Flicks on the Big Screen or Clicks on the Stream: Exploring Contemporary Film Taste and Consumption Practices

An Analysis of the German Cultural Education and Cultural Participation Survey 2018

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to the long tradition of cultural consumption research by examining the concepts of Bourdieusian homology and omnivorousness in the context of film. It probes the interplay between contemporary societal patterns, capital distribution, film taste, and engagement in film consumption practices within Germany. Utilising data from the large-scale survey KuBiPaD I, this research investigates the associations between socio-demographic factors and aesthetic dispositions towards film genres, as well as contemporary consumption patterns, including the yet young phenomenon of online streaming services. By means of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), two structuring dimensions are found. Axis one ranges from engagement to disengagement and is further interpreted as a continuum of private-public film consumption. The axis two reflects a traditional-contemporary divide in film consumption modes and encompasses a range of film genre preferences, spanning from entertainment to intellectually-oriented dispositions. The findings reveal that cultural and economic capital are primarily distributed along the first dimension, while age is associated to the second dimension. An examination of film consumption practices has revealed that social stratification mechanisms remain highly relevant in structuring both private and public participation. Notably, a digital divide rooted in class and age has emerged, impacting the level of engagement in online film consumption. The findings indicate associations between individuals with greater capital volume and higher levels of cinema attendance. By examining different interpretations of cultural omnivorousness, particularly the symbolic exclusion of certain film genres, the research raises questions about the concept's applicability to the German context and younger audiences. However, the findings provide compelling evidence of social stratification in aesthetic dispositions towards film genres in the German context. Notably, individuals with the highest levels of institutionalised cultural and economic capital as well as preference for highbrow genres such as auteur and classic films tend to symbolically exclude mainstream genres like action and fantasy.

KEYWORDS**:** *film taste, cultural participation, omnivores, cultural capital, Germany, multiple correspondence analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the cinematic landscape has experienced a seismic shift, largely driven by the emergence of film streaming platforms. As film, a relatively young art form, becomes omnipresent in various settings – from the comfort of our homes to theatres and public spaces. This disruptive wave has metamorphosed film distribution dynamics and diversified film consumption practices, ultimately altering accessibility and the way audiences consume motion pictures (Huffer, 2017; Weingartner, 2020; Hanchard et al., 2019; Jenkins, 2008). Current sociological discourse on cultural consumption revolves around three theoretical premises – Bourdieusian homology, omnivorousness, and individualisation – that explore the role of societal factors in shaping aesthetic dispositions and participation. While traditional highbrow culture has waned in importance, cultural omnivores have emerged, embracing eclecticism and cultural tolerance as new markers of distinction.

Although previous research has extensively examined cultural consumption, the focus has often been on other cultural products, particularly music, with cinema attendance being considered among and contrasted to these (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005; Purhonen et al., 2011; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005). When there was a focus on hierarchies in film taste, it is frequently based on datasets predating the rise of streaming services (Weingartner, 2020), or overlooking a private-public dimension to passive participation (Hanchard et al., 2019; Veenstra et al., 2019). Since there has been a focus on the domain of music, indications of highbrows within the cultural form and a digital divide in online film consumption based on capital distribution have been neglected. By addressing the limitations of previous groupings and zooming in on possible disparities within omnivorous consumption, this research aims to shed light on interpretations of omnivorousness and its decline among younger age cohorts, as well as the emergent forms of cultural capital that redefine class-based boundaries of taste (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005; Hanchard et al., 2019; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005; Prieur & Savage, 2013; Bryson, 1996).

To respond to these gaps, the main research question asks: What is the relationship between contemporary societal patterns, distribution of capital, film taste, and engagement in film consumption practices within the context of Germany? Puzzlingly, despite limited and scattered cultural participation data in Germany, few studies have specifically explored contemporary social stratification patterns in relation to film preference and participation (Rössel, 2006). It addresses the dearth of non-market-oriented research on cultural consumption in Germany, particularly regarding film and its various modes of consumption (Prommer, 2015). This research seeks to address these gaps by subjecting the data from the

German Cultural Education and Cultural Participation Survey 2018 (KuBiPaD I) to a multiple correspondence analysis to map a social space of film tastes and participation.

