

In a Class of Their Own:

The Role of Cultural Capital in Winning and Expanding Occupational Jurisdiction

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Abstract

It is a central project for occupational groups to establish and expand their jurisdiction. Scholars have identified abstract knowledge, material resources, and social connections as channels by which this is accomplished. We propose a different mechanism for winning jurisdiction: cultural capital, which may operate in situations where previously recognized channels do not. Our process model delineates how cultural capital is used at each of three critical stages in jurisdictional expansion: searching for new opportunities, persuading incumbents to relinquish their hold on certain existing tasks, and generating new tasks by securing the material and symbolic support of external audiences. When challengers are successful at these steps, a new jurisdictional settlement is achieved. We demonstrate this process by presenting an ethnography of a craft cluster in India where outsider designers gained jurisdiction over core tasks at the expense of indigenous artisans. We argue that this outcome is best explained by differentials in cultural capital between the designers and the incumbent craftsmen. By focusing on the cultural repertoires associated with the class backgrounds prevalent within a given occupational group, we reinvigorate the study of class while contributing to scholarship on work and occupations, the sociology of culture, and the study of social stratification.

Control of tasks, also known as jurisdiction, is one the principal concerns of any occupational group; achieving and defending jurisdiction is among the central projects of these groups (Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno 2016). Occupational groups strategically employ various resources, or forms of capital —human, material, and social—to establish, expand, and contest jurisdiction. One much-studied way that occupations gain jurisdiction is by marshaling superior cognitive skill and conceptual knowledge (Abbott 1988, Koppman 2014). Material resources, in the form of financial capital and technology, are another potent weapon in the struggle over task control (Barley 1986). Occupational groups also establish and expand jurisdiction through the activation of networks of trusting relationships, which grants them privileged information on valued tasks (Kellogg 2014, Huising 2015). When an outside group possesses one of these advantages, it may contest the status quo; when successful, it may gain jurisdiction over tasks previously performed by incumbent occupations and even over new tasks whose control is not yet settled.

Human, material, and social capital are often powerful tools for establishing or challenging jurisdiction. We present a case, however, in which an upstart occupational group was able to wrest jurisdiction from an incumbent group without enjoying any clear advantages in access to these much-studied forms of capital; this case thus suggests that the prevailing typology is not exhaustive. We propose a novel mechanism to explain this observation—cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986)—and offer a detailed portrait of its activation and use. Structural differences among social classes become entrenched in cultural habits, discourse styles, and tastes, which in turn serve as outwardly identifiable markers of social background; members of privileged classes are symbolically and materially rewarded for their mastery of these dispositions in strategic social situations. Previous studies have examined both how cultural capital is developed and how it serves

as a resource in navigating such institutional settings as schools (Khan 2012; Lareau and Weininger 2003; Stevens 2009), institutions of the welfare state (Emirbayer and Williams 2005), and formal hiring processes (Koppman 2016; Rivera 2012, 2016; Williams and Connell 2010), and in interactions between members of organizations and their clients (Sherman 2005, 2007). It has received surprisingly little scrutiny, however, in the analysis of interoccupational relations.

We argue that cultural capital can be a highly effective mechanism by which an occupational group can win jurisdiction over tasks and subordinate other groups, even in contexts devoid of obvious human, material, and social-capital advantages. We offer a process model of jurisdictional contestation to illustrate how a group's superior cultural capital can generate an advantageous new settlement. We show that cultural capital can be wielded to identify promising opportunities, placate incumbent groups, and connect with new audiences. By contrast with other accounts of jurisdictional contestation, which usually concentrate on direct conflicts for control of tasks, our account is also broader: it traces how challengers come to contest overlapping jurisdictions in the first place, and highlights the role of audiences (Collins and Evans 2007; Eyal 2013; Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, and Spee 2015) in the genesis of new task domains that complement existing jurisdictions. With an ethnographic study of a heritage craft cluster in India, we chronicle a jurisdictional contest over design and marketing work between traditional artisans and newcomer designers in which cultural capital contributed at every step to the establishment and contestation of jurisdiction.

This study contributes to several streams of scholarship. First, we contribute to the study of work and occupations by specifying embodied class-based cultural dispositions as potent tools for gaining and expanding control over tasks and thus producing material advantage. Though long a central concern of sociologists of labor, class has lately received less attention (Grusky and

Sørensen 1998); by re-introducing class (as embodied in cultural capital) to discussion of the interoccupational system, we offer a powerful new way to analyze which occupational groups claim and seize control over tasks, and to explain how they can entrench and enlarge their jurisdictions. Our process model specifies necessary stages in the activation of this mechanism. We also contribute to the literature on cultural capital, heretofore concerned with consumption patterns and formal institutions of education and hiring, by subjecting the large domain of occupational relations to an analysis of the function of cultural capital. Our study thus aggregates disparate strands of scholarship on cultural omnivorousness, tastemaking, and cultural appropriation within an interoccupational frame.

Acquiring, Expanding, and Settling Jurisdiction

Occupational groups are largely characterized by the kind of work they do, and the term *jurisdiction* has come to denote the array of tasks over which a group maintains control (Abbott 2005; Hodson and Sullivan 2011). Jurisdiction—intimately tied as it is to an occupation’s identity, social status, and livelihood—is thus central to collective action to lay claims to tasks, defend those claims against rival claimants, and expand the portfolio of tasks that an occupation controls (Abbott 1988). Though attention has been placed on institutionalized jurisdictions, control over most occupational groups’ tasks is rather informal. Jurisdiction is frequently negotiated, for instance, in *ad hoc* workplace “settlements” with colleagues from other occupations (e.g. Bechky 2003). Clients and other external audiences also play a role, patronizing the groups whose products and services best match their needs and values, and thus “voting” with their feet and pocketbooks (Sherman 2010). Such informal settlements are particularly prevalent in settings where

occupational groups are engaging in sustained competition for task control, and/or attempting to generate new tasks worthy of compensation (e.g., Nelsen and Barley 1997).

Three key mechanisms have been invoked by scholars to describe how occupations acquire jurisdiction and settle jurisdictional disputes over time: human capital, material capital, and social capital. First, Abbott (1988, 1989) argued that occupations' jurisdictions are a function of their knowledge systems: the more formalized and abstract an occupation's knowledge base, the more effectively it can defend and extend its control over the tasks it claims. Greater levels of formalization are often associated with professionalized structures, such as accreditation and selective education programs that teach theory, but even craft occupations attempt to monopolize their knowledge of techniques through apprenticeships and guilds. Power (1997), investigating the conflict between accountants and environmental engineers over lucrative contracts in the nascent field of environmental audits, shows that accountants gained jurisdiction because their central domain, auditing, was more abstract and theoretical than engineers' domain over the natural environment.

A second mechanism is material advantage. When two groups vie for the right to perform a task, the group with more financial capital or more sophisticated technology often prevails. A challenger group better endowed with financial capital can purchase more raw materials and manpower, and in turn can achieve economies of scale and finer divisions of labor. Such groups can also purchase assistive technologies ranging from the sophisticated and flashy (Barley 1986) to the quotidian and banal (Bechky 2003) to achieve their jurisdictional ends. New technologies generate new tasks over which jurisdiction can be asserted (Elias 1950); existing technologies can also be employed in novel ways to disrupt the allocation of tasks. Zetka (2001), for instance, shows how gastroenterologists employed new diagnostic scopes to lay claim to therapeutic tasks

previously performed by surgeons. Likewise, Nelson and Irwin (2013) show how the advent of Internet search engines enabled consumers to pursue their own searches for information, forcing librarians to redefine themselves as informed intermediaries between users and information.

A third, much-studied source of jurisdictional power is social networks. Such networks provide intangible resources customarily denoted *social capital*—notably trust, influence, and information—that have been shown to be advantageous in a variety of situations (Bourdieu 1980; Coleman 1988; Granovetter 1985; Lin, Cook, and Burt 2001; Portes 1998). Scholars have also documented the importance of relational work within occupations. Huising (2015) found that, by interacting with clients, laboratory health physicists amassed information and trust that their more aloof competitors, the biosafety officers, lacked, allowing them to assert greater authority over interactional tasks. DiBenigno (2019) shows how military psychotherapists used brief encounters with high-ranked officers to initiate collegial relationships that enabled them to effectively perform their core mission of treating post-traumatic stress disorder among soldiers. Similarly, Kellogg (2014) shows that social workers who served as brokers between physicians and attorneys were able to control the flow of messaging and thus to influence the enactment of health-reform initiatives.

