Methodology and Methods

2

2.1   Methodology

The Hipster as an ideal type does not exist as a sociologically identifiable form, but much rather as a discursive, vague and diffuse term. It is a typological term used in social and medial discourse to describe ideal types that differ greatly across various geographic and demographic discourses, and that have subtle but significant differences in meaning. One option is to look at what these definitions have in common, which would be difficult to achieve as there are so many discourses taking place and the term itself is indefinite. The most striking observation is that the main thing these definitions have in common, is that Hipsters deny that they are Hipsters and that they live in a state of constant distinction.

My predominant experience of asking about Hipsters directly, within the social milieu associated with hipsterism, is a play with an empty signifier. Those referred to as Hipsters react with amusement and an ironic approach; or otherwise, anger and frustration. What is especially interesting in an analysis of contemporary, western society is that they seem to be a unique example of a group in a fluid society, which defines itself by distancing itself. The binding element of hipsterism is to deny that you identify with this label, this is binding by distancing that we have not seen before and therefore have such difficulty objectifying and defining.

Rather than firmly relying on the concept of an identity, their practices and general lifestyle attitude seem to base on constant distinction. Any attempt at defining Hipsters as a sociologically identifiable form is bound to, and has up to date, failed. Anyone can tell you that the "real Hipsters" are now doing very different things, than what is described in these books and articles. What exactly they are engaging in currently however, is hotly debated, in all discourses at any given time.

> Sara looks at Hannah, irritated and interrupts her: "Oh no, [a mutual friend] is way too serious to be a Hipster, he actually takes yoga seriously." They start a dispute on whether Hipsters have to do everything ironically or not, and how serious a Hipster should take what he's doing. I ask Sara about how she is constantly called a Hipster and whether it bothers her. She answers "Well, my friends mean it as a compliment I guess, I am not offended by it. The Hipster is misunderstood I think. They mean well, they just, I guess it's just important to them, the aesthetics of everything, and then people think they are superficial. But of course, I don't really know. I'm not a Hipster." Sara says the last sentence with a laugh. Hannah says, also laughing, "That's what a Hipster would say isn't it?" Sara shrugs and there is a moment of discomfort. The subject is changed.
>
> *Field Diary, Summer 2015*

This observation shows a moment of discomfort when the implicit labelling of Sara as a Hipster becomes explicit. My overwhelming experience was that the labelling is considered impolite. Those being labelled as such either feel embarrassed, angry or annoyed. Depending on their sense of humour, they laugh and ironically distance themselves from it.

There is difficulty in capturing a phenomenon that is so contested, and in this sense sociology and other sciences have either deemed it unfit for sociological analysis or merely irrelevant. In this however, sociology has failed to acknowledge the benefits of understanding such a phenomenon in a historical sense, as a tool to derive a deeper understanding of contemporary society and as such the building of identity and groups in a fluid society infused by a new spirit of capitalism.

2.1.1 Ethnographic Approach

To gain insight to the self-understanding in hipsterism, to be able to give a detailed account of the practices of everyday life, and to identify the underlying assumptions and narrative identity of the individuals, an ethnographic approach is necessary.

When analysing such a phenomenon, the struggle for individualism and the defiance against labelling and stereotyping, require creative forms of investigation. In the process of trying to understand one another, one aim is to reduce symbolic power relations that can occur in a strict interview situation. In the context of hipsterism, there is an especially high risk of asking questions that influence individuals in their answer, because the aspiration for individualism and a unique narrative of the self and authenticity are central values that structure the space. To collect data in this context, the main method of inquiry was observing everyday practices and taking part. To understand the narrative of the repondents, it made sense to allow a more natural discourse to evolve over time and in various sessions. Observations and casual and ongoing conversations with narration-generating, opening questions allowed for a naturally developed conversation on the subject of hipsterism to evolve and for my respondents themselves to recount their everyday decisions and practices, and the context they set them in.

Some casual conversation were then also followed up with narrative interviews that were held in informal settings in the spaces of hipsterism, such as the many coffeehouses in the identified area of Berlin. In these narrative interviews, it was reasonable to have a general plan of inquiry, rather than having a set of questions to ask in a specific order. Interviews were more akin to a flowing conversation, which helped reduce the influence of posed questions and power dynamics in the data.