The subsequent chapters delve into the theoretical positions on cultural consumption and their application to film. The cultural legitimacy of cinema, film genres, and the blurring of taste boundaries are examined. By exploring the cultural legitimacy of film genres and the evolving boundaries of taste, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of film consumption practices in Germany and underscores the importance of inclusive audience engagement with this accessible medium.

By means of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), two structuring dimensions are identified. Axis one ranges from engagement to disengagement and is further interpreted as a continuum of private-public film consumption. The axis two reflects a traditional-contemporary divide in film consumption modes and encompasses a range of film genre preferences, spanning from entertainment to intellectually-oriented dispositions. The findings reveal that cultural and economic capital are primarily distributed along the first dimension, while age is associated to the second dimension. Overall, the results present compelling evidence for the continued relevance of social stratification mechanisms in shaping film consumption patterns and aesthetic dispositions towards film genres in the German context.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section investigates theoretical approaches to film consumption and taste patterns by exploring societal structures within these preferences assume symbolic meaning. Drawing upon the fields of cultural sociology and film studies, the theoretical framework takes an interdisciplinary approach to understand film as a cultural form, the changes in its media and technological landscape, and cultural practices.

2.1. FILM CONSUMPTION – SIGNIFIERS OF SOCIAL CLASS?

2.1.1. Film Taste: Bearer of Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, has made fundamental contributions to the study of cultural consumption, and indirectly the consumption of film. In his seminal work "*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*", published in 1979 Bourdieu argues that cultural consumption is not simply a matter of personal preference, but is heavily influenced by social factors that lead to resource-based dispositions. Thus, social stratification guides taste. Based on data of France in the 1970s and 1960s, he contends consumption is a way for the elite to assert their social position by differentiating themselves from lower classes.

In hierarchised societies, preference and practices vary in cultural legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu identifies different types of cultural consumption, which he calls 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate'. His homology thesis entails that lower strata consume illegitimate 'popular' culture and through these practices, socially unequal structures are perpetuated (Bourdieu, 1984; Baumann, 2007). In a Bourdeusian vein, Prieur et al. explain "'legitimate culture', are predominantly possessed by the highly educated and are recognised as valuable, also by those who do not possess them, who thereby devalue their own cultural forms (symbolic violence)" (Prieur et al., 2008, p. 48). Hence, symbolic dominance of culturally privileged is expressed in their affinity for highbrow cultural products. In other words, to symbolically demonstrate superiority, dominant social classes prefer legitimate 'high' culture that function as *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1984; Baumann, 2007).

Cultural capital as a central concept is determining "access to those more exacting forms which demand a certain time and effort in order to be appreciated" (Lahire, 2008, p. 167). "As a result, although structured by the overall amount of resources, the distribution of

cultural privilege is primarily, and unsurprisingly, correlated with educational resources" (Coulangeon, 2017, p. 6). Applying Bourdieu's framework to the context of film genres, it would show the types of films that individuals consume are heavily influenced by their social position. For example, individuals from higher social classes are more likely to consume legitimate films and disdain illegitimate ones, while individuals from lower social classes are more likely to consume illegitimate films. Moreover, watching arthouse films and knowing current discourse about these films, can function as social signal for higher cultural capital (Baumann, 2007) compared to only watching popular Hollywood blockbusters.

This is because individuals from higher social classes have more cultural capital, or in other words, the knowledge and skills that are valued in elite cultural circles, and are therefore more likely to be exposed to and appreciate legitimate films. Through the mediation of the *habitus,* patterns of comprehension, appreciation, and behaviour become internalised. For instance, auteur film requires well-developed taste and appreciation for a distinctive style (Wilinsky, 2001). Ian Huffer found, the consumption of international film, which is often deemed to carry more cultural legitimacy, increases with age and income, these older and wealthier audiences simultaneously proportionately are less likely to engage in online methods of film consumption (2017). However, according to Hanchard et al. other factors beyond economic and cultural capital feature in the consumption of film (2019).