Human, material, and social-capital explanations have all been invoked to explain how groups acquire, defend, and expand their jurisdiction. But none of the three theories pinpoints the source of the inequalities in social, material, and cognitive resources that account for some groups' abilities to wrest control over tasks. Without such an explanation, it remains puzzling why unsuccessful groups could not simply acquire the resources necessary to defend jurisdiction. We assert that these theories have overlooked conflicting occupational groups' cultural repertoires, sociodemographic in origin, which might play a decisive role in a jurisdictional dispute.

Cultural Capital as a Mechanism for Establishing Jurisdiction

We propose a new mechanism for jurisdictional acquisition: cultural capital. By highlighting this mechanism, we refocus the study of work and occupations on a subject—social class and stratification—that was long a core construct but that largely disappeared from this body of scholarship (Grusky and Sørensen 1998). Familial and institutional socialization affords members of a social class cultural resources, or *cultural capital*. These resources can take the form of embodied dispositions, tastes, mannerisms, styles of speech, and knowledge of cultural codes (Bourdieu 1986). Individuals first acquire cultural competencies through their families; they are then reinforced through educational and other social institutions (Dumais 2002). These cultural competencies offer a blueprint for navigating familiar social situations (Bourdieu 1977), providing members of a given class a collective sense of identity and demarcating the boundaries between them and members of other classes. More recent theorists have suggested that the breadth of tastes may differ between classes, such that those from higher socioeconomic-status backgrounds often display broader familiarity with the array of “high” and “low” culture (Goldberg, Hannan, and Kovacs 2016; Peterson 1992). In short, the poor have fewer tools in their “cultural toolkits” (Swidler 1986) than do the rich.

If knowledge of these cultural codes is to function as “capital,” there must be places of exchange where it can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu 1985). Bourdieu (also see Willis 1977) focused on the education system as a principal site of conversion, where the children of elites are rewarded for their dispositions and tastes and superior educational credentials; by extension, such children are also sorted into higher-status, better-compensated occupations. Since Bourdieu, scholars have examined additional locales where cultural capital is converted into fiscal

capital. For instance, Rivera (2012) demonstrates how, in organizational settings, homophilous cultural preferences are often used to screen job candidates vying for an occupational position.

When occupational groups vie for dominance over tasks (Abbott 1988), their disputes should be another venue in which class advantages can be leveraged. Just as many occupations are segregated at the level of gender (e.g., Reskin 1993), class sorts individuals into different occupations (Blau and Duncan 1967; Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Hällsten 2012; Griffin and Kalleberg 1981; Jonsson et al. 2009): thus, at an aggregate level, occupational groups possess different reserves of cultural capital. This study examines how cultural capital functions to both generate and decide jurisdiction disputes, and suggests that this form of capital can help to account for differences in other forms of capital as well.

We hypothesize that cultural capital can help challengers for jurisdiction to pursue three nested objectives: searching for promising task domains in which to assert jurisdiction, persuading incumbents to relinquish their hold on certain tasks, and creating new tasks that attract the material and symbolic support of external audiences. First, awareness of the tastes and values of elite social classes, particularly if they are changing or if unmet by existing offerings, could provide the requisite spark for an occupational group to seek out opportunities to appeal to those tastes. Such a search process might lead an occupational group to contest existing jurisdictions or to innovate new tasks for itself. Next, cultural capital can provide an alternative channel through which a challenger group can dislodge the jurisdictional incumbent. Instead of “pulling rank” by resorting to status hierarchies and deference behavior, challengers could frame their efforts to seize jurisdiction as identity-, status-, or welfare-enhancing for the incumbent group; further, they could manufacture incumbents’ tacit consent (Burawoy 1979) to a loss of jurisdiction or to a position of subordination. Cultural omnivores and those with versatile cultural toolkits would be

particularly well positioned to “speak the language” of incumbents and to show genuine interest and engagement with incumbents.

Finally, cultural capital could serve to develop and frame tasks in ways that are particularly appealing to external audiences, notably customers (Snow and Benford 1988). Familiarity with the tastes and values of an intended audience could equip challengers to fashion rhetorical language and articulate values and identities that resound with it (Anteby 2010; Fayard, Stigliani, and Bechky 2017; Zelizer 1978, 1981). Cultural capital could thus enable a group to articulate an appealing occupational identity (Ashcraft 2013) or to successfully persuade an audience of its expertise (Barley 1986; Eyal 2013; Galperin 2017; Gieryn 1983; Huising 2015; Nelsen and Barley 1997). When incumbents have not engaged in extensive relational work with audiences, challengers may seize an opening to engage in this work, thereby generating a new task domain that complements established jurisdiction over production or management. In this sense, challenger occupations may serve as tastemakers, curating products and services for valued consumers (Mears 2011, 2014). The process model presented in Figure 1 summarizes the role of cultural capital in the process of claiming, contesting, and expanding occupational jurisdiction. As an illustration of this model, we offer a case study of an Indian craft cluster.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Methods and Data

To elucidate the role of cultural capital in jurisdictional settlements, we present a field study from a traditional craft cluster, Channapatna, a town in the state of Karnataka in southern India known for its lacquerware toys. About 10 percent of the town’s 75,000 inhabitants are employed in its wood handicrafts industry, either as independent artisans working from home or

in small multi-artisan workshops known as *units*. Since the eighteenth century, artisans have produced crafts from a local wood known as milkwood,¹ which is turned on lathes to produce cyclical forms. Historically, most of Channapatna's products were finished with a glossy lacquer finish; some artisans hand-painted their products with floral or other decorative motifs. Although its artisans produce a variety of wares, Channapatna is best known for its lacquerware toys; its nickname is "*Gombegala Nagara*" ("Toy Town").

Historically, artisans fully controlled the design, production, and sale of their own products. In the 2000s, professional designers entered Channapatna and wrested jurisdiction over the design and marketing of artisanal goods. We selected Channapatna for study because it offered a representative case of an outsider challenger contesting and taking jurisdiction over design and marketing tasks, a trend evident not only in traditional craft clusters in India but indeed in many occupational milieux.

We conducted extensive observations and interviews in Channapatna. The first author conducted eight months of ethnographic fieldwork there in 2011–2012, residing near the handicraft localities and becoming deeply familiar with the cluster. In the course of fieldwork, she became aware of the entry of urban designers into the remote craft cluster and recognized that the question of how artisans and designers would negotiate their respective jurisdictions was ripe for study. She further concluded that in-depth interviewing would be the method best suited to exploring how artisans and designers understood tasks like design and marketing, and who they viewed as the rightful owners of those tasks. She therefore trained two research assistants to conduct interviews with artisans, designers, and customers of Channapatna's products.

The research assistants conducted 42 interviews in Hindi, English, and the local language,

¹ Also known as ivory wood or *hale* (genus *alstonia*).

Kannada, in 2017–2018. The first set of interviewees were individuals whom the first author had met during fieldwork. Subsequent interviewees were suggested by the first set; thus the interview sample was constructed using snowball methods. The sample also captured diversity in religion and in the size of work units (Trost 1986). We used these interviews to probe how artisans and designers understand and make sense of their work (Spradley 1980).

The semi-structured interviews ranged in duration from 26 to 97 minutes, averaging approximately 55 minutes. We began interviews by asking artisans and designers how they had entered their respective occupations. We then inquired about how they experienced their work, what they liked about it, their daily routines and practices, and the problems they encountered in their occupations. We asked how they resembled and differed from their occupational counterparts, and whether they had considered or would consider alternative occupations. These questions provoked conversations about handicraft work in Channapatna and elsewhere in India. Each interview was digitally recorded. After each interview, we recorded our impressions of the interviewee, the workplace, and the circumstances in which the interview was conducted.

The open-ended data, consisting of approximately 800 pages of interview transcripts, were analyzed inductively (Glaser and Strauss 1967) using Atlas.ti coding software. We went into the field without preconceptions and approached coding in an inductive manner. We initially coded line by line, then assigned overlapping codes at the level of sentences and paragraphs; associating a given passage of text with one or more codes served to pinpoint different ways that the designers and artisans understood recent changes. Initially, we employed 1,695 codes; the most frequent grounded codes referred to toys, domestic markets, copying of designs, interoccupational collaboration, sources of inspiration for design, and the role of prototyping in the production process. We then grouped similarly coded data into categories for further analysis. For example,

the initial codes Toys, Jewelry, Home Décor, and Gifts were bundled into the larger category Products. This iterative process—coding and categorizing each paragraph of each transcript using grounded analysis—revealed that orthodox mechanisms of determining jurisdiction did not seem to be at play. After the initial rounds of coding, we wrote memos to document patterns in the designers’ achievement of ascendancy over the artisans. In this way, we iterated between data analysis and theorizing.

