“Society Treats You According to What You Are”

- A Qualitative Study of Consumption Patterns Emphasising Conspicuous Consumption, Entebbe, Uganda.

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Abstract:

This thesis stands result of a research conducted in Entebbe Uganda, during approximately five weeks in the autumn of 2009. The aim was to understand the reasoning behind decisions taken concerning the use of economic means, after covering the consumption of necessities. The options set were either to increase the level of conspicuous consumption or enhance the level of investments or consumption of necessities. The point of departure and ontological approach is taken from a household member i.e. individual level.

The analytical framework applied elaborating the empirical material collected was Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of habitus. Enhancing the understanding of habitus concepts e.g. needs, methods introduced by Lull was utilised. The primary data consisted of assembled interviews and direct observations. The secondary data consists of qualitative literature.

The results display an individual vision of vertical or transversal social movement. Identified incentives were inter alia peer pressure and competition. Conspicuous consumption is viewed as a process decreasing the distance from an individual social movement i.e. changes habitus. Methods realising a status increase of social position and status, is of symbolic items possessed through conspicuous consumption in combination with social capital, economic capital and level of knowledge.

Key words: Uganda, conspicuous consumption, symbolic item, social movement.
To my Mother and Father
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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction
Consumption is probably one of the most common and daily activities that are being acted out all over the world. Still, even though the global interdependence has in a rapid pace increased, the divisions between the developed world and the developing world in terms of income and consumption differs widely, furthermore “[..]over 40% of the world’s population[..]lives on less than $2 a day” (Todaro and Smith, 2009, p. 208). Such wide gaps do not only exist between states but as the unequal distribution of economic resources within countries as well. Such imbalanced distributions are commonly found in developing countries, were the benefits from the economic performances in terms of economic growth and development does not trickle-down to the lower levels of society to the extent needed (Todaro and Smith, 2009). When continuing to narrow down, looking into the differences within countries such variation is to be found at micro levels as well, e.g. inside social groups. As stated, economic development is perceived as the main path towards development. While economic growth is generated amongst the lower levels of society it is viewed as a contribution to the actual development process. It is argued that the “[i]nter diversification is the norm among rural households, and different income generating activities offer alternative pathways out of poverty for households[..]” (Davis, 2007, p. 1). Meanwhile the actual activities displayed by these people are not taken into consideration for evaluation. Nevertheless, it is of importance when discussing poverty reducing effects, Davis continues:

“It is therefore useful[..]to think of the full range of rural income generating activities[..]carried out by rural households. This can allow a better understanding of the relationship between the various economic activities that take place in the rural space and of their implications for economic growth and poverty reduction” (Davis, 2007, p.1)

Even though this perspective indicates the importance including people of rural areas it is claimed that;

“[w]hile we have a great deal of information on the geography, history, economics, politics[..]of these [developing] countries, we know little about the psychology of the people, particularly of the lower classes[..]how they think and feel, what they[..]anticipate, or enjoy” (Lewis, 1959, p. 1)

The stated above is taking into consideration urban as well as rural groups. Such facts and understandings of people are needed to be set before claiming to understand the reasoning behind the actions taken. As an economic development process is occurring, increasing the
capital accumulation among the people life might, even though very slowly begin to reform, creating alternative demands changing the view of prestige and its relation to consumption.

Prestige is concerning consumption viewed as a driving force increasing the level of conspicuous consumption i.e. consumption for prestige, risking the result of other options e.g. investments to decrease since the symbolic items is displaying a certain level of prestige or status to the owner. For something to become a symbolic item, it first has to be accepted by the ubiquitous (local) public, ascribing it such status. An individual’s level of status/prestige is then founded on the comparison between what is, or is not, consumed out of the different symbolic items (de Swaan, 2004). An increased income and economic development can therefore be interpreted further to increase the level of conspicuous consumption rather than increasing the level of long term investments, following the line of argumentation by Todaro and Smith;

“[a]n increase of income frequently allows families in developing countries to switch consumption from nutritious foods such as beans and rice to nonnutritious ‘empty calories’ such as candy and soda, which may be perceived as modern and a symbol of economic success” (Todaro and Smith, 2009 p. 374).

The longing for such items are to be found in developed countries. Though are these patterns similar to consumption patterns i.e. an amplification of symbolic items, found in developing countries. The decision of how to spend the capital provided the consumer might become an issue of concern to the surrounding community, in positive or negative terms. The leverage and social effect is expected to depend on whether the decision of how to use the possible economic remains when covered the most basic needs. The different options of decision given are between consumption of a conspicuous nature, consumption of necessities or investment. It is understood that an investment increases the chance, long-term, for the individual to improve the future living standards. How can actions and decisions made, that are increasing the level of conspicuous consumption rather than the portion of investment be comprehended and accounted for.

**1.2. Problem Identification**

This thesis deals with the issue of consumption patterns and the reasons behind them. Consumption patterns taking place in developing countries are to be viewed as similar to consumption patterns displayed in developed countries concerning conspicuous consumption.
The purpose is to continue the ongoing discussion of consumption patterns of household individuals that might affect and influence the development process. Further to portray the possible long-term incentive and goal influencing such consumption preformed, emphasising a holistic view.

The aim is to detect consumption patterns, by the usage of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* as the analytical framework. The conceptualisation of Bourdieu will be further evaluated by the use of Lulls “*Method-satisfaction/need-gratification Model*”, identifying reasonings behind and adding variables portraying what the conspicuous consumption is contributing to the consumer. Identifying what the consumer gains from conspicuous consumption compared to increased levels of consumption of necessities and/or investments and underlying priorities and reasoning are vital to comprehend. Emphasising *what* is consumed, and adding the question of *why* the consumption activities are carried out, with the point of departure at a household member i.e. individual level as this is where decisions regarding consumption are made. This is an approach needed to be taken into consideration when discussing development.

This line of reasoning leads to the problem identification:

- **How is it possible to comprehend the reasoning behind the decisions made by household individuals, when prioritising between consumption of necessities, investments and conspicuous consumption?**

### 1.3. Point of Departure and Definitions

The point of departure of the thesis is taken from the household level represented by a family individual within the targeted groups i.e. individuals representing a student, urban and rural livelihood (see 5.2 ‘Targeted Groups’ p.23). The targeted groups are consisting of household individuals, whom after the consumption of necessities have an amount of capital left and thereby is able to consume what can be interpreted conspicuously. This target groups if further complemented with household individuals whom precede conspicuous consumption albeit not perceived to have such economic means at hand. The targeted groups are thereby creating an environment where conspicuous consumption can occur.

To be able to follow the reasoning and the work in the thesis some definitions of some concepts used is needed:
- **Household** – In this thesis households are defined by a definition given by Friedmann; viewing the household

  “[…]as a residential group of persons living under the same roof and eating out of the same pot[…] households are] the smallest unit of civil society, as both a polity and an economy, and as a unit for making decisions on a continuing and daily basis concerning the use of household resources and other matters” (Friedmann, 1992, p. 46).

  A household individual is therefore defined as a person living in a household according to the definition above.

- **Social group** – The concept of a social group is defined as a group consisting in humans with a high level of similarity in terms of lifestyle and habitus, belonging to the same social field.

- **Consumption of necessities** – The consumption of necessities is to be found within Friedmann’s reasoning of the “Whole Economy Model” as the basic needs, i.e. food, clothing adding on some equipment continuing to some extent include furniture and other items/goods viewed as necessary for maintaining the basic structure/function/health of the household (Friedmann, 1992).

- **Conspicuous consumption** – is in this thesis understood “[…]as a pattern of conduct that is intended to realize the goal maintaining or enhancing an individual’s social position” (Chambell, 1995, p. 38), continuously, it is further including the attempt to indicate status towards other individuals.

### 1.4. Methodology

The methodology applied in this thesis is of two natures, a participatory approach including interviews conducted in Entebbe Uganda between the 16th of November 2009 and the 10th of December 2009. Characteristics of the interviews are semi-structured and open-ended accumulating primary data. Adding direct observations from Entebbe Uganda, the observations viz. of dress code, type of mobile phone, the environment within which people are working and living in etc. collected between the 13th of November 2009 and the 15th of December 2009 in Entebbe, Uganda and its surroundings. The differences between the dates given the different methods is based on the fact that the direct observations started the day after the arrival in Entebbe, meanwhile the first interview was held a couple of days later.

The second type of method is based on analysis of qualitative secondary data. For a deeper elaboration of the methodology approaches used in this work see also (Chapter 2 ‘Methodology’ p. 10).
1.5. Research Questions

The empirical material assembled to counter the problem identification acknowledged in the thesis is based on specified research questions of a normative nature:

- What are the basic needs viewed for achieving and/or living the living the good life?\(^1\)
- Which symbols are viewed as symbolic items i.e. connected to a certain level of status/prestige, influencing the social position of the consumer?
- What is the future vision of the individual household member?
- Howcome the reasoning behind the prioritised made, concerning consumption of capital income, on conspicuous consumption or an increased level of consumption of necessities and/or investment?
- What is the conspicuous consumption contributing the consumer?
- What could be interpreted to be a source of inspiration encouraging conspicuous consumption?
- How is the income of the individual distributed in terms of consumption?

1.6. Structure of the Introducing Chapters

The following introducing chapters are here initiated: Chapter 2 evaluates the methodology utilised throughout the thesis followed by a critical discussion of the methodology. Chapter 3 holds an introduction of previous research related to the problem area identified. The second part of the chapter is a critical discussion including limitations of the thesis. Chapter 4 includes the analytical framework which is to be applied, consisting of models and concepts by Pierre Bourdieu and James Lull during the working process. The chapter will end with a discussion displaying the relevance of the framework concerning the issue at hand. Chapter 5 contains the presentation of the working process further presenting the targeted groups interviewed during the field study in the areas of and surroundings of Entebbe, Uganda.

\(^1\) The conceptualization of good life and what it is included is to be evaluated later on in the analysis (see Chapter 6) of the thesis. The elaboration and identification of what the good life contains is identified on the empirical material of primary data.
CHAPTER 2

2.1. Methodology
This chapter presents the methods used, when collecting the data needed for answering the research question set. A short discussion elaborating the methods selected are further included in this chapter.

2.1.1. Primary and Secondary Data
The data used and collected in this conducted research are of both of primary and secondary character. Due to the fact that parts of the data used stands as a result of a field study, the exercise of primary data is important. The primary data “[...differs from secondary data[...] in terms of the researcher’s possibility to better control the relevance and quality of primary data” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 159). This combination of the both kinds of data provides an increased depth to the thesis.

The primary data was, gathered through, observations, semi-structured and open-ended interviews in the rural and urban areas and surroundings of Entebbe, Uganda, 2009. The reliability of the interviews are found in the theoretical saturation the indentified i

The secondary data used i.e. literature, documents etc. has been evaluated to be fair and reliable. When selecting the secondary sources, the measure of interpreted reliability has been taken into account, further throughout the thesis the attempt has been to use both national (i.e. Swedish) and international recognised sources.

2.1.2. Semi-Structured and Open-ended Interviews
The semi-structured interview has according to Britha Mikkelsen its foundation in the “[p]articipatory methods [which] have contributed to adjust the interview to make it more conversational, while still controlled and structured” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p.169). The method is characterised by the questions being “[...asked according to a flexible checklist or guide, and not from a formal questionnaire” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 169). During the semi-structured interviews an interview guide approach (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 171 see Box 5.5) will be used. The main description of the approach is that the interview will consist of selected topics, which will be discussed, thereby maintain the interview at a fairly situational and conversational level. This makes the interview tailor-made to the individual interviewed in terms of e.g. understanding. However, there is a risk of, as the interviewer changes the
wordings when adapting to the respondent, that the answers might be from somewhat of another perspective. This is taken into account standing clear that “[t]he semi-structured interview requires substantial judgement by the interviewer” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 174).

The open-ended interview (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 171 see Box 5.5) is characterised by a somewhat more rigid nature, compared to the semi-structured interview. The interview questions are determined in advance in an open-ended wording, which during the interview will be asked in a specific order. On the one hand the level of flexibility regarding both the interviewer and the respondent are to some extent decreased in comparison to the semi-structure interview on the other hand the level of comparability of different interviews is enhanced. This is responding to the combination of the two types of interviews.

The nature of the interviews is focused on individual interviews within the targeted groups, the respondents will consist of both men and women, at different ages etc. since by “[…]interviewing a number of different people on the same topic which will quickly reveal a range of options, attitudes and strategies” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 172).