Emerging Cultural Capital

As previously stated, Bourdieu based his argument on France during the 1960s and 1970s. He insisted, however, on cultural capital as a relational concept that is inextricably linked to a dynamic wider social field (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Bourdieu, 1984). Within the social field, social groups can experience upward or downward mobility, resulting in gains or losses in their size (Prieur et al., 2008). To describe this phenomenon, Annick Prieur and Mike Savage (2013) coined the term *emerging cultural capital*.

In a straightforward interpretation of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, highbrow cultural consumption has traditionally functioned as a marker of distinction. However, in contemporary society, the relationship between cultural capital and highbrow consumption may has evolved, and it is no longer the sole determinant of symbolic boundaries. Other cultural forms and practices may now play a role in establishing and defining these boundaries. While class inequalities in cultural consumption remain deeply entrenched, they

have taken on a different form (Prieur & Savage, 2013). Today, displaying taste merely in traditional highbrow culture associated with the upper classes would be seen as outdated and disconnected from contemporary society (Prieur & Savage, 2013). For example, as the number of individuals attaining higher education increases, the value associated with this form of cultural capital diminishes. Bourdieu introduced the term the "Don Quixote" effect to describe those who hold values that have become obsolete within society (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur & Savage, 2013). These individuals from popular social groups strive to improve their circumstances, often making sacrifices to support their children's pursuit of higher education (Prieur & Savage, 2013). However, they realise that higher education itself no longer holds the values they had hoped for, rendering their efforts futile (Prieur & Savage, 2013). This phenomenon highlights the disparity between their aspirations and the evolving dynamics of cultural capital in contemporary society. With the culturally privileged to include other choices in their repertoire to demonstrate superiority and thereby serve as new forms of cultural capital.

Beyond that, since cultural capital is dependent on perception, which can change over time, it lacks a universal standard. Consequently, cultural markers in France may slightly differ from those in Germany. Given the technological and societal changes that have occurred since the 1970s, it would be imprudent to presume that cultural capital has remained unchanged in its form (Prieur & Savage, 2013). Moreover, a significant portion of the criticism directed towards Bourdieu's model originates from research on music, and the ways in which individuals consume music possibly differ in structure from other forms of cultural consumption (Prieur et al., 2008). In conclusion, cultural capital is a concept in motion depending on a social space and can differ depending on a specific aspect of cultural consumption. Hence, “what is regarded today as expressions of refined taste may be de´classe´ tomorrow; and what is regarded as fashionable in France may be disregarded in Japan, or vice versa” (Prieur et al., 2008).

2.1.2. Film Omnivores

The debates and research surrounding cultural omnivores have spanned over decades and across the globe. In the 1990s, Richard Peterson and Richard Kern introduced omnivorousness as an antithesis to snobbishness in the realm of cultural consumption. As one of the most well-known proponents of this position they brought to light, individuals of

higher social status consume a broader range of cultural goods, and through their eclecticism and entailed cultural openness, transgress symbolic boundaries (1996).

The *omnivore-univore* approach suggests the homology argument within modern western society is outdated (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2010; Hanchard et al., 2019; Weingartner, 2020). Hereby they refer to structural changes, for instance increased prosperity, educational expansion, increased geographical and social mobility as the social basis for the erosion of snobbish exclusion (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Rössel, 2006; Van Eijk & Knulst, 2005). Having conducted their research on the US population, Peterson and Kern focused their empirical analysis on cultural diversity, as measured by the number of music genres consumed. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily imply that a person oriented towards high culture would suddenly develop an equal appreciation for all music genres (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Rössel, 2006).