Artisans’ and Designers’ Differential Cultural Capital

Artisan and designers in our setting come from radically different class backgrounds, as Table 1 shows. Artisans have significantly less formal education than designers and are primarily Muslim, a disadvantaged minority in India; artisans spoke the regional language of Kannada. The designers practiced Hinduism, India’s majority religion; and spoke the national languages, English and Hindi. The artisans were raised in the small rural town of Channapatna; the designers primarily hail from large metropolitan areas outside of Karnataka state. Most artisans apprenticed with their fathers or grandfathers; the designers’ fathers were typically professionals and bureaucrats.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Many of the designers had prior experience in various cultural-production fields. For instance, Ganesh,² a designer, shared this account of his experience prior to entering Channapatna:

I got a job offer for a pittance of a salary in a company called Sony Music. . . .The job profile was to produce classical, spiritual, devotional Indian music. . . . So for me it's always been the creative space. So either it's radio, music, television, craft and design. And this is also, I would have thought—I mean, when I was working in music, no one thought I would ever leave music, because I was so into it. One fine day I left it, and then . . . I freelanced with . . . jewelry design.

Several designers spoke of “conditioning” that they traced to their class backgrounds. For instance, Anil described how his father, a scientist, had pushed him to excel: “My mother says he

² All names are pseudonyms.

[Anil's father] conditioned you to become one of the best, and that is what you are today. So because you don't settle for anything less, you want to do it your way and you're not dependent on anybody. You do it your way. That is the conditioning."

Artisans, by contrast, described disadvantaged class backgrounds that had afforded them little of the the exposure to popular and high culture that designers had typically enjoyed. For instance, one artisan, Rahman, recounted that he was "born in Channapatna itself," that his father "rolled *bidis* [locally-made cigarettes]" for a living, and that he had attended school "until fifth" grade. He described having entered the occupation out of economic necessity: "I was studying in school but at home my father and mother were not healthy, so there was no one to earn. So there wasn't much capacity to study in school. So I thought I would also earn something and bring it home." He further remarked that he had had little exposure to "new style items" or to anything produced outside of Channapatna. This paper explores how these differences in cultural capital might have influenced artisans' and designers' construction and expansion of their respective jurisdictions.

Findings

Designers get inspiration from all kinds of things, because maybe they are exposed to a wider variety of things that are happening around the world. And maybe because of the way they are, or their mindset or the training they've had, they have the ability to look at things and . . . come out with their design collection with a different perspective altogether. . . . [It's] the exposure [the designers] have had, and the wider variety of things that [they] see around.

Sunaina, an urban businesswoman

Urban designers first began pursuing ventures in the historic Channapatna craft cluster in the mid-2000s. Though they lacked experience, training, and skill in woodworking, and possessed neither access to superior technology nor significant social ties to the area, within ten years

designers had established jurisdiction over both design and marketing of local wood crafts. Thus, in one of India's historic artisan clusters, designers from other parts of the country today control both the aesthetics and the substance of products sold as authentic heritage wares, and have created a new and more elite audience for these products. This remarkable outcome prompts several questions. What opportunities drew the designers to Channapatna? How did designers win acceptance and acquiescence from the incumbent artisans? How did they create new tasks? And how did they come to exert outside influence over design and marketing within the cluster? As the next few sections will demonstrate, and as summarized in Table 2, differences in cultural capital between the challenger designers and the incumbent artisans have been central to this noteworthy expansion of the designers' jurisdiction.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Cultural Capital and the Search for New Jurisdictions

Unmet Demand for Niche Goods among Indian Elites. India's urban middle and professional classes have grown dramatically in the last decade. In the words of Sandhya, a retailer of Channapatna wares, "People have disposable incomes. They're willing to have more designer products in their house . . . [in order] to get their house [to] have a look and feel that is different from their neighbor's house." Growing consumer power has provided middle- and upper-class Indians new opportunities to display their taste and to affirm their sense of national identity. These trends have been manifested in increased demand among upper-middle-class consumers for handicrafts produced in India, and particularly for home-décor items authentically produced according to traditional methods.

Meanwhile the tastes of affluent Indian consumers increasingly resemble those of bourgeois customers around the globe: Indian elites increasingly favor niche products with a minimalist aesthetic and sustainable sourcing. Demand for organic and sustainable goods is driven in part by growing concern about the risks of plastics and of chemical paints, especially in children's products. Manjunath, a professor at a prestigious design school, described the growing taste for organics as consumers have become wealthier and more savvy:

[People] used to buy “loose” products . . . wherever they found it on the street. Now we don't do that. . . . People have started distrusting plastic things and artificial things. There is a huge market [for organics]. . . [Consumers] know the natural methods are better . . . because they care for themselves; they care for their children.

Opportunities to purchase environmentally branded products were until recently limited to elite consumers who shopped abroad; they were not available in India. Growing demand suggested, however, that producing and selling such goods in India would be profitable. The retailer Sandhya described the nascent opportunity to cater to consumers with cosmopolitan and Westernized tastes: “They're willing to go abroad and spend [that] kind of money. Why not give it to them here?” Designers were keen to exploit elite demand for updated artisanal products.

Channapatna's Unrealized Potential. Designers were familiar with many of India's craft clusters, but the products of Channapatna presented an ideal opportunity. Many Indians were passingly familiar with the long history of heritage production by skilled artisans in the town and its iconic toys; it had recently been officially designated a heritage craft. The products themselves were distinctive, with their rounded forms and bright lacquering, and seemed ripe for innovations that would appeal to cosmopolitan elites. “[A] friend of mine had seen some Japanese magazine selling wooden toys like the stuff [being made in Channapatna],” recalled Rhea, a designer, “and it was ridiculously high-priced, very fashionable.”

Many designers knew of the town's reputation for heritage toys; some had played with Channapatna toys as children. "We always knew about Channapatna," commented Muthu, a designer. "[It] was the first choice for wooden toys. You know, Channapatna is famous for toys." Other designers discovered Channapatna wares as consumers. One designer recalled encountering Channapatna goods at a flea market; another had stopped at a stand on the highway while driving past the town on a business trip. Anil, who would later become a prominent entrepreneur in the cluster, learned of the town from a friend who was filming a documentary about its crafts. Many had learned about the town through their affiliations with cultural institutions such as the National Institute of Design (NID) and the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), which both encourage students to travel to or pursue internships at sites like Channapatna and even to develop new products in partnership with local artisans.

In Channapatna, designers perceived an opportunity to meet the demand created by growing urban affluence and changing middle-class tastes. Their affiliations and training with prestigious design schools suggested to them the ways that traditional crafts could respond to those opportunities. Numerous designers attested to the *potential* they saw in Channapatna goods. "We felt that the craft is natural; [the] materials are natural; the process is eco-friendly," said Kiran, an employee of a Channapatna-based organization that was considering starting a workshop producing its own version of the crafts locally. In terms of the technique, in terms of the craft, in terms of the history behind that, "there is a lot of potential."

Designers characterized Channapatna as merely having potential, rather than meeting demand, principally because its artisans had begun to deviate from the traditional understanding of the craft's product types and aesthetics. Many of Channapatna's artisans had begun producing simple circular products, such as napkin rings, bangles, and buckles, for international export via

middlemen. Designers viewed this pivot as having lowered quality standards and replaced the cluster's celebrated traditional lacquering techniques with chemical paints and garish coloration. In the designers' eyes, export production had led artisans to stray from authentic Channapatna craft, cheapening the products and eroding artisans' unique skills. As foreign competition increased, some Channapatna artisans had even resorted to subsistence roadside sales, including selling plastic toys from China. Rhea, a customer who had started a design house, recalled fearing that the traditional craft was in existential crisis: "That's when I was like, 'I've got to do something. This [craft] is going to die out.'"

Muthu, a designer, commented further that the artisans lacked the "ability to create a new product [or] visualize something new from the consumer side." Eventually, this state of affairs generated opportunities for designers to present themselves as potential saviors of the craft while significantly reshaping its nature and the demographics of its customers.

