

Cultural chameleons: Social mobility and cultural practices in the private and the public sphere

Acta Sociologica
56(4) 309–324
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sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0001699313496589
asj.sagepub.com


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Abstract

This article investigates whether the cultural practices of socially mobile individuals are predominantly associated with social position of origin or with social position of destination. Using data representative of the Flemish population of Belgium ($n = 2,849$), we find evidence of a substantial association with the social position of destination, which we argue to be both profound and superficial. By contrasting private and public practices, we find that (1) both private and public practices are predominantly related to social position of destination and (2) that public practices are more strongly correlated with social position of destination than private practices. This suggests that underlying cultural preferences are mainly associated with the secondary socialization context and, moreover, that in the public sphere socially mobile individuals overstress their conformity – probably to fit in – and in a way become cultural chameleons.

Keywords

Cultural competence, cultural practices, cultural preferences, cultural taste, impression management, socialization, social mobility

Introduction

A vast number of sociological studies demonstrate that cultural taste is socially embedded and a result of an individual's position in the social structure (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007; Erickson, 1996; Nagel and Verboord, 2012; Purhonen et al., 2011). The argument is that individuals are

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socialized to conform to values and to exhibit behaviour appropriate for their social environment. The social background and practices of the family of origin, the individual's educational trajectory, as well as the influence of her/his peers function as agents of socialization. While it is known that these different socializing agents play a role in the development of an individual's cultural taste and practices, it remains unclear as to how they relate to one another in this development. This article focuses on two questions. First, are cultural practices of socially mobile individuals more strongly associated with the social environment they grew up in or are they more in line with the social position of destination? Second, we study whether socially mobile individuals try to blend in socially in the new socialization context by applying strategies of impression management. That is, do socially mobile individuals pretend to conform to cultural practices viable in their new social environment by misrepresenting their genuine preferences in public, or is their conformity more profound – actually rooted in their preferences and thus visible in both the private and the public sphere?

Socially mobile individuals have experienced different contexts of socialization characterized by different – and possibly incompatible – discourses and schemes regarding appropriate cultural taste and behaviour (cf. Featherman and Lerner, 1985). So, their practices may be predominantly shaped by childhood socialization or they may be more in line with the socialization context the individuals eventually end up in. That is, are socially mobile individuals able to conform to expectations regarding appropriate cultural preferences viable in their new social stratum – be it through anticipatory socialization or during/after the experience of social mobility? Or are they moulded by their social position of origin, feeling out of tune in their new social environment and thus condemned to lapse into superficial adaptation to ensure social integration?

It has to be stressed that the theoretical framing of this article analytically inclines towards the importance of social structure and social mobility on the formation of cultural practices. Of course, cultural practices may also influence life chances and increase/decrease opportunities for social mobility, for better or worse. For example, DiMaggio finds that cultural practices – as part of someone's cultural capital – are correlated with school grades, and thus related to chances of social mobility (e.g. DiMaggio, 1982). That is, those individuals that are 'out of tune' in terms of cultural practices in their primary socialization context may have higher chances of being socially mobile. Obviously, both processes, i.e. social mobility affecting cultural practices and cultural practices affecting social mobility, take place. However, our theoretical framing inclines towards the former; a choice founded on our theoretical background but by which we in no way intend to deny the possibility of the alternative causal interpretation.

As to the relation between social mobility and cultural practices, we distinguish superficial from more profound conformity to the dominant schemes and discourses of the different socialization contexts. By contrasting private and public manifestations of aesthetic preferences, we gain insight into the relative importance of social and competence-related motives for cultural consumption (Roose and Vander Stichele, 2010; see also Kraaykamp et al., 2007). The way aesthetic preferences are manifested is dependent on the social context. Concert attendance and going to the cinema, for example, are more conspicuous (cf. Veblen, 1899) and in that sense expected to be more susceptible to perceived social pressure and anticipated social esteem than private practices. In the same way, public practices can be expected to have a bigger impact on future life chances compared to private practices. A related question is whether socially mobile individuals misrepresent their genuine aesthetic preferences in public – possibly spurred by motives related to facilitating integration in a new social environment or to acquiring social status – without having a profound association with the aesthetic preferences viable in their new socialization context.

Theory

Social mobility

Our research questions pertain to the individual experience of social mobility and how it is expressed in everyday life, in the choices people make and the way these are socially structured, e.g. in preferences

for different cultural products and practices. Sorokin (1927) defines social mobility as the shifting of individuals within social space and claims that socially mobile individuals exhibit distinctive attitudes and values as a result of a cross-fertilization of attitudes and values originating from different social strata (Sorokin, 1927). In this article, we focus on (vertical) intergenerational mobility, that is, the change of position within the social hierarchy between parents and their children. Just like Park's marginal men, socially mobile individuals live on the margin of two cultures (Park, 1928). While the nature of the transition of socially mobile individuals and marginal men is different, the basic mechanism is identical: Because of mobility – be it geographical or social – individuals move from a familiar social environment to an unfamiliar one. Park claims that in this transition individuals become 'enlightened': Less bound by conventions and freed from tradition, 'these individuals look upon the world in which they were born and bred with something of the detachment of a stranger' (Park, 1928: 888).