Omnivorousness is an extension of cultural capital rather than its demise, as it is itself "a modality of cultural capital" (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 256; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010). As a concept, *omnivorousness* refers to shifts in cultural participation of upper social strata evident in boundary-crossing behaviours. For instance, to be a 'true' omnivore in the cultural sphere of film, watching a variety of genres (e.g. action and horror films) is not enough, but has to include "disparate levels of sophistication" (Weingartner, 2020, p. 3). Hence, the consumption of, for example, auteur films and action films is needed (Weingartner, 2020). Elites no longer consume with snobbish exclusivity but embrace an extension of their cultural repertoire along the spectrum of high and low brow cultural products, and not considering the latter as trivial (De Vries & Reeves, 2021). Thus, cultural tolerance functions as a status-marker (Weingartner, 2020; Bennett et al., 2009).

Studies conducted in the US (Peterson & Kern, 1996), the UK (Bennet et al., 2009; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005, 2010), the Netherlands (Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005), Denmark (Prieur & Savage, 2013), Spain (Lizardo, 2005), Finland (Purhonen et al., 2011), and Belgium (Roose & Stichele, 2010) primarily informed the discussion around omnivorous consumption (De Vries & Reeves, 2021). The omnivore thesis could not be verified in the case of Germany, this will be detailed in the later sections to follow (Neuhoff, 2001; Rössel, 2006). Amongst the innumerable items of research within the field of sociology of culture, only a few studies investigated cinema attendance amongst others, but not in combination with film genres as the mere subject (Huffer, 2017; Weingartner, 2020; Hanchard et al., 2019; Rössel, 2006). Studies predominately focused on music genres (Rössel, 2006). Additionally, people might be omnivorous in one cultural field but not in another (Hanchard et al., 2019;

Roux et al., 2008). Furthermore, the internet may have influenced film consumption, as demonstrated by Sebastian Weingartner's investigation (2020), which will be further examined in the chapter titled “Algorithmic Gatekeepers”.

Chan and Goldthorpe (2010) suggest there are cultural consumption patterns that do not fall into the homology and individualisation argument, but rather can be described as *inactive*, *paucivore* and *univore* consumption. Hanchard et al. (2019) expanded this by adjusting different types of omnivorous engagement in film, since the concept as defined by Chan and Goldthorpe (2010) does not neatly fit. Chan and Goldthorpe argue that cultural consumption continues to function as a marker of social distinction (2010). Thus, individuals from distinct social classes tend to consume cultural products in ways that serve as symbolic boundaries. With people from higher social classes more likely to consume highbrow cultural products as well as lowbrow ones, and people from lower social classes more likely to consume popular cultural products such as mainstream Hollywood films. However, research suggests that omnivorousness is declining amongst younger generations (Van Eijk & Knulst, 2005). This may be due to changes in cultural production and distribution, as well as shifts in socialisation in terms of generational values and attitudes towards culture and participation in such. Based on a Dutch data set, Koen van Eijk and Wim Knulst found that omnivorousness amongst higher educated younger cohorts decreases as young people’s consumption turns to pop-cultural products (2005).

Cultural Tastes: Equal Ground or Class Boundaries?

Robert de Vries and Aaron Reeves (2021) attribute the ongoing debate around omnivorousness to its inherent ambiguity. To remove the ambiguity and clarify the meaning of the concept, they propose two possible interpretations – a weak and a strong one (De Vries & Reeves, 2021). The *weak interpretation* proposes (1) high engagement levels in several distinct cultural forms, (2) the enjoyment of both non-elite and elite forms, yet without including a dimension of cultural exclusivity. Whereas, the *strong interpretation* adds an egalitarian approach to consumption that rejects snobbishness. Reeves and de Vries provide an extensive but not exhaustive summary of empirical undertakings, both qualitative and quantitative. De Vries and Reeves call for applying a “fine-grained” measure of cultural exclusivity (De Vries & Reeves, 2021).