2.1.3. Direct Observations

In an attempt to detect the consumption patterns and priorities within the targeted groups and in a second step to analyse the outcome applying the concept of habitus, direct observations becomes a natural and complementing method. The method is commonly used in research of different and “[...] consist of relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their context” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 145) enhancing a broader picture to the researcher regarding the issue at hand. The direct observations encourage the researcher to participate in the daily life and activities of the actors in focus. However the researcher must still keep the distance to the actors which are studied. Observations and experience from the field of research is further contributing with enhanced knowledge of the field integrated into the process of analysing the empirical material (Aspers, 2007). The conducted direct observations were acted out during the 13th of November 2009 until the 15th of December 2009, in Entebbe, Uganda. To increase the understanding of the material collected it will be combined with different types of interviews, elaborated above. What was of importance during the observation is the need of an open mind, as there are cultural differences between the observer and the observed.
2.1.4. Analysis of Qualitative Primary and Secondary Data

A third method is the understanding and analysis of qualitative secondary data. This method is of importance as it connects the findings in the primary data to the current discussion found in the secondary data. The secondary data is dealt with critically. The objectivity and perspectives of the secondary data used needs to be mentioned, as there is not possibly including all perspectives of the discussion.

The qualitative primary data is in this thesis the main material. Due to the methods chosen this data fights the hazard of interviews not being structured the same. The diverse openness and willingness of the interviewed is another factor related to the differences between the structures and the, what could be termed, depth of the interview. With this in mind it was emphasised to, the largest extent possible, interview each respondent twice. A proper segmentation and coding of the material is needed to structure the material. As “[o]ften there are ‘natural’ breaks in the material that can be used to break it into chunks that can then be allocated to particular categories” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 167). After the identification of such ‘natural’ breaks i.e. in this case the division between the three smaller groups, the process continued with the identification of themes of the interview and further segmentation of the material. The system used to divide the material into such themes was identified and given a specific colour, making it easier to handle and overview the material (Aspers, 2007). The different colours are related to the research questions set in this thesis, which further is enhancing the process of analysing the data.

2.2. Critical Discussion of the Methodology

The methodology used in the work of this thesis was seen natural to use due to the holistic approach of the thesis. However there are limitations occurring. Firstly the use of interviews acted out includes a limitation of the linguistic differences between the interviewer and the interviewed. The interviewer has English as a second language. Continuing with the fact of, even though English is the official language of Uganda, there are different languages and dialects spoken in different parts of the country. In the central part of Uganda, were Entebbe is located the dialect spoken is Luganda. The majority of the interviewed have Luganda as their mother tongue, there is a need of a translator. When communicating with the people that are speaking Luganda the translator needs to interpret both questions asked and answers given, making the translation possible. This process might, to a minor existent, have an influence on the outcome of the interview. On the other hand, the questions that will be
translated will most probably be asked in a way that is not sounding inappropriate to the interviewed, due to the translator’s knowledge of culture codes thereby decreases the level of misunderstandings. Thirdly, the outcome of the interview is analysed based on the interviewer’s interpretation of the interview. This issue is constantly, throughout the work taken into consideration.

Fourthly, the targeted groups from whom the primary data is collected is consisting of a certain number of household individuals. In an attempt to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the issue at hand the participants were to the largest extent possible, interviewed at least twice. This small focus group might not include all aspects of the issue at hand. However, the small focus groups are further a result of taking into account a fifthly limitation that is the time limit of the period under which it is possible to collect the primary, empirical data needed.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. Previous Research

The thesis has its focus on consumption patterns and its relation to conspicuous consumption and is therefore argued to be an interaction of two interdisciplinary fields. Emphasising the actual living conditions and circumstances of the individual, combined with the discussion of social position and prestige. Although these fields are interlaced they will in an attempt be treated separately in terms of previous research.

As it comes to previous research of consumption patterns there is a massive amount to be found. Due to this wide range of research linked to the field of consumption a narrowing down process is important. The issue at hand is concentrating on patterns of consumption at a household level and the discussion is often related to poverty. Consumption and economic growth has, especially during the latest decades been viewed as one of the main contributor reducing poverty. The expansion of this line of thinking has through research been challenged, emphasising the importance of a bottom-up approach, further viewed how the growth is distributed and taking into account external influences. One example is Mukimbu and Jayne “Urban Maize Meal Consumption Patterns – Strategies for Improving Food Access for Vulnerable Urban Households in Kenya” (1995). This research is presenting different variables determining the consumption made, such as; time, price and changes in the surrounding of the consumer. As this perspective has gained support in terms of development
approaches the advanced complexities of consumption is indicated. A second common perspective in terms of changes in consumption patterns of households’ and its members are; health. A change in the overall health of the family is expected to influence the consumption priorities. The issue of health in the household are part of the important discussion of poverty. The correlation between health and social position are argued strong, as the human being is in need to belong to a social context. Although, there are gaps found in this field of research. The focus on the daily patterns of consumption, clarifying what is consumed, connecting it to the second field, of lifestyle consumption.

There has been a long and is still an ongoing discussion regarding consumption, social position and society. One example portraying the relation of society and the reproduced consumption is Zygmunt Bauman is in the book “Consuming Life” (2007) carrying the discussion of Habermas:

“...[i]f the reproduction of capitalist society is accomplished through the endlessly repeated transactional encounters between capital in the role of the buyer and labour in the role of commodity, then the capitalist state must see to it that the encounters take place regularly and succeed in their purpose: that is, culminate in buying and selling transactions” (Bauman, 2007, p. 7).

This reproduction is continuous. Materialistic consumption is further evaluated as it is argued to have a major influence on the social group to which an individual belongs, shaping a lifestyle. Luxurious consumption becomes another variable needed to be taken into account as the “[n]ew luxury goods differ from the traditional luxury goods by being more affordable, more accessible, and by targeting new consumers” (Truong et.al, 2008, p. 189). Consumption of symbolic items is as a partial outcome of the globalisation to be found in alternative arenas, i.e. the developing countries. Social construction based on such consumption is among others brought up by Witt in the writing “Symbolic Consumption and the Social Construction of Product Characteristics” (2010). Still the focus of the long-term goal explaining the continuous reproduction of the actions are not explained nor accounted for.

3.2. Critical Discussion and Limitations of the Thesis

The issue at hand, with that meaning consumption, is perceived part of the everyday life. Due to this there are aspects of the conspicuous consumption not taken into account in this thesis. One example of this is the aspect of culture and cultural legacy of the target groups, the intercultural aspect i.e. of how cultures interact with one another. The discussion of
conspicuous consumption and the perceived relation to freedom of the consumer is not deeper elaborated due to the limitation of time. Nevertheless, the discussion of freedom is found in the analytical framework applied and thereby to a minor extent included it in the work. Another angle not taken into consideration is religion, though religious rituals and actions are common in Uganda. Even though religion does influence society and to a certain extent perhaps even consumption is has not been taken into account in this thesis only mentioned. Further there is limitations of the analytical framework, as it is not taking all aspects of the issue at hand into consideration hence an analytical limitation of this kind is vital for the possibility to achieve a result.

CHAPTER 4

4.1. Analytical Framework

Chapter 4 is presenting two analytical frameworks, which will be used in this Bachelor thesis, starting with Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “Habitus”. To enhance the understanding of underlying causes behind the actions taken by the individuals in terms of consumption the conceptualisation of habitus, James Lull’s model “Method-satisfaction/need-gratification model” will be utilised as a analytical tool to point out and evaluate important variables.

4.1.1. Pierre Bourdieu

“Instead of the abstract relation between the, on the one hand, consumers that among themselves has a interchangeable taste and on the other hand, the products that are given qualities which can be interpreted and valued the same by all, the sociologist should instead study a different relation, namely: the one between, on the one hand the different tastes that will necessarily vary with the economic and social conditions needed for its production and on the other hand the products attracting different tastes, endowing [the tastes] into different social identities”\(^2\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242-243, Translated by author).

In an attempt to give meaning and trying to explain the proper structure regarding the existence of different, what can be termed societal classes, the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu introduced the concept of habitus, i.e. the very description of a “[…]systems of dispositions that allows people to act, think and orient themselves in the social world”\(^3\) (Gustavsson, 1996, p.41, Translated by author). Further the concept was an attempt to explain how such societal classes and position is maintained and reproduced. According to Bourdieu,


\(^3\) Original text: “[…]system av dispositioner som tillåter människor att handla, tänka och orientera sig i den sociala världen” (Gustavsson, 1996, p.41).
the understanding how different lifestyles are acted out is of vital importance when attempting to comprehend the structure among and between different social positions in society, claiming that “the structures cannot exist independently. They exist due to the fact that people has been given a habitus built upon social conditions that through their practitioner consentingly recreating the structures”\(^4\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18, Translated by author). Bourdieu is in the point of departure emphasising the process of incorporation, opposed to the process of socialisation. Reasoning that habitus, with its social relations to positions is embodied into the individual thereby the knowledge of how to act and behave in the endless varieties and complexity of social situations is understood. Opposing the perspective of the individual as a ‘carrier’ of social norms and structures (Gustavsson, 1996) i.e. the process of socialisation.

The different attributes between different social positions are partly reproduced and maintained through two, sometimes parallel processes of learning. Firstly, there is the characterisation process taking place from the early childhood, secondly there is the actual affects, standing as a result of the social position one was born into. However the actual affects of the social position has also to be taken into account regarding the possibilities to move in between different positions, as this might transform habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). When continuing the elaboration of habitus, what is found to be of great importance for the existence of habitus is the field (champ) i.e. a struggle/s between different habitus. The concept of fields given by Bourdieu is: “[...]defining [that a] field [is] were people gather around something for them in common fighting for what they believe in[...]The field is kept together through the croyance (belief) [that this is worth the effort of fighting for] uniting the contesters”\(^5\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 14-15, Translated by author). The acceptance of certain assumptions and conditions existing, within a specific field thereby constitute “[...]conditions for the indisputable discussion and the conflicts unbreakable limits”\(^6\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 127, Translated by author).

The fields are of a hierarchic division with an ongoing struggle between them. The hierarchic division is “[...]foremost determined by the amount of specific capital which they [the

\(^4\) Original text: “strukturerna [har] ingen självständig existens. De finns där för att människor som fått sin habitus formad under bestämda betingelser genom sina praktiker ständigt återskapar strukturerna” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18)

\(^5\) Original text: “[...]defineras ett fält av att människor samlas kring något gemensamt som de tror på och strider om[...]Fältet hålls samman av denna croyance (tro) [på att detta är värt att kämpa för], som förenar alla de stridande[...]” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 14-15).

individuals] are able to mobilise – no matter if they possess one or the other type of capital”
(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 263, Translated by author). The capital referred to is perceived to be based on a broad perspective of wealth, thereby including features additional to the economical. Habitus is shaped based on the amount and which type of capital an individual possesses. There are three types of capital found influencing the habitus, that is, economic capital in terms of money; an individual’s level of knowledge i.e. the capital of knowledge and; the social capital i.e. the individual possess a good level of connection within the community, adding the fact of different types of capital being dominating different fields (Bourdieu, 1986). The capital may further consist of symbolic capital however, what is interpreted as symbolic capital varies between the different positions in society, and between ‘different societies’. As any resource or item can be entitled the status of symbolic capital, but the value exists only in the given context that is where it is recognised (Gunneriusson, 2002).
There are however, three dimensions “[…]that are the most homogenised, concerning conditions for the production of habitus [between different fields as within a field] is[[…]the volume of the capital, the structure of the capital and the development of the two over time”
(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 264, Translated by author). The amount of capital held by an individual is thereby argued to change as time passes on, which is influencing determining the possible modification of an individual’s habitus.

The fields are, as mentioned to a certain level homogenised, still there are a hierarchic structure within the field as such. There is an ongoing battle within and between the fields reshaping the current situation and structures of the individuals. This change is fought against by the ones in power within the fields as they are fighting to keep somewhat of a status quo, especially in the higher social positions ensuring the remain of their own position in the field. Although the proper structure of the fields leaves room for movement in two directions:

“[…]first there is the vertical movement up or down in the same vertical sector of the social area/room, i.e. within the same field[… the second movement is the transversal movement. The latter meaning a crossing into another field and may occur within the same horizontal level as well as in between different horizontal levels[… ” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 280-281, Translated by author).

