Andreja Trdina / Dejan Jontes

# Travel and distinction: The cultural currency of mobility in post-egalitarian context

## Abstract

The article focuses on tourist practices in the context of social differentiation and distinction. It examines the cultural significance of travel as classification practice and thereby its role in constituting and reproducing class hierarchies in contemporary globalized (or de-territorialized) world, characterized with increasing transnational patterns of communication and mobility. Using the case of Slovenia, characterized by post-egalitarian sentiment, it argues that class today is constituted also through class-specific and intersecting modes of travelling and dwelling. The results show that in post-egalitarian Slovenia social groups reproduce their status also by monopolizing distinct travel practices and travel aspirations, while on the other hand many are limited or constrained in such (voluntary) mobilities. We thus demonstrate that class matters for how people orient themselves as regards travel and (physical/geographical) mobility, although in the results only the fundamental tension between the (global) mobility of the advantaged and the (local) fixedness of the non-privileged that is structured by cultural capital/class position is recognized, along with the highest travel aspirations of those in the middle of social structure. In general, the paper calls for accounts on mobility in relation to class identity formation to be sensitive to both its symbolic and material aspects.

**Key words:** tourism; travel; social class; cultural capital; distinction; post-egalitarian; Slovenia

## Introduction

Against the backdrop of existing and ever growing social divisions, exploring relations of class and increasing (un)limited mobility in the context of travel seems to be of particular importance, and crucially contributing to current discussions in critical tourism studies. From this perspective the paper investigates the processes through which tourism practices are mobilized in boundary work in Slovenian society with prevalent post-egalitarian sentiment. It broadly addresses the ways in which social boundaries are affirmed and contested in the micropolitics of everyday interactions and, in particular, it furthers understanding of tourist practices in the context of social differentiation. In this regard travel is understood as an investment made in forming class identities. The paper does not, however, offer another attempt to formulate a typology of travelers or modes of traveling. As Franklin and Crang (2001, p. 6) appropriately noticed, tourist studies "has been prey to coping with an expanding field through ever finer subdivisions and more elaborate typologies as though these might eventually form a classificatory grid in which tourism could be defined and regulated".

Our discussion aims to complement the "mobility paradigm"[1] (Sheller & Urry, 2004; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Coles, Hall & Duval 2009; Hannam, 2009; Cohen & Cohen, 2012) with class based analysis and Bourdieusian approach, indicating still the structuring power of the social in forming differences in life opportunities and human experience. That is to say, we are more interested in the role of mobility

**Andreja Trdina**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor, Brežice, Slovenia;
Email: andreja.trdina@um.si

**Dejan Jontes**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia;
Email: dejan.jontes@fdv.uni-lj.si

or, to be more specific, tourist practices as classificatory practices in the process of consolidation and reproduction of class hierarchies. We understand classificatory practices as symbolically demarcating social classes and as such constitutive for class boundaries. In Bourdieu's words (1984/2010, p. 485): "A class is defined as much by its *being-perceived* as by its *being*, by its consumption – which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic – as much as by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that the latter governs the former)". In contemporary societies social classes are much more intertwined as in the past with increasingly more fluid boundaries and that is one of the main reasons that specific practices function less clearly as indicators of individual's social position. Although it might seem that the process of "cultural declassification" is taking place in plural societies (DiMaggio, 1987, p. 452) and with it the connections between class positions and cultural practices are becoming weaker and less clear, we argue that these trends would be better understood within the framework of greater semantic complexity and subtlety of cultural distinctions as class distinctions which are elusive at times but are actually the result of their close interconnectedness. It thus seems that social classes only change the strategies of symbolic differentiation in times when differentiation between high and popular culture is not so clear and when the mere exclusion on the basis of taste is not functional in achieving distinction anymore. But cultural distinctions in Slovenian context still function as class demarcations although in a different, more sophisticated way than in the French society in 1960s, which Bourdieu famously studied (Luthar & Kurdija, 2011). What has changed are the rules that govern the organization of symbolic boundaries between social classes and how travel functions within these new rules is of the interest of this paper.