In her study, Bethany Bryson (1996), more than Michael Emmison (2003), focuses on the actual tolerance and openness towards different musical genres. Therefore, she not primarily asks, how well participants know genres or how many they like, but she looks at the

number of genres people disapprove of (Bryson, 1996; Rössel, 2006). Her approach is builds upon studies on education and tolerance in the field of political sociology (Rössel, 2006). In her analysis of the US General Social Survey of 1993 she can find clear empirical support for her thesis: On the one hand, do highly educated clearly disapprove of fewer genres than less educated persons, on the other hand it becomes evident, that the extent of tolerance is dependent on the listeners' social structure. Relatively tolerant individuals are especially intolerant towards genres that are favoured by individuals with less cultural capital (Bryson 1996; Rössel, 2006).

Similarly, de Vries and Reeves (2021), in their empirical research, focus on dislikes to measure snobbish exclusion of lowbrow products by highbrow consumers (i.e. opera and classical music concert attendance and art gallery visits). Consequently, with their emphasis on disapproval from the highbrow cultural elite, they put the *strong interpretation* of the omnivore thesis to the test. While their findings showed broader, more inclusive taste in general, it looks different for less legitimate cultural products such as the disapproval of highbrow consumers for action, romance, and horror films (De Vries & Reeves, 2021). Therefore, their results are unsupportive of the strong interpretation of omnivorousness due to the class-based exclusivity in film consumption (De Vries & Reeves, 2021).

Are There German Film Omnivores?

So far, the reception of the omnivore thesis in German-speaking countries has been mainly limited to theoretical discussions (Gebesmair 1998, 2001; Hartmann 1999; Neuhoff 2001; Rössel, 2006). Hans Neuhoff (2001) conducted an empirical inquiry on the transferability of the concept to the situation in Germany in the field of music, while Jörg Rössel (2006) focused on the film genres (2006). Neuhoff's study analysed the transferability of the omnivore thesis to German society, and his results strongly question its applicability to cultural change processes in Germany. His study is based on a survey of over 6000 concert attendees of various types in Berlin from 1998-1999. However, in doing so, he may exclude a population that does not attend concerts, as he acknowledges. He primarily follows the approach of Peterson and Kern, yet additionally considers the amount of disliked popular music genres, thus a marker for cultural tolerance, which is primarily found in the study conducted by Bryson. He compares 'highbrows' with other individuals regarding their preference and rejection of popular music genres (Rössel, 2006).

In his analysis, Neuhoff scrutinised Peterson's and Bryson's interpretation of the omnivore phenomenon in regard to Germany (Neuhoff, 200; Rössel, 2006). Neuhoff concluded that in Germany, 'highbrows' have a distinct preference for fewer popular music genres than other participants. Furthermore, Neuhoff found that the 'highbrow' group had a higher number of dislikes for popular music genres than the other group (Neuhoff, 2001; Rössel, 2006). Based on these findings, Neuhoff concluded that Peterson and Kern's omnivore argument cannot be applied to Germany. Instead, his results rather suggest a survival of Bourdieu's homology thesis. Neuhoff attributes the cause to two main factors: Firstly, he claims there is no German equivalent of country music as a class-transcendent, integrative music genre with roots in diverse cultural traditions. Bryson's study, in particular, raises scepticism regarding this argument, as it identifies country music as one of the most rejected genres (Bryson, 1996). Nonetheless, when examined more broadly, this argument holds potential plausibility, as popular music and culture tend to be more widely accepted in the United States compared to Europe (Rössel, 2006). Secondly, the weak foundation of high cultural institutions in the United States, which have never received the same level of public financial support as those in Germany, resulted in their lower density compared to Germany (Neuhoff, 2001; Rössel, 2006).