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7 Original text: “[…]beror framförallt på vilket specifikt kapital de kan mobilisera – oavsett om de i övrigt besitter den ena eller andra arten av kapital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.263).
8 Original text: “[…]som är mest homogena i fråga om betingelser för produktionen av habitus [är][…]kapitalets volym, kapitalets struktur samt dessa två egenskapers utveckling över tid” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 264).
9 Original text: “[…]för det första vertikala förflyttningar uppåt eller nedåt inom samma vertikala sektor i av det sociala rummet, det vill säga inom samma fält[[…]och för det andra transversala förflyttningar. De senare förutsätter
The two kinds of movement that is seen possible to achieve are termed a vertical movement and a transversal movement. The vertical movement is achieved when the dominant capital in the environment of the individual is enhanced, resulting in a movement within the same specific field. The transversal movement is on the other hand the outcome of the capital being changed enough to convert a new structure and nature of the capital held by the individual fitting into the capital structure of another field. The transversal movement is resulting in movement into another field. Out of the two the vertical movement is the most common one. Though these types of movements stands as possibly achievements, there are hinders challenging such movements to occur. Hence, it is in the interests of some actors to maintain the current structure of positions, but foremost these hinders are based in the gap between the actual amount and to a certain extent also the type of capital in possession, since this differs between the participants of the fields and thereby differentiates the level of accomplishment of the goal. As “[t]his structural breach between the decree of needs and the possibility to achieve them is the foundation of the reproduction through transfer guaranteeing the maintenance of the structure of positions”\(^\text{10}\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 146, Translated by author).

The most obvious situation in which the different social positions are showing is through consumption. One of the, probably, most common action taken by individuals is also the one that most clearly can indicate the habitus of individuals, since;

\[\text{“[t]he true basis of the differences that can be observed in the consumption that elsewhere is the antagonism between the taste of luxury (or freedom) and the taste of necessity. The former distinguishes the individuals, that are a product of material conditions, defined by their choice of oppose the necessities, this is done through the freedoms[...]that is being guaranteed by possession of a specific capital, meanwhile the taste of necessities is expressing the necessities that has produced them”}\(^\text{11}\) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 303-304, Translated by author).

As can be suggested, consumption is one of the factors, indicating habitus to other individuals within the same field, and to individuals being part of another field. The claimed choice of consumption in terms of what are needed and luxuries is often not found being a choice hence the what is needed is required, however depending onto which habitus and social position an individual belongs to. When elaborating the concept of habitus it is to be seen as a structure in


\(^{11}\) Original text: “Den verkliga grunden för de skillnader som kan observeras i konsumtionen och på annat håll är motsatsställningen mellan lyxens (eller frihetens) smak och nödvändigheternas smak. Den förstnämnda kännetecknar de individer som är produkter av materiella existensbetingelser definierade genom sitt val av avstånd till nödvändighet, genom de friheter[...]som garanteras av ett visst kapitalinnehav, medan nödvändighetens smak genom själva sin anpassning uttrycker de nödvändigheter som producerat den” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 303-304).
itself: “[…]a condition is defined by everything it is not being, especially in relation to its discrepancy: in the difference the social identity is defined and confirmed”\textsuperscript{12} (Bourdieu, 1986, p.294, Translated by author). The consumer is through its actions, in this case being consumption, contributing to the reproduction of the structural system, since the consumption patterns and tastes within a field is to a significant level homogenised, even though the field is polar. Still, there is a major difference between the highest level and other levels. As the highest societal position is struggling for a status quo, while “[…]the characteristics among the lower positions[[…]depend on the lower positions objectively referring to the corresponding position at a higher level and tends to orient towards and pretention of it”\textsuperscript{13} (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 275, Translated by author). This can be interpreted as the lower levels are trying to achieve a position above their own, moving within or entering a new field. The responded action taken, trying to shape habitus could thereby be found in luxury consumption among the lower positions in society.

\textbf{4.1.2. James Lull}

To be able to obtain a deeper understanding of reasons regarding consumption activities when applying the analytical framework of Bourdieu, the line of thinking by James Lull is here introduced. Lull’s model “\textit{Method-satisfaction/need-gratification model}” (See Figure 1, p. 20) will be utilised as a tool moreover identifying concepts which will be used to reach an improved level of understanding of the empirical material elaborated in the thesis. The discussion by Lull is in its origin emphasising on how people use and respond to the mass-media, however this line of reasoning has its basis in the human psychology making the model feasible to apply on a societal and individual perspective, emphasising humans working towards the accomplishment of need gratification. Gratification is by this meaning to satisfy human needs, standing in line with Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of \textit{habitus}. To indicate the correlation and argue in the favour of the usage of Lull’s model, an elaboration of the concepts and reasoning is needed.

The model (see Figure 1 below) has its point of departure in human needs and its relation to the activities taken when attempting to achieve a level of gratified of such needs. The first

\textsuperscript{12} Original text: “[…]defineras en betingelse av allt som särskiljer sig från vad den inte är, särskilt från det den står i motsättning till: i skillnaden definieras och bekräftas den sociala identiteten” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 294).

\textsuperscript{13} Original text: “En del av de egenskaperna hos de lägre positionerna[[…]beror på att lägre positioner objektivt refererar till motsvarande positioner på en högre nivå och tenderar att orientera sig mot och pretendera på dessa” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 275).
half of the model portrayed in Figure 1, the part marked within the grey square (in the model), stands in focus during the analysis of the empirical material, the goal and term of satisfaction, found in the figure, will be used in the elaboration of the empirical material in relation of habitus and a social movement.

The model can in sum be described as; the process of “[...]need gratification occurs in two stages. First, the activity must satisfy the intrinsic requirements of the method. Second, the method (now realised in terms of the activity undertaken) must be able to gratify the need” (Lull, 2000, p. 109).

The needs taken into account is both of basic feature e.g. the need for food, as well as of a “[...]more abstract conceptions of need such as self-actualization, cognitive needs[...]esthetic needs, and expressive needs[...]” (Lull, 2000, p. 102) which nevertheless is of vital importance in the life of the human being. Ways for individuals’ to take action gratifying their needs varies and are dependent on the environment and experiences of the individual. One example pointed out by Lull is the need of belonging to a social group, which among other variable gratified by the environment and sentiments of the family, gender and social class. Thus indicating that “[...]culturally situated social experience reinforces basic biological and psychological needs while simultaneously giving direction to their sources of gratification” (Lull, 2000, p. 103). As this matter of fact is set, it displays a connection between the individual’s inner need with the external suggestions of how to gratify such needs portraying that “[p]eople thus intentionally engage the external social world in order to gratify their needs” (Lull, 2000, p. 104). This shows that needs are interdependent on one another. One clarifying example; when gratified the need of e.g. self-esteem it becomes connected to the
creation of an environment within which the level of self-esteem is satisfying becoming part of an individual's social identity and lifestyle.

The conceptualisation of habitus can be argued to stand in line with Lull’s concept gratification through the use of method, which in the model are viewed as “[...]cognitive plans and activities designed and undertaken by social actors[...]to accomplish particular goals that can gratify their needs” (Lull, 2000, p. 108). Thus, the creation and the shaping of a habitus, tailor made to suite the individual in current social group with a high level of the dominant capital identified in the individual’s field. Further is the fact that habitus includes the aim of achieving personal and social goals e.g. social movements. Visions and dreams are to be within the more abstract needs portrayed above, needs the individual requires to indulge. The individual is viewed targeting the achievement of a specific habitus, the method then become a reshaping of the current habitus. As have been argued, consumption is one of the methods making a reshape of habitus possible. Due to this combination of method and the wanted need gratification habitus is reinforced and reproduced. The methods may not at all occasions be successful as in achieving the goal of fulfilment, the basic nature of the methods are of constantly revised.

The achievement and level of satisfaction of needs is argued by Anthony Giddens to be: “the project of the self[...]translated into the[...]possession of desired goods and the pursuit of artificially framed styles of life[...]the consumption of ever-novel goods becomes in some part a substitute for the genuine development of the self” (Lull, 2000, p. 107). The individual’s progress, aiming at the accomplishment of social movement in between different societal fields is viewed as one of the driving forces of such a development. As the individuals within one field have the same habitus e.g. among other thing displayed by the consumption acted out. Standing in the line with the of argumentation of Bauman claiming that the;

“[c]onsumers’ ‘subjectivity’ is made out of shopping choices – choices made by the subject and the subject’s prospective purchasers – its description takes the form of the shopping list. What is assumed to be the materialization of the inner truth of the self is in fact an idealization of the material – objectified – traces of consumed choice” (Bauman, 2007, p.15)

Wants are yet not to be set equally to needs, since what is wanted is only desired. However, wants are to be taken into account motivating activities attempting to gratify them. The same parallel is to be set between the different tastes introduced by Bourdieu; the taste of needs (i.e. the needs) versus the taste of luxury (i.e. the wanted). The wants are to a certain extent
produced by the normative environment since “[t]he person develops cognitive predispositions that are influenced in large measure by what society expects and what local environments permit” (Lull, 2000, p. 110). The determination of wants is, as well as the determination of needs, except from the most basic and biological needs, is achieving a level of gratification, influenced by the external environment and not only of the inner valuations of the individual. This line of thought can be linked to the social and symbolic capital mentioned by Bourdieu, adding with the connection to the structure and creation of social fields within which habitus is created, shaped and reshaped.

The concepts identified to be used throughout the analysis of the empirical material enhancing the reasoning of Bourdieu, in this thesis are the needs and wants creating the motives resulting in the methods and the level achieved gratification of needs and wants.

4.2. Relevance of the Analytical Framework
The analytical frameworks that are elaborated above will be applied focusing on the process of interpreting and analyse patterns of consumption and lines of reasoning that can be detected. The analytical framework applied is Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, dealing the relation and understanding how the participants uses and prioritise economic income and other capitals e.g. social, symbolic, linking it to the conceptions of conspicuous consumption. This is done as an effort to understand the reasoning behind the consumption made by the targeted groups, emphasising what the consumer gain by the action. The concept of habitus is of relevance as it is taking into account different social identities, further including the struggle and wishes of individuals as a part of the social structure. When identifying such, the model given by Lull emphasising the needs, wishes and methods will be utilised. The frameworks will be used to evaluate the reasoning behind the decisions made in terms of consumption, by the responding participants.

CHAPTER 5

5.1. Working Process
The working process of the thesis was at first inspired by the book of Michael Marmot “The Status Syndrome: how social standing affects our health and longevity". The correlation and importance of social position to the health of individuals caught my interest. Other influences such as Amartya Sen’s “Development as Freedom” inspired as well, emphasising

14 The Swedish title: "Statussyndromet – hur vår sociala position påverkas hälsan och livslängden” references is to be found in the list of references.
the importance of identity and its complexity, adding to it the perspective of individual freedom. The actual idea of the thesis, dealing with the issue of conspicuous consumption, developed over time, but during the readings of “Economic Development” by Todaro and Smith it became set.

The actual process of work was initiated through background reading, selecting the analytical frameworks. The decision to make a field study, even though during a limited numbers of weeks stood as natural, hence the decisions of how to consume and reasoning supporting it was viewed needed to be gathered from the source, i.e. with the individuals themselves. After making contact with Ms. Olive Ayebale, secretary of the Mayor in Entebbe Uganda the preparation for the study begun. The field study was performed between the dates 12th of November 2009 until the 15th of December 2009. During this period interviews was arranged and recorded with a Dictaphone, with the three targeted group i.e. student, urban and rural. During the stay direct observations and impressions was written down in terms of notes. When arrived back in Sweden the process continued with turning down the 40 hours of interviews recorded from audio to text. As this step was finished the overview of the empirical material was possible, setting the ground for the analysis. Continuing with the selection of quotations put in the analysis, evaluating and portraying what were acted out in Entebbe. After working and re-working through the thesis with its structure and content, the result stands before You.

5.2. Targeted Groups
This thesis is based on empirical material adding up to a total number of 49 interviews proceeded between the dates of the 16th of November 2009 and the 10th of December 2009. The total number of interviews is conducting 27 participating individuals living in and in the surroundings of Entebbe, Uganda.

Most of the individuals were interviewed repeatedly i.e. at least twice. The interviewed can further be divided into three different groups, of a student, urban and rural character. The reasoning behind this division is to view whether there are patterns of similarities or yet differences among the three groups hence their environment and living situation can be argued different.

The students participating in the fieldwork attended the Nkumba University in Entebbe, a smaller yet well known university in the Central parts of Uganda. The students were between
the ages of 24 to 26, each of them studying for a Bachelor degree, all four in different subjects. Two of the respondents were living at campus where food and accommodation was included into the semester-fee. The other two were renting and cooking for themselves.

The urban group consisted of two major professions found in the urban area of Entebbe, that is traders and bodaboda-drivers\textsuperscript{15}. The traders works at the Central Market of Entebbe, selling fruits and vegetables. One of the participants was a chef who owned his own minor restaurant. The age differences between these participants spread from 33 to 76 years of age. The bodaboda-drivers are a group of workers whose representation that relatively recent increased in a rapid pace in the area of Entebbe. As a bodaboda-driver the income is earned basically two ways, either the driver is driving the bodaboda for a second part, sharing the income with the actual owner of the light motor-bike. The second option is to own the light motor-bike which one actually drives, not sharing the income. The ages of the drivers interviewed vary from 24 to 40 years, however the majority of the observed bodaboda-drivers were of the age within their twenties.

The third group, representing the rural areas is found in the surroundings of Entebbe Town. The villages visited were Kigungu, Bogonga and Nakiwogo. The majority of the interviewed professions are fisherman, trader or farmer. The village Kigungu is the largest landing site for fishermen working on Lake Victoria in the Entebbe area. Bogonga is a smaller landing site for fishermen. Nakiwogo is known for its trade in timber and to a certain extent also farming. The age of the participants in this targeted group varies from 24 to 75 years.

To interview individuals from different social groups and different ages with representants of both sexes was seen as important during the process of the field work. However regarding the representation of male and female interviewed the result did not turn out totally equal in the final product. As the interviews were acted out mainly at the settings of work this result is not unrealistic hence many women tend to be domestic and thereby were not as easy to get in contact with for an interview, as this included a visit to the home. The representation of females in the rural settings was 6 females interviewed to 18 males interviewed. However, in terms of the students the total number of interviewed were 4, equally distributed between the sexes. The same equal distribution between the sexes goes for the individuals working at the central market whom were interviewed twice, i.e. not including the male shoemaker who was

\textsuperscript{15} A Bodaboda-driver is a taxi driver, only their mean of transport is not yet a car but a light motor-bike of some kind.
only interviewed once. The second part of the urban group is, as already mentioned, consisting of bodaboda-drives. Within this group there were no female drivers to be found since this profession is strongly dominated by males. This fact has to be taken into account when discussing the representation of the sexes in the urban group and the total division between the sexes in terms of representation. The division between the sexes in terms of participants was 8 women set compared to 19 men. The total numbers of interviews given by women were 14 compared to 34 interviews with men. Regardless, of the wish to have had a larger participation of women in the interviews, some comparisons will be made in the analysis of the empirical material collected in terms of gender.

Clarifying the references of the participants in the empirical material is needed hence some of the participants were willing to give their given name while others wished to remain anonymous. The references to the anonymous interviews conducted in Entebbe, Uganda will therefore be done by given the sex of the interviewed and profession followed by location and year of the interview. Remaining interview references will be consisting of the given name pursued with profession, location and year of the interview.

**5.3. Structure of the Following Chapters**

In the chapter following include the analysis of the thesis. The analysis will be treated in Chapter 6, as a combination, presenting the analysis and result of the thesis, having the starting point in the empirical materials collected through the field study in Entebbe, Uganda. With the use of the analytical frameworks evaluated and initiated i.e. Bourdieu’s concept *habitus* with assistance of Lull’s model (see Chapter 4 Figure 1, p. 20). A large number of quotes from the empirical material are used in the analysis portraying the level of saturation. The final chapter of the thesis is including the concluding remarks of the analysis, followed by a further discussion and continuation of the discussion of the issues identified in the work.

**CHAPTER 6**

**6.1. Items of Prestige**

In society there are different types of items carrying a symbolic value of prestige depending on the perception of what is ascribed such a value. As argued by Witt; “[t]o serve an act of ‘symbolic consumption’ ‘[...] products have to be agreed symbols, a quality obtain from some form of social coordination on what are valid, approved consumption symbols” (Witt, 2010,
The symbolic values are as argued different depending on the environment in which one live and further on to the field within one are to be fitted into.

Despite this fact, there was a high level of congruence among the participants regarding which items that had such symbolic value. The symbolic items are commonly argued to occur at higher more opulent level than the perceived present level of the groups. Items of prestige identified are e.g. a house, a car, good clothes, education, a TV, or an expensive and advanced mobile phone. The result of such statement is a combination between interviews and direct observations. Illustrating statements are:

"Having a nice home and a car. [It] shows that you are of another status than others" (Peter, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"[Having] a house and is not renting would show prestige. If my children are going to school it can show that the family has prestige[...]") (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

When people wants to show off they buy "[...]a phone, a car and clothes" (Thomas, Chef, Entebbe, 2009).

"Owing property, an expensive piece of land and a car[...]" (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"[...]If you see someone who has a home, drives a car, does not rent [gives prestige]", (Male, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009) education can give you prestige.

"[...]In Uganda, everyone from the lower middle class and upwards has a radio and a TV[...]every mediocre person, even if you are renting. You perhaps do not own a bed but you own a TV" (Female, Trader, Nakiwogo, Uganda).

"A person with some kinds of houses, education, an expensive car[...]the prestige given to an individual being educated] depends, different levels of education gives you different status" (Female, Housemaid, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"If you are able to have a car, food, dress your kids and yourself is to have status[...]prestige depends on what kind of car you are driving. [Having] money and land. You are not renting then you can say your status is different from the rest" (Male, Shop owner, Kigingu, 2009)

Symbols of prestige in Uganda is to have property further "[i]t is very important how you dress yourself and portray yourself" (Kenneth, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

The common pattern among all the three groups is that the items of status have its basis at a higher level with increased possibilities of capital movement, i.e. being situated higher up in the hierarchy, either within the same field or belonging to another higher rated field. The respondents are interpreted visualising the accomplishment of the same habitus, explaining why the items symbolising status and prestige were not that different. Further, the similarities can be understood as an outcome as the environment inspiring the method of gratifying the want of the other habitus between the different targeted groups is on many levels comparable. The answers indicate that prestige is given to an individual with a high level of the dominant capital that is in this case perceived to be symbolic capital in terms of the level of material oppose to immaterial prestige. Although the immaterial capital e.g. knowledge is viewed as important it could not give a person the same level of prestige as the possession of material
items. There is one specific area of discussion found in the empirical material with a clear division of opinion regarding this very discussion, this area is religion. Some respondents claimed that everybody was equal in church meanwhile other argued that one could, through materialistic possessions of items or expensive clothing gain prestige in church.

All of the interviewed were owners of at least one mobile phone, still there was a general desire to own a more advanced and expensive one. This indicates the dual values that the item hold, one of practical use - in this case for communication - the second one being a symbolic value. As the phone owned by the interviewed satisfied the first i.e. the practical use the second value was not fulfilled. Creating the need for such satisfaction is making the possibility of gratifying the need voracious. Hence, as soon as one of the needs were satisfied e.g. the purchase of a new mobile phone, the level of satisfaction was not long lived. Immediately as another item of prestige was projected the level of satisfaction was again low and a new need occurred. When asked the question of why owning such symbolic items were so important to themselves and others in their environment, the answer was the struggle to belong to a social group and not be the one jealous, but the one other were jealous of due to the success showed by the new item in ownership. The items of prestige are in the society an indication of the amount of capital moved by the individual in possession of the items.

6.2. The Good Life
The basic needs of an human being are important subjects for discussion in terms of development. What are included in the category of essential needs separating such needs from what could be termed ‘other’ needs? The definitions of basic human needs vary depending on perspective, approach and the variables taken into account. One approach is set by John Burton arguing that the basic human needs is “[...]in addition to the more obvious biological needs of food and shelter there are basic human needs related to growth and development” (Burton, 1990, p. 36). This definition includes the shaping of an identity and adding to it the need to belonging to a group. The achievement of the basic needs is of importance in terms of living a decent life (Jolly, 2009). When an individual sough to live a good life, the specific variables of indication are more diffuse than the variables defining the basic needs16. As this thesis is dealing with the issue of conspicuous consumption and its relation to prestige the

16 A clarification of the differences between the two definitions of basic needs and the consumption of necessities is here argued to be in place. The basic needs are not set equally to the consumption of necessities even though some basic needs are included into the definition of consumption of necessities given in chapter 1.3, hence the definition of the basic needs includes a wider range of needs e.g. the creation of an identity. While the consumption of necessities are interpreted taking inter alia food, shelter and other features keeping the household functioning into consideration.
discussion of and determining the concept of good life becomes vital. Hence it is argued to include the achievements of living standards no longer only is of a fundamental feature. The content of basic needs does not have to stand similar to the substance of the needs for having a good life. The wish to live a good life is one of the most repeated statements indicated to be the incentive behind actions taken by individuals attempting need gratification. The paradox found stands between the feeling of deprivation within the targeted groups of not being able to live the good life, yet the respondents were able to take care and cover the basic needs i.e. shelter, food and clothing, although to an individual level.

What is of interest is the ongoing argumentation given by each of the respondents is that the good life is portrayed as a vision. There is a constant wish for something more. The method reoccurring to fight a situation is when the wishes are not accounted for conspicuous consumption. Due to this nature, depending on the point of departure one can either claim that the conspicuous consumption is intruding on the basic needs, that the conspicuous consumption is to be acted out by the individual after covering the most basic needs or that the conspicuous consumption has evolved into a prolongation of the basic needs. As this thesis has its point of departure at an individual level, the line of reasoning taken into account is that the conspicuous consumption has to a certain extent become a part of the basic needs.

The motivation with the aim changing habitus is interpreted as a natural part of the proper social structure.

The identification of the needs that is crucial to be satisfied in the achievement of the good life is of importance when trying to understand and preferably debunk difference between the basic needs and the needs required for living a good life. Throughout the field study the question concerning which the important basic needs that a human need to live a good life actually were. The question was answered by all the respondents. The formulation of the question has its base attempting to separate the basic needs necessary for living the good life, from the actual wishes and fantasies of each individual. Each of the three groups will be presented and then there will be a comparison between them.

The students stated the following during the interviews:

“Security[...]no external wars[...]then you need the basic needs like shelter and food”. Following with the statement portraying the need of “money[...]it depends on your status” (Kenneth, Student Nkumba University, 2009)

“Security[...]no wars. And then you need food, clothing[...]healthcare[...]and a good environment [in the] surrounding” adding to the answer education. “It [the need is wanted] because you want to fit into society” (Alice, Student Nkumba University, 2009)
"Food, nice clothing, a good house and some transportation" adding to this healthcare and education. Further he compliments with the fact that “[w]e need pleasure and luxury [...] otherwise you will never enjoy the good life” (Philip, Student Nkumba University, 2009)

“To be educated, living in a secure environment [...] where there are no wars [...] you have enough clothes to dress good and then you need food. A good house and money for other needs” She continues by saying that “[t]he basic needs depends on the situation and the environment you are in” (Jennifer, Student Nkumba University, 2009)

During the interviews with the group of students, answering the questions independently some patterns of reason was detected. Security is to be interpreted as one of the basic needs of having a good life, further are most of the basic biological needs included. The issue of security was only mentioned by the group of students, none of the other respondents took the need of security into account. This could be interpreted as an outcome since the students are attending the university, where the issue of security might have been enlighten and treated as a specific issue of importance in the everyday life of a human being. Meanwhile the other targeted groups might, although subconsciously take security into account. A second line of thought regarding the inclusion of security by the students is that they have, to a larger extent been exposed to broader perspectives thereby including security as basic but also as a part of the proper condition for a society function. The other targeted groups might not have been exposed to this way of thinking to the same extent as the students.

Further the basic needs for a good life are claimed to depend on the social group to which one belongs, as the external environment influences the variables of need. The symbolic capital of which an individual have is found to be of importance when interpreting whether or not one is living the good life. The perception of which field the individual is included into influences the level of expectations and perception of the lifestyle embraced.

The rural representatives stated the following when answering the question of what are the basic needs needed for living a good life are:

“Money, because then you can get a business and money can make my life happy” (Francis, Tailor, Bogonga, 2009).

“All the basics, clothes, my children are going to school and a balanced diet and you have a cash-flow, whenever you want to spend on something you can do it” (Vincent, Boat owner, Kigungu, 2009).

“Apart from the necessities at home like food and education after that you need a small investment to make sure that can keep me going after this work as a fisherman no longer is good for me” (Aleman, Fisherman, Kigungu, 2009)

“Like educate yourself and [to] look good, like any other woman and to get your hair properly cut” (Gerie, Shop owner, Kigungu, 2009).

“All you need is money, as long as that is around you will manage” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“A house, money, married happily, and a car [...] some technological support” (Female, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009).
What is clearly pointed out in the needs for a good life according to the rural groups is the significance of money, i.e. economic capital and to a certain adding on level symbolic capital. The majority consider money as one of the most basic need out of all, as it gives means of consuming other subsistence needs e.g. food, shelter and, clothes. One of the statements treats money as the way to happiness, the method for need satisfaction is to work and through this earn money. One other perspective of the need is related to work, offering a solution for capital income, which is of importance determining the symbolic capital in possession.

The **urban** group reasoned the following regarding the basic needs resulting in living the good life:

"First of all is money. It is what brings happiness and health because it can almost purchase everything. Also having a residence, but it comes from money. Money is the major resource for you to be happy" continuing with the ownership of "[s]ome of the things that show a person is well off, and people should respect you for having money"(Semikula, Bodaboda-driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"Having a home of your own, a TV and radio, a car taking you to church and the closest distance" (Rolance, Bodaboda-driver, Entebbe, 2009)

"[...]to have access to money enough to keep you and your children well off" (Thomas, Chef, Entebbe, 2009).

