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Finding the moral space: Rethinking morality, social class and worldviews

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A B S T R A C T

As social beings, we are compelled to take moral position toward one another but the nature of the relationship between morality and social structure remains a point of discussion. This article proposes a relational perspective on the debate, which involves reconceptualizing moral views as simultaneously status markers and attempts to achieve self-worth. In order to do so, the argument borrows from Bourdieu a depiction of the class structure as a multidimensional space and follows Douglas's understanding of culture and worldviews. The argument is supported by an analysis of an experimental survey design, relying on vignette questions to gauge moral worldviews. The data are processed using Multiple Correspondence Analysis, revealing that (1) people exhibit a consistency in their moral position-taking and that (2) a strong homology exists between the moral space and the space of social classes

1. Introduction

Moral concern is intrinsic to people's relation to the world as continuously evaluating our surroundings, positions and experiences is an integral part of the human condition. Our lives do not consist merely of a relentless pursuit of physical safety or power over others. But, as social beings, we are also involved in an endless quest for moral recognition or self-worth (De Keere, 2018b; Honneth, 1996; Lamont, 2017; Sayer, 2011). Therefore, the role of morality has always been a vital element within the study of social cohesion and conflict, albeit in different disguises, leading to different research avenues. Durkheim's (1934) classical take on morality, as the cultural cement that holds communities together, was later picked up by Parsons (1967), who conceptualized moral values as shared guiding principles that shape common goals and expectations. However, another strand of sociologists was more inspired by Weberian or Marxist accounts of morality, emphasizing not only its cohesive power but simultaneously seeing it as a driving force behind status and power conflicts. Yet, during the latter half of the 20th century, the topic of morality fell into sociological disgrace as it "went down with the functionalist ship" (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2013:53). But, the sharp increase in inequality, accompanied by a steady rise of radical politics in Europe and the US, have catapulted the importance of moral worth back into the scientific spotlight.

Consequently, within different disciplines and from varying perspectives, morality became a major topic of interest again. Within social psychology, the revival of Tajfel and Turner's *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) led to a string of new studies revealing how important shared moral standards are in constructing a positive in-group identity – independent from successfulness or sociability (Brambilla & Leach, 2014; Ellemers & van den Bos, 2012; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). In addition, recent cross-pollination between cognitive and social sciences yielded new insights on how moral decision-taking comes about and why value conflicts are so persistent. The *Moral Foundation Theory*, as an example of this, pushes for a pluralistic take on morality by conceptualizing judgments as resulting from a set of metaphorical "taste buds" that can be culturally modulated and activated differently within varying contexts (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012). Findings from cognitive science also inspired a *dual-process* take on morality leading to a *New Sociology of Morality* (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2013). This perspective proposes a research agenda that (1) studies both the declarative and non-declarative side of values and motives (Miles, 2015; Vaisey, 2009) and (2) focuses on not simply *thin*

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(e.g., good and bad behavior) but mainly *thick* (e.g., moral identities and notions of self-worth) understandings of moral judgments (Abend, 2011; Tavory, 2011).

A different but currently also burgeoning perspective on morality is the symbolic boundary approach pioneered by the comparative work of Lamont (1992; 2000). From a more qualitative perspective, she demonstrated how people from different social classes rely on drawing moral boundaries between themselves to dodge stigmatizing judgments from others. Inspired by her work, there is a growing body of literature on the moral dimension of class that repeatedly demonstrates how members of the upper and lower classes use diverging moral repertoires when judging others (e.g., Heikkilä & Rahkonen, 2011; Jarness & Friedman, 2017; Skjøtt-Larsen, 2012).

Hence, that (1) morality is not necessarily articulated verbally, (2) can vary depending on context and (3) is crucial to identity formation are essential insights, on which this study rests. Yet, the objective here is to push the debate further by strengthening the relational perspective on moral judgment as inspired by Bourdieu (1989) and further advanced by Emirbayer (1997) and Sayer (2005; 2011). Surprisingly, in terms of empirical studies on morality, this perspective has been somewhat underdeveloped. Most previous studies conceptualize moral attitudes as isolatable entities that can be measured and treated independently from each other (e.g., as separate taste buds), leading to somewhat substantive readings of it. Consequently, they primarily focus on quantitatively measuring the "strength" of values as self-subsistent entities. This also explains why they are often operationalized as separate interval variables suitable for linear regressions. Moreover, many studies (implicitly or explicitly) grant moral judgments independent causal powers, as they are seen as motivations or guiding principles that make people *do* things (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). In this way, values are understood as entities that act under their own power, which is highly questionable as they, therefore, become "the unmoved mover" in social theory (Swidler, 1986:274).

The relational perspective departs from such a substantive reading. It does not comprehend morality as a set of distinct values, but as worldviews that are relational in nature because they (1) come about through a process of reciprocal position-taking in a shared symbolic space, (2) only make sense in relation to other worldviews and (3) inevitably respond to other social structures. In other words, this study gives primacy to investigating the way judgments are conjointly arranged and, at the same time, mirror other relational configurations (Bourdieu, 1989; Emirbayer, 1997). As Sayer (2005) has pointed out, moral judgments are – at least to some extent – similar to taste preferences. Not for the reason that they can be traced back to a set of metaphorical taste buds, but because they come about through social distinction and conflict over symbolic power.

Hence, analogue to relational studies of tastes and lifestyles (Bourdieu, 2010), also moral distinction is viewed here through a prism of class, in order to better grasp how it is both dependent on, as well as constitutive to, a general struggle over power and resources. This will be empirically investigated by mapping out the relationship between the objective conditions in which people find themselves and their subjective moral responses to it. In order to conceptualize both social class and moral worldviews, this study combines the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Mary Douglas. Besides relying on several of Bourdieu's key concepts, such as habitus, symbolic power and distinction, I also take lessons from the way he comprehended social class as a relational space determined by (primarily) cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1989, 2010). From Douglas I borrow the two-dimensional classification of worldviews, which she defines through varying levels of grid and group control that people experience (or aspire to) (Douglas, 1996a, 1996b). Combining these two dimensions renders a configuration of varying moral views that will serve as a heuristic tool to both theoretically conceptualize as well as empirically operationalize the moral space. The argument of this article is supported by data from an experimental survey design relying on vignette questions. To analyze these data, I use Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). This method fits the relational approach better than conventional regression techniques as it is not designed to isolate effects but instead study indicators configurationally.

2. Moral space

2.1. Moral distinction

Recent studies of the role of class habitus have demonstrated that, through life trajectories, people incorporate not only aesthetic tastes but also specific cognitive and emotional patterns of evaluation (e.g., Friedman, 2016; Schmitz, Flemmen, & Rosenlund, 2018) – what Reay (2005) calls the psychic landscape of social class. Clearly, the habitus not only steers people's cultural preferences but also determines their moral and political positions (Bourdieu, 2010; De Keere, 2018a; Flemmen, 2014; Harrits, 2013; Sayer, 2005). Hence, just as a particular genre of music may be dismissed because it is "not for the likes of us" (Bourdieu, 2000:185), an ethical stance can be rejected on the same grounds. Analogous to the way people "feel" what taste is "proper" for them, without consciously reflecting on it, people also perform moral distinctions by intuitively feeling what their suitable moral position is (Vaisey, 2009).

This process is essentially shaped by a circular causality. On the one hand, class determines the types of moral views that people maintain, but, on the other, people categorize themselves by their "feel for the evaluative game" (Sayer, 2005:45). In this regard, moral views classify the classifier in the same way as tastes and lifestyles do (Bourdieu, 2010:xxix). Through a dynamic of moral distinction, people's views play out as status markers that betray their position in the social space.

Moreover, people also gain access to class-specific privileges and resources not only because they value the same cultural style or have a similar economic profile, but because they are governed by the same moral dispositions. As experiments based on social identity theory show us, a sense of shared morality actually reinforces group identity (Brambilla & Leach, 2014; Ellemers & van den Bos, 2012; Leach et al., 2007). This manifests itself in clear benefits such as the strengthening of social networks or gaining access to fields. For instance, a network study by Vaisey and Lizardo (2010) demonstrated how worldviews have a bonding effect on the formation of interpersonal configurations and group behavior. Research on gateway situations, such as job or school admission

procedures, also show how shared normative codes enable cultural matching and social closure (Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). So, while "patrolling the borders of our groups" (Lamont, 1992:11), we utilize normative beliefs and ethical codes as means of both inclusion and exclusion.

However, moral dispositions do not only serve as status markers. The variations in suffering and flourishing – as Sayer puts it (2011:131) – create diverging paths of informal moral education. Although we share the same social space, we inevitably have strongly diverging outlooks on it. Moral positions are thus not only status markers but are simultaneously worldviews we employ to legitimatize our positions and justify our situations. Through them we establish for ourselves, and those with whom we share a position, feelings of dignity and self-worth (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012; Skeggs, 2011). This calls for a closer look at how we can understand worldviews and the way they can potentially vary, which brings us to the cultural theory of Mary Douglas.

2.2. A cultural theory of varying worldviews

"Each social environment," as Douglas states "permits only certain kinds of control, and this allows the dominant cultural bias to develop" (1996b:xxvi). These biases, in turn, produce specific thought styles or worldviews on which we rely when making sense of our experiences from our own perspective (Douglas, 1978; 1996a, 1996b). In this regard, she agrees with Bourdieu that the social world always embraces us like a point, which is simultaneously a point of view "defined, in form and contents, by the objective position from which it is adopted" (Bourdieu, 1998:13).

Douglas actually called her own work a "prolegomenon to Bourdieu's analysis of habitus" (1992:137), as she shares with him a "social-accounting approach" (1978:6) to culture. This essentially means that the social constraints we experience have a direct influence on the codes and categories we use to frame our social reality. Basically, they both criticize substantive and culturalist readings of attitudes as being inverted materialisms (1996a:152). Beliefs do not float around freely throughout society, but our social existence imposes direct restriction on the contents of our ideas. Yet, although Bourdieu's writings often touched upon the intrinsic relationship between social positions and ethical dispositions, he, overall, neglected to systematically describe varying moral perspectives. Mary Douglas, on the other hand, made more effort in theorizing the notion of worldviews and how they can possibly vary depending on specific constraints.

Through comparative anthropological research, Douglas and her collaborators have systematized variations in possible worldviews by introducing two crucial dimensions of constraint, namely a *grid* and a *group dimension* (1996b, Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983; Douglas, 1996a; 2013). The latter primarily refers to the importance of the collective, i.e., to what extent an actor is determined by a group. The grid dimension, on the other hand, pertains to the amount of individual control one experiences or aspires to, i.e., how much autonomy the actor has. Douglas herself has applied this schema to a range of issues such as variations in religious cosmologies (Douglas, 1996a), health risk perceptions (Douglas & Calvez, 1990), views on technology and environment (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983) and even national variations in labor markets logics (Douglas, 2013).

Later on, Douglas's cultural theory became primarily influential within the study of risk perception. Scholars such as Karl Dake (1991) and Dan Kahan (Kahan, Braman, Gastil, Slovic, & Mertz, 2007) empirically demonstrated, using survey data, how the group/grid classification allows us to systematically read into the diverging orienting dispositions people uphold when being confronted with potential technological dangers or environmental hazards. Similar to these studies, I rely on Douglas's classification to empirically operationalize different worldviews when using survey data. Yet, in contrast, the focus is here not on risk perception, but on more general worldviews through investigating whether people position themselves consistently on the same side when evaluating a range of apparently unrelated issues. In this sense, the objective is not to test the validity of Douglas's classification but to use the schema as a potential moral space in which people of different social classes can position themselves. But, before getting into this, it is necessary to first succinctly summarize which moralities are as yet identified by previous studies as belonging to specific class fractions.

2.3. Classed moralities

By now there is a consensus that social classes structurally diverge in the way they view themselves, their world and their possibilities in it. Several studies have indicated how the working class has a stronger tendency toward privileging a worldview based on a moral premise of interdependence. Lamont's interviews with working-class men, for instance, revealed that they placed more moral weight on community, connectivity and family life (Lamont, 2000). However, social psychological research also showed that members of the working class draw more on external factors to explain changes in their lives and, therefore, value independence and individual choice much less than their middle-class counterparts (Stephens, Fryber, & Markus 2011).

Besides this tendency toward interdependence, working class or those with downward social trajectories also seem to support a "hard" or utilitarian type of individualism, stressing perseverance and hard work (Daenekindt 2017; Kusserow, 2012). This corresponds with older research, depicting manual laborers as more prone to obedience, discipline and authority (Bernstein, 1971; Kohn, 1989). Other studies, however, hint at a working-class morality that actually includes elements of resistance and "caged resentment" (Willis, 1977:120), such as anti-institutional sentiments, awareness of exploitation and a preference for non-hypocrisy (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012; Skeggs, 2011; Willis, 1977).

Studies of the moral views of the (upper) middle class, in turn, point toward enthusiastic support for values such as self-expression, uniqueness and independence (Kusserow, 2012; Lamont, 1992; Skeggs, 2011). Unlike the working class, they feel more comfortable with claiming agency and focusing on their possibilities (Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007). They experience life events and their surroundings as malleable and controllable. Research on child-rearing (Kusserow, 2012; Lareau, 2003) demonstrates,

for instance, that middle-class parents want their children to grow up mainly as independent, self-expressive beings. Moreover, these studies also reveal that the middle class are used to negotiating with institutes, which they see primarily as a means of self-development. This corroborates the overall higher levels of institutional trust among the members of this class (Elchardus & De Keere, 2013) In particular, the new middle class endorses a therapeutic morality, pushing for emotional self-actualization through the guidance of institutions such as psychology and schooling (Illouz, 2008).

Regardless of how instrumental all these studies are in better grasping the nature of classed morality, they suffer from two shortcomings. First, none of the studies really bring these varying moral stances fully into relation with each other. Most studies categorically contrast independence/expression with interdependence/restraint while pitting the lower against the higher class. A more fruitful approach, however, would be to conceptualize moral dispositions as coming forth from a relational position-taking within a shared symbolic space. Second, all these studies explain the variations in moral views by tracing them back to one structural cause. Whether it is the position in the production process (Kohn, 1989), the spatial organization during one's upbringing (Bernstein, 1971) or references to variations in opportunities (Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011), most of these arguments neglect the circular causal relationship between the moral and social structure.

2.4. Worldviews

Hence, we are in need of an instrument to systematize moral plurality in a relational way and Douglas's cultural theory is, therefore, heuristically useful here. Her group and grid dimensions of constraint actually allow us to capture many of the moral contradictions – self-expression versus obedience, independence versus interdependence, institutionalism versus resentment – into a unifying configuration. In order to concretize these two dimensions and translate them into survey items, they are interpreted as answering to two main questions, namely "what should the collective do?" and "how should I behave?" In other words, the two dimensions should be understood as representing different evaluations of *external* and *internal* control. The external control or group dimension refers to the extent the individual ought to be controlled by the collective or should adapt to society. Essentially, this dimension contrasts a positive evaluation of external control with a normative rejection of collective interference. Then again, the grid or internal control dimension is not about how much autonomy the individual receives from society, but how much freedom one ought to give oneself. In other words, this dimension represents the distinction between those who value self-control versus those who prefer self-expression. Combining these two dimensions leads to four possible moral worldviews (see Fig. 1). These worldviews have been labeled (1) egalitarian, (2) institutional, (3) fatalist and (4) entrepreneurial.

1) The egalitarian worldview refers to a belief in collective interference (high external) combined with a strong endorsement of self-restriction (high internal). This moral view presupposes that individual and societal development is only possible through both internal and external control. It entails an emphasis on conformity leading to harmony, equality and solidarity. In other words, being an individual means, above all, being a member of a collective. This egalitarian worldview leads to a view of individual and societal problems where the focus lies on bottom-up solutions through cooperation.

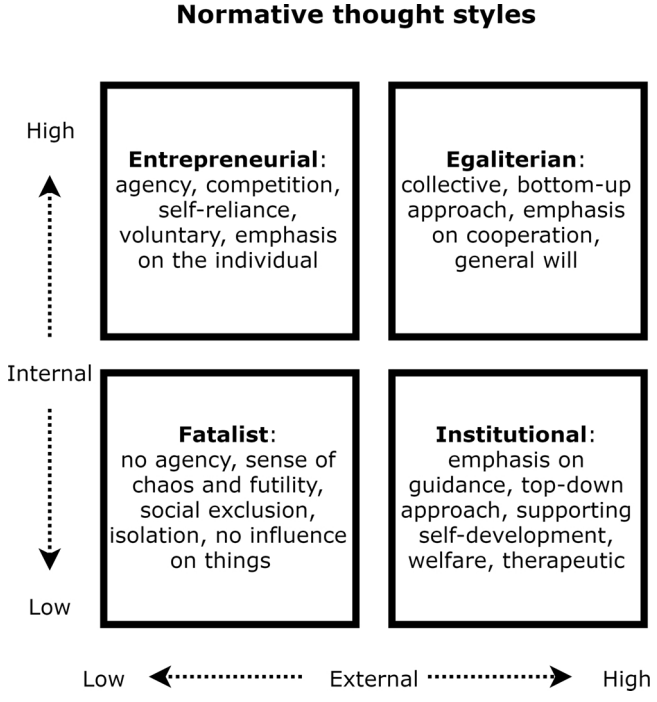

Fig. 1. Four worldviews: external and internal control.

2) The second moral worldview is dubbed institutional as it entails a belief in strong social interference (high external) combined with an emphasis on self-expression (low internal). Hence, the self needs to be expressed but it needs clear institutional guidance and support to do so. It is up to institutions to help individuals realize themselves and thus achieve a feeling of well-being. Consequently, trust is placed in societal systems offering welfare, pedagogical and therapeutic support. Societal challenges are not, therefore, the responsibility of single individuals but should be handled by organizations, institutes and governments. The individual, on the other hand, should primarily be focused on their self-development.
3) The third worldview is determined by a rejection of any type of control and is called, following Douglas, fatalistic. This worldview involves a strong skepticism of rules or regulations and is, therefore, dismissive, anti-establishment and non-conformist. The premise is that one should not expect society to offer much except exploitation and manipulation (as nobody actually follows the rules). From a fatalistic perspective, the way to counteract and survive this situation is by not abiding by the rules and instead emphasizing one's own hedonism, straightforwardness and non-hypocrisy.
4) The last normative worldview can be described as entrepreneurial and combines a strong belief in self-discipline (high internal) with little interference by society (low external). It corresponds to a somewhat classical liberalism where both self-efficacy and the minimization of public interference are valued. In this point of view, all social engagement needs to be voluntary and the ideal individual is regarded as competent, competitive and self-responsible. The moral worth of a person lies primarily in her or his capacity to be independent and endure.

Of course, these worldviews are described somewhat archetypically and differences are gradual and not clear-cut. Nor should we ignore that other cultural frames, besides internal and external control, also influence people's moral outlooks (e.g., national cultures, religion or one's relation to the public media). Moreover, it should be stressed that the objective here is not to investigate whether this classification manifests itself in absolute form or how "strong" certain worldviews are but to use these worldviews as ethical flagpoles around which people can orient themselves morally.

3. Toward an analysis

3.1. Measuring morality

Evidently, these different worldviews are not consciously held by people and it is, therefore, pointless to ask directly how they evaluate internal or external control. Bourdieu correctly criticizes social scientists who seek to translate articulated social theories into conscious regularities. If they do so, they commit what he called "the fallacy of the rule" or the assumption that discursive rules determine our thinking and behavior (Bourdieu, 1977:22). However, the moral habitus can yield a pre-reflexive moral compass that generates consistent patterns of evaluation without one needing to be aware of any explicit ethical premises that bind these (Vaisey, 2009).

That said, if people are not always conscious of their worldviews, how could we ever elicit them? One option would be to conduct in-depth interviews with people in different class positions and see how they vary in their views of the world and their possibilities in it. This option, although often very valuable, has the drawback of being more vulnerable to the fallacy of the rule. Interviewing presupposes that morality can always be articulated. An alternative approach is the *dual-process* model described by Vaisey (2009). He argues that questionnaires sometimes offer advantages compared with more discursive instruments such as in-depth interviews, especially if respondents have to pick one response from a fixed list of possibilities. Forced-choice questions give respondents the possibility to choose which response "feels right," revealing moral dispositions without having to verbalize them.

Moreover, research has revealed that the more remote the questions are from ordinary experience, the more difficult it is for respondents to express opinions (for an overview, see Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). In alignment with this, several scholars showed that, when comparing different groups or cultures, a vignette method, i.e., formulating the question as a relatable short story or dilemma, yields more criterion validity than other methods, such as evaluating or ranking isolated propositions (King, Murray, Salomon, & Tandon, 2004; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997). Hence, to allow people to take a position in the moral space, respondents were presented with everyday life decisions and societal dilemmas that were framed within familiar situations in the form of short vignettes. Most moral positions are rarely articulated unless they are challenged (Sayer, 2011:26) and this is what these dilemmas do. The vignettes entail story-like descriptions of common predicaments within different spheres of life, that is, choosing a type of school, making career choices, solving a problem with one's boss and how to deal with sports and child-rearing (for a detailed description of the scenarios, see Table 1). The societal dilemmas – by definition already slightly more removed from daily life – revolve around salient topics within the public debate, namely on how to view the economic crisis, deal with migration waves and cope with the risks of climate change, as well as a closed question about the principal role of government (see Table 2).

The dilemmas were presented to the respondents together with four possible solutions, inspired by the four worldviews. When constructing these items, the intention was not simply to make one-to-one translations of the four worldviews but to present items that evoke a reaction because they are recognizable. Hence, they are formulated using idioms that should trigger a specific worldview (see Data section and Appendix A, Table 5,6 and 7 for details about validity). The moral habitus can be expected to reveal itself not only through a tendency to opt consistently for one specific type of solution, but also in a systematic rejection of other possibilities.

3.2. Data

The data used in the analysis are taken from a survey conducted among a random sample of the Flemish population during the fall

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Table 1
Everyday life dilemmas.

Everyday life dilemmas	Style	Solution	Label
Schooling For her job, Anna had to move together with her 15-year-old daughter Julie. Therefore, Julie needs to be enrolled in a new school. However, in their new neighborhood there are many different types of schools. In your view, what should Anna and Julie pay attention to when choosing a new school?	**Egalitarian**	*The school with the most diverse group of pupils, so Julie learns to be tolerant and respectful of others.*	*School egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*The school with the best academic results, so that Julie will be well prepared to enter the competitive job market.*	*School entrep.*
	Institutional	*The school that offers the most personal guidance, so that Julie is fully supported in her search for self- development.*	*School instit.*
	Fatalist	*Which school does not really matter, in the end it all makes little difference to Julie's future.*	*School fatal.*
Job conflict Nicole is a secretary and has just started working for a new boss. Her boss is very busy and also rather nervous. He sometimes bursts out in anger against her. Nicole can barely cope with the pressure and often comes home crying. What kind of advice do you think should be given to Nicole?	**Egalitarian**	*Nicole does not have to tolerate such behavior from her boss and needs to go to the labor union to complain about his misconduct.*	*Job conflict egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*Nicole needs to learn how to grin and bear it. After a while, these insults will not affect her anymore and she will eventually do her job even better.*	*Job conflict entrep.*
	Institutional	*Nicole has to go to a 'job coach' or therapist, who can help her in finding out whether this job suits her and teach her how to deal with the pressure.*	*Job conflict instit.*
	Fatalist	*Nicole should not care too much about her boss and just bluntly say what she thinks about the situation.*	*Job conflict fatal.*
Future job David graduated a few months ago and has already had many job interviews. Most of them went so well that David can pick any job he wants. The jobs are all quite similar, so he has a lot of doubt. Which kind of job would you most recommend for him?	**Egalitarian**	*The job that offers him the possibility to do something for society.*	*Future job egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*The job in which he can make a career and prove himself professionally.*	*Future job entrep.*
	Institutional	*The job that fits his personality best and in which he can develop personally.*	*Future job instit.*
	Fatalist	*The job in which he can have the most fun and do what he pleases.*	*Future job fatal.*
Sport Stephen is 13 years old and plays soccer. There was an important match today. The team won, but Stephen played very badly. He is quite upset and is looking for comfort from his father. What kind of advice should his father give to Stephen?	**Egalitarian**	*He needs to explain to Stephen that it is more important that the team has won. It is therefore in the interests of the team that he remains committed.*	*Sport egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*He needs to explain to Stephen that to become a better soccer player he must above all train harder. This way he will eventually start to play better.*	*Sport entrep.*
	Institutional	*He needs to explain to Stephen that soccer needs to, above all, be fun and not something in which he has to become the best. If not, it might be better for him to find a hobby he really likes.*	*Sport instit.*
	Fatalist	*He needs to explain that soccer is just a game and there are winners and losers in every game. So it does not matter all that much.*	*Sport fatal.*

of 2013. Flanders is a densely populated, relatively stable, affluent region in Belgium that is characterized politically by a Christian Democratic tradition that has established a fairly strong social security system. Although each region or nation has cultural idiosyncrasies, as our focus is not on specific moral dimensions such as religion, nationalism or ethnicity, there is no specific reason why Flanders would be a particular case in terms of general moral worldviews.

The survey sample included 4000 inhabitants of Flanders aged 18-75, drawn at random from the National Register. Aiming to maximize responses, we opted to use Dillman's Total Design Method (2008), which means the questionnaire and then three follow-up mail-shots were sent out. By the end of the fieldwork, 1659 questionnaires had been returned, which corresponds to a net response rate of 41% (a moderate to fair response rate for a postal survey). A weighting coefficient was calculated based solely on respondents' education level, as there was no significant deviation from the overall Flemish population with regard to age and gender (for more details see author deleted).

The content validity of the scenarios was assessed by pre-testing them through an online survey (N: 150) and asking the respondents to comment on them (scenarios and solutions that caused too much confusion were dropped, for more details see (De Keere, Vandebroeck, & Spruyt, 2013)). The vignette items were deliberately constructed so that religion, nationality, race or ethnicity were not explicitly mentioned to avoid introducing other dimensions of meaning. In terms of concurrent validity, the 32 answering categories were tested by calculating the mean scores for each separate item on two principle components scales that serve as proxies for the group and grid dimension. Eventually, only 8 out of 64 mean scores contradicted Douglas's categorization while 38 score were in clear accordance with the model (the remaining 18 scores barely deviated from the general standardized mean ($x < 0,05$), see Tables 5, 6 and 7 in Appendix B). As yet pointed out, the objective here is however not to test Douglas's schema once more (see Dake, 1991; Kahan et al., 2007). Instead, the goal is to inductively explore how consistent respondents are in discriminating between possible solutions and how this consistency mirrors their class position.

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Table 2
Societal dilemmas.

Societal dilemmas	Style	Solution	Label
Climate According to some scientists and politicians we are being threatened by a global warming and a deregulation of our climate. Which of the following views corresponds most with your own?	**Egalitarian**	*The climate problem can best be solved by changing our way of living and all of us together start living a more balanced life.*	*Climate egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*The climate problem can best be solved by everybody taking his own responsibility and do what he or she can (e.g. solar panels, start cycling, …)*	*Climate entrep.*
	Institutional	*The climate problem can best be solved by governments and other institutions like science.*	*Climate instit.*
	Fatalist	*The climate problem is nonsense and exaggerated, I don't bother with that.*	*Climate fatal.*
Migration Every year new migrants arrive in Belgium. This creates societal possibilities and challenges, Which of the following views corresponds most with yours?	**Egalitarian**	*The question of migration has to be handled by accommodating migrants and taking into account their own culture so that we can create a new and diverse society together.*	*Migration egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*The question of migration has to be handled by only allowing migrants who can independently take care of themselves.*	*Migration entrep.*
	Institutional	*The question of migration can only be handled by accommodating migrants and oblige them to integrate so that they can contribute to the welfare system*	*Migration instit.*
	Fatalist	*The migrant question is too big so we cannot get a hold on the problem and therefore should close off our borders.*	*Migration fatal.*
Economy For a number of years now, we have been hearing about a financial crisis that has costs society a lot of money. Which of the following views corresponds most with yours?	**Egalitarian**	*The financial crisis is the consequence of a wrong way of living. People need to learn to live in a way that is less focused on material and financial wealth.*	*Economy egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*The financial crisis is the consequence of wrong investments and this is a part of the economic process, In the end people will come who make the right investments and make the economy blossom again.*	*Economy entrep.*
	Institutional	*The financial crisis is the consequence of not having enough control from the state. In the future the government needs to exercise more control on banks and companies.*	*Economy instit.*
	Fatalist	*The financial crisis is the consequence of greed and egoism that are a part of the human nature, There is not much we can do about this.*	*Economy fatal.*
Government If you would have to delimit yourselves only one, what would have to be the most important tasks of the government? Choose one of the following possibilities	**Egalitarian**	*Above all, the government needs to ensure social and economic equality.*	*Government egal.*
	Entrepreneurial	*Above all, the government needs to ensure safety and safeguard property right.*	*Government entrep.*
	Institutional	*Above all, the government needs to ensure personal and individual self-development.*	*Government instit.*
	Fatalist	*Above all, the government should not interfere with the lives of its civilians.*	*Government fatal.*

3.3. Method

To analyze the survey data, I rely on Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), as it answers better to a relational perspective on social structure. MCA is a versatile statistical tool that allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple sociodemographic characteristics and symbolic properties (Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010). It is a topological approach whereby coalitions, clusters and dissimilarities between individuals and categories are conveyed as geometric distances. In contrast to more mainstream statistical techniques in social science, MCA is not a hypothesis testing method, as the goal is not to isolate effects of variables but to inductively gain insight into their configurations and homologies.

A two-way application of MCA is used to investigate structural similarities between symbolic and objective spaces, as has been proposed by Rosenlund (2000; 2009) and applied by several other researchers (De Keere, 2018a; Flemmen, 2014; Harrits, 2013) . This entails that two separate spaces are being created – in this case, one moral, and one for social classes – and compared. This comparison is carried out by plotting, as passive or supplementary variables, the attributes of one space of social classes into a diagram that is constructed based on moral indicators of the other field and vice versa.

4. Analysis

4.1. Step 1: Constructing the moral space

The answers to the eight dilemmas were included in an MCA, yielding a multidimensional moral space (see Tables 1 and 2 for an overview of the dilemmas and solutions). As the rate of the third dimensions drops with about 6%, only the two highest dimensions

Table 3
Multiple Correspondence Analysis - moral space: eigenvalues, raw and modified rates.

	Axis 1	Axis 2
Eigenvalue (λ)	0.234	0.189
Raw rates of inertia	7.7%	6.2%
Benzécri's modified rates	39,7%	17.9%
Percentage of contributions per response category		
Egalitarian	9.5%	**33.7%**
Entrepreneurial	16.2%	**34.4%**
Institutional	**35.6%**	12.4%
Fatalistic	**38.7%**	19.5%
N: 1521		

were retained (modified rates of 40% and 18%, see Table 3 and Figure 8 in Appendix A). The contribution of the different worldviews shows that the first axis, which is clearly the predominant moral dimension, mainly pits institutional answers against fatalistic ones (see Table 3). The second axis is less determining but still moderately strong and contrasts egalitarian options with entrepreneurial

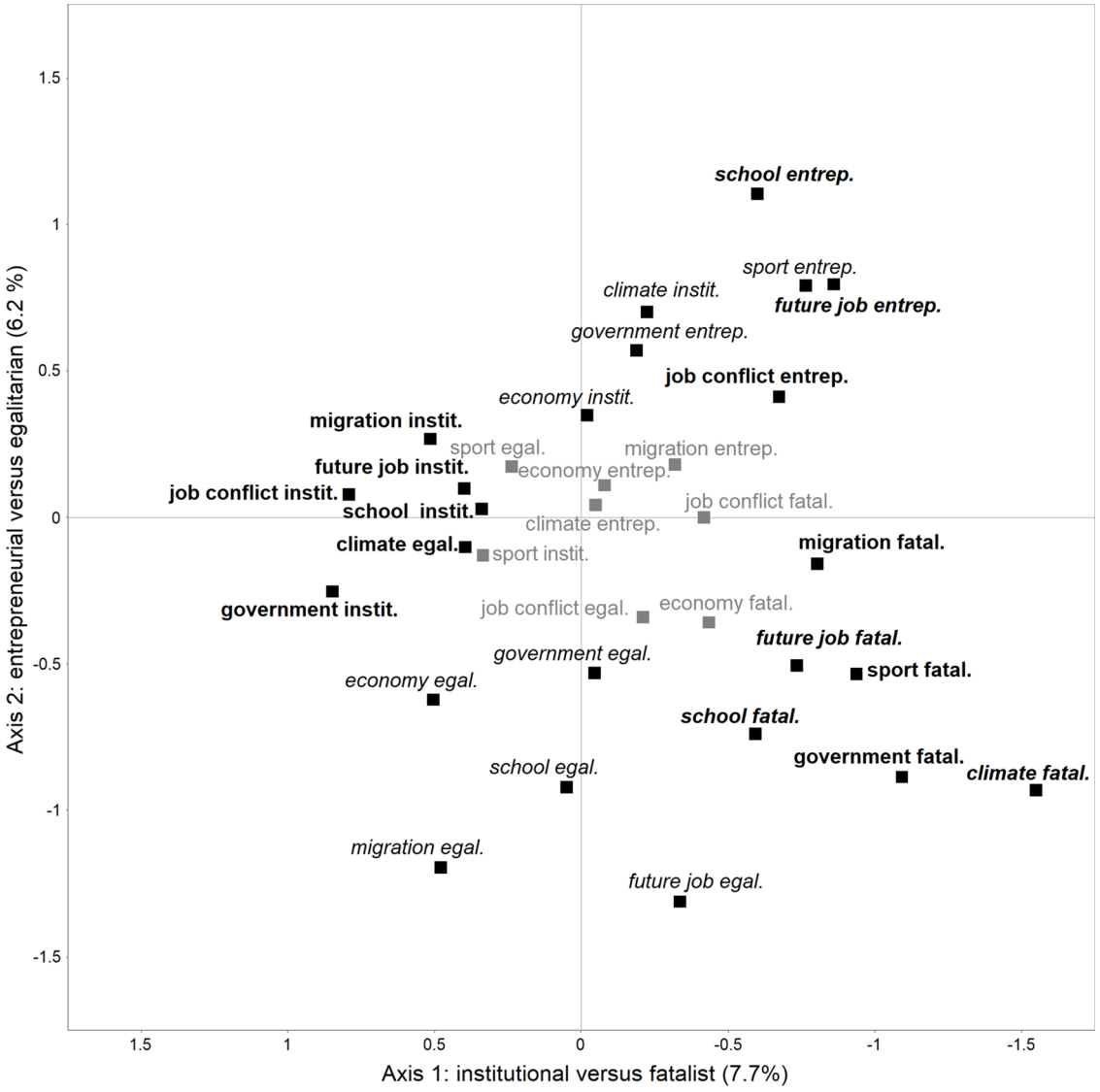

Fig. 2. Explaining points for axes 1 and 2. Contributions higher than average on axes 1 and 2 are indicated by bold and italics respectively. Percentages refer to raw rates of inertia.

ones (see Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix B for detailed information about the categories).

Fig. 2 (for the cloud of individuals, see Figure 8 in Appendix A) shows in bold type all response categories that load above average on the institutional-fatalism dimension (Axis 1); the modalities that determine the egalitarian-entrepreneurial dimension most highly (Axis 2) are shown in italics (some are in both, whereas all others are gray). The solutions to dilemmas appear to cluster in correspondence with the worldviews to which they are related. At the top of the map, one mainly finds the entrepreneurial options. High on this axis we can find the items that point to a competitive view on work, sports and schooling.

On the opposite, lower part of the map, we mainly find egalitarian solutions. Here, respondents have a bottom-up view, based on solidarity, to solving the economic or migration crisis, but also personal decisions are framed in a collectivist perspective. In many ways, this vertical dimension echoes the traditional political economic fault line between liberalism and socialism (author deleted). Even though this axis is easily interpretable and shows consistency, it is less distinctive than the horizontal one. Moreover, also noticeable is that two of the entrepreneurial items contribute to the horizontal axis, indicating that there is some overlap between entrepreneurialism and fatalism.

Looking at the horizontal positioning of the categories, one discovers that the institutional solutions are predominantly situated on the left side of the map. When it comes to making decisions regarding schooling, job-related problems or choosing a profession, respondents on this side share a moral disposition that leads them to primarily value options that entail therapeutic and institutional-oriented solutions. However, we notice that this is mainly the case for the dilemmas concerning everyday life. The categories relating to societal issues are, on the other hand, positioned relatively high up the vertical axis and also contribute to this second dimension. This means that some moral alliance seems to be possible between institutional and entrepreneurial worldviews, as has already been theoretically argued by Foucauldian scholars of governmentality (e.g., Rose, 1999).

On the right-hand side of the space, mainly the fatalist items can be found. The respondents here are drawn to options that emphasize both low agency and collective support, such as government should never interfere and the migration crisis cannot be solved "without closing borders." Both views find political resonance in a right-wing, populist discourse (De Keere, 2018a). However, this moral worldview does not only pertain to societal issues, but also manifests itself in people's reactions to everyday dilemmas such as choosing a hobby or school for a child.

Finally, when looking at the whole structure of the moral space, although there is clear consistency in the way responses cluster, the configuration does not replicate the two dimensions of control as theoretically suggested. We would expect fatalists to be positioned wholly opposite to egalitarians and institutionalists and furthest away from the entrepreneurial types, yet the opposite seems true. This demonstrates that we should not expect a one-on-one relationship between theoretical classifications and the way in which moral frameworks manifest themselves in society, as that would involve committing a fallacy of the rule. But, if not the content of the worldviews, what does determine the structure of the moral spaces? To answer this question, we need to look at the characteristics of the carriers of the different worldviews.

4.2. Step 2: Constructing the space of social classes

To examine the claim that a structural similarity exists between objective positions and moral position-taking, a social space that acknowledges variations in both economic and cultural capital – as originally devised by Bourdieu (2010) – needs to be constructed. To do so, 10 socioeconomic variables were included in an MCA (see Appendix B, Tables 10 and 11 for details of all indicators).

The estimation of the objective cultural position is based on the educational level of the respondents and their fathers, combined with two measures pertaining to their cultural upbringing as a child (i.e., Did you ever visit museums/theaters during your childhood?). Economic capital is measured based on rudimentary variables such as family income, the length of time one is or has been unemployed, the amount of money savable monthly, home ownership (with or without a mortgage) or home rental. In addition to these indicators, one's occupational status and employment sector were also included.

An MCA based on these indicators yields a two-dimensional social space (see Table 4). The first and strongest axis represents the total capital volume or the total amount of resources a respondent possesses (modified rate 52%). The second but weaker axis reflects the differences in capital composition, differentiating those whose overall amount of cultural capital exceeds their economic capital from respondents whose social positions are primarily determined by their economic assets (modified rate 12%).

By intersecting these two axes, it is possible to reconstruct the social space and use the scores on these axes as coordinates for the respondents and the separate categories. Figs. 3 and 4, which map the modalities that contribute above averagely to the two capital dimensions, depict a configuration that displays a strong similarity to that of the space of social classes, as advanced by Bourdieu. On the left-hand side, we can see the respondents who rely primarily on their cultural resources, while those on the right-hand side are more secure in financial and material resources. Moreover, the modalities spread out at the top of the map indicate an intensification

Table 4
Multiple Correspondence Analysis – field of social classes, eigenvalues (raw and modified).

	Axis 1	Axis 2
Eigenvalue (λ)	0.310	0.192
Raw rates of inertia	7.8%	4.8%
Benzécri's modified rates	52,05%	12,1%
N: 1521		

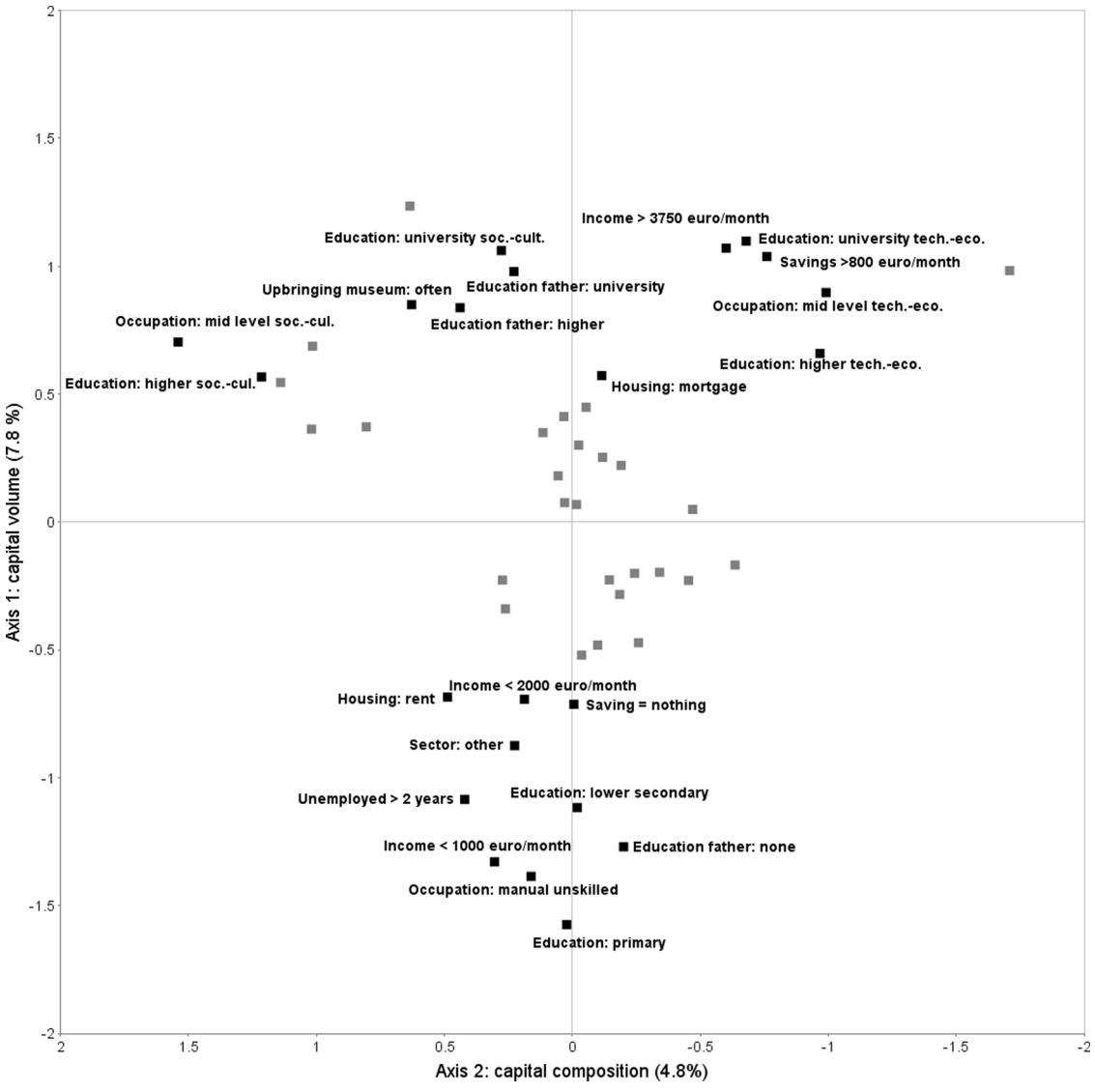

Fig. 3. Explaining points for axis 1 (vertical, capital volume). Percentages refer to raw rates of inertia (variance accounted for).

of the division of capital composition when the capital volume increases.

Fig. 5 then shows how this space can be used to create a general class taxonomy by dividing the cloud of individuals, both horizontally as vertically, into three equal groups. In this manner, we can conceive of nine class fractions that represent the variations in capital volume and composition (for a similar approach, see Harrits, 2013; Flemmen, 2014; Rosenlund, 2000, 2009).

4.3. Step 3: Homology of spaces

The final step is to investigate whether a structural similarity exists between the space of social positions, as operationalized above, and moral position-taking. First, the nine social classes (see Fig. 5) will be projected as passive or supplementary variables onto a grid that was produced during step 1 based on the responses to the dilemmas (see Fig. 2). This is then reversed by placing the moral categories into the matrix of socioeconomic variables created during step 2. The structure of the two separately designed spaces are then compared.

The result of the first part of this test of homology is in Fig. 6, showing that the class structure is largely preserved, although tilted to the left. When considering the rule of thumb that a distance of around 0.5 SD is considered notable and above 1 SD as large (Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010:46), one can discern that most categories are relatively far apart from each other (to assess whether they are significantly associated with the dimensions, see the T-tests in Table 12 of Appendix B).

Concentrating on the separate classes, this figure shows that the middle-class fractions are positioned close to the center of the figure, possessing the most indistinct moral positions. This is surprising in light of research on political voting patterns and attitudes

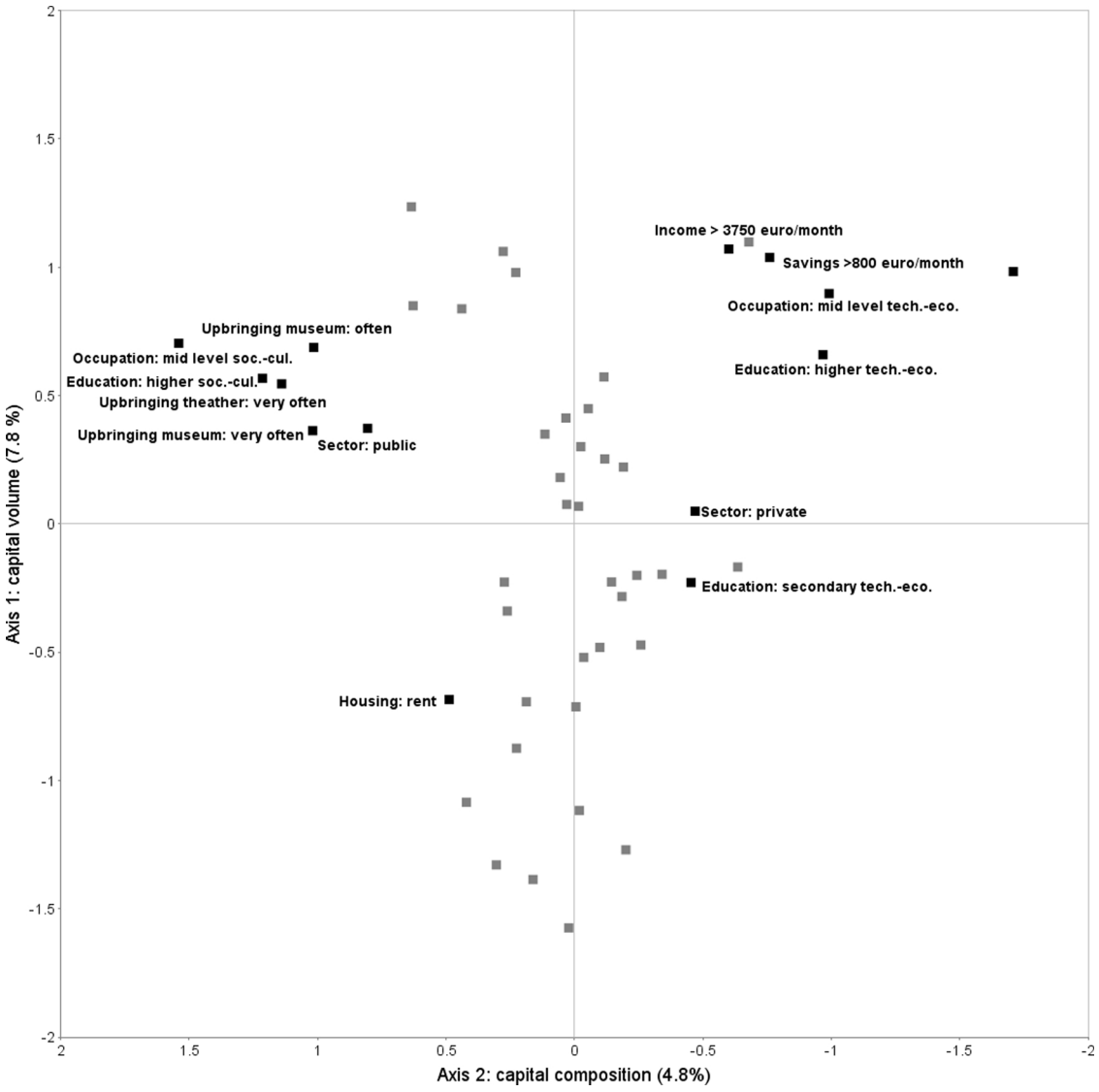

Fig. 4. Explaining points for axis 2 (horizanotal, capital composition). Percentages refer to raw rates of inertia (variance accounted for).

that shows strong disparities between the middle classes (De Keere, 2018a; Flemmen, 2014; De Keere, 2018a). However, it does support the theses of scholars such as Goldthorpe (1982) and Boltanski (1987) that the most conformist members of society, when it comes to beliefs and attitudes, will always be found among the middle classes. As Goldthorpe (1982) argued, the promise of upward mobility and the specific character of a "service contract" based on mutual trust between employee and employer, which are true of most of the middle class (except for some self-employed), make them conservative and willing to protect the current state of affairs.

The higher volume categories, on the other hand, are positioned more discerningly. Especially the cultural and economic fractions of the dominant class diverge from each other more clearly. On the entrepreneurial side of the map, one finds the economic higher and middle fractions. This means that people with more economic resources, who own property and work in the private sector, are characterized by their entrepreneurial dispositions. From their point of view, the more comfortable economic position they hold is not unjustified as their moral worldview values competition and self-reliance. The higher cultural fractions, on the other hand, were most inclined to opt for institutional responses. This is again unsurprising as many of them work for public institutions (therapy, teaching, health and so forth) and derive their status from this. Hence, their worldview actually legitimizes their social position and allows them to derive a sense of dignity from it.

The three classes possessing the lowest amount of capital are positioned in between the two opposite poles of egalitarianism and fatalism. This corroborates research demonstrating that egalitarianism, traditionally seen as characteristic of the working classes, is often accompanied by "dismissive" attitudes such as distrust, relative deprivation and a preference for radical politics (De Keere, 2018a; Elchardus & De Keere, 2013). All these attitudes share a dystopian, anti-establishment tone that is emblematic of a fatalistic worldview. The logic behind dominated classes supporting fatalism is that they do not really benefit from the "rules of society" and

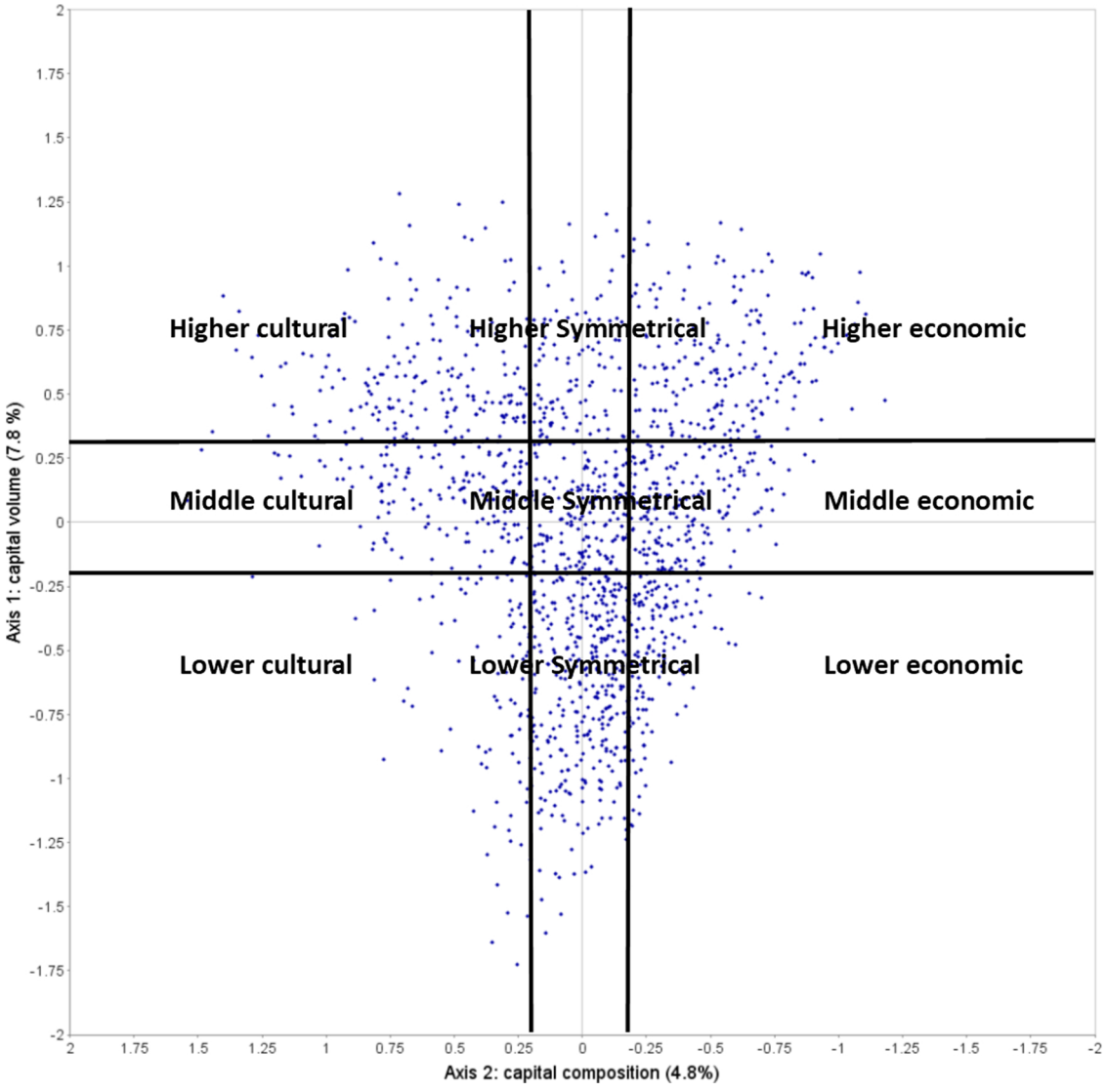

Fig. 5. Constructing nine class fractions by slicing the cloud of individuals of the space of social classes.

thus do not feel inclined to abide by them but are "aware, resentful and angered by judgement and devaluation" (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012:487). Lacking the means to defend their interests, they become excluded from society's "game," resulting in denouncing the conventions of that society (Merton, 1938). In doing so, dominated classes depersonalize their precarious trajectory and try to dodge blame and stigma coming from others.

Although in many ways the opposite of fatalism, egalitarianism seems to be equally salient among some of the most deprived fractions of society, i.e., lower cultural and symmetrical classes. Opting for bottom-up solutions is actually an opposite way of depersonalizing one's precarious situation. By falling back on the group one belongs to and seeing strength in its collectivity, people can gain a sense of self-worth, which they would lose if they individualized their life trajectories.

Yet, in contrast to previous studies, this analysis reveals that capital compositions seem to play a role for the more dominated fractions as well. Although all fractions can be found on the fatalist side of the first axis, they do differ clearly on the second axis (about 0.6 SD). Whereas egalitarianism is mainly supported by the dominated fractions with relatively higher levels of cultural capital, the lower economic fractions, on the other hand, seem to combine fatalism with more entrepreneurial dispositions.

Finally, we can see that all the economic fractions are positioned relatively close to one another on the entrepreneurial pole of the axis (distance less than 0.2 SD), while the cultural classes, both high and low, are positioned much further away from each other on both dimensions (almost 0.8 SD and 0.5 SD on axes 1 and 2, respectively). As far as morality is concerned, we can thus see that a coalition between cultural fractions is less likely than among the economic classes.

To close the analytical circle, in Fig. 7 we project the responses to the dilemmas as supplementary variables onto the space of social classes. We can immediately see that the positions are less distinct. Nonetheless, especially by projecting the two axes onto the

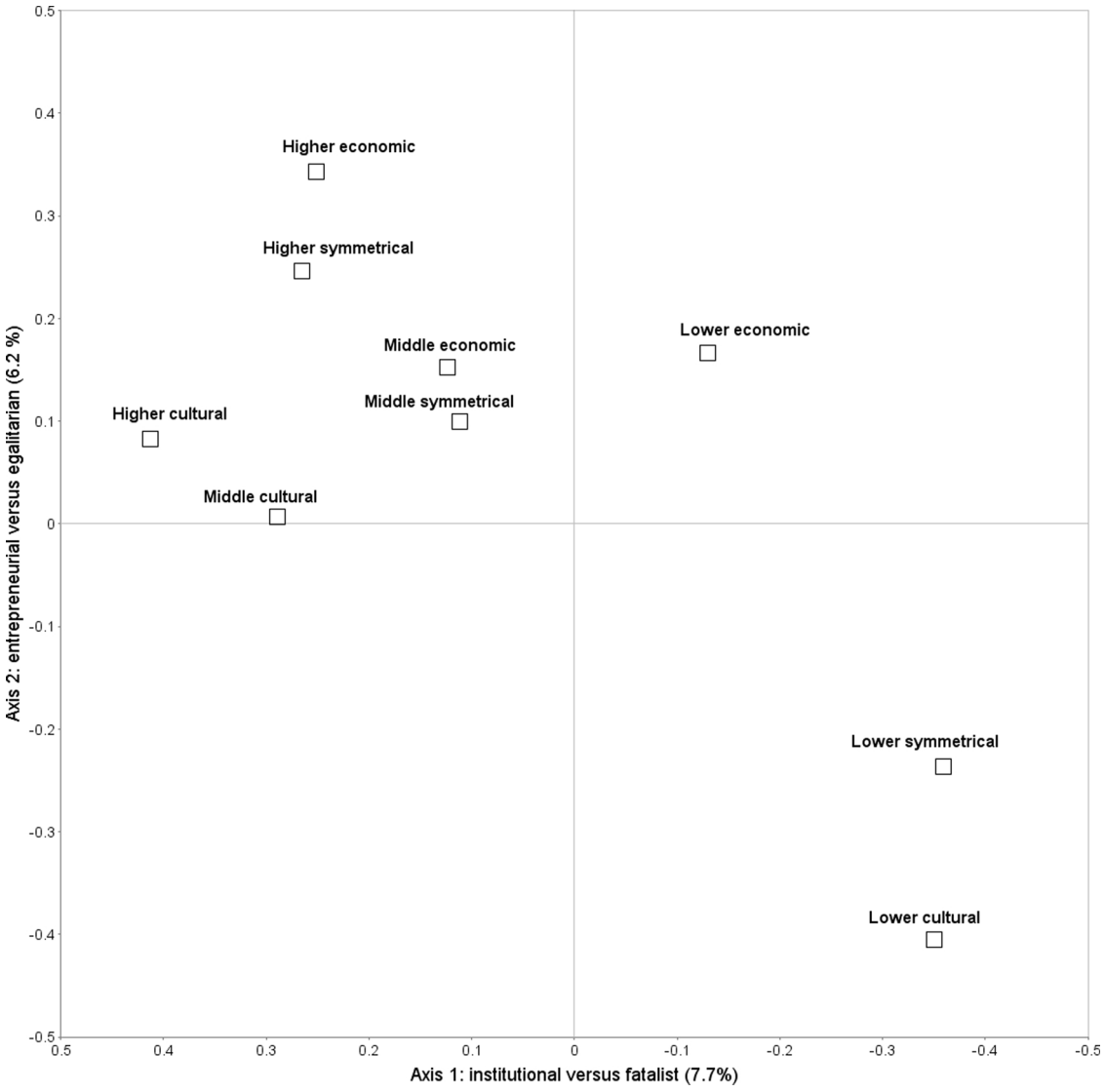

Fig. 6. Supplementary variables: class fractions projected onto the moral space.

maps, we can still see a reproduction of the structure of the moral space.

Most of the institutional answers are concentrated in the upper left or cultural quadrant. The entrepreneurial options are mainly on the right-hand or economic side of the map. The egalitarian options, however, are more scattered, though predominantly on the left-hand or cultural side of the map, especially when it comes to solving the dilemma of migration. Fatalist options, finally, are mainly in the lowest region of the map.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Consistency, homology and middle-class drifters

The analysis yields two main conclusions. First, based on the vignette questions, we can construct a two-dimensional moral space that contains four distinguishable worldviews (institutional, entrepreneurial, egalitarian and fatalist). Although the vignettes used pertain to completely different issues (from choosing a school to solving climate change), there is a moral consistency in the way people view both public and private dilemmas, corresponding to these four worldviews. Second, and related directly to the first point, is that a homology exists between the space of objective positions and subjective moral position-taking. Hence, we learn that the configuration of different moral positions mirrors the socioeconomic structure, both in terms of capital volume and composition. Moreover, this does not only apply to higher class fractions; the dominated classes also morally distinguish themselves depending on the type of capital on which they rely. Importantly, there is a two-way dynamic here. People tend toward specific moral positions, not

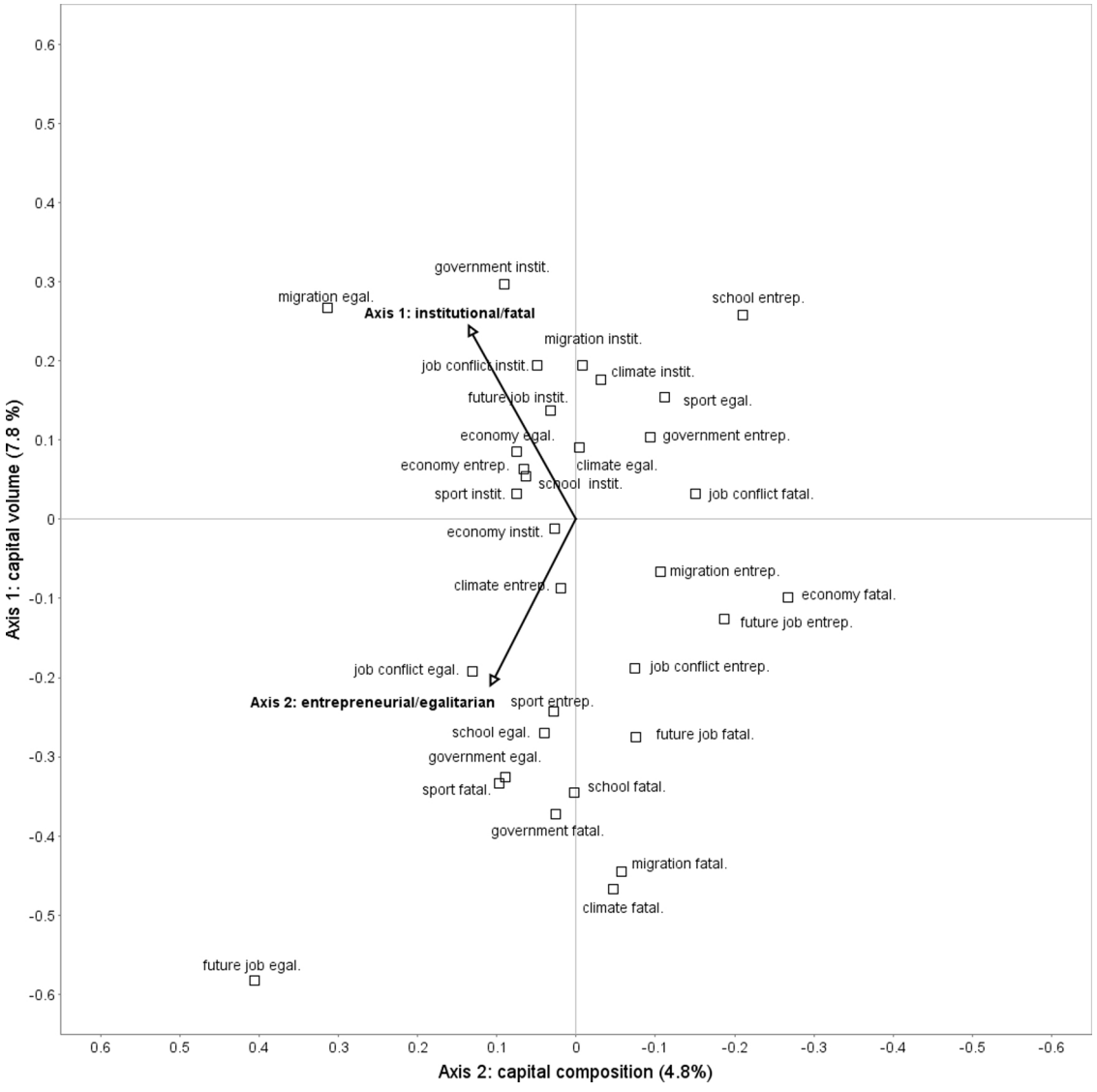

Fig. 7. Supplementary variables: responses to the dilemmas projected onto the space of social classes.

only because it corresponds to their moral education and justifies their social position, but also because it serves as a status marker that allows them to distance themselves from other class fractions. Hence, we should break away from substantialist perspectives of morality that try to investigate values as self-subsistent entities while presupposing a unidirectional causal relationship between morality and behavior or conflict.

Moreover, it is striking that moral ambiguity is most prevalent among the middle classes. The distances between the middle-class fractions were by far the smallest and they were also positioned closest to the origin of the two axes, meaning that they have more indefinite and careful moral tendencies. According to Bourdieu, the petit-bourgeoisie is supposed to be characterized by moral rigorism as "they do not only have the morality of their interest, as everyone; they also have an interest in morality" (Bourdieu, 2014:245). Hence, they are the social class most prone to expressing their morality. However, we can see here that this preoccupation with morality actually translates into ambiguous moral position-taking. It is probable that their tendency to safeguard the status quo (Boltanski, 1987; Goldthorpe, 1982) and anxiety about accidently exhibiting allodoxic responses (Bourdieu, 2010) turn them into moral drifters, easily drawn to different frameworks. This claim, however, calls for more in-depth research on the moral culture of the middle class.

5.2. Symbolic power?

The results of the analysis confirm much of Bourdieu's reading of a struggle over morality as directly tied to the societal game for symbolic power and resources. Symbolic struggles, he writes, are about "the power to produce and to impose the legitimate vision of

the world" (1989:20). It is clear that entrepreneurialism, with its emphasis on self-responsibility, and institutionalism, which relies on a therapeutic view of individual development, are worldviews that carry more symbolic weight in contemporary society. As scholars of state power and governmentality have demonstrated, contemporary forms of social control seem to rely strongly on a neoliberal framework that combines an ethic of self-responsibility with the therapeutization of social problems (Rose, 1999; Wacquant, 2009). Without a doubt the state plays a crucial role in establishing "moral conformism" (Bourdieu, 2000:177), primarily benefiting the upper strata of society. Although the distinction between institutionalism and entrepreneurialism mirrors the divide between the cultural and economic classes, the fact that an "organic solidarity" (Bourdieu, 1996:386) exists between these different fractions of the field of power actually allows for a moral symbiosis of these worldviews.

However, this is only part of the picture. Bourdieu's idea of the game of moral recognition "as a symbolic power struggle of all against all" (2000:238) describes morality as merely an instrument in a competition over domination. In the end, for Bourdieu, self-worth can only be achieved through victories in the battle over symbolic capital, leading to esteem or honor (Pellandini-Simányi, 2014). This suggests that being dispossessed of symbolic capital makes one not only be misrecognized but even powerless and passive. But, as Skeggs has argued, this model does not fully allow us to understand how personhood is formed by those who do not have legitimate resources to do so (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012; Skeggs, 2011). Self-worth, however, is also constructed through resistance. As such, recognition, as Bourdieu seems to suggest, is not only granted to us by others in the form of honor, esteem or glory, but personal dignity can be achieved by resisting symbolic power as well. As we can learn from Douglas, through our worldviews, we produce alternative cosmologies that make our everyday experience appear less hazardous and confusing and, therefore, more tolerable. As she argues, worldviews are "like lenses which bring into focus and make *bearable* the manifold challenge of experience" (Douglas 1970:158, italics added). Hence, through these worldviews, people can actually shield themselves from dominant moral frameworks that potentially threaten their sense of self-worth. As Skeggs and Loveday have succinctly summarized: "They try to make life liveable with a different value compass" (2012:487).

As the empirical results show, a substantial part of the research population does not abide by the worldviews of the dominant classes but their ethical disposition seems to lead them toward resisting moral conformism. Both egalitarianism and fatalism entail an opposition to the symbolic power that institutionalism and entrepreneurialism possess in neoliberal societies. Opting for fatalist solutions to dilemmas is a response, though often a "caged" one, to the moral conformity of society. By denouncing the rules of that society, one excludes oneself from the societal "game" and is thus also exempt from the responsibility to "play well" (e.g., "I did not lose, because the game is rigged anyway"). It is not illogical for those in dominated positions to have "adaptive preferences" and "refuse what they are refused" (Sayer, 2011:134). Anti-establishment and anomic social sentiments, strongly tied to a fatalistic worldview, are a counter-reaction to being dispossessed of symbolic power and not a passive acceptance of it. But, the working-class tendency to value equality, collectivity and group solidarity, as the work of Lamont (2000) has demonstrated, is also a strong response to rising self-responsibility and an attempt to regain dignity in post-industrial society.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2019.101415.

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