Rössel (2006) argues that the analysis of the omnivore argument within the cultural field of film is particularly suitable, as film genres are less strongly hierarchised than music genres. Additionally, is the average age of cinema goers is relatively low. Film acts as a form of artistic expression that on the one hand draws weaker hierarchies compared to music and on the other hand is especially suitable for different reception forms – dependent on the cultural capital of the viewer. Hence, in the field of film, there exists low threshold for the formation of preferences and therefore symbolic boundaries for rather popular genres. Rössel maintains that especially if there is no evidence of the applicability of the omnivore thesis in a study on cinema audiences, then the search for further empirical evidence in Germany can be abandoned (Rössel, 2006). Moreover, an empirical analysis of film taste simply extends the debate as it so far has surprisingly been focused on music taste (Rössel, 2006). To encompass a wide range of cinema-goers, the survey was conducted using a written questionnaire in various films at a multiplex cinema (610 respondents) as well as in a larger art house cinema (140 respondents). Similarly to Neuhoff's study, frequent visitors are overrepresented, on the other hand, there is no bias specific to subgroups, as the subgroups were defined by musical preferences rather than film-specific indicators (Rössel, 2006).

Rössel's findings challenge the applicability of the omnivore argument proposed by Peterson and Kern to the German context, suggesting that diverse tastes rather than high-culture snobbery form the basis of social distinction in contemporary society. The differences between the 'highbrow' and 'other' comparison groups in his study were relatively small, providing weak evidence for the transferability of the omnivore concept to the German context. In addition, he considered, based on Bryson's discussion (1996), whether tolerance for certain film genres results in the exclusion of genres primarily preferred by individuals with lower social status and educational attainment. His analysis revealed that Germans with higher education rarely disapprove of literary adaptations, satires, and auteur films, but often disapprove of horror films, thrillers, and comedies (Rössel, 2006). In summary, these findings propose that consumers of legitimate culture in Germany are not cultural snobs, but do not exhibit strong characteristics of cultural omnivores either (Rössel, 2006). His findings cast doubt on the applicability of the concept of cultural omnivores to the cultural and social context in Germany. While the results do not simply indicate the persistence of high culture snobbery, they suggest a nuanced blending of high culture and popular taste, particularly among individuals over the age of 40. However, this boundary crossing is less common among younger age groups.

One potential explanation, as proposed by Neuhoff (2001), is that the availability and prominence of high culture offerings in the United States are comparatively limited in contrast to Germany's extensive network of music schools, orchestras, and concert halls, which provide unparalleled access to classical music on a national scale. Following Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural production fields (1999), high culture in the Federal Republic of Germany is deeply institutionalised, encompassing not only venues for active and passive consumption of classical music but also the prominence of sophisticated literature and music in educational curricula, the emphasis on high culture in cultural critique, and, significantly, the prioritisation of high culture support within cultural policy (Rössel, 2006). These instiutional factors have contributed to the stabilisation and reproduction of high cultural taste preferences within segments of the population (Rössel, 2006).

2.1.3. Individualisation in Film Consumption

The individualisation argument relegates homology together with omnivorous consumption to the past. In a society previously structured by the concepts of class and power, these are rendered obsolete, and as Anthony Giddens (1991) and Ulrich Beck (1992)

postulate, social change and responses to risk take over (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). This has led to a shift from scarcity to affluence, resulting in the erosion of class relations and collectivity (Rasborg, 2017; Beck, 1992). As a result, "social mobility has increased and individuals' ties to their upbringing environment" have weakened (Klaus Rasborg, 2017, p. 4). However, Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992) argued that individualisation is not necessarily a negative phenomenon with a 'me-first mentality' "synonymous with egoism and rejection of community" (Rasborg, 2017, p. 6).

This stance focuses not on cultural consumption per se, but on lifestyle, meaning a shift towards individual agency and choice. It argues that post-industrial societies are no longer class-based in terms of internalised taste, but freedom of choice reigns (Rasborg, 2017; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005; Hanchard et al., 2019). Hence, individuals are required to make choices to assemble their *reflexive*-self, which consequently bears the risk of choosing incorrectly (Rasborg, 2017; Giddens 1991; Beck 1992). In today's 'consumer society', the vast array of possibilities available compels individuals to consume a chosen mélange of cultural products through which they construct 'selves' (Hanchard et al., 2019; Bauman, 1988; Giddens; Rasborg, 2017).