Winning Jurisdiction: Wresting Control over Design Tasks from Artisans

Having seen potential, designers gradually began to engage the artisans of Channapatna. The arrival of the designers was uncoordinated and staggered, the product of individual inspiration rather than collective action. Some designers commissioned local artisans to produce custom designs, sometimes in more complex products incorporating components from multiple craft clusters. For these designers, Channapatna's characteristic cylindrical style offered a solution to a specific problem—spinners for a board game, for instance, or the shaft of a makeup brush—while allowing the finished product to be marketed as representing genuine Indian-made handicraft. Other designers began their own production lines in the town, hiring artisans as employees and subcontractors to produce custom-designed milkwood products. By manufacturing *in situ*,

designers could exert considerable control over design, production, and marketing of the resulting wares.

Designers lacked the sort of expertise in woodcraft production that was practically second nature to Channapatnans. Thus, in order to produce and sell Channapatna wares, the designers would have to gain the acquiescence of the artisans. To do so, individual designers generally used one of two tactics. The first was to affirm the artisans' jurisdiction over production, a form of mastery strongly tied to their values and identities. The second was to generate benefits for artisans that further entrenched the artisans' jurisdiction over production. These practices in turn obscured the designers' gradual appropriation of control over design.

Entrenching Artisans' Jurisdictional Identity. Artisans account for some 10 percent of the population of Channapatna. For many, woodcraft is a decades-old family tradition; many artisans drop out of school before their teens to learn the craft of wood turning from their fathers or other relatives. While artisans enjoy the creative aspects of design too, the identity of artisans is deeply rooted in their expertise and pride in production. Artisans exhibit high levels of identification with their work and with the objects they produce, referring to them lovingly as their "children" or "babies" (Ranganathan and Doering 2018). For artisans, the aesthetic quality of a product resides largely in its technical sophistication; they are exceptionally attuned to minute details of lathework and brushwork imperceptible even to discerning non-artisans. For the larger-scale artisans who filled orders placed by importer-exporters and retailers, this value system manifested itself in willingness and ability to produce any product that was commissioned to exacting technical specifications. Artisan Fayad expressed his values succinctly and proudly: "I will make whatever the client or exporter asks for."

At the core of the artisans' value system is confidence and pride in mastery of traditional techniques. Artisans attributed authorship of an object to whoever had expended manual and cognitive labor on turning and decorating it. They ascribed expertise to peers who were particularly adept, and ascribed beauty to products that embodied high levels of technical precision. Designers in pursuit of jurisdictional opportunities in turn immediately apprehended the artisans' pride in production and reinforced it by deferring to, rather than challenging, the artisans' expertise over physical manufacturing. For instance, once they had begun production in their own facilities, designers often allowed artisans, both their own employees and subcontractors, to adjust their designs to make them easier to execute and scalable. As artisan Ali commented, "When the worker thinks about the design and makes [an object], it will definitely be beautiful. But when the designer sketches it on the computer, we make the required changes and give it life to make it beautiful." Artisan Amir echoed this sentiment: "They [designers] don't make it. . . . The name [on the product] is theirs, but the work is ours." Designers found that the artisans they hired or subcontracted were relatively pliant on such matters of design as form and coloration. Designer Muthu recalled: "When I ask for some changes [to a product], I feel bad about it because in my head I'm thinking they've put their head and heart into it and they've made it. But when [I] asked [artisans] to change, I don't think I [saw] any kind of resistance."

As designers exerted growing influence over design, they attempted to win artisans' compliance by affirming the locals' jurisdiction over production and deferring to the traditional system of values. Designers framed their design innovations as incremental; artisans accordingly interpreted such work as peripheral to their own core activity, production, and thus relatively unthreatening to the *status quo*. Ali, an artisan who subcontracted to designers, exemplified this attitude: "[Designers] just make some changes to the initial designs. . . . He will make the bottom

[of a piece] a bit fat[ter] . . . and gives it a new name.”

In fact the designers were substantially altering both the design and the marketing narratives of Channapatna goods, presenting them as sustainable and modern in ways that had previously been unimaginable to the artisans. Though constrained by their presentation of Channapatna goods as authentic and traditional, the designers had nonetheless modified the artisans’ most recent production practices by changing how paint colors were produced, which products were being made, and how they were being decorated. The designers again presented these changes to the artisans as mere inconsequential alterations in design or marketing, and as ways of enhancing artisan technique, thus entrenching artisans’ jurisdiction over production.

Reinforcing Cultural Benefits for Artisans. Designers revived the use of natural colorants and lacquer, which many artisans had abandoned in response to export competition and cost-conscious exporters who had little concern for tradition. By showing the artisans that there was a market for traditional methods of coloration, the designers seemingly affirmed the value of the artisans’ skills and heritage. Designers also introduced many new designs. Artisans strategically signed up to work for the designers as employees or subcontractors, with the aims of mastering new technical challenges learning how to execute new designs, and acquainting themselves with the tastes of well-heeled urban Indians like the designers. “It is more fun to work with designers,” the independent artisan Amanullah commented. “Our knowledge improves. . . . The chances of getting orders in [the] future increases.” The artisan Sohail elaborated: “In the Indian market, there is the benefit that we can find out what is the trend in Delhi, what is it in Bombay, what are people wanting? We can interact with our suppliers, the buyers we have; we can interact with them and get details. . . . If there is some awareness like that, then we won't need to depend on anyone. Then one of our artisans can easily take products to a fair and sell them there easily.”

Designers also tacitly allowed local units to copy their designs, thus expanding the range of products that artisans were able to produce. “We are not very particular that [artisans] should not copy [our designs],” commented Kiran, a designer from one of the most established design houses. “Many of the designs that we have done have penetrated Channapatna market. . . . For the next 10, 12 years, the artisans will be making [those designs].” Maya, another designer, argued that artisans had neglected to innovate: “Sadly . . . [the artisans have] stuck to the kind of products that they have been making. . . . There's not too much thought being put into what they're making. It's just the same things that they keep replicating because it doesn't take effort at their end to kind of imagine whether it could or would not work at the market end.” Independent artisans reported that studying the designers' designs had taught them what product types and features were popular; they had copied the designers' work to increase their own sales. This laid the groundwork for designers to present themselves as solving a problem for the artisans by taking on the task of generating new designs and showing that they could be profitable.

Designers presented themselves to artisans as saviors of the traditional craft cluster, demonstrating commitment to its long-term viability by paying their employees and subcontractors marginally more than did the locally owned production units, sometimes in the form of guaranteed hourly wages rather than piece rates, and by offering training and such benefits as child care. The designers were able to offer benefits because their products commanded prices several multiples higher than those charged by the artisans. Artisans in turn interpreted these gestures as both material support and as a token of designers' appreciation for their traditional productive expertise. But by accepting wages and subcontracts for their work, artisans subordinated themselves to designers who deprived them of the autonomy of choosing which designs to pursue. Moreover,

even as material benefits improved the lot of at least some artisans, designers claimed a growing share of total revenue.

Expanding Jurisdiction: Developing New Tasks by Marketing to the Urban Middle Class

Interviewer: Skilled worker or designer: who can understand customers' taste better?

Hamid, an artisan: Worker prepares the model which is given by the designer. Designer should know the taste of customer . . . Customers should say “Wow” [when] looking at the product. All these responsibilities are with [the designer].

Interviewer: Why don't laborers understand the taste of customers?

Hamid: He would be busy making product from morning to evening, inside. He can't make out who comes, outside—which kind of project, what is the amount. We don't know about that; we just know about our work and labor.

Designers had entered Channapatna intending to attract a new clientele among India's middle class. To develop this new market, the designers advanced two claims: first, that Channapatna wood crafts represented authentic Indian heritage handicraft, and, second, that they could also appeal to the tastes of an affluent, urban, Westernized audience in India's major cities. This marketing pitch, advancing both claims in tandem, was neatly encapsulated in the identity statement of Caravan Evolved Indic Craft, a Bangalore-based retailer of Channapatna crafts: “Caravan attempts to bridge the gap between the rich reservoir of traditional Indian craftsmanship and the evolving needs of contemporary living. In so doing, it seeks to revive a diverse and glorious artistic heritage and aims to protect the livelihood of artisans.”³ The next section will examine this rhetorical strategy in some depth.