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) shows how the position of the individual in the social space gives rise to the habitus. This habitus – a socially constituted and largely unconsciously evolved system of dispositions – expresses itself in cultural preferences and practices which are considered appropriate in the social environment in which the habitus was bred. The social origins of the habitus manifest themselves in all domains of life, from food and eating, over manners and uses of the body, to tastes in clothes, literature and music; that is, in *ways of being*. Immobile individuals tend to take values and norms characteristic of their social stratum for granted. Socially mobile individuals, however, have been confronted with different social environments – and their associated discourses on appropriate cultural practices – and have internalized different expectations. Thus, they become aware of the arbitrariness of each set of norms and values which they have been confronted with and are forced to choose (Coser, 1975, 1991; see also Blau, 1956). This is not to say that a multiplicity of expectations automatically results in conscious choices, but the possibility of a conscious and reflexive perspective is higher than in the absence of multiple expectations (Coser, 1975: 239; see also Park, 1928).

Furthermore, as Swidler argues (1986), culture is a 'tool kit' for constructing strategies of action. Socially mobile individuals face alternative forms of action and hence social mobility results in a more diverse and elaborated toolkit which individuals can draw from, which may be associated with cultural omnivorousness (e.g. Peterson, 1992). Because socially mobile individuals have been subject to different contexts of socialization, they have been confronted with different cultural registers, providing them with a dispositional foundation for an omnivorous taste pattern (cf. Bryson, 1996; Emmison, 2003). As such, social mobility presents socially mobile individuals with alternative courses of action. Applied to cultural practices, this means that because they are aware of the arbitrariness and the social consequences of certain forms of cultural behaviour, socially mobile individuals may deploy cultural practices for other motives than mere aesthetic enjoyment, i.e. to manage the presentation of self in everyday life (cf. Goffman, 1959; Veblen, 1899). We are interested in the cultural practices individuals select in particular situations: Do they use cultural practices as props in public (cf. Goffman, 1959), even though these may not reflect their aesthetic preferences? For this reason, we focus on specific cultural practices, as these are more suited – compared to taste patterns such as cultural omnivorousness – to deploy in specific situations in everyday interaction because of their conspicuousness (cf. Veblen, 1899).

Origin, destination or maximization?

Traditional socialization theory considers parental socialization as having a deep and lasting influence on preferences, values and behaviour in adulthood, as children are expected to be much more malleable compared to adults (e.g. Brim, 1968; Rosow, 1974). The importance of childhood socialization is also expressed by Bourdieu in some of his publications. According to Bourdieu, socially mobile individuals can never completely adapt to their new social stratum as 'these self-made men cannot have the familiar relation to culture which authorizes liberties and audacities of those who are linked to it by birth, that is by nature and essence' (Bourdieu, 1984: 331). Also Kraaykamp and Van Eijck (2010) argue that family socialization is the most effective socializing agent for arts appreciation and contend that aesthetic

preferences are mainly guided by the primary socialization context. In a recent empirical study, Ter Bogt et al. (2011) find evidence for the existence of a continuity between musical preferences of parents and their children. However, they admit this effect to be modest, which results in the following question: To what extent are cultural preferences and practices associated with the secondary socialization context? The situation in which cultural practices are predominantly associated with the primary socialization context will be referred to as *the origin hypothesis*.

However, traditional socialization theory has been criticized for its view on socialization as too straightforward and unidirectional. It considers children as adults-in-the-making and as passive receivers who need to be shaped to fit in society (e.g. Thorne, 1993). Recent empirical findings challenge some of these insights and contemporary socialization theory reframes the process of socialization as a group-to-group relationship instead of a dyadic relationship between parent and child, and stresses the importance of socialization by peers and peer cultures (cf. Harris, 1995, 1998). Of course, this emphasis on socialization by peers does not necessarily imply that parental socialization loses its relevance. As Corsaro argues, decisions about children's interactions with peers are in the first place made within the family context (2005: 112). For example, it is the parents who decide in what type of peer settings and institutional contexts they allow their children to spend their time (Lareau, 2003). Yet, the emphasis on parental socialization ignores the fact that children thrive in many different environments.

Similar ideas have been expressed in cultural sociology as several authors point to the influence of different contexts of socialization and argue that Bourdieu overestimates the lifelong influence of the social position of origin (Erickson, 1996; Lahire, 2004, 2008). Contemporary socialization theory states that socialization is never complete and stresses its contextual character (Arnett, 2007; Harris, 1995, 1998). Because of the multiplicity of heterogeneous socialization contexts (cf. Berger et al., 1974), the significance of the primary socialization context would be rather modest. For example, recent empirical research in cultural sociology shows that aesthetic preferences of mobile individuals are more likely to foreshadow their future social position than their position of origin (Roe, 1992; Tanner et al., 2008). These authors argue that the cultural taste of individuals is predominantly associated with the secondary socialization context. We refer to this situation as *the destination hypothesis*.

It is possible that the way social mobility expresses itself in cultural practices depends on the direction of mobility, as upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals are confronted with a different experience. Therefore, we consider a third possibility, i.e. the *maximization hypothesis*, which refers to a situation in which practices are predominantly guided by the socialization context associated with the highest social status (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013; De Graaf et al., 1995; Ganzeboom, 1982; Van Eijck, 1999). For downwardly mobile individuals this is the primary socialization context; for upwardly mobile individuals this is the secondary socialization context. Upwardly mobile individuals express practices typical of their new socialization context to show their newly acquired social position and higher status. Downwardly mobile individuals stick to cultural activities characteristic of their former social environment. In both cases, individuals maximize their status by clinging to the cultural practices associated with the social environment with the highest status – be it context of origin or destination. Maximization may occur consciously in the quest for social status, i.e. maximization of status. It is also possible that this pattern results from a maximization of cultural competence: To be able to enjoy certain cultural activities, specific knowledge or competence is needed. As practices common within higher social strata are generally more complex – either in terms of stimuli and/or in terms of appropriation (cf. Bourdieu, 1968) – mobile individuals persist in a preference for more complex forms of culture. Upwardly mobile individuals learn to appreciate more complex forms of art in anticipation, during or after their transition to a higher social stratum and thus exhibit practices typical of the secondary socialization context. Downwardly mobile individuals have been confronted with this deciphering ability in their primary socialization context and maintain this competence after their social decline. To try to get at some of the mechanisms related to cultural competence and/or status, we contrast private practices with their public counterparts.

Private/public taste: Cultural competence or aesthetic dissimulation?

In his analysis of the domestic sphere as a context for art and culture, Halle argues that status and social standing do not play a major role in the choices for art (1993). Private consumption is primarily related to aesthetic enjoyment (Kraaykamp et al., 2007; Roose and Vander Stichele, 2010). However, for activities and commodities that are more conspicuous also social motives may be involved, such as gaining prestige, having the opportunity for networking, being in the company of someone, etc. As such, social motives are expected to be more strongly linked to public than to private taste.

The 'publicness' of practices varies along a continuous spectrum (Kuran, 1995). At the one end of this spectrum there are private practices known only to a single person. The other end covers public practices expressed in the presence of total strangers. In his analysis of religious practices, Kuran discusses a false and pretended conformity to religious beliefs to prevent persecution: Individuals pretend to conform, but in the privacy of their homes they continue to practise their former religion. Kuran calls the act of intentionally misrepresenting one's genuine preferences under perceived social pressure 'preference falsification' (Kuran, 1995; see also Zagorin, 1996).

Similar processes may be applicable to cultural practices of socially mobile individuals. Knowing that practices signal social position and being aware that practices in public have social consequences, socially mobile individuals manage the presentation of Self (cf. Goffman, 1959). They apply strategies of impression management and do not express – or rather overstress – their genuine preferences outside the domestic sphere. Upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals are confronted with different dilemmas. Therefore, their motives for applying preference falsification may differ (Blau, 1956). Upwardly mobile individuals have to choose between social acceptance of the new, more prestigious social group versus valued ties and customs from their social past. Downwardly mobile individuals have to choose between losing affiliation with their former, more prestigious social group and becoming accepted by their new social environment (Blau, 1956: 290).

We argue that there are different mechanisms to link social mobility and taste. The nature of each mechanism is inferred from the combination of the association of social mobility with a private cultural practice, e.g. listening to classical music at home, and its public *pendant*, e.g. attending classical concerts. When the private and the public versions of a cultural practice are similarly related to mobility, we contend *cultural competence* to be at work. In this situation, we assume that the manifested preferences originate from the possession of the registers and dispositional schemes to be able to enjoy certain cultural activities. However, when public manifestations of preferences are related differently to social mobility than private manifestations, other aspects than sheer cultural competence may be at work. We refer to this situation – in line with Kuran's religious dissimulation (1995) – as *aesthetic dissimulation*, and distinguish four different forms. The first form consists of a superficial adaptation to the new social environment aiming at social integration: public activities mirror the secondary socialization context, while private praxis is more in line with the social context of origin. In line with Rosow (1965), we use the term 'chameleon socialization' to refer to this situation in which individuals conform outwardly, but not/less in terms of inner values/preferences.

The second form of aesthetic dissimulation refers to a situation in which practices at home are predominantly in line with the social position of destination, while public activities are more strongly associated with the social position of origin. This pattern suggests that mobile individuals use the public sphere to maintain social relationships with family and friends from their social position of origin. Furthermore, this pattern indicates that aesthetic preferences are profoundly in line with the new social environment, but that socially mobile individuals do not want to abandon the social relations with people from their former socialization context. Possibly, they want to stay identified with and remain socially embedded in their social position of origin. We call this form of aesthetic dissimulation 'social nostalgia'.

In the third type of aesthetic dissimulation, public cultural practices are guided by status considerations. Both upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals use public activities as a means to acquiring

Table 1. Underlying mechanisms explaining the effects of social mobility.

Underlying mechanism of the effect of social mobility	Downwardly socially mobile	Upwardly socially mobile
Cultural competence related	private = public	private = public
Aesthetic dissimulation: chameleon socialization	private > public	private < public
Aesthetic dissimulation: social nostalgia	private < public	private > public
Aesthetic dissimulation: status seeking	private < public	private < public
Aesthetic dissimulation: status evasion	private > public	private > public

>, <, =: Respectively, is more, less or equally associated with practices characteristic of higher social strata.

status. In this situation, the public version of a cultural practice is predominantly guided by the social position associated with the highest social status, while its private counterpart is more in line with the social position associated with lower social status. Both upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals prefer public activities associated with higher social positions, while at home they resort to practices which are typical of lower social strata. So, in public, socially mobile individuals play a role, they try to generate favourable perceptions through impression management by overdoing practices associated with higher social status in public in their new social environment. At home they stick to activities more associated with lower social status. We term this second type of aesthetic dissimulation as ‘status seeking’.

Theoretically, a fourth form of aesthetic dissimulation can be identified which constitutes the opposite of ‘status seeking’. This possibility – which we term ‘status evasion’ – denotes the situation in which private cultural practices are more associated with status than with public practices. In this last form of aesthetic dissimulation, socially mobile individuals shun expressing practices associated with higher social status in the public sphere, despite the fact that they perform these practices at home. Possible motives for ‘status evasion’ can be related to not wanting to come across as snobbish or not feeling at home in situations where status-acquiring practices are performed. In our opinion, status evasion is unlikely to occur.

Table 1 presents the different mechanisms through which social mobility can be associated with taste, i.e. cultural competence and the four forms of aesthetic dissimulation.

Data and methods

Data

We use data from the survey *Cultural Participation in Flanders 2003–2004* of a representative sample of the Flemish population, i.e. the Dutch-speaking population of Belgium. Flanders is the northern part of Belgium, which has a very high population density and is highly urbanized. This data set has detailed information on a great variety of cultural practices and attitudes collected through computer-assisted face-to-face interviews which resulted in a realized sample size of 2,849 (Lievens et al., 2006). Response rate is 61.0 per cent (AAPOR, 2011).

Measures

Two criteria are important in our choice of public and private practices. First, we select activities that cover a variety of cultural domains, viz. music, television and cinema, media use, travelling, books and book fair attendance. With the choice for this wide spectrum of cultural practices, we aim at maximizing the range of empirical generalizability. Second, we include practices that can be performed in both the private and the public sphere and that differ in terms of the social strata they are associated with. Practices are classified to be associated with higher or lower social strata, based on our experience with the Flemish cultural field and their association with SES measures in preliminary analyses (not shown).

Public practices, e.g. concert attendance, are dichotomized, because the frequency of attendance is small. To make our measures for private practices consistent with their public counterparts, we also dichotomize private activities.

Music. Musical taste very well fits our criteria. Music can be consumed in a wide variety of social contexts: from listening at home to attending concerts. Furthermore, music is consumed in every social stratum. So we can easily include musical genres associated with different social strata and different social spheres. Respondents are presented several genres, such as ‘classical music’, ‘jazz’, ‘baroque music’, ‘pop/rock’, ‘folk/traditional music’, ‘dance’ and ‘schlager (popular Flemish music)’. For listening at home, the reference period is the previous month; for concert attendance, the previous six months. Frequency of attendance as well as frequency of listening at home are recoded into ‘never’ and ‘once or more’.

Television. Television is almost exclusively consumed in the private sphere. As practically everybody is watching programmes of some sort, we use the frequency of watching certain channels to get at differences in the associated social status. As Elchardus and Siongers point out, public channels in Flanders are legally required to provide a high-quality selection of programmes. Furthermore, they have to give priority to informative and cultural programmes. Private channels are more directed at entertainment and serve popular taste (2007: 220). We consider two channels that are associated with the opposite extremes in the cultural stratification system in the Flemish context, i.e. Canvas – a public channel with a lot of highbrow cultural content – and VTM – a commercial channel with primarily lowbrow entertainment programmes. Respondents have to indicate how frequently they watched both of these channels during the previous month on a five-point scale between ‘daily’ and ‘not in the past month’. We consider watching Canvas ‘daily’ or ‘multiple times a week’ as an indicator of television preferences characteristic of higher social strata; watching VTM ‘daily’ or ‘multiple times a week’ is considered indicative of television preferences viable in lower social strata.

Cinema attendance is included as the public pendant of television preferences. We have information on respondents’ attendance at different cinemas in the past six months. Attendance at large cinema complexes that programme new blockbusters – associated with lower social strata – is opposed to attendance at small cinemas that offer art house movies – associated with higher social strata.

Media use. This refers to what extent respondents actively search for information on a variety of topics in papers, magazines, brochures or the Internet during the past month. We consider frequency of inquiring on international political news as an activity typical of higher social strata. The frequency of looking for news on accidents and disasters is associated with lower social strata. A five-point scale ranging from ‘never during the past month’ to ‘daily’ is used to record the answers. Answers are dichotomized: ‘never’ and ‘once’ versus ‘more than a few times a month’ or more.

Travelling. Respondents reported on the aspects they find important when going on a holiday on a seven-point scale ranging from ‘never important’ to ‘always important’. Scores four to seven are recoded as ‘important’. Preferences typical of the higher social strata are ‘visiting historical buildings, churches and monuments’. For the lower social strata, we use an item that assesses the importance of ‘amusement and parties’ in holidays.

Books and book fairs. While book-related practices are generally associated only with higher social positions, we include reading books and attending book fairs because they nicely indicate private and public practices related to books. For reading books, we construct a variable that distinguishes respondents who have read at least one novel or poem during the past month with those who did not. The public counterpart is having attended a book fair during the past twelve months. Table 2 presents an overview of the various cultural practices we include in the analysis, each with their relative frequencies.

Table 2. Overview of cultural practices included in the analysis and their relative frequency.

	Private		Public	
Associated with higher social strata	Classical music	41.2	Classical music	4.4
	Baroque music	17.2	Baroque music	1.3
	Jazz	43.5	Jazz	1.5
	Canvas (public television channel)	37.8	Small cinemas showing art house movies	5.5
	Media use: international political news	66.7	Holidays: historical buildings, churches and monuments	48.3
	Reading novels and poetry	37.0	Book fairs	11.2
Associated with lower social strata	Pop/rock	68.9	Pop/rock	4.9
	Dance	39.8	Dance	1.3
	Schlager/popular Flemish music	64.1	Schlager/popular Flemish music	1.8
	Folk/traditional	44.3	Folk/traditional	1.6
	VTM (commercial television channel)	49.8	Big cinema complexes	42.5
	Media use: accidents and disasters	52.7	Holidays: amusement and parties	41.3

Table 3. Mobility table: Relative cell frequencies.

Origin: Educational level parents	Destination: Educational level of the respondent				Total
	Primary	Lower secondary	Higher secondary	Higher	
Primary	15.5	12.6	10.2	4.4	42.8
Lower secondary	1.7	6.2	11.7	8.0	27.6
Higher secondary	0.3	1.9	7.5	10.2	19.9
Higher	0.1	0.5	1.7	7.5	9.7
Total	17.6	21.1	31.1	30.2	100

Social mobility. We operationalize social mobility as educational mobility. Previous research finds education to be a better predictor of cultural practices than socio-economic status (Ganzeboom et al., 1987; Nagel, 2004), that is, educational groups in particular differ in dominant discourses and schemes on appropriate cultural behaviour. Also, studies have shown that education is a very important predictor of occupational position and income (e.g. Blau and Duncan, 1967; Card, 1999). The survey assesses the educational level of the respondents and of the respondents' parents. Answers were recoded into four categories: (1) primary school, (2) lower secondary school, (3) higher secondary school, and (4) higher education. As indicator for position of origin, we take the average of educational attainment of both parents and round it up (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013; Sorensen, 1994; Van Eijck, 1999). Table 3 presents the mobility table.

Control variables. Gender (51.6 per cent female) and age in years (centred around the mean of 44; SD: 18.3) are included in the analysis as control variables. Because we focus on private/public practices, we also include indicators of social network size and household income. A lack of an extended social network or a low income may function as a barrier for public participation. The measure for social network is based on a name generator. Respondents had to indicate the number of alters present in their leisure network. Answers are recoded into three categories: '0-4', '5-9' and 'more than 10', which we include as a set of dummy variables with '0-4' as reference category. Income is measured by asking respondents to what extent they get around with their current household income. Answers range from

‘very hard to manage’ to ‘very comfortably to manage’ on a 7-point scale. This subjective measure originates from economic literature in which it is termed the income satisfaction approach (Dubnoff et al., 1981; Van Praag, 2004).

Statistical procedure

To study consequences of the experience of social mobility and to be able to analyse which socialization context is predominantly associated with cultural practices of socially mobile individuals, we use Diagonal Reference Models (DRM), a statistical method developed by Sobel (1981, 1985; also see, e.g., De Graaf et al., 1995; Tolsma et al., 2009). Central in DRM is the idea that immobile individuals represent the core of a specific social position. Characteristics of mobile individuals are predicted as a function of the characteristics of immobile individuals situated in the corresponding social position of origin and destination. So, we model private and public taste of mobile individuals, i.e. the off-diagonals, as a function of the immobile individuals, i.e. the diagonal of the mobility table. Our baseline model (with covariates) is

$$Y_{ijk} = p * \mu_{ii} + (1 - p) * \mu_{jj} \left(+ \sum \beta_b x_{ijb} \right) + \epsilon_{ijk} \quad (\text{Model 1})$$

Subscripts i and j , respectively, refer to the social position of origin and destination. Y_{ijk} is the value of the dependent variable in cell ij , which has k observations. μ_{ii} and μ_{jj} are both estimates of Y in the diagonal cells. The former refers to the corresponding diagonal cell for the position of origin, while the latter refers to the corresponding diagonal cell for the position of destination. The relative importance of the position of origin is represented by the p -parameter. P -parameters significantly higher than 0.5 indicate that Y is predominantly associated with the social position of origin, i.e. in line with *the origin hypothesis*. Vice versa, p -values significantly lower than 0.5 indicate a stronger relationship with the social position of destination, i.e. consistent with the *destination hypothesis*.

The *maximization hypothesis* states that taste of mobile individuals is in line with the socialization position associated with the highest social status. To test this hypothesis, we construct the dummy variable x_{ijm} : Downwardly mobile individuals score one, upwardly mobile individuals score zero. This allows the salience parameter for origin to vary between upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals. In the model, the salience parameter for position of origin for downwardly mobile individuals is ' $p + m$ ', for upwardly mobile individuals the parameter for position of origin remains ' p '. The maximization model is:

$$Y_{ijk} = (p + mx_{ijm}) * \mu_{ii} + (1 - (p + mx_{ijm})) * \mu_{jj} + \sum \beta_b x_{ijb} + \epsilon_{ijk} \quad (\text{Model 2})$$

Because our dependent variables are dichotomous, logistic regression models are used. For example, model 1 for a dichotomous variable thus becomes:

$$\pi(x) = \frac{e^{p * \mu_{ii} + (1-p) * \mu_{jj} + \sum \beta_b x_{ijb} + \epsilon_{ijk}}}{1 + e^{p * \mu_{ii} + (1-p) * \mu_{jj} + \sum \beta_b x_{ijb} + \epsilon_{ijk}}}$$

where $\pi(x) = E(Y | x)$ is the conditional mean of Y , given x .

Results

For all cultural practices, we estimate the base model, i.e. the restricted model, and the maximization model, i.e. the extended model. Results show that for all cultural practices the extended model does not provide a better fit, because the *maximization* parameter in the extended models is never significantly different from zero, which indicates that the salience parameter of the social position of origin does not differ significantly between upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals. Hence, the maximization hypothesis is rejected for all cultural practices in both social spheres. Pseudo R^2 s are calculated as

Table 4. Parameter estimates for private and public musical taste based on the DRM analyses.

	Classical music		Schlager	
	Private	Public	Private	Public
Mobility parameters				
p : relative impact of origin	0.371 (0.053)	0.138 (0.089)	0.315 (0.133)	0.000 (0.235)
m : maximization parameter	—	—	—	—
DRM intercepts: musical preferences of immobile individuals				
μ_{11} : primary education	-3.407 (0.321)	-8.309 (1.034)	1.037 (0.319)	-5.548 (0.950)
μ_{22} : lower secondary education	-2.363 (0.288)	-6.567 (0.623)	0.914 (0.265)	-5.043 (0.892)
μ_{33} : higher secondary education	-1.969 (0.270)	-6.009 (0.531)	0.620 (0.275)	-5.435 (0.773)
μ_{44} : higher education	-0.516 (0.288)	-4.726 (0.542)	-0.180 (0.299)	-4.546 (0.793)
Effects of the covariates on musical preference				
β_{gender} : women	0.036 (0.100)	0.470 (0.201)	0.027 (0.100)	0.520 (0.289)
β_{age} : age	0.035 (0.004)	0.047 (0.007)	0.004 (0.004)	0.018 (0.009)
β_{income} : income	0.032 (0.036)	0.072 (0.071)	-0.090 (0.034)	0.023 (0.082)
Network size^a				
β_{s1} : 5-9	0.089 (0.116)	0.054 (0.250)	0.253 (0.113)	-0.005 (0.389)
β_{s2} : 10 or more	0.282 (0.128)	0.450 (0.260)	0.325 (0.127)	0.538 (0.397)
Pseudo R ²	0.19	0.12	0.07	0.04

^aReference category: '0-4'. Standard errors in parentheses. The DRM intercepts and the effects of the covariates are logit coefficients.

squared polychoric correlations between predicted and observed values of the dependent variables (Long, 1997; Veall and Zimmerman, 1996).

Due to a lack of space, we cannot discuss the results of the analyses of all cultural practices. Therefore, we present only the results for two musical genres: classical music and popular Flemish music/schlager. These results are illustrative of the findings of all other practices which are summarized in Table 5. Full results of all analyses are available on request.

Music consumption

Classical music. Table 4 shows the parameter estimates for the preferences for two musical genres in the private and public sphere. If we first take a look at the DRM intercepts, i.e. the preferences of immobile individuals, we see that higher educated individuals have higher odds of listening to classical music versus not listening ($0.597 = e^{-.516}$ and $0.139 = e^{-1.969}$) compared to lower educated individuals ($0.033 = e^{-3.407}$). Also concert attendance is stratified as we expected: Higher educated individuals have higher odds to attend classical concerts than lower educated individuals. For the p -parameters, we consider the 95 per cent confidence intervals to check whether they differ significantly from 0.5 and conclude that the destination hypothesis applies for listening to classical music in the private and public spheres. Both p -parameters ($p_{private} = 0.371$ and $p_{public} = 0.138$) are significantly lower than 0.5. This means that both for upwardly as well as downwardly mobile individuals, private and public highbrow musical taste predominantly resembles the taste of immobile individuals who have the same educational level as the mobile individual, i.e. the destination hypothesis.

The effects of the control variables in all analyses are in line with findings common in the literature (e.g. Katz-Gerro and Sullivan, 2010; Nagel, 2004). For classical music we find that older individuals have higher odds of listening to classical music at home ($e^{0.035} = 1.036$) and attending classical concerts ($e^{0.047} = 1.048$). We also find a gender difference: women visit classical concerts more frequently than men do ($e^{.470} = 1.599$).

Table 5. Summary of the DRM analyses on various cultural practices: *p*-values and standard errors.

	Cultural practices associated with higher social strata		Cultural practices associated with lower social strata	
Private	Classical music	0.371 (0.053)	Pop/rock	0.803 (0.231)
	Baroque music	0.358 (0.056)	Dance	0.296 (0.181)
	Jazz	0.270 (0.080)	Schlager/popular Flemish music	0.315 (0.135)
	Canvas (public television channel)	0.315 (0.085)	Folk/traditional	0.373 (0.128)
	Media use: international political news	0.355 (0.074)	VTM (commercial television channel)	0.334 (0.092)
	Reading novels and poetry	0.366 (0.068)	Media use: accidents and disasters	0.293 (0.126)
	Public	Classical music	0.138 (0.089)	Pop/rock
Baroque music		0.148 (0.116)	Dance	0.00 (0.170)
Jazz		0.163 (0.105)	Schlager/popular Flemish music	0.00 (0.228)
Small cinemas showing art house movies		0.203 (0.100)	Folk/traditional	0.00 (0.042)
Holidays: historical buildings, churches and monuments		0.312 (0.090)	Big cinema complexes	0.297 (0.083)
Book fairs		0.115 (0.084)	Holidays: amusement and parties	0.183 (0.109)
Summary		Private: Destination Public: Destination Public, more destination – compared to private		Private: Origin and destination Public: Destination Public, more destination – compared to private

Between parentheses: the standard error of the *p*-parameters. Maximization hypothesis rejected for all cultural practices.

Schlager/popular Flemish music. By considering the 95 per cent confidence interval, we see that the *p*-parameter for listening to schlager at home does not significantly differ from 0.5 (0.315). Neither parental nor own educational level of socially mobile individuals is more strongly associated with listening at home to popular Flemish music. However, the *p*-parameter for schlager concert attendance is significantly lower than 0.5 (0.000), providing evidence for the destination hypothesis: Public taste for popular Flemish music of mobile individuals is similar to the preferences of immobile individuals with the same educational level.

Other cultural practices

In Table 5, the *p*-parameters from the analyses on the other cultural practices are presented. Results confirm the patterns we found for classical and popular Flemish music. Private and public practices that are associated with higher social strata are consistent with the destination hypothesis. This means that these practices are predominantly related to the own educational attainment of mobile individuals. That is, they conform to their new social environment both publicly and privately.

For cultural practices viable in lower social strata, we find the following pattern: Neither parental educational context nor own educational attainment is predominantly associated with private practices. Public practices, however, are mainly associated with the own educational level, i.e. the destination hypothesis. So, both private and public cultural practices associated with lower social strata are partially in line with expectations from the new social environment. However, public pendants of these practices are *more* in line with the social position of destination compared to the private pendants, suggesting that socially mobile individuals overstress their conformity in public.

A similar argument can be made for practices associated with higher social strata. Even though all p -parameters for these practices are significantly lower than 0.5 (supporting the destination hypothesis), all p -parameters of the public practices are lower than those of their private counterparts. So, while both private and public practices characteristic of higher social strata are predominantly associated with own educational level, public practices are even more strongly related to the socially mobile's educational credentials compared to their private activities (e.g. baroque music $p_{private} = 0.358$ and $p_{public} = 0.148$).

So, for practices associated with higher as well as lower social positions, we find evidence of chameleon socialization. And while the results for practices viable in higher social strata are less clear-cut in corroborating chameleon socialization, they suggest that processes of chameleon socialization also apply there.

Conclusion and discussion

In this article, we studied cultural practices of socially mobile individuals. First, we found evidence that their cultural taste is more strongly linked to their own acquired educational level compared to the mean educational level of their parents. This implies – considering educational level as a proxy for the social environment – that both the social position of origin and destination matter, and, moreover, that the social position of destination has the strongest association with actual cultural taste of socially mobile individuals.

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu depicts the habitus as a product of childhood socialization within the social position of origin that continues to colour individuals' lives. Our results suggest that the importance of childhood experiences may be exaggerated as we find practices of socially mobile individuals to be mainly in accordance with the secondary socialization position – be it because of changes during/after the experience of social mobility, or because these individuals acquired cultural practices during childhood socialization which are 'inappropriate' for the social position of origin. Our results are in line with recent empirical studies claiming that traditional socialization theory overestimates parental socialization and the lifelong influence of the lived experiences during childhood (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013; Erickson, 1996; Stein, 2005). These studies suggest the habitus to be less rigid, more malleable and more adaptable to other contexts of socialization. It is obvious, however, that if the habitus is not a monolithic entity but rather incorporates different aspects, some parts of it may be more durable than others and react differently to the experience of social mobility. This may cause an even greater amount of intra-individual behavioural variation (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013; Lahire, 2008).

Second, we found a discrepancy between the way the experience of social mobility is associated with private and public manifestations of preferences. For the socially mobile, public cultural activities are more strongly related to the new social environment than activities that are inconspicuous and limited to the privacy of the homes. We call this situation chameleon socialization and argue it to be guided by motives for social integration. That is, while their preferences partially conform to the norms and values of the new social environment, socially mobile individuals overdo/overstress this conformity in the public sphere to facilitate social integration in a new social environment.

Actually, cultural chameleons act in ways reminiscent of Bourdieu's idea of cultural goodwill: they recognize and aspire to conformity with the cultural practices viable in their new social environment. While cultural goodwill is generally considered to be related to upward social mobility and to the *petite bourgeoisie*, our results imply that similar processes are present for downwardly mobile individuals. They also try to conform to the cultural practices dominant in their new social environment. This suggests that the motives behind cultural goodwill may not necessarily be status-related, but more related to social integration.

By taking the private–public dimension into consideration, we emphasize the importance of recent ideas stressing the situational character of cultural taste (Hennion, 2007; Roose and Vander Stichele, 2010). As Bourdieu claims: 'dispositions do not lead in a determinate way to a determinate action; they are revealed and fulfilled only in appropriate circumstances and in the relationship with a situation'

(Bourdieu, 2000: 149). Furthermore, it highlights the importance of a more contextualized outlook on the study and measurement of cultural practices. By de-contextualizing cultural practices through using general genre labels as a measurement instrument, surveys have a hard time capturing the intra-individual variability in cultural behaviour that may depend on context. So, the equation of cultural preferences with actual behaviour hampers the possibility to detect intra-individual variation in cultural practices (cf. Lahire, 2008).

Furthermore, distinguishing private and public sphere has, to our knowledge, not yet been done in research on social mobility. We maintain that this dimension is relevant in this research domain because social mobility can lead to feelings of being out of place (Blau, 1956), which in turn can lead to embarrassment and strategies of impression management (Goffman, 1956, 1959). Distinguishing the private and public sphere allows the range of impact of the effects of social mobility to be measured. It sheds light on whether social mobility only has superficial effects, or whether the effects go deeper and penetrate the social identity and very Self of socially mobile individuals.

In this article, and this applies to a whole lot of other research in this tradition, we were not able to make any causal claims because we lack information on the cultural practices during childhood. An alternative interpretation of our findings is that cultural practices – as part of someone's cultural capital – affect chances for social mobility and that it is especially the cultural activities in the public sphere that spur mobility chances and should be considered as indicators of cultural capital. However way our findings are interpreted, it is hard, if not impossible, to get at the complex interconnection between cultural practices, social position and mobility in the social space by using survey research and we hope this article may serve as an impetus for further research on the experience of social mobility.

We have associated a change in private practices with a 'deep' adaptation and a change in only the public activities with a 'superficial' change. An alternative argument could be made. For example, Lahire (2008) claims that private practices are characterized by a certain amount of freedom; this in contrast to public practices which demand a commitment, an engagement. However, if a practice related to a certain cultural product, e.g. opera, is only performed in public, and *not* in the freedom of the private sphere, this is in our opinion an indication that this engagement to the cultural product is much more associated with social motives than it is with aesthetic dispositions alone. In this article we have operationalized social mobility as educational mobility. We argued that this measurement of mobility is the most relevant for cultural practices in Flanders. However, other dimensions, e.g. occupational mobility, may be relevant as well, perhaps more so for other forms of practices (Westoff et al., 1960).

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

We thank Rie Bosman, Piet Bracke and Chloë Delcour for their kind and insightful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. We also very much appreciated the constructive suggestions of the anonymous reviewers and the editors.

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