Following Giddens, individuals are able to use film as a means of exploring and constructing their own identities, rather than simply consuming a pre-determined set of cultural dispositions (Rasborg, 2017; Giddens, 1991). Individualisation in film consumption means a personalised approach, where individuals seek out films that reflect their personal preferences and identity (Rasborg, 2017). This may involve rejecting films that do not meet their criteria of reflecting their identity and selecting films based on genres, directors, or actors they prefer. In Beck's (1992) and Giddens' (1991) individualisation approach, ethnicity and gender "may feature in consumer choices" (Hanchard et al., 2019, p. 4). With *Liquid modernity*, Bauman describes a contemporary society within which constant flux of change occurs (Bauman, 2000). However, such could imply class-based inequality in ever-changing disguises rather than freedom of choice (Rasborg, 2017; Hanchard et al., 2019). In other words, new forms of cultural capital might take shape and functions as substitute. The latter would obscure patterns of inequality and exclusion. As the main focus of this thesis is to test interpretations of the homology and omnivore argument, this chapter section merely acknowledges the existence of the individualisation theory in the discourse surrounding social stratification in cultural consumption.

2.2. ARTISTIC LEGITIMACY OF FILMS

2.2.1. The Legitimation Process – is it Art or Entertainment?

While it has been more than a century since its inception, there is still an ongoing discussion regarding the classification of moving images as economic or cultural goods. Currently, film serves as a widely consumed cultural form, encompassing a range of practices that produce both popular and artistic aesthetics across a broad array of genres (Weingartner, 2020; Baumann, 2007; Hanchard et al., 2019). The legitimisation process of art has been a subject of interest for numerous scholars in the fields of cultural sociology and film studies, with notable contributions from Bourdieu (1984), Howard Becker (2008), Paul DiMaggio (1987; 1992), and more recently Shyon Baumann (2001; 2007) for film in particular. Baumann, a sociologist who has extensively studied the legitimation process of cinema, asserts that the legitimisation of film is a multifaceted process involving a variety of economic, social, and cultural factors. In order for a cultural product to attain the status of art and achieve a public consensus, Baumann (2001) suggests that three key factors must be in place: (1) opportunity of space, (2) institutionalisation, and (3) intellectualisation.

The notion of *opportunity of space* (Baumann, 2001; DiMaggio, 1992) arises when an art form, such as film, is contrasted with alternative forms (here: theatre vs. film) and distinguishes itself, thereby elevating the status of earlier existing art forms. Prior to World War I, cinema underwent significant development, leading to two distinct phenomena relating to the *opportunity of space*. Firstly, cinema began to compete with other cultural forms, including theatre, varietés, and circuses (Reuband, 2017). Within this spatial opportunity, the legitimisation of a new art form necessitates the presence of influential advocates, be they audiences or sponsors, who fuel its artistic legitimation. Secondly, a new cinema audience emerged, consisting of individuals who had previously not frequented film theatres (Reuband, 2017). This particular development concerning German cinema audiences will be elaborated upon in section 2.3.1 of the subsequent chapter.