Channapatna as Heritage Craft. Designers marketed Channapatna goods as authentic Indian handicraft. Their websites and product packaging emphasized Channapatna's long heritage in

³ <https://www.caravancraft.com/about-us>

handicrafts, including the artisans' simple techniques and use of natural materials. To further bolster claims of authenticity, some designer lines featured iconic Channapatna toys that customers were likely to recall from childhood. Designers also personalized products by including a biography and photo of the artisan who had produced each piece on its packaging, thus downplaying their own roles. One customer, Sunaina, commented:

I like to know their story. I like to know more about what they're making, why they're making. . . . There are some designers who are openly sharing who made [a product] and what's their story. . . . It's stories that really get our emotions out, and it's a big [part of the] decision in buying a product. . . . If I connected with the story, I connect to the product.

By presenting romanticized portraits of the craftsmen, designers sought to elicit an emotional response from consumers and to bolster the narrative that they, the designers, were saviors of the cluster. Designers proclaimed their commitment to the Channapatna craft cluster's long-term viability by declaring that the high wages they paid enabled the artisans to resist the temptations presented by economic development—namely, migrating to an urban area and abandoning craft in favor of a modern job. The same customer, Sunaina, expressed an idealized view of the artisans' struggle: “You take an artisan out of their surroundings and they're not happy. A lot of them have moved to bigger cities but want to go back, because they want to be with nature.” Designers also advertised the training, child care, and health care they offered the artisans. Caravan, for instance, declared on its website that “artisan communities are up-skilled to achieve the level of desired sophistication.”⁴ Such boasts, along with claims that they were “reviving” a dying craft, attested to the designers' magnanimous role in preserving the sustainability, both fiscal and cultural, of the craft cluster.

These claims were designed to appeal to the professional classes of urban India at an emotional level, evoking nostalgia for childhood toys, pride in a pan-Indian identity, and fear that

⁴ <https://www.caravancraft.com/about-us>

traditional crafts were falling prey to modern economic development. The designers were deeply familiar with these urban, professional values because they themselves had been socialized to share them.

Channapatna as a “Lifestyle Product.” Even as designers were affirming the authenticity of their Channapatna wares in the traditional mould, many were also appealing to modern Western values. Assertions about the natural sourcing of goods were aimed at urban professionals who favor ecologically aware products, especially child-safe toys. Several designers sought institutional certifications, such as fair-trade designations and the CE mark,⁵ to bolster their claims about product safety and sustainability.

Designers also presented Channapatna’s wood crafts as compatible with modern sensibilities and tastes, though they were careful not to contradict other claims about authenticity. Anil, a designer, pointed out that heritage alone was not a sufficient selling point: “The consumer is the one who is going to decide the future of any industry. If you don’t understand their sensibility, and you keep doing the same old stuff, I think what you’re doing is all waste.” Ganesh, a prominent designer, explained why his marketing emphasized the modern rather than the traditional:

We don’t say, “The craft is dying”. . . For us, the key word is *design*. . . . Craft doesn’t need saving; . . . craft needs relevance . . . in terms of design, relevance in terms of being functional. . . . If it is relevant in today’s times, people will buy it. . . . We have a lot of people who come in and say, . . . “You brought the fun back in[to] craft.”

To show consumers how traditional handicrafts fit the lifestyle of a discerning, modern, urban, professional Indian family, some designers produced toys based on modern technologies, such as airplanes, and exotic animals like giraffes. Several designers also created toys that met the

⁵ A certification symbol issued by the European Union to denote that a product meets certain production and safety benchmarks.

exacting design specification of the private preschools, such as Montessori and Waldorf,⁶ that have proliferated in wealthy urban Indian enclaves. Designers also sold what they called “lifestyle products,” such as lamps and paper-towel holders, that were at once functional, aesthetically attractive, and indicative of their owners’ taste and support for Indian craft. Manjunath, a design-school professor, explained that products combining modern functionality with traditional production techniques required a skillful balancing act. Using the example of a dressing table, he inquired rhetorically, “How do you get the ‘Channapatna-ness’ into the dressing table? [You cannot] just forcibly [add] it.”

Designers’ departures from traditional templates also extended to aesthetics. Channapatna wares were traditionally brightly colored but, as design student Ananya explained, designers considered such a palette out of keeping with urban professional tastes: “The target market . . . doesn’t go for very colorful things. . . . If there are a lot of colors in one particular product, then people think it’s very kitschy and loud. . . . People think about what is sophisticated, and [traditional Channapatna] doesn’t go with their taste.” Thus designers largely offered more austere decorated products. Sunaina, a customer, welcomed the innovation: “With the changing pace in society, those same products which were selling earlier are not selling today. If you were to just, maybe, mute them a little, maybe make them a little more subtle, the same products would sell.” Designers described the coloration of their products as an incremental fine-tuning of the traditional palette, informed by market testing and urban fashion trends. Manjunath, a design-school professor, recounted: “There was a natural indigo flavor that was running [i.e., popular] around the country, so we also got some indigo cakes; we crushed them and mixed them with lacquer. We generated a new possibility of color. . . . The user was the driver of the whole process.”

⁶ Both Montessori and Waldorf schools have exacting standards for toys, guided by their educational philosophies.

To these products, with their modern functionality and aesthetics, designers added catchy names, brand logos, and slick packaging—all of which the traditional products sold by the artisans themselves usually lacked. Sandhya, a high-end retailer, stated that such attractively packaged and branded products commanded a significant price premium over traditional wares and appealed to a well-heeled audience: “[Anil’s products] gave . . . a certain class to the whole Channapatna feel. [They] lent [themselves] to a certain, different crowd. . . .When you have a vision of Channapatna, [it is] a very boring, wood-based, colorful toy, right? But that's not what Anil made it out to be. . . . He gave it . . . a completely different story.”

Jurisdictional Settlement

Less than a decade after their initial entry into Channapatna, urban designers have become the principal innovators of new forms and product types in this rural craft cluster. Having created a new market among India’s professional and middle class, the designers are able to command prices substantially higher than those paid to artisans for similar products. They have also introduced aesthetic and organizational departures from longstanding practice, many of which have been adopted by the artisans. In addition to placing orders with and subcontracting work to artisans, some designers directly employ artisans in their workshops, which tend to be much larger than locally owned units though the number of artisans employed at designer houses remains small as a fraction of the entire artisan workforce. This is a remarkable turn of events: though the designers possessed virtually none of the technical skills and cluster-specific experience required to physically produce the town’s traditional crafts, they have realized most of the economic and symbolic rewards of these innovations. Table 3 summarizes the jurisdictional settlement.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

In general, artisans tolerate this settlement, though some who subcontract for designers are dissatisfied with thin margins; they point out that end-consumer prices greatly exceed the rates they are offered. Others artisans assert that subcontracting deprives them not only of productive autonomy but even of productive know-how. Artisan Haider, recalling subcontracting to a designer, commented, “I didn’t learn anything new. . . . But [the designer] learned a lot from me. . . . He made videos of all my work and took many good ideas from me.” Opposition has nonetheless been relatively localized, and arose only after designers had largely achieved jurisdiction over design and marketing.

Designers have presented their products using narratives that appeal to the aesthetic and functional preferences of urban professionals for products that blend traditional and modern features. The designers’ narratives have largely been accepted by consumers, who appear not to question the division of labor and compensation between the designers who sell “authentic” Indian crafts and the artisans who actually produce them. Customer Gayatri commented favorably on the changes she had witnessed over many years of buying Channapatna goods:

Now, I think the [product] range is so much wider. . . . [The artisans] have some designers who are sort of giving them designs, especially because they're trying to promote it all over the world and all over India. The designs have definitely changed. The finishing is better. . . . Earlier they didn’t have any packaging; they were just, you know, sold loosely in the stores. But now, for gifting purposes and all, it comes in lovely packaging. . . . The marketability and all is definitely there, and they [the artisans] are getting help, so that's why, I think, [Channapatna is] becoming more popular and available more easily. And there's a lot of awareness that these toys are even existing. Many people never knew that there's something like these traditional toys which are available.

Customer Sunaina similarly commented about the designers that they “give a different perspective. So, you know, it may be a traditional craft, but how do you...create something totally different and new? . . . [Designer objects] may be pricier but they are more marketable, because people who appreciate the art, and people who appreciate the aesthetic” will buy them.

Few customers were aware of the presence of designers in the cluster; they imagined that it was the artisans who had undertaken the shift in aesthetics and functionality that drove a revival of interest in Channapatna wares. Customers who were aware of the designers' presence typically had a relatively accurate understanding of the jurisdictional settlement, both the division of labor and the allocation of compensation. Sunaina, a customer, justified higher compensation for designers than for artisans: "It's more like a job work for the artisans. [The designers say to the artisans], 'You are skilled and I appreciate it but, you know, I will be making more money at the end of it.' . . . They say 'I know what will sell, and so it's my risk, so it has to be my way.'"

Some customers interpreted the settlement as a mutually beneficial relationship: designers taught artisans about marketing, and artisans taught designers how to produce the goods. As customer Gayatri said of the artisans, "If somebody is helping them [to make products] more modern and it increases saleability of the products, then why not? I think it's [a] good thing, if they [the artisans] are evolving and improving . . . because, on their own, they're not going to evolve. They will be making the same design for [the] next couple of decades."

Cultural Capital and Alternative Explanations

In Channapatna, jurisdiction over design work has shifted from artisans to designers, and designers have additionally gained control over the new task of marketing Channapatna wares; we argue that differences in cultural capital have driven this pattern. The designers' cultural capital equipped them with awareness of promising market opportunities in urban India and of Channapatna as a site of production capable of meeting those demands. Cultural capital is also the source of a rhetorical repertoire that prepared designers to present the town's products as both traditional and sustainable, and as sophisticated in their function and contemporary in their

aesthetics. Meanwhile the habitus of artisans constrained them to securing and defending only their jurisdictional claims to production; designers' opportunistic reinforcement of that jurisdiction enabled them to hive off design tasks and to develop a new mandate for commodified marketing work (Nelsen and Barley 1997)—tasks previously integral to the production process, but that familiarity with the professional habitus of urban India now revealed had economic value.

Cultural capital thus constitutes a means by which jurisdiction can be newly established or generated. This process is theoretically distinct from the workings of human, material, and social capital (although may operate in parallel in many empirical contexts). A human-capital-based explanation of what we observed in Channapatna would highlight differentials in education between the artisans and the designers. But what use is Muthu's masters degree in genetics or Gayatri's degree in English literature for producing crafts? The craftsmen of Channapatna are far from unsophisticated rubes; they are master artisans, who despite little formal education have highly refined skills; those who head production units tend to have as much managerial experience as the designers, if not more. Designers do possess a type of knowledge that the artisans lack, but *contra* Abbott (1988) it is not more theoretical or abstract; it is instead a matter of taste (Bourdieu 1984a). The old adage is that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but certain beholders' eyes pay more handsomely than others.

Nor can financial and material resources adequately account for the change we have documented in Channapatna. It is true that the designers possess vastly more resources than do the locals, who often live in near-poverty. But purchasing Channapatna goods and selling them across India required less capital than the average solopreneur artisan has invested in his woodshop, and there is little evidence that designers entered Channapatna with significant endowments of financial capital. And though the larger design houses have invested significantly in production

infrastructure since their entry, financial capital alone cannot account for the designers' marketing and design activities, such as developing urban markets and products suited to them. If artisans were wealthier, they might have expanded production and purchased better tools, but they would not have altered their products in any significant way. Nor does material advantage explain why artisans would not engage in such activities when doing so presented such a lucrative opportunity. Artisans use many of the same technologies as designers; many artisans eagerly showed us cellphone photos and orders received via email. Artisans also have access to many of the same media sources—but probably would not know whether and how to incorporate aesthetic fashions into their work, or how to present such innovations. Designers have not deployed much in the way of new technology; when they have, artisans have adopted the same practices in lockstep. Thus, material advantage alone does not explain the designers' successes. To the extent that financial capital has been in play, it has been usefully employed because the designers possess particular ways of seeing the world.

Finally, social capital did not play a decisive role in designers' appropriation of jurisdiction from artisans. Network- and social-capital-based explanations typically trace how social ties facilitate the trust and reciprocal obligations that foster sharing of tacit knowledge, enabling privileged actors to take advantage of such structural features as closure and brokerage. In this case, however, that initial point of entry would not account for the development of new markets, for the modification of business practices, or for artisans' acceptance of the designers, and we have little evidence of designers' prior relationships with central market actors. Though, in a sense, the designers served as brokers by opening up new markets, it is the *content* of the relations with audiences rather than the relations themselves that is most significant (Padgett and Ansell 1993). A variant of this set of explanations would focus on status. Not only did the designers come from

higher socioeconomic strata than the artisans; they also belonged to groups whose status in Indian society was higher: the designers were predominantly Hindi-speaking Hindus; the artisans were Muslims who spoke the regional language of Kannada. But this final observation hints at the correct explanation without going far enough. The artisans did not merely defer to the designers because of their higher social rank. Instead, rank provided the designers symbolic resources that equipped them to employ effective rhetorics with fellow members of their class; meanwhile habitus prevented the artisans from knowing how to use such frames and even from appreciating their economic worth. This is the very definition of cultural capital.

Not only are human, material, and social capital insufficient on their own to explain our case; we believe that cultural capital in fact ties these threads together. Cultural capital offers a consistent and comprehensive explanation of how urban designers discovered this small town in southern India, why they undertook ventures there, and how they were able to reframe indigenous products to appeal to well-heeled audiences in urban north India, few of whom had had prior contact with the town's crafts. Cultural capital alone explains why artisans acceded relatively readily to the designers' appropriation of their indigenous crafts, though the designers never learned to produce the crafts, and why they adopted practices originally promulgated by the outsiders. Thus, scholars of work and occupations must recognize the role of social class, and in particular of attitudes, manners of speaking, tastes, and values, in adjudicating jurisdictional struggles.

Discussion

In this paper, we argue that previous scholars have overlooked the mechanism of cultural capital—the repertoires of behaviors and values that distinguish social groups, particularly

classes—in accounting for how occupational groups contest and establish jurisdiction over tasks. To illustrate the workings of cultural capital, we conducted an ethnographic study in Channapatna, a craft cluster in rural southern India. Artisans in Channapatna traditionally exercised control over all aspects of craft production, but we observed that an outsider group of designers from urban India had discovered the town and gained control over the domains of design and marketing from the artisans. This paper presents a process model illustrating how the designers used cultural capital at every juncture, from search to marketing, to expand their jurisdiction by reframing traditional crafts for new urban audiences while placating the indigenous artisans.

Generalizability

The process by which jurisdictional claimants seek tasks, reframe their activities for new audiences, and placate incumbents is not unique to Channapatna; it is occurring in many craft clusters in India. Many urban retailers of Channapatna wares carry other crafts, such as Bagh block printing and jute textiles, that also evince modernized aesthetics and marketing narratives espousing heritage and sustainability. Consider the Kalhath Institute, a craft center in Lucknow associated with that city's artisanal embroidery cluster, that instruct artisans on producing products that appeal to modern sensibilities. The Institute was founded by Maximilian Modesti, a French-Italian designer with masters degrees in business and design from French institutions. Entrepreneurs like Modesti, much like the designers in Channapatna, express respect for traditional crafts and the artisans who make them but use their knowledge of tastes and cultural codes to reimagine these crafts, positioning themselves to skim off the most lucrative tasks, design and marketing, away from indigenous artisans.

We acknowledge that India is a particularly stratified society (Wilkerson 2020), but this process is hardly limited to that country. Entrepreneurs and curators in the global North have long

transformed folk and popular art into products for elite consumption. Folk melodies have long been incorporated into the canon of classical music by such composers as Benjamin Britten and Bela Bartok. Franz Liszt, the son a court musician, was inspired by music he heard played by ethnic Romani musicians to compose *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, whose central motif is based on "Simple Gifts," a song that originated in the Shaker religious community, premiered at the Library of Congress. Jazz also offers notable examples: having emerged in black communities in the southern United States around World War I, the genre was by the mid-1930s played in clubs and concert halls frequented by American and European professionals. White bandleaders like Paul Whiteman, known as "the King of Jazz," played an influential role in the reframing. Whiteman injected what were regarded by white society as "primitive" jazz tunes like "Livery Stable Blues" with elaborate, classically inspired orchestration, which helped to legitimate the new form with white audiences in New York and Europe (Phillips 2013). Thus elite composers and conductors have employed their cultural sophistication to seek out appealing material from performers and reshape it for more elite audiences. In many cases, these musical entrepreneurs shaped the very character of the musical form, influencing what audiences perceived to be the 'authentic,' thus coercing the original creators to adapt their own playing styles to the popular style.