Rojek and Urry (1997) argue that one of many responses to the problematic character of tourism is to consider tourism as a set of economic activities only, thus ignoring the important issues of tourism as social and cultural practice. "Questions of taste, fashion and identity would thus be viewed as exogenous to the system" (Rojek & Urry, 1997, p. 2), and therefore so far often overlooked in tourism research. Consequently, the paper highlights the processes of transposing distinctions into the arena of everyday life, where vacations, mobility in general or merely travel ambitions play an evenly important role as a source of distinction and symbolic differentiation in society. In order to comprehend how cultural capital is reorganizing and how cultural practices remain constitutive for class boundaries in changed conditions of contemporary societies even more focus should be put on researching tastes in everyday life, therefore on analysis of less central lifestyle choices such as tourist practices which might at first glance seem marginal in terms of symbolic differentiation.

According to our previous research (Trdina & Vezovnik, 2014; Jontes, 2014; Jontes & Trdina, 2018) the main differences in Slovenian context are established on the line between global and local culture (or in other words within the differentiated popular culture) and are not based primarily on the high culture/popular culture dichotomy. The latter has proven to be less important. Differentiated consumption of (local and global) popular culture has become primary source of strategies of symbolic distinction in Slovenia. It distinguishes the practices of those whose taste and practices are primarily grounded in domestic, local environment and home, from those who actively and cosmopolitanly position themselves in formal public culture and attach themselves to global urban environment. In other words, association to global culture can be understood as one of the main sources of distinction in Slovenia.

We would like to argue that transnationalized nature of classification struggles among social classes becomes even more evident in post-egalitarian context of post-socialist societies, that is in contexts where the value of different capitals has been questioned and re-evaluated due to the profound political, economic and social transformations accompanying the transition. In line of our argument

Cvetičanin and Popescu (2011, p. 445) also hypothesize that in societies that were at some point in history ''Westernized'' – either through colonization (e.g., India) or through the activities of their own elites (e.g., Serbia, Russia) – there is a constant struggle between global and local culture for the status of legitimate culture. In these societies this tension is more important than the one between popular culture and high culture. They argue that "one cannot take for granted an equation between high culture and legitimate culture; rather, one has to identify legitimate culture after studying the field dynamics that are specific to particular national contexts" (Cvetičanin & Popescu, 2011).

Paper draws on the data from the empirical research project *Media consumption, social class and cultural stratification* carried out with the help of a questionnaire administered to 820 residents of Ljubljana and Maribor, two largest cities in Slovenia in 2011 (Luthar et al., 2011). Class was operationalized with the help of Goldthorpe's class schema which we according to our sample of population reduced to four categories: lower class (43.2 % of the sample), middle class (20.2 % of the sample), upper middle class (22.7 % of the sample), and upper class (13.9 % of the sample). Education as the basic indicator of institutionalized cultural capital correlates highly with this class schema (correlation coefficient 0.65). With this article we aim to contribute to the current debates in cultural class studies on one hand and in tourism studies on the other in two ways in particular. We explain how class distinction strategies are becoming more and more transnationalized and contribute to travel studies by highlighting the social mechanisms that structure one's travel choices, which are in turn used in symbolic class struggles.

## "Tourist angst": class and cultural differentiation in travel

According to Jansson (2016, pp. 422–423) one of the key shift of late modern phase of the globalization process is the transformation of class structure, evident first in the emergence of new influential class fractions with their transnational character, reflected both in their expanding symbolic competencies and extended mode of mobility and interaction and, second, in the conditions of older (industrial and political) elite groups being challenged by instant communication and global networking that demand higher degree of reflexivity, mobility and networking. Under such conditions of transnational social fields mobility itself, considered in terms of "constellations of movements, representations, and practices" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 29), is becoming particularly salient, bestowed with intense symbolic significance and thus implicated in reproduction of class hierarchies and power relations.[2]