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Noam and I have had lots of informal chats at the
store, I have told him about my work very briefly,
but mostly our conversations have been casual
conversations about books, art, culture…I asked
if we could have a coffee outside of the store at
some point, so I could ask him more questions and
take some notes. He agrees and I offer to buy him
lunch one day. He suggests meeting at a new café
on the corner of Sonnenallee and Hobrechtstrasse.


                              Field Diary,Summer 2016
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It is important in this context that the social space of hipsterism and their community are captured holistically. Participant observation, combining direct participation, observations and introspection supplemented narrative interviews in order to understand the social action from within. Participation in the activities of hipsterism would intensify that which is not explicitly stated concerning the self-understanding of the respondents, as well as reveal contradictions that are not immediately perceptible.

Furthermore, objectified media reports can complement the participant observation and qualitative interviews by providing a more transnational perspective on this global phenomenon. In a highly individualised social group, the analysis of media can help provide consistency to the individual observations and limits of collecting qualitative data under given circumstances.

2.1.2   Emergent Design and Emerging Methods

Combining these methods can provide data on a phenomenon that can only be experienced in practice and over time. Engaging in the everyday life itself and through participatory observation it is possible to specify, improve and enhance the questions and observed practices, whilst describing the social reality of hipsterism. Working with an emergent design, including phases of reflection, was crucial to keep up with new developments.

In an emergent design the investigator collects and analyses data, identifies phenomena of interest and progressively narrows down the investigation. As the investigator is immersed in the field, it allows for a personal experience and thus rich description, understanding and introspection. While these insights are being collected, the emergent design unfolds. This results in a cyclical and flexible process that allows for more precise data to be collected and the collection of data itself to be specified.(Campbellet al., 2014)

Emerging design allows for a shorter stay in the field, and still to gain insight, because a kind of interim evaluation and self-reflection helps narrow down the phenomenon of interest. This can provide a deep and focused reading of the social reality, while still maintaining the holistic experience provided by the field.

Subsequently I spent two periods of about 3 months immersed in the field in Berlin, building on the findings of my MA thesis which took place in the small student city of Giessen. In Berlin I narrowed down the research geographically, and specified and identified tools within the ethnographic palette which helped me gain better access and achieve a more precise investigation of hipsterism.

By moving the research from a smaller student city, to a highly urbanised setting in Berlin, it allowed me to tease out the subtle differences of hipsterism in a city—an

institution that depicts a stable fixation of the social arrangements in the sense of Robert E. Park—where for example the hipster milieu inhabits an area together with other populations, with various socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Characteristic of the city as Park describes is the meeting and mingling of peoples, that do not necessarily comprehend one another, that "touch elbows on the street, [and] still live in totally different worlds"(Park, 1915, p. 595). Further geographical determination, by scouting a few boroughs, consulting blogs and having conversation with locals, finally brought me to the level of the neighbourhood, as the simplest and most elementary form of association in a city's organisation. Neighbourhoods are especially interesting units of the city life as they exist without formal organisation, but express local sentiments and an individual character (Park, 1915, p. 580).

The area called "Kreuzkölln" was identified as an area characteristic of hipsterism. Located on the overlapping border between the boroughs Neukölln and Kreuzberg—Kreuzberg the largely gentrified area and Neukölln the area broadly still inhabited mostly by people of a lower socioeconomic background—it has gained recognition in media reports and within the local discourse as the home of the hipster milieu. This area, once described by the newspaper *The Guardian* as the "epicentre of cool" (Dyckhoff, 2011), finds its epiphany in the Weserstrasse, a street peppered with cafés, restaurants, galleries, shared working spaces, and concept stores combining them.

2.2   Data Collection

2.2.1   Access to the Field and Self-reflection

In the case of research that takes place in the researcher's own field and their familiar local setting, the subjectivity of participant observation is particularly challenging. The familiarity with and adaption to the field pose a very practical challenge, and thus provide an opportunity for new ideas and the development of new strategies for field work of the researcher's own social spaces. Most connections I had within the field were built through preexisting friendship, or friendships that developed through the work I was doing. For months at a time I engaged with methods of ethnography, immersed in a field in which the volatility of the significant "Hipster" was a defining feature, and thus represented the biggest challenge. It is a field, indeed a whole social milieu, in which the question what Hipsters actually are, is met frequently with distancing and self-reflective amusement. Whether one is a Hipster, is sometimes met with indignation, but mostly with irony, that constitutes

yet another affirming characteristic of the ideal type as described across various discourses.