Urban development offers another illustrative case. Gentrification—transformation of low-income residential districts into upper-middle-class enclaves—is often led by tastemakers, including artists and knowledge workers (Florida 2002). Zukin (1989) chronicles how real-estate agents and developers parlayed familiarity with urban professionals' values and tastes—ecological awareness, support for historic preservation, and appreciation for bohemian lifestyles—into a lucrative business opportunity, transforming the lofts of lower Manhattan from industrial spaces

occupied by small immigrant-owned manufacturing enterprises into high-end living spaces. In gentrification, elites with a grasp of the tastes of people like them seize jurisdiction over the meaning-making of urban space from incumbent residents and small-scale lower-class shopkeepers, who seldom reap any benefit from the repositioning of their neighborhoods.

Visual arts, music, and urban planning all offer illustrations of how jurisdictional challengers, often members of elites, can employ cultural capital to wrest jurisdiction from incumbent producers and to expand into new jurisdictions, arriving at settlements that vary from shared control to a completely new division of labor (Abbott 1988). Cultural capital can also be employed similarly in occupations outside the arts to find promising task domains, develop new audiences, and placate incumbents. Re-analysis of classic studies of jurisdictions could well show that class is often a latent factor in the rhetorical and behavioral strategies that incumbents and challengers employ in jurisdictional showdowns.

Contributions to Scholarship on Work and Occupations

By highlighting the role of cultural capital in jurisdictional contests, we hope to breathe new life into the study of class in the sphere of work and occupations. Class was long a central input variable for sociologists of labor, who observed that children were sorted, on the basis of family background, into educational and career tracks that offered differential opportunities for advancement, development, and compensation (Binder, Davis, and Bloom 2016; Lynn and Ellerbach 2017). Recent work starting with Abbott (1988), however, has shown the occupational system to be a dynamic sphere in which groups strive for legitimacy and power over their rivals, suggesting that class alone is not determinative of one's station in life. Abbott's focus on professionals—whom he took to constitute a class of their own—has diverted attention from the possibility that class is an input to jurisdictional boundary work. We present a template for renewed

attention to class within the study of work by synthesizing Abbott's conceptualization of the occupational system as a dynamic sphere where groups vie for control of tasks with Bourdieu's definition of class as a socially differentiated repertoire of aesthetic and moral preferences and behaviors; our template preserves the original insight, strongly supported empirically, that family background remains a potent mechanism for sorting into occupations.

Our study proposes viewing cultural capital as a resource that occupations use to establish jurisdiction over tasks that offer symbolic and pecuniary rewards. Though Abbott expressly rejected this possibility,⁷ Bourdieu flirted with similar ideas in his monograph on the events of May 1968, *Homo Academicus* (1984b), which shows how various scholars' class backgrounds influenced their ability to shape the crisis and thus to secure the future of their scholarship within the academy.⁸ Since that book, there has been little uptake of the proposition that class influences struggles for jurisdiction; the scant recent work that exists persists in treating class as ascriptive status rather than as a cultural repertoire. (Some work nominally addresses cultural and behavioral correlates of status, such as the ability to relate to others on the basis of shared tastes in television, language, and dress (e.g., DiBenigno and Kellogg 2014).) Promisingly, scholars of race and gender are increasingly treating class both as source of cultural practices and values, rather than merely as ascriptive statuses (e.g., Turco 2010); we are not aware of work that takes that perspective on acquisition of jurisdiction.

Class can help to account for a variety of phenomena that might otherwise be puzzling. For one thing, cultural capital can help to explain, at a once-removed level, where differentials in

⁷ In a footnote to his seminal monograph, Abbott wrote, "That professions pursue status is obvious. That this may involve class or gender alliance is unquestionable. That these alliances determine the major aspects of professional development is simply wrong" (1988:352).

⁸ Whereas French social scientists and humanists sprang from the middle classes, the medical-school and law-school professors with whom they clashed over control of the university were drawn from the elite classes, giving them a different set of values and practices with which to interpret the crisis and to entrench their ascendancy in the hierarchy of academic disciplines.

human, material and social capital originate. With respect to human capital, critics of this explanation have objected that much education serves little functional purpose; instead, credentials and titles may serve primarily as signals that their possessor comes from a certain social background and is likely to “speak one’s language.” Thus, the effect of human capital may be reduced, in part, to cultural capital. Likewise, cultural capital may help to explain why certain occupations bring material or technical advantages to the field of jurisdictional struggle. Beyond their mere economic advantages, members of higher social strata may be able to win trust and goodwill from financiers and technology innovators by invoking elements of a shared culture. Cultural knowledge may also help to explain how brokers and others endowed with high social capital search for those positions and strategically build relationships that can be monetized; individuals from particular class backgrounds draw on familiarity with the values and cultural repertoires of their friends, colleagues, and neighbors—that is, of people like themselves—to build a forceful case for jurisdiction. Thus, the construct of cultural capital, the rhetorical and behavioral frames that privileged groups use to win legitimacy and acceptance from audiences, can potentially elucidate aspects of phenomena previously analyzed with the human, material, and social capital constructs.

Cultural capital may even explain why incumbent groups accept, or at least refrain from resisting, the jurisdictional overtures of elites if their own cultural values prevent them from apprehending new opportunities as they arise. In a jurisdictional settlement adjudicated by cultural capital, a conventional conflictual struggle for control over tasks might not take place at all; much like the artisans of Channapatna, incumbents may cede control of tasks to a challenger group in a sort of symbiotic mutualism. In keeping with our process model, cultural capital can also help to explain why incumbent occupations abstain from defending their traditional jurisdictions. Contests

over tasks may result in acquiescence rather than overt struggle if challengers offer material and symbolic compensations for lost jurisdiction, even if such compensation represents only a fraction of the new value created.

Contributions to the Study of Cultural Capital

We also open a distinct new line of inquiry in the study of cultural capital. Before Bourdieu (1984a), the cultural habits of classes (styles of speech and dress, tastes in arts and leisure, etc.) were viewed as epiphenomena of stratification. Bourdieu then convincingly demonstrated that knowledge of cultural codes in fact functions as a form of capital, equipping members of various classes, particularly elites, to navigate social situations and thus to (re)produce material and symbolic advantage. The study of cultural capital has been eagerly taken up by scholars since Bourdieu, but has mainly proceeded along two lines: first, showing how cultural capital is rewarded in educational institutions (e.g., DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Lareau and Weininger 2003), and, second, evolving into a robust debate about how cultural products are consumed (e.g., Goldberg et al. 2016; Peterson 1992). We contribute to the first line by reproducing earlier findings that institutions of cultural education are a particularly robust source of cultural-capital reproduction and reward. As for the second line of inquiry, it is striking that studies of cultural omnivorousness have focused nearly exclusively on *consumption* of culture; our study suggests that elites may also be omnivorous *producers* of culture, strategically drawing on well-equipped toolkits (Swidler 1986) to identify promising sites of production, create cultural externalities for incumbent producers, and win new audiences and markets. This process is noteworthy because it offers a more direct channel than consumption whereby cultural capital is fungible with economic capital. We thus follow scholarship that has highlighted “aesthetic work” and tastemaking as a value-creating activity (Mears 2011, 2014). We also contribute to the discussion of cultural

appropriation (Rogers 2006), which recognized that the privilege of defining how “foreign” or “exotic” material and cultural objects and symbolic practices—such as songs, styles of dress, and Channapatna toys—are produced, presented, and consumed is concentrated among elites; we show that it is often situated in interoccupational contexts and that it is deeply imbued with economic motivations.

A more recent line of scholarship has examined how culture acquired through class-based family socialization is rewarded in the labor market (Koppman 2016; e.g., Rivera 2012; Williams and Connell 2010). Some evidence suggests that cultural capital may play a role in how organizations allocate tasks and evaluate workers for promotion. We show that dispositions and tastes associated with elite class status are rewarded upon entry into the labor market, not only in hiring processes but also in cross-occupational struggles in fields where hiring and employment relations are, at most, peripheral and relatively rare. Moreover, our study suggests that entire occupational groups enjoy higher levels of aggregate cultural capital than others; thus culture may function as a shared resource rather than just an individually-held resource.

Implications for Future Research and Policy

We suggest that cultural capital plays a central role in the establishment and contestation of jurisdictions. This offers a promising new avenue of research, for scholars of work and occupations and for scholars of culture; it also invites re-examination of prior work on jurisdictions. Perhaps scholars should re-evaluate how extensively class culture operated in jurisdictional dispute by assembling a corpus of past studies and using qualitative comparative analysis (Ragin 1987) to probe the role of cultural capital. Looking forward, we hope that class-based practices and values will inform future workplace ethnographies and quantitative research on how tasks are allocated to various groups.