Bottero (2004, p. 989) argues that although "the failure of class identities" today poses a problem for class analysis, the processes of dis-identification (denials of class) do not undermine class theory, since they are essentially the result of class processes as such and thus the evidence of class itself, albeit class in transformed state. For this reason, Bottero further argues for a new direction in class analysis, that is for a focus on "class as an individualized process of hierarchical distinction" (Bottero, 2004, p. 991). Following Bourdieu's legacy, class today has to be discovered in the ways in which individuals differentiate themselves through cultural tastes and practices, so the emphasis of renewed class analysis (at times also called "cultural class approach") is on how specific cultural practices are bound up in the reproduction of social hierarchies and inequality. Or, as argued by Devine and Savage:

> What establishes the relationship between class and culture (i.e., what establishes the classed nature of cultural dispositions) is not the existence of class consciousness /…/. Rather, the relationship is to be found in the way in which cultural outlooks are implicated in mode of exclusion and/or domination (2000, p. 195).

Rather than class identity, the classed nature of particular cultural practices is a central feature of contemporary class relations. If today examining class distinctions needs to be extended from the

traditional high vs. popular culture dichotomy to the field of everyday life, at the same time this does not mean that we should consider differentiations in the field of legitimate culture and everyday life as empirically unrelated. On the contrary, they are likely to work in homology and are both important in creating social distance/proximity between individuals. The stores we choose for our shopping or the destinations we choose for our holiday are in terms of class distinction equally important as the movies we like or the music we choose to reject. That the generative schemes of habitus can be transferred to other fields of consumption is one of the main Bourdieu's arguments. This means that the principles that generate and guide individual's taste for example in the field of literature also guide his or her preferences in other cultural fields.

According to Bourdieu, this mechanism manifests itself in systematicity that can be traced in all aspects of individual's taste:

> *Systematicity is found in the opus operatum because it is in the modus operandi. It is found in all the properties – and property – with which individuals and groups surround themselves, houses, furniture, paintings, books, cars, spirits, cigarettes, perfume, clothes, and in the practices in which they manifest their distinction, sports, games, entertainments, only because it is in the synthetic unity of the habitus, the unifying, generative principle of all practices* (1984/2010, p. 169).

With the argument about homology between social positions and spaces of lifestyles, Bourdieu claims that individuals that share relatively homogenous conditions of existence also share a certain lifestyle. He emphasizes (1984/2010, p. 507) that the questionnaire in Distinction "was based on the hypothesis of the unity of tastes". The predisposition here is that social classes can be differentiated according to different, but unified and internally coherent sets of tastes. Yet, classification struggles today are based on subtler status competitions in the narrower social space and on weakly organized and especially informal interaction rituals of everyday life that constantly reproduce and consolidate the symbolic boundaries between social groups. And to understand the semantics of contemporary symbolic boundary-making basically means to understand the institutionalization of new frames of inequality.

As shown in the study of Bennett et al. (2009, p. 250) cultural capital is not solely organised within bounded national fields, as different kinds of transnational identifications are becoming key components of cultural capital. Whereas most studies in cultural sociology has predominantly focus on cultural practices and their relations to class as organised within national fields, we suggest looking at the transnational cultural identifications and its role in boundary-drawing strategies that constitute class differences. Especially mobility and travel broadens the opportunities for accumulating cosmopolitan capital primarily, that is a sub-form of cultural capital, defined by Jansson (2016, p. 423) as "embodied capabilities and attributes, such as language skills, international experiences and educational degrees, that make social agents better equipped to navigate the world geographically, socially and culturally."