In the sense of Bauman (2015)'s liquid society, the textbook Hipster is in a state of constant distinction: unsatisfied, he permanently discards his old self, and then redefines himself, through further distinction.

The exciting ethnographic challenge for research in familiar and home settings is especially obvious in this milieu, though not at all unique to it. Every field of research, but especially field work at home, in the researcher's domestic environment, requires the repositioning and a critical self-reflection. This positioning process must be reflected in the data.

While it is ethnographic in its essence, I realised after some initial research, that this kind of research in a setting that is not foreign to us, has other challenges, than those described in classical ethnographic works. As Forsey (2010, p. 558) describes, observation often consists of what we hear in the field, rather than what we see. While all the aesthetic elements of hipsterism are observable, the most revealing insights came from the ethnographic self-consciousness of the observed. Forsey argues that we should be aware of this. Ethnographers tend to ignore that most of their observation, when it takes place in a homey environment, is casual conversation.

Most of my observations consist of casual conversations I was having within specific spaces, or just me listening very closely while a group of friends conversed. I decided very naturally against recording any of these conversations, but would jot them down quickly on my mobile device and write them down in my field diary shortly after, or even later, so as not to make the naturally evolving conversation unnatural, or evoke some sort of power relationship between the speaker and the listener. Most informative was actually listening to other people converse during the coffee breaks, or engaging in casual small talk whilst making coffee. More insightful conversations then emerged when the relationships were deeper and existed for a longer time. Emerged in the everyday life and practices of hipsterism, it was these things I heard that helped me access the consciousness and attitudes within this field.

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Was having a really interesting conversation with
Finn, the shop manager, I asked if I could take
some notes during our conversation, rather than
recording everything, that would have seemed quite
unnatural and weird in the situation. I turned the
notes into proper sentences below. Single
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statements that were especially interesting have
been noted as direct quotes in quotation marks.

                              Field Diary, Summer 2017
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Within this work, such casual conversations are marked as "Conversation Notes".

Forsey (2010) explains that there are major links between the personality of the researcher and the methodology, but this link has not been explored enough. He challenges us to compare what we think we are doing, with what we are actually doing. Many of the questions that were asked of me during my field work was how I was gaining an insider status and able to collect so much data, with a group that is associated with such exclusivity.

```
Talking in the car with my colleague – also
sociologist doing a phd – he asks me how I can
bear working with Hipsters (he specifically means
those described as Hipsters in Giessen, a group of
young, creative students, studying Applied Theatre
Studies, very engaged, organising some festivals
and creative use of spaces, that I observed for my
MA thesis). "They are such snobs", he says. I say
"I experienced it very differently, they are quite
nice and inclusive to me. Maybe you also haven't
really tried to approach them. They even let me
join in all the organisational meetings of the
discourse festival …" He answers something along
the lines of that they are only like that to me,
and not to him, because I offer something, I am
somehow interesting because I am doing this study.
I don't find this explanation very convincing, but
also not sure why our experiences with the same
people are different. It must have to do with our
approaching them, me and this friend are quite
similar I feel. He is also quite extroverted and
open.

                        Fieldnotes from Giessen Summer 2015
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As one can see from this very early experience, just before starting the PhD research, I always assumed this had to do with my personality, I am able and willing to adapt to this field, I am just lucky to have found a research object so willing to cooperate with me and open up to me etc. However, I realised with reading and reflecting on notes such as these, that what I am defining here as personality traits, these are not inherent but express a habitual expression of my incorporated cultural capital.

Park (1915) explains in his essay about the city as an environment to observe human behaviour, that one aspect of interest is what he calls the social ritual. By social ritual he means the cultural practices one must undertake in a neighbourhood "not to arouse suspicion or be looked upon as peculiar" (Park, 1915, p. 584). Another observation that was collected later shows that this process plays a significant role in this social milieu as well.

Reflecting on some observations from the first research phase in Berlin, it became clear that the researcher's own access to the field and fitting in included practices that were part of hipsterism too. Reflecting in my logbook I realised that there are some moment of embarrassment when I ask specific questions, which means there is implicit knowledge that it important for the formation of the milieu. It is often assumed everyone knows what it being implicitly talked about and my asking for that implicitness to be made explicit is uncomfortable. Reflecting on my own position, it is a partial fitting in, because I am only a researcher and observer. My success and failure to fit in can help to map out the field of hipsterism.

Thus in the sense of my emergent design, I decided to collect such self-observation as a basis of my reflection within the field. This is why I include the very personal experiences and impressions in a logbook, as an addition to my observations. These reflections helped to further refine my understanding and supplemented the data greatly. They are marked as "Logbook" entries throughout the entire study.

I also identified key people within the social milieu and had conversations with them in an interview-like setting, however with a general plan of inquiry, rather than determined questions. Spontaneously asked narrative-generating questions encouraged them to explain their understanding of everyday practices and their attitudes. Extracts from these narrative interviews can be found in this work as well.

2.2.2 Ethnographic Imaginary and Mapping the Field

As stated before, in an emergent design the narrowing down does not only take place geographically, but also in the realm of specifying and identifying tools within the ethnographic palette that help gain better access and attain a more precise investigation.

While the researcher's proximity to the field through occuring friendships, a similar age and life phase, and similar lifestyles greatly simplifies access to the field and reduces the disturbance of the field through the researcher's presence, the hazard of closeness also increases. It is difficult to see what is all too visible and to notice things that have always been in the researcher's sight. Things are usually perceived only when they disappear or shy away from routine. It is the unpleasant and impractical, unfamiliar and otherwise frustrating things that sociologists notice, that attracts them.

If, despite the challenges of proximity to the field, we want to examine and analyse our present society, we must learn to deal with the challenges, develop methods, and overcome these hurdles.

While the possible creeping, unconscious assumption of the group's self-understanding could be perceived as a challenge to the epistemological process, the proximity to the research subjects helped me in my field of research immensely. Rather than restricting the data, careful self-reflection enriched the data to an extent that could not have been anticipated beforehand.

Parallel to the *actual* research, meaning the observations of these spaces with the lens of the theories with which I entered the field, I observed that in the discourses that were concerned with them, the respondents were often underestimated. The work in the field is only made more difficult, if the artificial boundaries between the knowing, understanding sociologists—in this case the researcher—and the incomprehensing actors—the respondents in this study—are artificially emphasized.

Sociologists often assume that individuals are deluded, naive and unaware of their privilege and their constraints. But the proximity to my field of research, the bonds of friendship based on reciprocity and the open and intimate exchange showed quickly that the actors in this milieu are indeed aware of the web they are in. There is a moment of irritation that furthers the research, when I see the unexpected: when the theories with which I enter the field are not sufficient to explain my respondents' grin about the label they are expected to deny vehemently.

Those referred to as Hipsters do not only notice how empty the signifier is, but observation and permanent presence in the field shows that they actually enjoy it, or find it amusing.

Only through intimate familiarity with the field, it becomes clear that the hipster scene is so 'post-structuralised' that this play with the empty significant has become completely conscious and akin to a lifestyle. However, the field is also marked by criticism and justifications and thus provides a complex web of relations, positions and practices that can be explored and understood by participation and proximity to the field alone. When referred to themselves the respondents' can laugh about the

label, but the process of labelling others is no laughing matter to them. This could show an implicit understanding that milieu formation os problematic.

However, for the researcher, closeness, familiarity and even friendship, must be freed from the hazards of an unconscious assumption of the group's self-understanding, through permanent and rigorous self-reflection.

In the following section I will define some elements for a conceptual framework of ethnographic research in a familiar setting that will allow a meaningful collection of data and a holistic result.

I will argue that what is perceived as a stumbling block, can indeed turn into a stepping stone for a deeper understanding of our contemporary society. Dealing with these challenges in my field has led to two approaches in particular, which shed a new light on my findings, that not only counteracted the challenges, but enriched the data and even added new knowledge.

These are on the one hand research with an ethnographic imaginary (Forsey, 2010), which can be combined with the somewhat romanticised ethnographic approach of friendship as a method (Owton et al., 2013).

The other approach is to use the access barriers of the field as a mapping of the field, based on narrative interviews with an ethnographic imaginary. To lead an interview with an ethnographic imaginary means to ask questions that are not necessarily related to the immediate concerns of the research question, and they can help to comprehend the self-narrative of the individuals. The following quote by Forsey describes the ethnographic imaginary in relation to his own research on educational pursuits in contemporary Australia:

> To conduct interviews with an ethnographic imaginary is to ask questions beyond the immediate concerns of the research question. They sample biography, seeking to locate the cultural influences on a person's life, looking later to link this to the been pursued question, or, in the inductive spirit of ethnography, to even change the question. […] We asked about the work the adults did, the work their parents did and their various aspirations. We wanted to know about the individual's experiences of formal education, their philosophies of life and education, how they viewed contemporary Australia in terms of equity and choice, and so on. In other words, listening beyond the immediate experience of locating a school as parent, student or teacher, we wanted to know about a person's social milieu, their cultural influences, in order that we might be able to make links with previous and current decision-making about schooling. Participant Observation would not have allowed us to get to this sort of ethnographic information.(Forsey, 2010)

A natural, free flowing conversation about everyday practices was not possible without at least a degree of friendship—a relationship of reciprocity, solidarity and

trust—that built an environment that allowed the individual to open up and share their concerns, cultural influences, philosophies of life and aspirations with me.

The foundation of this trust was built through my own openness: in nearly all cases the participants knew, or were quickly informed that I was undertaking a PHD thesis about precisely this milieu that they are part of and they were informed that I was collecting observations and keeping a field diary. Furthermore this element of friendship implied that I would not exploit or portray vulnerability or insecurities in a bad light, although my work would be critical. Making abundantly clear that I am more interested in the societal structures and spaces that shape this milieu, their practices and narrative, rather than the individual itself, expanded this open and honest environment.

Mostly the consent to my observation and note-taking was implicit, which is demonstrated by the following extract:

> Katherine, Lara, and Lara's sister enter the coffee shop. Lara introduces me to her sister saying "This is Tara, she's always here because she is analysing Hipsters." Lara's sister looks at me and asks who I am observing here. I say "I am just drinking coffee. Or at least trying to just drink coffee." We laugh. Lara points to her friends and explains that all her friends are being observed. I jokingly pretend to take out a notepad and take notes. Katherine says "Lara is the biggest Hipster of all, because she denies it. And calls all of us Hipsters instead." They start a conversation on how the fancy types of coffee and the aesthetics of the coffee shop make it Hipster. I pull out my laptop seriously this time and take these notes.
>
> *Field Diary, Winter 2016*

This observation demonstrates the light-hearted, unserious and unanxious way of how the respondents dealt with the label, but how they also take the practices seriously, demonstrated by the conversation following about the types of coffee and the practices of hipsterism. It also shows how access to the field has been very easy in

a place with slightly longer standing relationships, through regular participation in hipster practices and within a group of friends, who also find the research interesting. While I am partially in this group, the role was always also that of an observer. It shows that taking notes does not have to be explicit, but the consent is implicit. Taking out a laptop and starting to take notes on what they are mentioning is okay for all the respondents.

In many cases the respondents and I feel comfortable with each other. We do not harbour feelings of unease, even when we share insecurities. Social desirability no longer plays a large role in our relationships. Under these circumstances, I am able to develop this ethnographic imaginary with these respondents. I know who they are, what narrative they have of their own life, I know about their attitudes and habits, about their relationships to their family.

This friendship approach challenges the power imbalance that normally arises between researchers and research subject, just as Owton et al. (2014) describe in their paper "Close But Not Too Close. Friendship as Method(ology) in Ethnographic Research Encounters" (Owton et al., 2014, p. 4).

My experience confirmed that the relationship between me as a researcher and the circle of people engaged in the milieu I was exploring was very dialogical instead of a hierarchical separation—with a constant exchange and a mutual feeling, rather than being in a position of "wanting something from them."

Since we are well acquainted and I participate in a broad spectrum of activities, it becomes natural to talk about and recount practices of everyday life, share and constructively discuss challenges, to debate ideas about what it means to live a good life.

The following example shows this comfort and familiarity that allowed for difficult or embarrassing themes to emerge in conversations:

```
Sam and I had a conversation with me about "what
constitutes a good life". He implied that he is
often jealous of others, especially of his room
mate, because he sees on instagram and facebook
what everyone is doing, traveling, and especially
working creatively. All their jobs are creative
and fun, and this makes him a bit envious.

                              Field Diary, Winter 2016
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The friendship and reciprocal relationship led to new insights that helped specify research questions. It became clear for example that the divide between private and professional life is theoretically very blurry and as an ideal united, but does not always manifest in reality (see section 3.3.5).

A friendly, reciprocal relationship, the ethnographic imaginary and participant listening as I described here have been useful elements of my research approach, and integral elements of my toolbox for research in a familiar setting. In each situation it was assessed what approach could be helpful, and often intuitively the relationship and my actions within the field took shape. This made access easy, but as explained before, the proximity to the field bears the hazard of unconscious assumption of the group's self-understanding. Logbooking, as an expression of permanent and rigorous self-reflection, was thus later supplemented to observations, to enable a deeper understanding of the various layers of interaction.

This method of Logbooking is useful to reflect the researchers own incorporated habitus and thus to make implicit adaption and belonging to the field.

Another interesting factor is when access is denied. It became clear that while it is difficult to pinpoint the moment where access is granted and friendships materialise, it can help to map out the field by looking at social closure in the sense of Bourdieu. Friendship as a method is strongest when friendships do not materialise, because the feeling of not belonging or not being fully accepted demonstrates barriers in the field. Moments of awkwardness, embarrassment and hesitation demonstrate elements of the field and are clear markers and distinguishing features of hipsterism, rather than the more vague and blurry elements of belonging that one often can not quite pinpoint.

The use of these reflections whilst collecting data became indispensable. Through constant self-reflection by posing questions about where is access denied, where the researcher does not understand or know of something, and where situations become unpleasant, makes the self-understanding in the field more visible. It can make explicit what is implied and seemingly self-evident in this milieu.

2.3   Data Analysis: The Conceptual Triad

2.3.1   Space as a Tool

To understand hipsterism as an element of contemporary society the question of the analysis of data and the conceptualisation of hipsterism is of tremendous importance. Some of the challenges include going beyond a mere list of accumulated cultural practices and fashion symbols, or an artificial ideal type of "the Hipster" that is

purely discursive and varies across different milieus and is too transitory to have sociological substance.

The approach of understanding hipsterism not only as a set of cultural practices, but as a sociological space that can be understood as various dimensions of dialectically connected moments, helped to conceptualise hipsterism in the phase of analysis.

As a geographic and material space that is infused with meaning and imagination, conceptually conceived and also materially perceived, Hipsterism is socially produced and modified over time. The spaces are invested with meaning, real and imagined.

Foucault (2019) described that since the end of the Middle Ages and the realisation of indefinite and open space influenced by Galileo's discoveries, the hierarchy of spaces is crumbling, the divide between sacred and profane space, protected and exposed, urban and rural. However, Foucault describes that in modernity the theoretical desanctification of space has not found its practical expression yet. There are still divides upheld by institutions and practices—private as opposed to public space, family as opposed to social space, cultural versus useful, and opposing spaces of leisure and work ibid.

Hipsterism could also challenge these oppositions further and show a continuity of the development as described by Foucault into contemporary society, as their spaces are often ambiguous in these respects (see chapter 3). In order to analyse the space that Foucault describes we live in, we must take into account that we live in a set of relations and that the space also influences and tears at us Foucault (2019).

However, one cannot epistemologically start with the space, as it is not something that exists by itself, but rather is produced materially, socially and mentally over time. Both space and time are not purely material or conceptual, but rather social products—as well as society's precondition. They are elements of social practice, that enter relations with one another through said practice and activity. This is to say that, space is not just relational, but also historic, in the sense that its production can only be understood in the context of the society (Schmid, 2008).

As such, hipsterism understood with this relation to time and space, and its history, can function as a concept and structural form that is culturally significant and corresponds to social reality in a way that preserves unique elements but still provides utility for our purpose—a better understanding of social reality.

In the sense of Henri Lefebvre (1991) as read by Stuart Elden (2007) or Christian Schmid (2008), we can analyse hipsterism in three dialectically connected moments, as a three dimensional figure of social reality.

Lefebvre's dialectic figure combines three approaches that can be understood as a reconciliation of certain contradictions that mark social reality, in this case

materialism—inspired by the Marxist approach—and idealism—the Hegelian approach (Lefebvre, 1991, 68 ff).

The approach that Lefebvre supplements is the poetic, creative act of a space of representation. It refers to an, as Schmid (2008) refers to it, a "divine" realm of symbolic interaction, which conveys meaning and connects it to the material space. This third dimension expresses and evokes social norms that can map the space, they are connected to a human experience of said space.