From a policy perspective, the way forward is less clear. If we acknowledge that culture is “sticky,” the prospects for a near-term solution to advantage on the basis of values and practices attributable to upbringing appear scant. Solutions such as reducing residential and institutional segregation between classes would require significant public investment and purposeful, even heavy-handed, policies such as affirmative-action programs for educational opportunities and jobs on the basis of class. This will not be easy. Yet we are confident that, as scholars begin to embrace class analysis anew, research will shed new light on the ways that familial and institutional upbringing create opportunities in inter-occupational relations in an advantageous way, which in turn may suggest more concrete ways to address the mechanism of cultural capital by which advantages perpetuate themselves and disadvantages compound.

Conclusion

Inter-occupational fields are ripe sites for contestation over the control of tasks. Scholars have examined a range of mechanisms by which this contestation is conducted. Here, we introduce a novel mechanism, cultural capital, as well as a process model by which it is used to search for new opportunities, to gain control over existing tasks by securing the acquiescence of incumbents, and to develop new tasks with the support of external audiences. Our study thus stands at the unique juncture between scholarship on work and occupations, the sociology of culture, and the study of social stratification. While social class has long been recognized as a mechanism for occupational sorting, we expect that future exploration into the role of class and cultural capital will yield rich insights into the phenomenon of jurisdictional dispute.

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Figures and Tables

Figure 1: A Process Model Showing how Cultural Capital Is Used to Win and Expand Jurisdiction

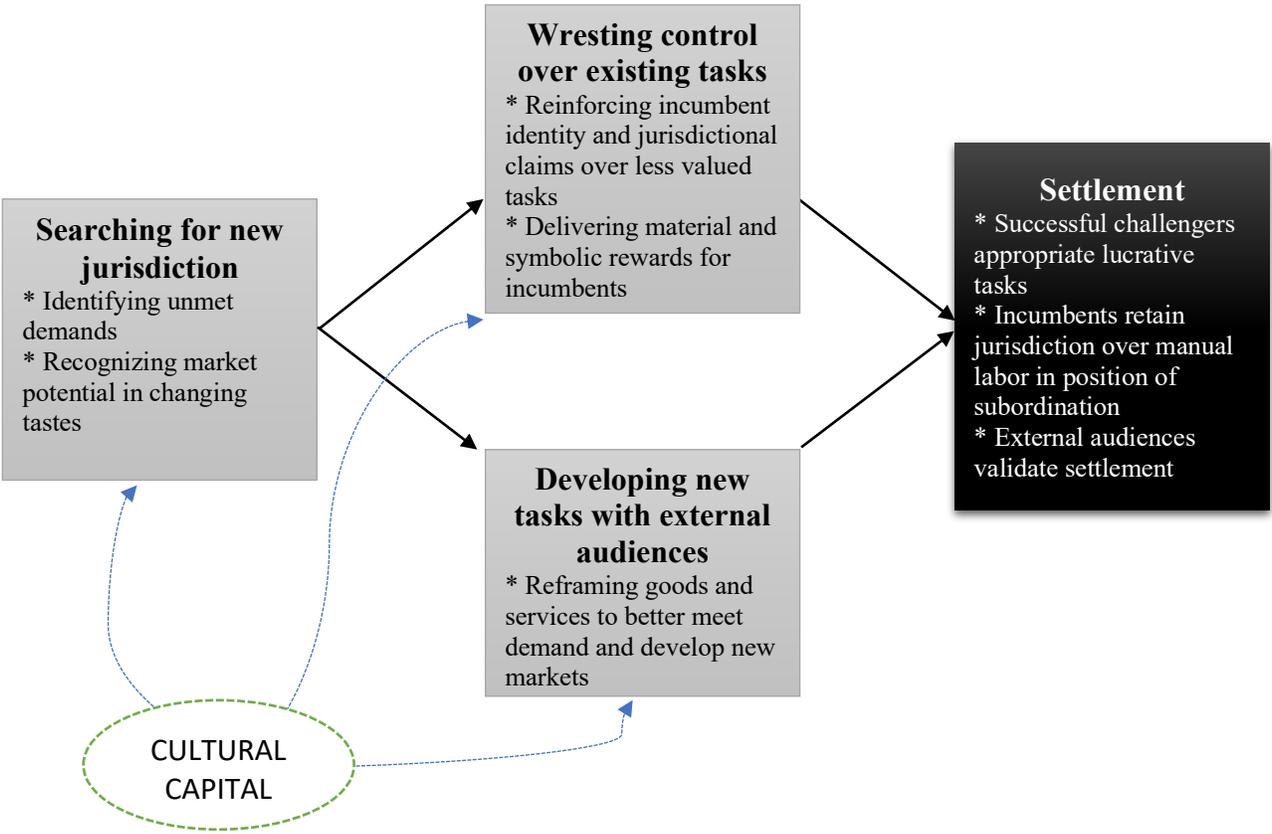


TABLE 1. Demographics of informants

Group	n	Quoted interviewees	Gender	Education	Residence	Parental occupation	Religion	Interview language
Designers	11	Ananya Anil Ganesh Kiran Manjunath Muthu Reema Sandhya	Mostly male	Bachelor and master degrees in various subjects (e.g. business, design)	Bangalore Lucknow Mumbai	Various white collar occupations	Hindu	English Hindi ⁹
Artisans	24	Ali Amir Ayaan Bilal Haider Rahman Rashid	Mostly male	Middle school, few high school graduates	Channapatna	Mostly wood craft artisans	Mostly Muslim	Hindi Kannada ¹⁰
Customers	7	Gayatri Rhea Sunaina	Mixed	Bachelor and master degrees in various subjects (e.g. business, law)	Bangalore Chennai Allahabad	Unknown	Mostly Hindu	English Hindi

⁹ The national language and *lingua franca* of India

¹⁰ Regional language spoken in Karnataka state

TABLE 2. The role of designers’ cultural capital in subprocesses of jurisdictional transfer

Step in Process	Subprocess	Role of Designers’ Cultural Capital
Searching for new tasks and jurisdictions	Awareness of Channapatna	Childhood toys, professional opportunities to travel around India, and association with prestigious design schools all familiarize designers with Channapatna.
	Identification of unmet demand	As urban professionals, designers are deeply familiar with the tastes, values, fashion preferences, and purchasing power of their peers.
	Identification of opportunity in Channapatna	Crises within the cluster and designers’ familiarity with urban professional tastes both suggest that Channapatna wares are ripe for reframing. Meanwhile artisans’ <i>habitus</i> , centered on productive expertise, suggests that artisans may not defend their jurisdiction over design and marketing tasks prized by designers.
Winning consent of artisans	Ceding production expertise and jurisdiction to artisans	Designers affirm artisans’ values, privileging production as central to their occupational identity and expertise; designers skim off marketing and design work, which they know to be lucrative, without contest.
	Reinforcing cultural benefits for artisans	Designers deliver symbolic and material benefits, aligned with external framing, that affirm and reinforce artisans’ jurisdiction over production.
Developing a new customer base	Presenting Channapatna craft as authentic, traditional, and sustainable	Designers’ intimate familiarity with their peers’ patriotism, nostalgia for craft, and interest in preserving historic clusters equips them to generate and disseminate effective marketing language, such as including artisans’ biographies and highlighting their own role in “saving” the cluster.
	Presenting Channapatna craft as a modern lifestyle product	Designers’ familiarity with urban professionals’ taste for Westernized lifestyles and products prompts them to adapt and introduce new designs with modern features and aesthetics.

TABLE 3. Jurisdictional Settlement in Channapatna

	Before the designers’ arrival	After the designers’ arrival
Artisans	<p>Exclusive control over production</p> <p>Control over design in keeping with traditional patterns</p> <p>Sales via roadside stalls and retailers to tourists and locals and to overseas exporters</p>	<p>Exclusive control over production; enhanced pride in production</p> <p>Significantly reduced scope for design activity</p> <p>Adoption of new designs and product types introduced by designers</p> <p>Subcontracting and wage-labor relations with designers for production work</p> <p>Continued roadside and retail sales at low prices</p>
Designers	<p>No presence in Channapatna; peripatetic design and other cultural activities in urban India and in other craft clusters</p>	<p>Dominant influence over design, including minimalist aesthetics, new products, and new practices</p> <p>Marketing to Indian elites using diverse frames— modern design, sustainability, and heritage—at high prices</p>