Redfoot (1984) hierarchizes tourist experiences and suggests four orders in what he calls a typology of "touristic realities", where he distinguishes among 1) the first-order or "true tourist", 2) the second-order or "Angst-ridden tourist", 3) the third-order or "anthropological tourist" and 4) the fourth-order or "spiritual tourist". Redfoot (1984, p. 296) argues that a touristic quest for authenticity requires the advance of specific strategies in order to see the things one went to see while avoiding other "mere" tourists.[3] Efforts to assert the difference from being a mere tourist can thus be understood as an important form of boundary-work. According to Fussell:

> *"Tourist angst like this is distinctly a class signal. Only the upper elements of the middle classes suffer from it. /…/ the working class finds nothing shameful about tourism. It is the middle class that has read and*

*heard just enough to sense that being a tourist is somehow offensive and scorned by an imagined upper class which it hopes to emulate and, if possible, be mistaken for."* (1980, p. 49).

In a classical study, Lash and Urry (1994, p. 252) consider the train passenger, a car driver and jet plane passenger as "emblematic of modernity", arguing that in many ways the modern world is inconceivable without these new forms of long-distance transportation and travel. Yet, they argue, as important as new transportation technologies have been, it is not the technology that makes tourism culturally emblematic of modern world, but the "social organization of travel" (Lash & Urry, 1994, p. 253). Following from this, Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) in their critical discourse analysis of airline frequent-flyer programs illustrate how long-standing divisions of distinction, taste and luxury are re-embedded in super-elite travel and how this recontextualizes broader social divisions. As such, the fabrication of airline loyalty programs and business-class services with their elite hierarchies of passenger classes and reworking of symbolic capital resonates far beyond the confines of the cabin and the tourism industry itself (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011, p. 101).

It seems that transnational strategies of distinction are gaining the importance in non-Western countries in particular, since they are "informed by historically and contextually specific imaginaries of 'the West' and individual affinities cultivated throughout people's lives", as argued by Altan-Olcay and Balta (2016, p. 1118).[4] In this way they stress that these contextual specificities reflect the historical uncertainties of postcolonial contexts and disclose that forms of capital that define class positions are socially-historically specific (Altan-Olcay & Balta, 2016, p. 1118).

From the starting point that travel has an increasingly important symbolic role to play in social differentiation between classes in contemporary de-territorialized world, our main question which we address in the next section arises: how do social classes pursue differentiation in the field of travel and to what effect – what is then the value of travel in classification struggles in post-egalitarian[5] Slovenia?

## Boundary work: mapping travel practices and travel aspirations in social field

An important part of our everyday interactions is focused on the processes of categorization and identification (see Jenkins, 1996) with which we control the boundaries of the groups we associate with. Lamont (1992, p. 11) argues that boundary work is an intrinsic part of constituting our identity relationally as "by generating distinctions, we also signal our identity and develop a sense of security, dignity, and honor" (Lamont, 1992).

Given the uninterrupted and significant growth of international tourist arrivals worldwide in recent years, tourism became the world's third largest export category (World Tourism Organization UN-WTO, 2018). With such rise of modern global tourism and democratization of tourist practices[6] the distinction has shifted from 'what' to 'how' as class pursuits of distinctions, that is attempts to differentiate themselves from another in order to maintain social distance, has become grounded more in the modes and attitudes towards travelling than in travel as such.[7] Even though the highly stereotyped traveler/tourist distinction is indicative of a broader discussion over social differentiation in tourism, the distinctive ways in which different social classes consume tourism, as argued by Mowforth and Munt (2003, p. 126), are still vastly under-researched. In the analysis we focused on three dimensions of differentiation through travel: the extent of travelling, chosen destination, and travel aspirations in general.

## Democratization of tourism and the divide in the extent of traveling

Firstly, we examined how many times a year different social classes in Slovenia go on vacation. The results show that the extent of travelling, measured with the number of times people go on vacation in a year, clearly differentiates between the lower class and all other classes. According to the ANOVA test, the differences in means among social classes are statistically significant (Sig. 0.000). More specifically, Bonferroni Post Hoc Test shows that the mean difference is significant (sig. 0.000) between lower class (2.02) and middle class (2.42), lower class and upper middle class (2.51), and lower class and upper class (2.67).

Table 1
**How many times a year do you go on vacation?**

| (Occupational) class | N | Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Lower class | 280 | 2.02 |
| Middle class | 132 | 2.42 |
| Upper middle class | 147 | 2.51 |
| Upper class | 90 | 2.67 |
| Total | 649 | 2.30 |

Nonetheless, even lower class travel in average two times a year, what seems to support the argument on democratization of tourism. Yet, as shown, they still travel significantly less than any other class. It is thus important to note that (occupational) class does not differentiate between mobile and nonmobile individuals, instead it influences their level of mobility. It is then the extent of being mobile, not being mobile or not by itself, that solidifies the positions in the social structure.

Furthermore, as there are no statistically significant differences in number of vacations per year among middle, upper middle and upper class, this suggests that for the upper classes the ability to maintain the distinction (and their social distance) in travel practices from the middle class has become more difficult and that the mere extent of traveling (volume of vacations per year) for that purpose is not sufficient. Both middle, upper middle and upper class travel more than average (total mean 2.30), equally between two to three times a year. It is clear that the practice of traveling more than two times a year does no longer guarantee the distinction in these segments of the social space. Classification struggles seem to be based on subtler status competitions. This implies we should redirect our search for the distinction in upper classes from the extent to the modes of traveling.

## The pursuit of status: spatial separation or modes of consumption?

Secondly, we focused on the destination where respondents have been for their longest vacation in the previous year. We coded the open question into four categories: Slovenia, Croatia and the Adriatic coast (including Montenegro), Mediterranean (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia) and the last category included remaining destinations in Europe (mostly continental) and outside Europe.[8] Association between class and destination has proved to be statistically significant (Chi-Square test Sig. 0.001) and medium strong (Cramer's V 0.134).

Table 2
**Where have you been for the longest vacation last year?**

| (Occupational) class | | Slovenia | Croatia +Adriatic | Mediterra-nean | Europe+ outside Europe | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Lower class** | Count | 49 | 99 | 21 | 27 | 196 |
| | % within class | 25.0% | 50.5% | 10.7% | 13.8% | 100.0% |

Table 2 **Continued**

| (Occupational) class | | Slovenia | Croatia +Adriatic | Mediterra-nean | Europe+ outside Europe | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Middle class** | Count | 10 | 66 | 25 | 15 | 116 |
| | % within class | 8.6% | 56.9% | 21.6% | 12.9% | 100.0% |
| **Upper middle class** | Count | 17 | 73 | 15 | 24 | 129 |
| | % within class | 13.2% | 56.6% | 11.6% | 18.6% | 100.0% |
| **Upper class** | Count | 11 | 38 | 15 | 20 | 84 |
| | % within class | 13.1% | 45.2% | 17.9% | 23.8% | 100.0% |
| **Total** | Count | 87 | 276 | 76 | 86 | 525 |
| | % within class | 16.6% | 52.6% | 14.5% | 16.4% | 100.0% |

Ahmad (2014, p. 491) warns against investigating why people travel to certain destinations only through psychological and individualistic perspectives, motivation theories, values and lifestyles or sociodemographic variables. He argues that tourism consumption practices cannot be understood without understanding the underlying social processes. He suggests operationalizing habitus as choices tourists make in the space of available holidays, destinations, hotels, cuisine, and other tourism services. "To achieve distinction in their consumption practices, agents (tourists), together with their respective schema of habitus, draw on different types of capital" (Ahmad, 2014, p. 493). On the other hand, Bourdieu's remark that "those who are deprived of capital are either physically or symbolically held at a distance from goods that are the rarest socially" (1999, p. 127) is very important here.

In our case the findings most of all indicate that type of holiday/travel is probably more important in terms of distinction than the destination itself. While vacations in Croatia and the Adriatic are expectedly by far the most popular within all classes, few destinations are left monopolized by the upper class. Indeed, those which might have held a monopoly in the past – e.g. Mediterranean – have been encroached upon by much of a middle class encouraged by a sense to catch up. Great distances consequently no longer offer the exclusiveness as they used to. In that sense, what seems in the context of cultural stratification research more promising is to investigate not only what destinations people prefer, but how they appropriate these destinations – how they consume them and engage with them. Presumably we might find more overt (cultural) superiority in a more nuanced modes of tourism consumption, if recorded in the study, that would suggest that distinction today is predominantly achieved through embodiment (how tourists consume) and not in its objective form (what tourists consume), since a given destination as an object can be appropriated in many different ways with differences being structured along class lines (see Jarness 2015).

Yet, as demonstrated by traveling to (continental) Europe and outside Europe, that is according to the data vital and distinctive for upper middle and upper classes in particular, scarcity (as well as distinction resulted from it) still seems to be guaranteed with particular travel choices. This is not surprising, as participation in tourism in these destinations usually requires a certain level of financial resources, specific cultural knowledge and certainly also more than satisfactory foreign language skills.

On the other side, though traveling in average more than once a year the lower classes still remain rather restricted in terms of geographical area they tend to visit for their longest vacation. They most likely ground the lengthiest travel within limits of their (cultural and economic) capacities, namely into the local Slovenian destinations (25%, what is the highest share among all other classes) or into nearby regional coastal destinations (Croatia and Adriatic) tops (50%). In terms of distinction, symbolic aspect of practices or destinations is crucial. However, one should not overlook the unequal material conditions

and life chances that pre-structure the possibilities for the few and confine them for the many. It is not only the propensity, but also the capacity to appropriate, materially and symbolically, a given object (a specific travel style or particular destination) that is unequally distributed in society. Following Morley (2001, p. 427), inadequate consideration is repeatedly paid to precisely these "processes through which the forms of cultural capital with which people can refashion their identities are unequally distributed, and to the extent to which many people are still forced to live through the identities ascribed to them by others, rather than through the identities they might choose for themselves."

In the last section of our analysis we examined if and how travel as an aspiration stands apart from other forms of voluntary consumption.

## Unequally distributed travel aspirations

Lastly, class segments seem to differentiate from each other at most by their contrasting attitudes towards travel, manifested in their travel aspirations. The relationship between occupational class and travel aspirations is statistically significant (Chi-Square test Sig. 0.001) and medium strong (Cramer's V 0.163). This is demarcating class specific differences in how people in general may envision travelling as part of the "good life".

Table 3
**If you would have an extra money what would you spend it for?[9]**

| (Occupational) class | | Other | Travel | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Lower class** | Count | 202 | 79 | 281 |
| | % within class | 71.9% | 28.1% | 100.0% |
| **Middle class** | Count | 72 | 59 | 131 |
| | % within class | 55.0% | 45.0% | 100.0% |
| **Upper middle class** | Count | 82 | 66 | 148 |
| | % within class | 55.4% | 44.6% | 100.0% |
| **Upper class** | Count | 54 | 36 | 90 |
| | % within class | 60.0% | 40.0% | 100.0% |
| **Total** | Count | 410 | 240 | 650 |
| | % within class | 63.1% | 36.9% | 100.0% |

Travel is what constitutes a key part of normative conception of a good life for middle and upper middle class in particular, as their travel aspiration are the highest among all classes. It is right in the intermediate or middle positions of social space that the fuzziness or indeterminacy of the relationship between cultural practices and social positions is the greatest, according to Bourdieu (1987, p. 12). Consequently, the area that remains open for strategies of symbolic differentiation to fill this association is there also the largest. We can assume that the strategy of distinction in this area is of particular importance, and that the middle classes most strongly deal with the cultural distinctions and the profits they bring about. In relation to their high travel aspirations, travel then seems to be one of the reliable symbols of social position, a sign of social success and individual freedom. It appears that middle class and upper middle class are therefore the most aware of the politics of classification and of the value of the subjectivity, constituted through "connections with elsewhere" (Urry, 2000, p. 56).

At the lowest end of social stratification, the travel aspirations are distinctly lower than the average. More than two thirds (almost 72%) of lower-class respondents would rather spend the extra money for other things than travel. The lack of capital intensifies the experience of finitude: it chains one to a place," argues Bourdieu (1999, p. 127). And this might be considered, as our results suggest, not

only in stratification terms of movement between social strata in a given society (mobility as social phenomenon) but geographically as well (mobility as geographical phenomenon). The limitation of travel aspirations is actually a restriction that is in the operation of the class habitus repackaged/camouflaged into a preference. Namely, the habitus "continuously transforms necessities into strategies, constraints into preferences, and /…/ it generates a set of 'choices' constituting life-styles" (Bourdieu, 1984/2010, p. 171). Class habitus then encourages the choices that correspond to the conditions, of which it is the product. For the members of lower class these choices of necessity are therefore not seen as deprivation but as their own preferences.

As far as the other end of social hierarchy is concerned, travel aspirations of upper class are slightly lower than travel aspirations of middle and upper middle class. This might be to some extent understood also in the context that despite the value ascribed to global travelling (travel being a sign of social success and individual freedom) upper, otherwise and anyhow very mobile, class fractions are frequently fairly reluctant travellers. A growing body of research has acknowledged so far often unrecognized social and emotional costs involved in the privileged forms of mobility (see Jansson, 2016; Fast & Lindell, 2016). Transnational lifestyles of business elites, who lead extremely mobile working lives in particular, are proven to be accompanied by "existential anxieties involved in being away from home" as well as informed with "sedentariness and longing for local fixity," as demonstrated by Fast and Lindell (2016, p. 446). These accounts then suggest, as argued by Fast and Lindell (2016, p. 447), that we need to debunk the common preconception of the global ethos of the transnationally mobile elites and the idea of the frictionless cosmopolitan lives of the privileged. Yet, at the same time, those in affluent positions do indicate a significant comfort in moving about in various transnational settings, which implies possession of specific skills necessary to navigate in these contexts (Fast & Lindell, 2016) For that reason and regardless of the documented ambivalence, being mobile (or at least the mere opportunities to be mobile) should be considered first and foremost a privilege, a manifestation and realization of one's (cultural and economic) capital.

## Conclusion: the value of mobile lifestyles

In this paper we were able to demonstrate that class matters for how people orient themselves as regards travel and (physical/geographical) mobility in a world that has been increasingly characterized with a "process of flux that destabilizes traditional forms of place-based identity" (Morley, 2001, p. 427). Results show that in post-egalitarian Slovenia social groups reproduce their status also by monopolizing distinct travel practices and travel aspirations, while on the other hand many are limited or constrained in such (voluntary) mobilities. Still, performing distinction is complex theatre, as argued by Bennett et al. (2009, p. 256), and we should not assume that the same cultural forms will retain their classificatory value eternally. What our results recognize is only the fundamental tension between the (global) mobility of the advantaged and the (local) fixedness of the non-privileged that is structured by cultural capital/class position with the highest travel aspiration of those in the middle of social structure. This aligns with Bourdieu's argument (1987, p. 12) that (economic and cultural) capital generates utmost clear-cut differences between individuals situated at the ends of its distribution. While the upper classes are characterized by global attachments that articulate a distinctive cosmopolitan ethos and belonging beyond locality, the lower classes ground their travel practices primarily in the local/regional and bind their aspirations to the choice of necessity.

Rather than reproducing firm typologies or creating reified, immutable and highly unified patterns of class behaviour in the field of travel, our analysis is instead meant to convey loose and overlapping

tendencies. For this reason, it seems more appropriate to understand the role of classes in cultural differentiation in the way Bennett et al. (2009, p. 252) propose, as "force fields, within the parameters of which individuals very, though within limits," suggesting that nuanced individual differences in the field of travel too always oscillate around the core class patterns.

Although class remains one of the main factors structuring cultural practice, the impact of other variables should also be noticed. Class relations are always qualified or weighted by other forms of inequality. That is to say, beside social class age and gender are also very important stratification principles of taste and practices, thus an inquiry of travel practices that extends beyond class relations would be of interest to carry out. However, we follow Bourdieu (1984/2010, p. 101) in stipulating that class relations are the "fundamental determinants" of the social space, while other principles such as gender, age, nationality, place of residence etc. are "secondary characteristics", merely moderating class effects on cultural practices. Particularly, it is the volume and composition of capital that give specific form and significance to the determinations which other factors impose on practices (Bourdieu, 1984/2010, p. 101–102).

With global processes of de-traditionalization and de-territorialization of society the borders between social milieus lost traditional contours, but the very importance of establishing symbolic boundaries through everyday practices has actually strengthened in modern societies characterized by a lower degree of structural stability. "Borders and boundaries of various sorts are becoming more, rather than less, strongly marked," according to Morley (2001, p. 427), and the efforts to assert the difference has intensified, also in the field of travel amidst the democratization of travel practices. With this paper we called for accounts on mobility in relation to (class) identity formation to be sensitive to both its symbolic and material aspects. Travel should thus be accounted for as a powerful asset in classification struggles today since it continues to, albeit in much more specific and not so straightforward ways, to create, mark and consolidate social divisions.

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## Notes

[1] Doering's and Duncan's (2016, p. 49) criticism of largely unchallenged incorporation of mobilities within tourism studies should be noted here.

[2] According to Cresswell (2010), different aspects/facets of mobility (force, speed, rythm, route, experience and friction) are implicated in the constitution of "kinetic hierarchies", that means they serve to differentiate people and things into hierachies of mobility. See also the debate on migrations and tourism in Rangus (2017).

[3] MacCannell (1976/2013, p. 10) illustrates the traveller's anxiety to get behind the artifices of modernity to the realm of authentic existence with an anecdote. An educated respondent told him that while visiting the Winterthur museum he and his wife were really nervous for not knowing the proper names of all the different styles of antiques and consequently anxious that their silence would disclose their ignorance. MacCannell (ibid.) argues: "touristic shame is not based on being a tourist but on not being tourist enough, on a failure to see everything the way it "ought" to be seen. The touristic critique of tourism is based on a desire to go beyond the other "mere" tourists to a more profound appreciation of society and culture."

[4] In the case of Turkey, they explain new ways in which class distinctions are becoming transnationalized by US citizenship acquisition as a new form of cultural and social capital among upper and middle classes. This is a new class strategy, which they situate within class anxieties in contemporary Turkey, as "US citizenship is expected to consolidate and institutionalize prior investments in westernized cultural practices, which have historically been the source of these groups' symbolic distinction" (Altan-Olcay & Balta, 2016, p. 1117).

[5] We use the term post-egalitarian as Slovenia is according to macroeconomic indicators one of the European societies with the lowest but rising social inequality (measured by Gini coefficient). However, this is not reflected in the dominant public perceptions in which the extent of social inequality is systematically overestimated and where a larger proportion of respondents still believes that the differences in society are rising and should be reduced. According to Malnar (2011, p. 954), tolerance to income inequalities is traditionally low in Slovenia, as individuals constantly evaluate differences in income as too large, regardless of what the actual statistics show.

[6] See Urry (2000, p. 56–57) on how railways democratised long distance travel.

[7] See for example Kontogeorgopoulos's study (2003) on mass vs. alternative tourism behavioural patterns presented on a continuum and illustrating how the alternative tourism in southern Thailand relates to status and social differentiation among the new middle classes. Self-identified alternative tourists reproduce the discourse of "good versus bad" tourism, Kontogeorgopoulos argues (ibid., p. 172), by positioning their experiences as "culturally rewarding, environmentally friendly, and socially benign for host communities, especially in relation to the activities of what has become, in the popular imagination, the stereotypical, badly behaved mass tourist."

[8] Here it should be noted that especially destinations within this last category were taken together mostly because of statistical reasons as small number of responses for certain destinations were to low for analysis.

[9] This is a variable recoded from an existing variable with plenty options on how to spend an extra amount of money (among others clothes, car, furniture etc.) to a new variable with only two options: 0-other (any other option rather than travel), 1-travel.

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