To be more specific about these three moments of space, which can offer a conceptual tool to map hipsterism, it is interesting to look at the development of urbanism and how Lefebvre (2014)'s *Critique of everyday life* led him to this model. In an explanation by Elden (2007), Lefebvre wondered how structures, codes and signs of the everyday life integrated with biographical life. By thinking of the rural and the urban together, he was able to analyse towns and cities, and realised they were planned rather than the result of organic development. The effects of industrialisation on a superficially modified capitalist society of production and property, and the disintegration of the traditional town and the expansion of urban space, resulted in a programmed everyday life in its appropriate urban setting (Elden, 2007, p. 103).

Urbanism can be described as the ideology and rational practice of the state—such as the state's active involvement in housing construction, urbanisation, planning etc. In such an urbanised environment, everyday life is organised, subdivided and programmed; it submits to fit a controlled and exact timetable (Elden, 2007, p. 105).

As such a city can be "read", if the everyday life is decoded. One cannot just observe the negation of the traditional town, but also understand the organisation of everyday life as a social inscription, a code of control over leisure time. According to Elden (2007), Lefebvres notion of everyday life suggests that the capitalist mode of production, which has controlled working life, has now expanded its control over the private life and over leisure. This often functions through the organisation of space.

Lefebvre explains that while the ancient city appropriated its space in two dimensions: the social relations of production – the organisation of the relations within the family – and the relations of production – the organisation of the divisions of labour, hierarchal and societal functions etc. modern capitalist space is more complex in as much as it is reproduced in three ways:

> The advent of capitalism, and more particularly 'modern' neocapitalism, has rendered this state of affairs considerably more complex. Here three interrelated levels must be taken into account: (1) biological reproduction (the family); (2) the reproduction of labour power (the working class per se); and (3) the reproduction of the social relations of production—that is, of those relations which are constitutive of capitalism

and which are increasingly (and increasingly effectively) sought and imposed as such.
(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 32)

Lefebvre (ibid., p. 33) goes on to explain that this reproduction is then further complicated in modern spaces, because it contains symbolic representations of these modes of reproduction, and their intersections. These representations serve to maintain social relations cohesive. They are overt and public and coded, or covert and repressed.

All these elements are encompassed in his understanding of space and his contemplations led Lefebvre to a conceptual triad of space. As the elements subsume power relations, if broken down, they can demonstrate how capitalism is being reproduced and maintained.

Capitalism's flexibility in constructing and reconstructing relations of space in this way, stabilises it greatly. Space is shaped and folded by historical (imperialistic e.g.) and natural elements, and political processes, and thus is a social and political product. Space is a medium of struggle, its shaped by historical and natural elements, and also by political processes. If space is produced in such a way, the mode of production in capitalism has an influence on it. Elden explains that this is not a strict correspondence, but that sometimes spaces are produced by the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production.

David Harvey (2006, pp. 70–116) explains that space is of utmost importance in the functioning of capitalism, as the whole history of territorial organisation, colonialism, imperialism, urban and rural contradictions, etc. demonstrates.

This is also evident in the attempts of hipsters to occupy spaces, as well as the struggles caused by them through gentrification for example (see section 3.4).

2.3.2 Lefebvres Triad

Lefebvre realised that this element of space was missing in Marxism, as Marx's elaborate theory was fixed around time. Marx's historical dialectic did not respond to the stability of capitalism through its flexibility in constructing and reconstructing space and its relations to economy. Lefebvre wanted to dispel a false dichotomy between time and space, by analysing not only how space is produced but also how it is experienced. So while space and time manifest themselves differently, they are inseparable and are experienced within history, and as such are historical. With this new critical understanding, by analysing how space is produced and how it is experienced, Lefebvre examined the modern world, his contemporary society. (Elden, 2007)

In analysing how space is produced and how it is experienced, he realised that while space is produced in two ways, it is then experienced in a third. Lefebvre describes the two ways space is being produced corresponding to first, Marxist thinking, and second, to the Hegelian thinking and Heideggers idealist approach. Space is produced first as a social formation through the means of production, and second is as a mental construction. These two dimensions of the becoming of space are spatial practice and the representations of space. Lefebvre differentiates between the latter, as the way space is conceived, idealistically, and mentally imagined, and the former, the actual perception of space, the practical, materialistic, concrete and physical.

The spatial practice is perceived space, that corresponds to Marx's reading of reality is produced has a physical form and is generated and used. It should not be misunderstood as a mere material dimension, even though it corresponds to Marx's materialism. It designates the material and physical aspects to the social activities and interactions. Spatial practice links daily routine and everyday activities to the urban reality, for example the various spaces designated for work and leisure. Lefebvre explains that it "embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation." (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). It corresponds the biological reproduction, the reproduction of labour power and the reproduction of social relations, described above. Spatial practice can be understood as the way space is produced by society and in turn how space appropriates, controls and shapes society (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38).

The second dimension of space is the representation of space, which refers to what we Lefebvre associated with symbolism, and overt, frontal and public and as such coded relations. Representations of space are conceived, rather than perceived. These representations take place within the realm of knowledge and are conceptualised. Often scientific in nature, numbers and verbal codes are used to describe this. The codes and signs are often intellectually worked out, by urban planners, social engineers, scientists etc. These representations of space are dominant in society and the conceptions especially demonstrate the mode of production in society. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33, 38)

Schmid interprets this dimension as linguistically defined and as an "organising schema or reference for communication, which permits a (spatial) orientation and thus co-determines activity at the same time" (Schmid, 2008, p. 37).

To complete this triad, Lefebvre extends the perceived spatial practice and the conceived representation of space, with spaces of representation (Lefebvre, 1991, 39f.). This is the lived space that is experienced at the moment of intersection between physical space, the use and interaction with said space, its conceptualisation and symbolism. It's socially produced, rather than mentally (conceived space) or

physically experienced (perceived space). Space is shaped and modified by historical and natural elements, as through political process. During all this time it is invested meaning and sometimes codes. These codes are, as Lefebvre describes, more covert hidden meanings and complex symbolisms (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). It is where Lefebvre reconciles the materialism and idealism. Elden describes that this third moment is

> space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning, the space of *connaissance* (less formal or more local forms of knowledge), space as *real-and-imagined*. (Elden, 2007, p. 105)

Schmid describes that this third dimension describes the emergence of a symbolism or order that becomes a vehicle that conveys meaning. Thus, the third dimension expresses social norms and values. (Schmid, 2008, p. 37)

The important thing to note is that Lefebvre never sees these three dimensions or moments of space as separate spaces that can be unequal. It is rather that the space is at once perceived, conceived and lived, and as such, needs to be understood with all three of these aspects.

Lefebvre uses the example of a human body to explain the triad. One can consider the body as an example, and how it can be understood within these three moments as a whole. The first moment of spatial practice would be the use of the body, which can be perceived. We can perceive the use of sensory organs, limbs, gestures, activities of work and leisure, etc. The second moment is the representation of space, encompassing what can be known and conceived mentally, but also the ideology of it: the understanding of the body with its functions, ailments and cures, how its physiology and anatomy work, the body's relationship with its surroundings, etc. However, everyone would agree that the actual lived experience of the body goes beyond that, not only because it is highly complex, but because culture intervenes with the experience. It is laden with symbols, for example the heart, which is lived more complexly than it is mere bodily function, or the scientific or religious and cultural knowledge of which it is thought and perceived. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 40)

Elden uses the simple example of a park, to explain that it is ideologically and scientifically conceived at some point (by urban planners, architects, etc.) and produced through labour, institutions and technology. It is then however perceived and adapted with all its everyday practices and materiality. And the lived experience of the park is then attributed to how its socially constructed and modified over time, and imposed with symbolism and meaning. (Elden, 2007, p. 112)

The space of hipsterism can thus be analysed in relation to these three dimensions and then serve as an expression of social norms, values and experiences in contemporary western, affluent society.

While the initial idea and collection of data rather focused on the self-understanding of my respondents, and thus observed their everyday practices and self-narration with an ethnographic imaginary, the analysis went beyond the personal experience but analysed the structure of space and the symbolic reproduction and representation of societal power relations. The theoretical framework initially considered and described in the previous chapter helped the entry into the field, but the findings showed that the data can be utilised not just to understand these elements of hipster consumption, capitalism, and consumerism, but also show contradictions in the material, conceived and practical space. Ultimately, these two approaches complimented each other and allowed for the development of hipsterism functioning as a paradigm for its society.