"The most basic thing is a job. When you have a job then you can live and you have money. You can go relax you can do what you wish" (Rose, Trader, Entebbe, 2009).

When comparing the statements of the urban group the importance of symbolic capital is interpreted enhanced compared to the rural group. The importance of money is again viewed as one of the single most important to have. Money and economic means are viewed as creating the foundation, not only for survival but also of for what is considered the good life.

Putting all the three groups, side by side the students stands as the single group not putting equal emphasis on containing economic capital as the other targeted groups. The student does claim the importance of money, linking it to the external environment of the individual. Further, the students are the only group not participating in similar working environment as the urban and rural group. The students are on the other hand interpreted to have a future with an expected higher capital income than the urban and rural group, based on their level of education. Howcome the students whom already have gathered a certain level of capital through their education is no to the same extent as the rural and urban group, emphasising economic capital. The fact of expecting a well paid job could be one of the explanations to why they are viewing their future with a high level of economic income. They are expecting to move within or between the social fields after graduation. As argued by Bourdieu there are different types of capital e.g. economic, social and knowledge. Thus, the students do not in
the current situation require increasing their capital with an amplified level of economic capital.

To summarise; the good life is argued to correspond to the wishes of the individual regarding items to possess being valued important for the identification of a social group. One of the differences found between the basic needs and the good life is the possibility to consume according to wishes and wants and not singlehanded out of needs. The wishes and methods to achieve the level of the good life are indicated in the first episode of the analysis, the possession of items of symbolic value.

### 6.3. Wishes, Visions and Waste

Conspicuous consumption is partly based on the wishes of what one wants to achieve. The social group to which an individual is set to belong is argued to be determined by how effectively an individual can fulfil and accomplishing a certain habitus. Also the nature of the wishes differs, depending on the environment and circumstances around the individual. Wishes are not part of the needs, as argued by Lull they are part of what is desired. The gap of deprivation among individuals in terms of wishes produces new needs, crucial to satisfy. The items acknowledged being a part of the wishes of the targeted groups are e.g. a car, a computer, a TV, all identified as items holding a symbolic value. Such items would then increase the status of the individual claiming the close relation between the wish for such items, and the wish for an amplified level of status.

Below are representative items wished to be hold by the targeted groups:

"To get money to finish the bodaboda and to start drive a car" (Moses, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"[I dream of] having a car[...]and a TV and radio [in my newly built house]" (Maria-Theresa, Trader, Entebbe, 2009).

"[...]I want a car, since I have many kids" (Female, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"To have a bodaboda and get some money. And to get some tenant in her own house and a plot" (Rose, Trader, Entebbe, 2009).

"To get a motorcycle that is big enough for easier mobility[...]and a computer" (Thomas, Chef, Entebbe, 2009).

"A car. Yes that is what I want. I pray to God to give me a car" (Female, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"I wish to have a laptop and to have a nice car to drive myself around[...]I wish to have a TV" (Jennifer, Student Nkumba University, 2009).

"[A] car cause I move around so much on foot[...]When you have a car you save on many things like time, visit many places and learn very many things[...]I wish to have the latest mobile telephone. It has many good features[...] a nice laptop" (Philip, Student Nkumba University, 2009) more advanced than the one already possessed.
There exist a link between the vision of the interviewed and gratification of needs, connecting it to the ownership of symbolic items. Hence, both indicate an increase of prestige and thereby the level of economic but foremost of symbolic and social capital. The struggle of increasing such capital are found in the quotes above, Rosa whom is a trader wishes to own a boda-boda, meanwhile the boda-boda driver desires a car. Both of them are visualising an increase in capital both social and symbolic capital, as well as increasing their income i.e. economic capital. Emphasising a social movement or a change in habitus is treated as the goal of the vision, as the reshaping of habitus is thereby indicating the satisfaction.

The vision is treated as a method where the possession of symbolic items is the intended goal. But also as a goal where the vision has an even longer timeframe that is resulting in a social movement. The ownership of such items identified in the quotes is interpreted to automatically enclose the gap for the individual to accomplish a social movement and a change habitus and social identity. A clarification: it is perceived that the ownership of a number of specific symbolic items together will enhance the individual’s capital enough that the result of a social movement, transversal or vertical, is automatically achieved.

The visions are to a high level of extent homogenous, emphasising a strong want for a high level of capital and about the items a strong wish for the conspicuous consumption of luxuries. There is neither any strong assortment depending on the sex of the respondent.

The visions given by the targeted groups were:

“My vision is to get money, enough money to develop. I want to trade crops” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“To own my own house with additional houses so that I can get money out of them” (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“To have a chain of restaurants” (Thomas, Chef, Entebbe, 2009).

“My vision is to be self-employed and support my family even more” (Male, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009)

“To get a plot and some good business” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“I would like to have money and make a business and stay in the village of my home. When I was working at home[...] I felt good, now I do not feel good since I do not have money” (Francis, Tailor, Bogonga, 2009).

“Ten years from now I want to see my family recognised and feel proud of my family” (Male, Trader, Kigungu, 2009).

“My vision is to be a very successful man in the end. I want to be an employer not an employee” (Philip, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

“A nice job” (Kenneth, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).
The connection between the methods and the needs required to be gratified point towards the nature of conspicuous consumption. All groups are agreeing on the fact of being successful in business would result in the satisfaction of wishes, enhancing the chances of increased capital possessed by the individual.

Continuing the discussion of wishes and wants, a new issue at hand, namely the issue of wasting money compared to use it, what could be termed, correctly is required. The perspective of wasting money was by the participants perceived as an act of ignorance and stupidity, especially when borrowing money for such behaviour. Wasting money stood equal to either luxurious consumption or to not gain profit from the amount put out. When looked into the perception of wishes and visions its similarities to the interpretation of wasting money is striking:

"Wasting money is to have fun going to the beaches and buying alcohol and buying expensive clothes" (Rose, Trade, Central Market, 2009).

"Wasting money is to spend money that does not come back” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

"Buying luxuries things[...]like alcohol, women, and buying luxurious things like things you do not really need you just want to show people you have it” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"[T]o go to the club and buy people beer everyday and gambling” (Peter, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"When someone buys expensive things like clothes, change your hair all the time at the saloon. Going to hotels and eating expensive things” (Maria-Theresa, Trader, Central market, 2009).

"Going to discos, spending money on luxuries things“ (Vincent, Boat owner, Kigungu, 2009).

"Wasting money is when you get pocket money and you spend it on something else[...]then you do not have any money for the research work[...] being extravagant” (Alice, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

"Having fun. [You] just need to go out and you are wasting money“ (Kenneth, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

"When you put other needs before the basic needs you are wasting money. If you do not look after your basic needs that is wasting money. I do not think people know they are wasting money that is something for people to see later” (Jennifer, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

Even though the rejection of such spending, the admiration of such behaviour was constantly ubiquitous underlying. This being based on the perception of acceptance for such consumption if one is pictured to belong to a field identified at a higher rate. Yet it can be claimed that the respondents, implicit or not, acted out conspicuous consumption although to different levels. Conspicuous consumption is argued to increase different kinds of capital of the consumer. The wish of enhancing different types of capital is set linked to the struggle towards a social movement and the creation of a social identity. Conspicuous purchases should thereby automatically lead and be the preparation for such a movement, interpreted to
be set contrary to long-term investments. This might be the line towards an understanding of how come other individuals conspicuous consumption is viewed as waste meanwhile the one made by the respondent oneself is not. This could be understood, arguing that the individual’s own consumption is accounted for and not considered waste, since the individual portrays a scheme of what is gained. In such a situation the whole line of reasoning is detected of arguments supporting the consumption being made, with the ultimate of reaching the maximum social level (and habitus) of luxury and conspicuous consumption. Supporting the argumentation that conspicuous consumption developed to a certain degree is a part of the basic needs and of the consumption of necessities. Such a scheme might not be possible to detect when viewing another individual’s consumption, and is therefore interpreted as wastage of money. The resolved variable of what wasting money is can be argued to be the individual’s perception of someone else’s economic situation determining the nature of the consumption as argued above.

There is a remaining admiration of being able to move such amounts of capital making the wasting of money accepted in the habitus and lifestyle. It can be claimed that what is considered waste of money in one habitus is not perceived as such in another habitus, rather viewed needed. Hence, habitus is under continued reformation. “[...] [S]tatus [...] is also conveyed in more sophisticated and subtle [...] shifting from ‘waste’ to ‘taste’ (Truong, 2008, p. 190). On the other hand, the large majority of the interviewed managed to cover the consumption of necessities e.g. food, shelter and basic clothes, with their income. Yet, they did not picture themselves living the good life, further expenditures on luxurious things were pictured as bad behaviour. Many of the interviewed claimed that the level of consumption and the importance of owning expensive items/goods depend on the level of status possessed. The diffuse line between consumption of needs and of a conspicuous nature are again exposed. Where to draw the line between the two, the drastic argumentation would be that all consumption, not being a part of the basic needs are of a conspicuous nature. In that case, the perceptions of the respondents own situation is not conformable to the argumentation. The interviewed’ spending outside the basic needs are not considered waste of money since it is planned for and thereby measured needed.

It was generally not accepted to spend money on luxury or short-termed pleasures as it could affect the society in terms of not developing. This issue of a stagnated development process of
the surrounding areas of the interviewed was reoccurring, this is identified in the quotes below:

“Yes [conspicuous consumption can affect society], for something to put things in place there has to be put in an order [in terms of consumption and priorities]. If you follow that kind of thinking you can achieve much but this kind of pulsar [consumption] thinking is hindering the development of society” (Jennifer, Student, Nkumba University, 2009)

“That [due to a high level of conspicuous consumption by the population in the village] the place cannot develop. This area [where timber is purchased and sold] is still like this, but if people had knowledge [...] [investing] money when they get money so that this place can develop. But instead the place will never develop because people are not spending their money wisely” (Female, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009)

What was among the respondents emphasised as a vital part either hindering or causing such a situation was conspicuous consumption interpreted as shot-termed and to certain extent wastage of money. People consumed rather than invest the money in business or in some cases prior to education.

The feelings of deprivation when not satisfying the needs surfaced, creating drastic action attempting to do the contrary. The eager wish to gratify such needs and wishes increasing the capital possessed by the individual is perceived to generate other issues rather than develop the individual and its environment. One example is given by Alice:

“Yes you can go backwards [between social groups]. Going ahead by chance. Many girls I know here at campus ends up falling in love with sugar-dads. Because they want to have that extravagant life she ends up in the hands of those men. They give you a lot of money, they are married and have kids in your own age and you end up sleeping with them. Now where do you think you are going with that kind of life? Then you end up get HIV/AIDS and there is many problems adding up like many girls become pregnant and do an abortion. That is going backwards. It is so sad” (Alice, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

A second example is to buy items on instalments, even though the pace of repayment is unrealistic for the actual economic accumulation of the individual. This is then resulting in a lifelong economic dept. The wish for another lifestyle and perhaps even a social movement is being inspired by the individuals surrounding environment, becoming a driving force emphasising and making sure that one is at least at an equal level, if not above, others. The need of belonging combined with, what can be termed the fear of being left behind is here identified through an extreme expression.

**6.3.1. Dual Values of Items**

With the perception of not having the means required for living the good life, many of the respondents claimed not spending conspicuously. Since, they are arguing not to have the same level of freedom as individuals with a higher level of consumption possibilities and options. That argumentation is defended by the interpretation of the items holding a conspicuous
nature is viewed as investments, or as gratifying existing needs. Even though, these needs and investments are in the origin conspicuous items and thereby treated as such. Resulting in the fact that the majority of the respondents actively taking part in such consumption. This emphasise the dual values behind items consumed, i.e. a practical/functional values of the item, as argued by Professor Marieke de Mooij:

“Consumption decisions can be driven by functional or social needs. Clothes satisfy a functional need, fashion satisfies a social need. Some personal care products serve functional needs, others serve social needs. A house serves functional need, a home a social need. Culture influences what type of house people live in, how they relate to their homes and how they tend to their homes. A car may satisfy a functional need, but the type of car for most satisfies a social need. Social needs are culture-bound” (Hofstede G and Hofstede G.J, 2005, p. 349)

Then there is the symbolic value of the item indicating a certain level of the capital that is possible to move by the individual in possession of the item.

The method of satisfying needs changes due to the individual and conditions. Several of the participants are interpreted to show a ‘false’ depiction of their standards of living to their surrounding environment. Or rather prioritising conspicuous consumption prior to investments. This line of discussion sets investments and conspicuous consumption opposing each other. Challenging this is the thought, only put forward by participating men, of the conspicuous items being the investment.

To obtain symbolic items is considered a waste of money or conspicuous consumption, rather as money invested as saving the recite to show its economic value.

“I do not like to save a lot of money in the bank, I like to keep the money in assets” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009) for example TV and other valuable items.

“You see that is how I am doing it, I get money and try to invest it in things in our everyday life [e.g. buying a new TV for his mother]” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“The expensive phones are prestige but that also depends on what you want to use the phone for. Just to give you an example, I can go around for an expensive [phone] but the features I need from that phone, this is the only phone offering the features I want[...]Prestige is doing something just to show off. Buying something for people to see. You get a phone that you cannot operate” (Philip, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

However, as know, the usage of items and especially of technological viz. a mobile phone, a TV or a computer, it is soon to be devalued and no longer modern, so it can be argued to be a loss in terms of money. Still the possession of the item ascribes the individual a higher social capital and putting up the front of having economical means to move. The lines are no longer
clear between what is considered necessary as the external environment encourages the need of symbolic materialistic items.

6.4. Sources of Inspiration and Gain
The need to recognize incentives behind the wish to emulate social groups higher rated in the hierarchy of fields and of lifestyles is of great importance. Driving forces creates the foundation of motives behind the conspicuous consumption taking place. Thus, the encouragements for such consumption enhance the perceived possibility for the individual achieving a level good life. The inspiration is argued to be of an external nature, in terms of the characterisation process of the individual.

In terms of consumption the inner needs of the human being is gratified by the accomplishment defined by the external environment. One example is the wish and need to belong to a social context were conspicuous consumption becomes a method for gratifying the need. However the external influence is identified in several disguises. The result from the primary data confirms inter alia peer pressure, competition, jealousy and admiration:

“The major driving force is the competition between friends and neighbours” (Rose, Trader, Central Market, 2009).

“When you start work and money comes in you will be inspired to consume, automatically [...] Competitions between neighbours, you are doing something because someone else is doing something [...] Increasing money increase the wish for prestige. More money inspire you to buy more” (Maria-Theresa, Trader, Central Market, 2009).

“Sometimes parents without a humble background [i.e. have had to fight to themselves] might learn children badly. And also the surroundings can also change you feel wanting prestige [...] Basically in society people think it is easier to get respect politically, socially and economically if you have prestige [...] Most of the time is peer pressure [...] And then the reason to is for this society to appreciate who you are [...] [It also depends on] your upbringing [...]” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

“They [hard workers] spend it because they know they are going back, like fisherman, they know they are going to go back and catch more fish tomorrow and earn some more money tomorrow [...] [Since] each of the women [consume a lot because they] are competing for the husband's love and for the man’s love” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“Admiring. To admire is the inspiration to fight and get it [...] [also] jealousy [...] when you develop faster [...] and leave people behind they will feel bad [...] [due to] the competition [...] The reason for someone to want to have an expensive phone is to [...] show that he carries something expensive. To show that I have money [...] To [be able to] fit into society in some group of people” (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

Like "we admire people [...] having a good shirt, then we save some money to get the same shirt. Why would my mum not have the same things as the others living in the same area? Why should I not buy things for my kid? Because we people comparing us to others” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"Some are brought up that way of spending spontaneously. It is there nature, they earn and waste it. Some get inspiration from friends like peer pressure. You follow to be a part of them” (Vincent, Boat owner, Kigungu, 2009).

“[...] That is why fighting here and there has occurred over power, prestige and so, because no one want to see their friends up there and yourself not among them” (Alice, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

The impact of television as an incentive of inspiration is in the empirical material claimed to be of two types; first, as a positive influence viz. educational programs which increase
knowledge, and second, as a negative term, mainly focusing on copying behaviours in terms of increased violence and blue movies. The only respondents who distanced from this perspective were the students, i.e. Alice, Kenneth and Philip. They confirmed the encouraging and influential forces of the media and TV. The argumentation of the students having a higher rate of exposure from TV is diminished due to the fact that none of the students owned a TV. While as good as all of the other within the targeted groups owned at least one TV. The difference between the groups in terms of view on media influence can be understood by a higher level of knowledge in this field, compared to the urban and rural group.

Turning the focus from the incentives of the conspicuous consumption and values connected to it, onto the gain of the consumer. The scrutinising of what the consumption contributes the consumer stands a bit more difficult to understand, including the perspective of the dual values of the items consumed. Hence, according to the large majority of the interviewed, there is nothing particularly gained by the action of conspicuous consumption. On the other hand if the level of need satisfaction formed by the consumer did not contribute anything except the practical gain i.e. the actual use of the item bought, it is not explanatory to why the consumer desires an expensive item prior a cheaper yet functional item. This was in the empirical material indicating that the verification of conspicuous consumption conduce the consumer other means than the real use of the item. The reasoning of what to be the virtue of conspicuous consumption needs to be further elaborated.

When answering what the consumer gains the perspective of needs has to be turned around, with the starting point from values enhanced by the possession of symbolic items i.e. the issue of respect/recognition, prestige, and power within the society. In this perspective the incentives of competition and jealousy is included. As the competition and jealously shows the individual’s social capital. To be one step ahead of others and to have other jealous of oneself indicates what an individual has accomplished. These variables of respect/recognition, prestige, and power within the society were during the interviews identified through what an individual gain by owning symbolic items. Still only a minority of the respondents did directly link such gains to conspicuous consumption, the majority made the connection indirectly. The answer regarding the contribution to the consumer by were the questions emphasising inter alia the importance of respect, recognition, prestige and power further how to increasing such levels, influencing social identity of the individual. The vital importance of social recognition was confirmed by all respondents however the picture of how to achieve a
high level of social recognition differed. Several of the participants mentioned a good behaviour and the significance of a good dress code, preferable somewhat expensive clothes to determine the level of social recognition and respect given. Showing that the dressing is not only giving the consumer clothes covered by the consumption of necessities, but also – if so just temporary – a high/higher level of respect and recognition, becoming part of the conspicuous consumption. The level of recognition is claimed to enhance the opportunity of gaining prestige. Thus, confirming the correlation between the dual values of the items in this case the good dressing making the argumentation of the dual contributions to the consumer.

In sum it can be understood that incentives of inspiration encouraging conspicuous consumption influences the individual’s exposed to it, to view what may be gained. The main means of profit and sources of inspiration identified in empirical material was: recognition and respect, power and prestige, which is all being part of the social capital. Claiming that while the conspicuous consumption is acted out, the consumer’s levels of the three variables is expected to change. Although the three variables all stand close they will be treated separately in parts below to bring about a higher level of understanding concerning the relation to conspicuous consumption and need gratification.

6.4.1. Recognition and Respect

Respect is by the Oxford Advanced Dictionary defined: “admiration felt or shown for a person or thing that has good qualities or achievements” (Hornby, 1989, Oxford Dictionary, p. 1076). Still, the interpretation of respect is not argued universal. The definition of respect is here to be evaluated to increase the level of liability to the following discussion. The issue put into focus is the importance of an individual accomplishing a higher level of respect and recognition. Some of the respondents’ reasoning regarding the issue of social recognition and respect is illustrated:

"[Having money] [y]ou can do anything you want. You have purchasing power. That is why a person with money gets more respect than a person with little money because they have less saying in the society[...] [If you are recognised] people will be willing to help you out. If you get a problem people know you and are ready and already there to help you” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

"Respect is based on someone's appearance. If they do not dress well they will not get respect, if they are not respecting themselves they will not get respect. You cannot give a man at the bar right now in the morning taking alcohol respect" (Male, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009).

"To get respect you must first respect yourself. When you respect others they will respect you. The kind of work that you do command respect. And also if you are faithful then you gain respect[...]Respect comes with the dressing because here you sometimes see that clothes are clean and that gives you respect” (Aleman, Fisherman, Kigungu, 2009).

For "[...a family to be recognised is really good, it means that there are some other chances to overcome some luck” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).
“If you dress well people will respect you, they honour you. Just by nearly dressing well people may not see what kind of person you are [...] you might fail to see who is looking for a job and who is the boss of the place [...] So [...] because people do not know who you are. They cannot judge your background or status [...] So you win respect [...]” (Philip, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

Recognition is “ [...] to be known by very many people. Everybody knowing you and respect you. To see that you have an expensive phone and good dressing” (Alice, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

What is of importance when discussing respect is taking into account different attributes of the individual regarding behaviour and treatment of others, into the sum of an individual’s social capital. By treating others with respect, in return there is recognition and respect gained. Nevertheless, values of a more materialistic feature are repeated adding the importance of money as the possession of symbolic features and items are included. The social capital, and to a certain extent the capital of knowledge are increased by the level of these variables, indicators shaping habitus and determining social group to which one are interpreted to belong. Recognition and respect is claimed to be part of the more basic needs, in terms of identity creation. The inner need is gratified by the consumption of items related to other needs created and identified by the external environment. Items increasing the level of, out of the two mostly recognition are identified as items of prestige.

6.4.2. Prestige

The level of prestige given an individual is related to the lifestyle exercised. The major difference between recognition and respect versus prestige is that prestige is determined by what is achieved. While the respect and recognition can be increased based on how one behave. The classification of symbolic and social capital has been elaborated. The discussion continues to deal with the finding of how an individual can increase the level of prestige. The link between a high level of social recognition and respect is indeed closely connected to the level of prestige. The accomplishments taken into account is how the success developed out of the circumstances and conditions given. This is verified by the statements following:

“Yes, [it is important to be known in society] because when you get known from prestige you get many friends and people advise and admire to be your friend [...] The one with more materialistic things will be more recognised than the one who is educated because education is there only a few who know about” (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“I feel like prestige is like winning as in achieving something in life. After your education you study enough, and then you will have a nice home and nice cars” (Jennifer, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

Prestige is part of the social and symbolic capital introduced by the conceptualisation of habitus. Continuing with the fact of prestige linking the social capital to the economic and symbolic capital possessed by the individual. A clarification; economic capital creates an environment for a higher level of conspicuous consumption. Such purchases of symbolic
items increases the level of social capital i.e. firstly prestige and in a second step the level of social recognition and respect. This is making prestige an important indicator in the struggle towards living the good life as well as a method aiming for a social movement.

6.4.3. Power

The concept of power is in this case foremost emphasising the level of political power and having people dependent on oneself. As “[a]uthority might be based on achievement, wealth, education, charisma or birthright” (Lewis, 2006, p.110). The summed level of social and economic capital clears the path towards the amplification of power. What is indicated, yet not as clear in the quotes demonstrated below is the correlation between power and status and corruption in terms of politics. The possession of an economic capital is enough for a political advancement.

“In Africa there is the saying that if you are not rich you are not called into the meeting, because you cannot discuss anything” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“You will never know what will happen tomorrow. But if you only have the basic and something happens you will be dependent on others” (Peter, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009) contrary the one having more than the basics, they will manage and still not be in a position of depending on others.

“Rich people do not beg they give.” (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

It is important to have many expensive things because then “[..]you have something more than those people [leading to] people [most probably] recognise you[..][then] whatever you say they accept because you are always a level ahead” (Ben-Peter, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

By having prestige “[s]ome people hate you and some people worship you. You will always have people who will serve you, go get this for me. Go fix that for me” (Trader, Female, Nakiwogo, 2009).

Prestige is important “[b]ecause it is one of characters like important of big people in society” (Jennifer, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

There is, in terms of power a correlation to the visions displayed, e.g. to be an employer and not an employee. The power given to an individual is correlating to the number of people dependent on the individual (de Swaan, 2004). The wish of people indicating and recognising ones importance as an individual is shown by the wish to have other dependent on the capital, whether that is of capital in terms of economic, social or knowledge. The actual level of power ascribed to an individual is dependent of the level of possess capital of the same nature in the surrounding environment.

In sum it can be argued that the conspicuous consumption contribute the consumer, besides the practical use of the items, with the possibility of increasing the level of social capital. The increase of social capital is seen as needed and incentive by the perception of living
conditions within another habitus. This is creating the ownership of symbolic items a method increasing the level of prestige.

6.4.4. Reduced Social Capital

As part of the major goal with conspicuous consumption is to increase the level of capital, the methods accomplishing it are argued to be different. The process of maintaining the capital level is depending on what and how the capital amount was achieved. This goes for all the different types of capital, and to a certain extent the social capital. The response and gratification given by society regarding the three variables i.e. recognition/respect, power and prestige, is dependent on the environments knowledge about the process when achieving the current level.

As already claimed, the individual development from the conditions given determines the level of different types of capital ascribed. For example, with a very high level of respect towards an educated individual depends on what has happened after graduation:

“If you are educated and do not have any money, then you will not be respected in society” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

Methods achieving a high level of e.g. prestige and respect are dependent by other means of one’s lifestyle, ones habitus. Hence:

"[F]or someone to see you having Blue-band [a more expensive label of cream cheese] will consider you being well off[…]it becomes hard for them like next time you have a problem. They saw you having Blue-band and think of you as prestigious so they will say; Eh, you ate Blue-band but you cannot afford this minor thing?? So in the near future you cannot get helped” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

“At times [owning expensive things] it does owe you respect. That depends on how you got the things, like if you did not work and struggle for the money and people see that you have not, then people will not give you the same respect as if you have been struggling to get money to buy those expensive things. Then you become popular” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“Education can give you prestige, but limited. It can give you prestige, education and money goes hand in hand. You are being educated to earn money. But you can be learned and not getting a job. And people will not give you respect [hence you are educated and unemployed]” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

The capital gained can be reduced due to the behaviour e.g. if neighbours see you ‘cheating’ i.e. by earning higher levels of prestige the wrong way. When it comes to conspicuous consumption, if the knowledge of the individual not being able to cover the consumption of necessities, reaches the surrounding environment, that individual will not be given the same level of social capital, such as respect, as when the capital in possession was gathered after covering the individuals basic needs and then consume conspicuously. This line of reasoning, evaluated above, was commonly claimed by the respondents though the direct observations
indicated something else. The fact was that many of the respondents did possess prestigious items while they at the same time claimed not having enough money covering their needs.

The knowledge of the true standards of living is often spread in the nearby environment i.e. the neighbourhood of the individual. What is of interest is that if such knowledge of the actual circumstances of living is not spread in the society, people will continue to give the individual an equal level of capital as when the individual had achieved the level of prestige portrayed by the items in possession. Taking one of the examples from the quotations above; Society will continue to give the individual seen having Blue-band17 with the same social recognition due to the lack of information of the actual conditions of that individual. As a limited number of the society is expected to know the details behind the front created by the conspicuous consumption, the large majority of society will give the individual the social capital displayed. Therefore the method achieving social capital is the acting out conspicuous consumption, even though it can be argued to be situated to early in the individuals economic progress.

6.5. Consumption Patterns
Consumption priorities are to be found as the next step in the attempt to view the correlation between consumption of necessities, investments and conspicuous consumption, further elaborated the reasoning behind such consumption patterns. The consumption priorities will be divided into the categories of consumption of necessities; conspicuous consumption i.e. consumption to increase for example status and; investments i.e. economic capital reinvested into the actual work/business of the individual. The argumentation behind the few categories portrayed and accounted for is based on the attempt of identify the line of reasoning behind the consumption made. The analytical framework of Lull and Bourdieu will be used in an attempt to identify the actual priorities and lines of though supporting them, made by the interviewed household individuals.

The questions answered by the respondents, despite priorities of money, was; the latest item of purchase and; how much is spent on airtime i.e. money for telecommunication. The amount of airtime spent is often identified high compared to the daily income of the individual, adding the fact of the social and practical importance of the mobile phone. Due to the

17 “Blue-band” is a label for cream cheese.
different circumstances and ways of life between the three targeted groups, each group will separately be evaluated in the analysis following in this chapter.

6.5.1. Consumption Priorities

Students

“I spend my pocket money on copying handouts, typing and printing my coursework. And on some shoes and some on biscuits and so, working on my hair. That is it[...]On airtime I spend like 5-10 000 Ugandan shillings a month” (Jennifer, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

“If my uncle sends me something it is just for the basic needs, transport, accommodation and so. He sends some small [amounts] to get something for food. And on top of that we need many other things apart from the basics. We need pleasure and luxury. We also struggle to channel out the money and to find something extra here and there that can help us to stay on a level of life you want to have[...]I spend around 30 000 Ugandan shillings per month [on airtime]” (Philip, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

The spending “[...]depends on my priorities,[I] just [make] a list of priorities of how to spend the money. Like right now I am doing my research so almost all of my money goes to that, and some on hair and clothes[...]In a month I spend something like 30 000 Ugandan shillings on airtime. That is a lot[...]The latest thing. I bought some skirts” (Alice, Student, Nkumba University, 2009).

“I spend it on clothes, food, paying for my residence. I do not usually cook for myself. Then once in a while socially have fun with friends[...]we go to the beach, booze, eat fish[...]” (Kenneth, Student. Nkumba University, 2009).

The students’ pattern and priorities differs to a large extent, when compared to the urban and rural results (see below). This is due to the students’ circumstances and conditions of life, for example the fact of their semester fees being paid for. Two of them, i.e. Kenneth and Alice have accommodation and food included into the semester fee. Further the students are not interpreted to stand with the responsibility of supporting anybody else.

Priorities made in terms of capital expenditures are coursework and exam fees, which is interpreted as investments into their education. Both of the female students expressed the importance of this priority however it was not stated by the male students. A second priority identified is leisure time which is a bit harder to categorise into one of the three given categories i.e. consumption of necessities, conspicuous consumption and investments. The perception of leisure time being a need needed to be gratified. This can, among other facts be argued the base of the need of belonging to a social context adding the creation of a social identity which stands interconnected to an individual’s habitus. Although, leisure time is to be treated as expenditures in terms of consumption to which one of the two categories is standing less clearly. Pleasure time is considered needed, as stated above, yet it is linked to the issue of increasing capital of the individual. The need of belonging to a social context does not have to include costly expenses. On the other hand when belonging to a certain, chosen social context, a certain habitus selected by the individual such expenses might be seen unavoidable.
Thereby it can be claimed that the internal need of belonging has become a part of a conspicuous consumption pattern and is thereby the line of though behind such spending can to a certain extent the accounted for. Hence, leisure time often include consumption of luxuries indicating conspicuous consumption.

The students are paying very high amounts of money on airtime. This also goes for Jennifer hence her monthly income in terms of pocket money is lower compared to the other students. Such expenditures is related to the ownership of the mobile phone, which is portrayed needed resulting in airtime becoming a natural next step in terms of needs. Due to the need portrayed this is thereby not viewed by the students not perceived as unneeded or wastage of money.

Rural

“[W]hat I normally do is that I buy food twice a week on market days. On a daily basis they [the family] are giver 15 000 – 20 000 Ugandan shillings, I do not follow that money[...]but what is taken a lot of money right now is education[...]” (Experitus, Chairman of the landing site, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“Whenever I get money I get some minor cash, I cannot plan for a few thousands [therefore] I only invest in the bigger amounts of money[...]the minor notes and coins I will but things like meals[...]and some minor things for my mum and my wife[...] [e.g. a new TV for his mother]. [The latest thing I bought was] a DVD player, I had one so I bought another one[...]” (John, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“The food from the farm is basically for home consumption since I have a large family. The first thing I do when I get money is to pay [with the pension] for the school-fees. The grandchildren are [the] priority[...]The latest thing bought was “[a]second TV that is in the bedroom” (Female, Farmer, Nakiwogo, 2009).

The first thing done when I get money is to “[...]charge 10% to the church and thanking God, as it is said in the Bible. This is very valued by the church to do. [Then] I look after the children [and family] with clothes and food[...] [The latest thing I bought] was clothes for my new baby born, for my expected” (Female, Trader, Nakiwogo, 2009).

“Looking after home, food, clothes, and school-fees” (Gerie, Shop owner, Kigungu, 2009).

“First I re-invest into my first business, dairy business. Takes the money and buys a cow[...]then] I meet the basic needs like now I have to buy clothes for my kids and for my wife. Buy some small few things for the house, like a radio or a TV. So it depends on my money” (Aleman, Fisherman, Kigungu, 2009).

First “I re-invest in the business [e.g.] new fishing nets[...] I also spend on education, a certain percentage and then also in necessities at home, food, clothing” (Vincent, Boat owner, Kigungu, 2009).

Compared to the quite homogenous priorities among the students, the diversity of priorities made by the rural respondents was found. Some of the differences between the sexes were identified of distinguished priorities. What is firstly prioritised by the female participants in the rural areas is consumption of necessities, covering the basic needs e.g. food and shelter. Meanwhile male participants’ first priority tends to be the area of some reinvestments into the business, and secondly to deal with the issue of consumption of necessities. How such differences are to be understood is in this case based on cultural and gender roles, were the woman are interpreted traditional (Alastar et.al. 2007), responsible for the domestic sphere. Education is given a high priority among the participants, with the wish of the children having
a better opportunity for better conditions of life compared to the parents themselves. The priority of education is put belonging to the category of investments.

The discussion and priorities of leisure time found among the groups of students is not to the same extent prioritised in the rural group. When viewing the rural settings, ways of life and patterns of consumption, there is clearly occurring consumption of a conspicuous nature. Consumption of items such as a DVD-player or a TV is reoccurring. No longer is the division between the sexes visible. Again the difficulty with the allocation of such priorities whether the consumption of such items is viewed as conspicuous or investments. The reasoning of investing money by holding such expensive and symbolic items has been touched upon earlier in the study. Due to the interpreted nature of the items mentioned above, e.g. the DVD-player and the TV are argued to belong to the area of conspicuous consumption as the holding of such items enhances among other things symbolic capital. The discussion of airtime was current, confirming that they spent a couple of thousands Ugandan shillings each month on airtime however that differed.

Urban

“First [before] I bought a land, a house and a bodaboda, now the money goes to school-fees and feeding the family[...][The latest thing he bought was] a DVD player[...][I eat lunches close to the place I work[...][taking sodas] Fanta [when having lunch]” (Moses, bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009).

“I spend it [the income] as I gets it[...]on clothes and so[...][I budget the little I have[...][For example if I planned having lunch for 5 000 Ugandan shilling I will have it for 3 000 Ugandan shillings. When I get money and see that it will not cover for today, I will not spend it all on lunch[...] I will reduce the types of food not the amount of food so that it will match the 3 000 Ugandan shillings” (Semikula, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009) Semikula spends 1 500 Ugandan shillings daily on airtime.

“When I get the money I pay rent and buys food for the family and school-fees for the one in school[...]I just bought a bodaboda on instalments, I have some 1,5 Million Ugandan shillings left [to pay off] (Rolance, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009)

“My money is not much, but what I does is that I picks money from the market association to clear out the school-fees. The loan within the market is paid back as good as possible. I sell Matoke [i.e. bananas] for three days getting a profit of 15 000 Ugandan shillings and put the money back into the organisation. The little money that is left is spared for that is used at home to run the home like clothes, soap, food, water[...]Now I am receiving from my children I am not buying things myself[...] the ones working is the ones giving me things[...]and some pocket money” (Rose, Trader, Central Market, 2009). Rose later confirms that she spends around 1 000 Ugandan shillings on airtime on a daily basis.

The latest thing bought was “[...]new clothes, a new Gomez [i.e. a traditional Ugandan dress]” (Maria-Theresa, Trader, Central Market, 2009).

“Most of the time I re-invest it in my business[...]like cooking oil[...]meat[...]potatoes Irish[...][with my personal savings] I buy in assets like mobile phones[...]The latest thing I bought was a gas cooker and a computer, but I do not have it [the computer] yet, I would like to have it. I pay instalments and soon I will have it” (Thomas, Chef, Central Market, 2009).

“I eat most of my lunches out” (Peter, Bodaboda driver, Entebbe, 2009) meanwhile claiming that money is not enough for him and his family.
The interpretation of the urban target group is the occurrence of a higher movement of economic capital, compared to the rural group, for example a lower level of self-sufficiency in terms of agriculture food on the own farm. Thereby it is the importance of consumption encompassing the consumption of necessities higher, especially when compared to the farmers. Reinvesting in business in terms of small scale investments or to pay off loans is found firstly prioritised, prior the consumption of basic features followed by consumption of a conspicuous nature.

A new issue is put at hand in the urban group that is the fact of individual’s eating lunch out at small restaurants. This pattern portrays a choice of how to spend the income to another extent than how it is needed to spend. This action is not only portraying the basic need of food but also showing additional quantity of status linking it closer to a priority of conspicuous rather than basic feature. The wish of belonging to another habitus is especially viewed hence some of the respondents having lunch out claims not to have enough economic capital covering the consumption of necessities.

Among the urban group the existence of conspicuous consumption is found. The ownership of symbolic items was once again identified. What separated the urban group from the others in terms of such consumption is the purchase of such items on instalments. Education is again portrayed as part of the category of investments. The issue of the level of investments in the rural and urban group can be interpreted to be current however to a certain extent minor, as the level of conspicuous consumption is a part of the consumption patterns found.

Among all three groups there is a reoccurring discussion of airtime expenditures needs to be further dealt with. The priority of airtime, as seen among the students, is high concerning the amount of economic means dedicated. One example found in the urban targeted group is Rose; borrowing money to pay for school fees, paying back that loan as good as it goes. Rose claims to earns 15 000 per three working days, equalling 5 000 Ugandan shillings per day, while spending a 1000 Ugandan shillings on airtime on a daily basis, taking 20% of her daily income. As argued by both Rose and the bodaboda drivers e.g. Semikula answering the question of airtime expenditures, are used in matters of business. To a certain level this can be argued realistic, still there is an indication that the importance of such spending increased the capital of an individual as the individual does not only possess a mobile phone but can afford to spend money onto using it. Both economical capital, in terms of the amount spent when purchasing as well as the social capital is demonstrating a good network of contacts when
seen talking in the mobile phone increasing the level of symbolic capital. Airtime is therefore to be divided between the three fields of investments related to work; consumption of necessities and of conspicuous consumption.

CHAPTER 7

7.1. Conclusion

This conclusion is structured as the concluding remarks of the thesis and to relate to the research questions identified (see Chapter 1.5, p 8.)

In the analysis of the empirical material items interpreted to hold a symbolic value is identified as symbolic items. The respondents did during independent interviews identify such symbolic items e.g. a car with a high level of unanimously. Continuing with a strong connection between the ownership of such items and another habitus perceived and viewed as more opulent than the habitus of the respondent. For an item to be given a symbolic status it has to be ascribed such a level by the general public of society. The person possessing such an item is given an increased level of symbolic capital. Due to this nature of the symbolic items, the actual possession of such indicates status. As the increase of different typed of capital influences and reshapes an individual’s habitus which among other things include the social identity. Thus, the items identified are interpreted to be of a conspicuous nature. An individual’s need of belonging is combined with the vision for increased movement of capital resulting in conspicuous consumption becoming a method of gratifying the need. Reasoning behind the actions in terms of consumption choices is understood as conspicuous consumption have, to a certain extent, evolved into becoming a part in the consumption of necessities. Hence, the line between consumption of necessities and conspicuous consumption is diffused as the external environment of the individual i.e. society is influencing which of the needs that are the most important ones to gratify and the method of how such gratification is accomplished.

The good life is identified to cover the consumption of necessities altogether with conspicuous and luxury consumption, furthermore containing the ownership of several symbolic items. The vision of living the good life is interpreted achieved when an individual accomplish the description above, resulting in a reshape of habitus and perhaps even in a social movement. The conceptualisation of basic needs includes, not only the biological basic needs inter alia food, basic clothing and shelter but the shape and creation of an identity and
the need of belonging to a social context. Due to this the basic needs does not stand equal to the consumption of necessities. The inner needs are a result of external influence gratified differently. As for the participating respondent in the empirical material the importance possessing economical means in terms of money is portrayed a part of the most basic needs, based on the line of thought that with money an individual have the possibility to cover other basic needs through consumption. This pattern of reasoning was especially strongly claimed in the urban and rural group. The students mentioned money as needed for living the good life, yet were to a larger extent including other features. The students were the single group identifying a good level of security as an important indicator needed for being able to live the good life.

The conspicuous consumption is, as already claimed becoming a method of when different types of capital held by an individual is amplified. But further as while different types of capital given an individual are amplified the perceived ‘long-term’ scheme of how an individual can achieve a social movement and living the good life. One of the indentified differences between the basic needs and the good life is the possibility of consuming not only out of need but also out of want, with the goal of entering another or to move within field(s), following the line of reasoning by Bourdieu. The good life is argued to correspond to the wishes of the individual concerning items to possess being valued important for the identification of a social groups and a specific habitus.

Out of the items which the participating respondents wished to possess, symbolic items were indicating a close relation and connection between the ownership of such items and the wish for an increased level of social status and perhaps even a reshape of the social identity. The conspicuous consumption is partly based onto wishes and a vision one wants to achieve, determining which habitus given an individual. There are differences between what is needed and what is wished for as claimed by Lull. Still, the gratification of wants and wishes are of importance as there is a gap of deprivation occurring when one is not being able to gratify such. Future vision of the respondents stands very similar to the wish of increasing different types of capital, emphasising the importance of conspicuous consumption and its connection to the social identity of an individual. The conspicuous consumption is used both in terms of a need gratified through consumption and a method achieving a specific and wanted social
identity, a certain habitus. The visions and wishes are to a very high extent homogenous between sexes and ages of the participants.

There is a dual value of the items identified as symbolic in the material. The two values are of a practical nature or of a social value. The consumer is thereby argued to gain both the actual and practical use of the item bought as a social value that is interpreted to change the level of capital given the individual. It is interpreted that certain levels of conspicuous consumption is defended and argued for based on the dual values of the items.

Wastage of money is set more or less similar to the conspicuous consumption and consumption of a luxurious nature, although waste of money is portrayed as an act of stupidity and lack of future planning. However, there is a very high level of similarities between what, at one hand is perceived as wasting money and future visions of the individual and on the other containing possession of symbolic items which further is perceived as a part of the good life criteria. The wastage of money is interpreted accepted if an individual is put belonging to another habitus within which another lifestyle including a higher level of consumption is viewed current. Even though the rejection of wasting money there were a common admiration for such way of spending among the interviewed, explaining howcome such behaviour is repeated in the visions and wishes. The belief and line of reasoning that an individual automatically becomes part of the vision due to possession of different types of symbolic items is indicated. As waste is connected to a higher rated habitus, and the perception of the respondents themselves not living the good life conspicuous consumption is not seen as possible. The conspicuous consumption that is being made by the respondents is however reasoned as investments or needed, due to this there is no waste of money interpreted to occur. The conspicuous consumption is therefore defended. Another argumentation supporting such consumption is based on the external environment of the individual. Items possessed by others are becoming an indicator of what is needed to have, following the line of reasoning by both Lull and Bourieu. As Lull is claiming that the external environment influences how the more specific needs, wants and, wishes are to be gratified and further setting a standard of such priorities. Bourdieu is connecting this to the struggle either stay in current position in the individual’s field and/or actions emphasising the social movement of an individual’s habitus and position.
Incentives behind the level of conspicuous consumption have already been touched upon, in terms of future visions of the individuals and introducing the discussion of increase of different types of capital. Sources of inspiration are found to be of an external nature, as the inner needs of the human being gratified by the accomplishment defined by the surrounding environment. Results from the primary data confirms *inter alia* peer pressure, competition and jealousy together with admiration as incentives encouraging conspicuous consumption. Media was not pointed out as playing an extended role in terms of impact regarding consumption. Only two of the respondents, both of them students stated the importance of media influence.

According to the respondents there is nothing particular to be gained from conspicuous consumption. Only a small minority identified that such consumption is giving the consumer something additional to the practical use of the item. When viewing the material all in all there was found that the connection between increased capital and conspicuous consumption, leading the focus to what is gained by the ownership of such items. Three concepts was indentified i.e. recognition and respect; prestige and; power. Recognition and respect could be ascribed to an individual through the behaviour towards others, adding values of a more materialistic nature helping the enhancement of an individual’s social recognition and respect. The need of recognition and respect is part of the basic needs of human were the most distinct methods indentified by the interviewed in terms of gratification is the actual behaviour of the individual in combination with conspicuous consumption increasing the social capital of the individual. The second indentified variable is prestige, which differ from the prior hence prestige is determined by what is accomplished. Prestige is found highly connected to an individual’s level of recognition and respect. Thereby a high level of prestige is interpreted to increase the level of the social capital in combination with other types of capital and habitus is to be shaped. Capital of knowledge is here viewed as a path towards increased prestige, in terms of education. To symbolise the level of success that is connected to prestige is to own and to have a lifestyle indicating it. When it comes to the concept of power, it is linked with the other concepts identified (see above). The power that has been detected in this perspective is political power as well as the power related to having people dependent on oneself. Having power is thereby indicating the accomplishments of an individual and also influencing the social recognition and respect prescribed an individual.
An amplified level of conspicuous consumption set prior to larger investments is among all targeted groups projected with anxiousness. Claiming such priorities to hinder or delay the actual process of development in the areas and surrounding environment of the respondents. Further issues concerning such an increase is an enhanced level of consumption based on instalments. The risk perceived by such behaviour is the result of a life-long dept. The desperate need of living the lifestyle wished is further shown when individuals voluntarily get into e.g. prostitution, and through this being able support the expensive lifestyle connected to the taste of freedom in regards of consumption measures.

Even though there are different methods to accomplish a higher level of capital emphasising the long-term goal of a social movement, there are hinders which might result in the process going the opposite direction. An example of when the process of increasing capital is going in the opposite direction i.e. decreasing when an educated individual is out of work. Thereby not accomplished the expected, such an expectation is that an educated individual should be able to get a well paid job decreasing the social capital e.g. level of social recognition, respect and prestige. Further has it been seen that an individual has to rightfully earn its social position and the type and amount of capital held, that is e.g. if the individual is not taking care of the consumption of necessities. If the lifestyle portrayed by an individual is not rightfully earned or correctly corresponding to the actual standards of living, then that individual’s amount of capital is interpreted to reduce. However this is to come about in areas where such knowledge is present. Meanwhile, in areas and environments where the correct information of the individual’s life and living standards are not known, the individual will be given the amount of capital indicated by the items and lifestyle portrayed.

The consumption priorities portray a difference between the sexes in terms of what is considered to qualify as a first priority. Among the women the consumption of necessities was firstly prioritised, while minor reinvestments in the business were firstly prioritised among men. Conspicuous consumption were identified as reoccurring through the items bought thereby increasing the individual’s different of capitals, although the participants argued not to spend conspicuously. The diffuse line and separation between what is needed and what is wanted, as can be seen in the example of possession of symbolic items stands a method of need gratification supporting such consumption as being necessary or even part of the investments made.
7.2. Further Discussion

There is basically one discussion that will be brought up in this part of the thesis, that is the reasoning were the consumption of symbolic items are increasing at the expense of investments and how this might affect the development process.

The relation between conspicuous consumption and development is argued to be complex. It is claimed that an increase of consumption indicates development. Still, the risk when focusing on consumption as such, portraying all consumption as equal to development is that the actual actions taken by the individuals are not indicated at the micro level needed of possible effect by the choice of consumption. With this not arguing that all consumption might become contradictive in terms of an individual spending a too high proportion of the economic means so that the investments into the business becomes suffering, consumption can to a certain extent be used as a variable for development. Sill, there has to be set a difference between different kinds of consumption and what effect and consequences it will cause. Taking into account and emphasising what is consumed. Some share of the money spend by a person is required to return to the consumer in terms of economic means otherwise a what can be termed vicious circle might stand as the result. During the interviews minor investments was accounted for by the large part of the participants, yet the level of conspicuous items was constantly occurring, interpreted as a part of the consumption of necessities or not. Whether this is at the expense of increased investments is understood as rightfully, however this issue requires a further and deeper elaboration. The empirical material confirmed that the willingness to investment tend to ‘disappear’ as economic means are given to an individual. Instead luxurious and conspicuous consumption is acted out.

What has been portrayed in the thesis is the reasoning behind the conspicuous consumption acted out. What further has to be taken into account when attempting to elaborate possible effects by such an increase is that conspicuous items are extremely expensive. The purchase is interpreted to be costly enough that it, after being made, holds the individual back from further invest in the business due to lack of economic means. It has been showed by the respondents during the thesis that there is a level of anxiousness regarding this relation and what might be standing as a result. Arguing that the process of development is slowed down or even held up if conspicuous consumption becomes too big a part of the of individual’s spending. The very large majority of the respondents claimed that they did not spend money conspicuously still items and consumption of a conspicuous nature was identified. These were
by the respondent put equal to investments or consumption of necessities. Showing that knowledge of the possible long-term effects does not hinder the individual’s from such consumption, since what is gained by it is found more giving to the consumer e.g. increased status, need gratification and prestige.

The continuation of this discussion should emphasise the questions of; what is expected to happen in a neighbourhood where the level of conspicuous consumption is given a higher priority than larger investments? Is increased basic consumption enhancing the individual’s actual standards of living rather than symbolise a certain standard of living? What are interpreted to be the effect of the desperate wish for living the good life that individual’s freely becoming prostitutes to earn the money needed for increased conspicuous consumption and luxuries? When putting the situation on a larger scale, what is expected to happen as the conspicuous consumption is increasing at the expense of investments. Is the process of development argued to be accomplished, or is the level of development, in terms of the enhancement of living standards viewed absent?

The complex situation of the discussion initiated above is that the attitude towards patterns of consumption is based on the individual’s freedom of choice. If an increase of conspicuous consumption in terms of symbolic items increases and the level of investments decreases is leading to a delayed development process, how to approach such an issue without violating the freedom of choice. Hence, each individual is, as long as it is not an illegal act, free to consume and/or invest the economic means according to preference.
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- **Photography**

Front Page Picture, Photographer Anna Helgesson, 13th December 2009