The second factor, institutionalisation, pertains to the establishment of production and reception mechanisms within the art world (Becker, 2008). This process aligns closely with the preceding factor, as critics' intellectualising discourse allows for the understanding of art as such through theory. Intellectualisation further strengthens the legitimisation of film by implementing formalised structures. In his work, Paul DiMaggio (1987) emphasises,

institutionalisation plays a pivotal role in the legitimisation process by involving cultural gatekeepers who possess the authority to determine the value of various cultural forms. These gatekeepers "create and defend boundaries amongst varying kinds of aesthetic (…) products and practices" (DiMaggio, 1987, p. 21). Consequently, formal organisations such as film schools, film festivals, and film critics emerge to establish standards and criteria for evaluating films (Baumann, 2001; DiMaggio, 1987). Within these cultural institutions, an intellectual discourse develops, serving to intellectualise the aesthetic experience and construct symbolic boundaries that define what is considered legitimate. From DiMaggio's perspective, the process of legitimisation is dynamic and contentious, characterised by the continuous evolution of symbolic boundaries used to evaluate the value of films (Paul DiMaggio, 1992). Baumann (2001; 2007) highlights the significance of film festivals in legitimising the cinema industry. Thus, film festivals play a crucial role in legitimising particular films and filmmakers, while excluding others (Baumann, 2001; Bourdieu, 1984; Heise & Tudor, 2007). They provide a platform through which arthouse films can gain legitimacy, expand their reach, and garner critical acclaim (Baumann, 2001; 2007).

Bourdieu (1995) argues that the arts are part of a larger cultural field that is structured by social hierarchies, in which there is a struggle for capital, whether it is economic or truly symbolic. In this sense, with different groups vying for prestige, the process of legitimation is an ongoing struggle for power within the cultural field (1995). Whereas, Becker (2008) emphasises the role of collaborative processes within the art world’s social networks in the legitimation of artistic crafts and practices. Both Bourdieu (1995) and Becker (2008) acknowledge that the process of legitimation is ongoing and dynamic, shaped by changing cultural and social conditions (Bauman, 2001; 2007). Therefore, the process of legitimation in film is a social construct that is influenced by power relations, social networks, and historic context.

2.2.2. Legitimate Film Genres

It is crucial to note that these genres are not mutually exclusive and that many films may combine elements from multiple genres (Baumann, 2001; Altman, 1984). As a consequence of these overlapping and ambiguous categorisations films labelled as illegitimate genres may still possess artistic value and serve as a marker of embodied cultural capital (Baumann, 2007; Bourdieu, 1984). Hence, the symbolic boundaries between what constitutes legitimate versus illegitimate film genres are often blurred (Baumann, 2007).

Ultimately, the artistic value of a film is determined by a complex set of factors, including its formal qualities, narrative structure, cultural context, historical perspective, and reception by audiences and critics.

Yet, the differentiation of film classics as arthouse or auteur films holding 'artistic value' "in contemporary discourse about cinema" (Przylipiak, 2018, p. 14) is typically understood to be opposed to commercialised Hollywood cinema (Baumann, 2001). Relying on standardised cinematic formulas, the Hollywood culture industry minimises risk and guaranteeing a profit (Adorno, 2020; Baumann, 2007; Kellner, 2004; Wilinsky, 2001). Conversely, focusing on "authorial expressivity" (Bordwell, 2002, p. 95), auteur films highlight the director as the sole artist pursuing his artistic ambitions. By exploring new conventions in content and style, these films typically require a certain understanding to be appreciated (Becker, 2008; Bennett et al., 2009; Bordwell, 2002; Bourdieu, 1984; Cardullo, 2011; Wilinsky, 2001).

Cult films and film classics have both grown in popularity and status over time, but they differ in significant ways (Barefoot, 2017). A classic or is a masterpiece that has had a substantial impact on cinema and culture, and has endured as a widely recognised work of art, often reflecting the social and cultural contexts in which they occurred. These films are usually well-received critically and are frequently studied and analysed as an important part of cinematic history in academic circles. Examples of film classics include *Metropolis, Vertigo,* and *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Hence, film classics are widely recognised as masterpieces of cinema and have had a significant impact on culture, while cult classic films are appreciated by a small but dedicated group of fans for their unique and unconventional qualities. Film classics are frequently associated with Hollywood's golden era, yet there are numerous examples from across the globe with auteur filmmakers such as Akira Kurosawa, Agnès Varda, Jean-Luc Goddard, Satyajit Ray, