does not like show-off places
 420. is not into drugs
 447. does not like prestigious, expensive restaurants
 462. does not come in Rotterdam South or West, likes North
 463. places avoided: Inul8, because the crowd has a different lifestyle
 464. people who go to Inul8 care about looks, showing-off, are less educated
 492. does not like tacky music
 503. does not associate with low-income people
 504. places avoided
 505. does not like places where less intelligent people go who are jugy and drink a lot
 506. does not like show-off places
 525. does not like tracksuits
 526. does not like 'tokkie' clothing style
 552. does not like mass tourism and all-inclusive places
 559. does not want to be viewed as superficial, simple
 560. does not want to be viewed as a tokkie
 561. does not like people who are not willing to work
 562. does not like misogynistic people
 563. does not like racists
 564. does not like homophobic people
 565. does not like close-minded people
 566. tokkies are loud, have tattoos, do not look neat, are racists, vote PVV
 567. does not want to be associated with PVV voters
 570. defines tokkies
 582. dislikes dutch singers
 603. does not like people who feel like they are better than others
 604. brands disliked
 609. places avoided
 634. does not associate with alternative people
 635. does not associate with gothics, emo's or tokkies
 637. went to a concert but did not like the audience. They dress provokingly, are more aggressive and loud
 650. does not like show-off places
 651. places avoided

10. Personal philosophy

10. important to them
19. spirituality and mental health
20. religion
375. focus on mental health
376. takes time for herself
377. not focused on mental health
378. does christian mindfulness
425. making impact starts with yourself
79. values personal freedom
94. is atheist
95. values mindfulness, selfreflection and self development
128. interested in mindfulness and spirituality
173. norms and values
210. had a burn-out and depression
221. journey of faith
266. norms and values include treat others how you want to be treated and respect
272. does yoga and spirituality/religion
313. is focused on career and intellectuality
314. balance between work and hobbies is important
333. feels privileged and attaches value to equality
334. attaches value to mutual respect
409. self-development is important
413. is open to others
421. norms and values include considering others and the environment
507. norms and values include equality and taking care of the environment
512. is not focused on mindfulness or spirituality
571. norms and values include honesty, humor, loyalty and respect
577. does not like spiritual activities
638. norms and values include working hard, being independent, taking care of loved ones, being reliable and honest
668. is very rational
669. goes to church
670. has nothing with spirituality except for religion
33. thinks the multicultural society is important

11. Place and consumption preferences

9. Favorite places
27. specialty coffee (place)
28. prefers laid back atmosphere
29. willing to pay more for quality
31. fashion taste is casual and basic
32. Same taste in fashion as 'finance bro's'
33. food preferences
34. likes fresh food
55. started living more conciously
56. quitted drinking alcohol
58. thinks Carhartt is too 'yuppie' and alternative
61. drinks nature wine
67. is not into micro trends or hypes
82. likes Scandinavian fashion
102. atmosphere is important
103. favourite fashion brands
105. goes to the same places as vegans
106. does not only go to 'expensive' dinner places
108. likes wine bars
109. prefers more intimate events
111. prefers activities/memories over material goods
164. likes smaller and more intimate restaurants
165. likes sustainable restaurants with a local menu
169. likes alternative/vegetarian places
171. prefers more intimate restaurants over posh restaurants
177. enjoys the local biological market (Rotterdamse Oogstmarkt)
178. attaches value to local, environmentally friendly, sustainable and high quality products
184. shops for quality
185. likes different types of vacation
186. likes quality basics in fashion
189. taste in music events changed from bigger events to more intimate events
190. enjoys laid-back events
246. goes for drinks or coffee more often than for dinner
290. wants experiences rather than material goods
347. places they go to in Utrecht
351. likes intimate bars better
354. Likes laid back music in bars
356. Like bars with different types of people
363. willing to pay more for quality
373. go to different types of restaurants
374. pays attention to what she consumes
435. likes club Ferry
436. goes to places in Rotterdam Noord for food and drinks
448. likes intimate atmosphere places
449. likes authentic places
450. likes gay-parties
451. likes to get cheese at the biological market in Rotterdam Noord
452. likes events that bring cities together
453. goes to other cities for parties
465. likes more intimate laid-back places
468. likes espresso martini's
469. drinks cocktails, even though it can be expensive
470. is not a real foodie
471. drinks out milk cappuccinos at work in Amsterdam
498. sees other suppies in the bouldering hall. It is expensive.
520. willing to pay more for quality
543. likes shared dining
544. favorite places
555. nice places in Rotterdam
598. likes luxury dinners and wines
608. interior is important in restaurants
610. favorite places
647. Likes to go to the Jordaan or West
648. likes cozy places with good quality food and drinks
649. favorite places

12. Leisure and hobbies

- 5. hobbies
- 22. interests
- 24. backpacking
- 25. wintersports
- 26. surfing
- 35. likes to try new things
- 36. goes out for dinner often
- 37. likes festivals
- 38. into house / techno music
- 39. events
- 40. works and workouts more and parties less
- 41. Highly educated, mid twenty year olds go to house/techno festivals
- 76. activities with friends: coffee, lunch, parties and festivals, vacation
- 78. likes to spend time alone
- 96. practices yoga
- 99. ideal weekend
- 110. goes to other cities
- 113. likes to discover new cultures
- 116. enjoys summer
- 136. does gardening on balcony
- 137. likes to play soccer
- 143. Bikes a lot on his electric bike
- 158. likes sports
- 159. likes to read
- 160. likes to go to the market
- 161. likes to be outside
- 162. likes to draw
- 163. likes to go out for dinner
- 176. weekend plans are soccer, beers in the sun, reading, listening to music, cinema and gardening.
- 199. enjoys personal development
- 226. visits museums
- 227. goes to cafes or restaurants
- 242. starts to look more into cultural activities
- 273. did yoga retreats
- 278. hobbies
- 280. festivals she likes
- 281. likes happy house festivals
- 298. hobbies include running, cooking, music and traveling
- 338. reads and listens to books
- 339. want to climb mountains
- 344. like to cook
- 345. like to go cycling
- 346. hobbies include bird watching and building/fixing things
- 348. likes to go to museums
- 349. likes historical and classical art
- 357. Likes music performances
- 358. listen to different music genres
- 372. go out for dinner often
- 387. does charity work
- 406. goes to openminded festivals
- 408. likes to do new things
- 432. likes to spend time at home
- 434. likes running
- 439. likes to plan out things
- 477. likes to go to cafes
- 478. makes music
- 479. likes to go running or bouldering
- 480. likes to go to festivals
- 481. likes to play boardgames
- 499. goes to a restaurant at least once a month
- 519. is too lazy to cook
- 530. likes social activities
- 541. likes to play games or go out for drinks
- 542. likes to go to new places
- 545. likes food festivals
- 546. likes social people who are ambitious
- 578. likes yoga
- 580. busy social schedule
- 581. likes techno and house music
- 583. likes festivals that are nearby
- 584. went to big international festivals
- 585. likes that everything is possible at festivals
- 586. only likes cooking when she has time
- 627. went to DGTL
- 652. ideal weekend: sports class, getting coffee and pastries, going to the terrace

13. Aspirations and (academic) career

- 2. career
- 3. future
- 18. future
- 21. future goals
- 127. wants to develop in yoga
- 70. works in media
- 97. wants to live abroad
- 104. works from coffee places
- 107. wishlist
- 112. becomes digital nomad
- 139. works in plant pest control
- 140. works in marketing
- 141. works in an environmentally friendly business
- 142. wants to work in sustainability
- 146. highly educated
- 150. has a good connection with his colleagues
- 151. works in a left winged organisation
- 175. would like life to be more local
- 191. wants to go to more events
- 203. wants a dog
- 205. Works for a strategy agency
- 207. Studied Fashion Business at a private university
- 209. works for a sustainable and innovative organization
- 212. important in work
- 224. friends from university work in Amsterdam and or in fashion
- 228. has a good connection with colleagues
- 229. has an intimate work environment
- 267. wants to make positive impact

- 269. wants social environment to be more occupied with sustainability
- 270. raises awareness among friends and family about sustainable choices
- 274. wants to stay in Amsterdam
- 275. wants her own positive impact business
- 276. future goals
- 287. wishlist things
- 289. wants golden jewelry and burberry sunglasses
- 293. wants to eat more local, but other than that wants to keep the same lifestyle
- 295. is confident, but can be insecure in her job
- 297. Career
- 299. works for a non-profit organization
- 315. Work needs to contribute to a better world
- 335. do not really have a plan for the future
- 336. would like to live abroad
- 337. wants a challenging job where she can learn a lot
- 343. want public transport to be cheaper, so it becomes a favorable option instead of flying
- 384. works for a non-profit organization that helps refugees
- 385. works in Amsterdam
- 404. works fulltime
- 405. relationship with co-workers is important
- 407. is online marketer
- 430. future goals
- 431. wants to make impact and look out for family and friends
- 474. Works as a game/app developer
- 475. studies
- 513. wants to move in the future
- 514. wants to go to italy and japan
- 529. works as youth counselor

14. Social demographic background and environment

- 1. Social demographic information
- 4. living situation
- 11. social environment
- 71. loving upbringing
- 72. parents occupation
- 73. experienced youth as prosperous
- 74. Went on multiple vacations a year
- 138. lives together with girlfriend
- 144. loving upbringing
- 145. prosperous upbringing
- 157. gets along with different types of people
- 170. different taste than parents
- 172. parents did enjoy posh places
- 204. lives in Amsterdam with best friend
- 206. Lived in Ridderkerk, Doorn and Amsterdam
- 216. is single
- 217. christian family
- 218. loving upbringing
- 219. parents are open and caring
- 220. talks with her mom about sex
- 296. lives in Utrecht with partner
- 300. loving upbringing
- 301. Lived in The Hague and Zoetermeer
- 302. christian family
- 303. prosperous upbringing
- 305. learning and being active were motivated in youth
- 309. was a member of a student association
- 310. progressive upbringing: people follow news, talk about worldly issues and are focussed on career
- 325. Utrecht is a very progressive city
- 326. Neighborhood exists of highly educated left-winged elites
- 327. neighborhood exists of rich white people
- 383. lives in Rotterdam north
- 388. comes from a big christian family
- 389. is homosexual and struggled with this during puberty
- 390. Would have liked a more scientific school with a more worldly focus
- 391. studies
- 392. did charity work in Africa
- 393. Wanted to do an international study
- 394. joined a student association
- 395. loving and progressive parents
- 396. environment accepting homosexuality
- 397. stepmother has second hand design fashion store
- 398. loving upbringing
- 399. did not really learn how to be assertive
- 473. has own apartment in Rotterdam West
- 482. christian background
- 483. prosperous upbringing
- 484. parents thought it was important that he could play an instrument
- 485. pushed to develop talent
- 486. parents occupation
- 487. highly educated friends
- 502. is inspired by his parents
- 533. is single
- 534. loving upbringing
- 535. christian background
- 536. middle class family
- 616. moved from Rotterdam to Amsterdam because of commute time
- 617. lives with friend
- 622. busy schedule
- 628. Amsterdam is expensive, not accesible for everyone to live there
- 629. everyone in Amsterdam looks alike
- 630. Rotterdam is more diverse
- 631. Amsterdam is not representative for the actual society
- 646. lives in de Pijp
- 661. people in Amsterdam go out for food more often

- 531. intense job
- 579. wants to study more
- 615. finance consultant at big corporate
- 618. enjoys work
- 619. does fun things with colleagues in Amsterdam
- 642. wants to stay in Amsterdam
- 644. career goals

15. Inspirations, taste and aesthetics

- 8. omnivorousness taste
- 44. actively searches for new places to eat or drink
- 45. actively uses social media
- 46. social media purposes
- 86. recognizes people like her by appearance
- 87. Influencers she likes
- 114. is interested in aesthetics
- 115. is influenced by others
- 133. social media is not super influential in her consumption behaviour
- 247. loves confident people
- 248. pays attention to people's outfits
- 285. inspiration for new places
- 286. uses social media
- 491. omnivorousness music taste
- 500. recognizes similar people by their fashion style
- 556. uses social media for inspiration and to share own life
- 636. people show bits of their life by their outfits
- 658. is influenced by instagram and friends
- 659. uses social media

16. Fashion consumption and taste

- 14. fashion
- 134. bought clothing via ads on social media
- 195. goes for dinner at least once a month
- 249. buys most clothing second hand on Vinted
- 250. likes the fashion brand Ganni, COS and Laagam
- 251. does not like that she still wears fast fashion
- 277. inspiring brands
- 359. only buys secondhand clothing
- 360. fashion taste is trendy and clean
- 361. only buys sustainable clothing
- 362. dislikes Zara, because people consume high pace
- 364. likes surfing clothing style
- 365. likes authentic clothing styles
- 423. buys vintage and second-hand clothing
- 433. likes the funky house clothing store
- 440. clothing brands he likes, preferably buys them second-hand
- 441. clothing brands he likes are for richer people
- 443. rather wears a clean shirt than a shirt from a brand he does not know
- 444. does not want to be dressed in something tacky
- 445. does not like PME Legends and clothing store The Sting
- 446. does not have a lot of clothes
- 501. has hipster style
- 521. buys second-hand clothing
- 522. recycles old clothes
- 558. likes different fashion styles
- 589. wears fast fashion
- 605. buys trending items
- 632. trending items are leopard print pants, blazers and adidas samba's, uniqlo bags
- 633. is sensitive to trends
- 655. wears fast fashion
- 666. does not own a lot of designer stuff

17. Sustainable consumption

- 12. sustainability
- 180. eating biological products is important
- 181. eats biological
- 182. Shops groceries at Albert Heijn
- 183. Shops vegetables at the Oogstmarkt or at a local farm
- 252. thinks shopping sustainably is important
- 253. realization of why sustainability is important
- 254. buys sustainable home products
- 256. sustainable brands and products
- 258. sustainable groceries
- 259. uses anti food faste app
- 260. tries to eat biological and vegetarian
- 320. eat vegetarian for the environment
- 422. convenient consumption behaviour
- 424. was vegetarian
- 437. uses Too Good To Go
- 508. did not fly and eat meat for climate change
- 590. used to shop sustaynable, not anymore
- 591. sustainable choices have to be convenient
- 592. struggles with consuming sustainable
- 593. tries new sustainable products
- 595. thinks bigger instances should deal with climate change instead of individuals
- 656. considers sustainable options, but does not really buy it
- 657. does not eat a lot of meat, does not have a car

Selective codes

Social background and identity

- 14. Social demographic background and environment
- 5. Social identification and association
- 10. Personal philosophy
- 2. Definitions of luxury
- 7. Political preferences
- 3. Financial situation

Lifestyle and social practices

- 12. Leisure and hobbies
- 6. Relationships and collective consumption
- 4. Health and physical activity
- 1. Lifestyle transitions

Consuming behaviour and taste

- 11. Place and consumption preferences
- 16. Fashion consumption and taste
- 15. Inspiration, taste and aesthetics
- 9. Lifestyle exclusions
- 17. Sustainable consumption

Work, future and ambitions

- 13. Aspirations and (academic) career
- 8. Travel preferences, habits and experiences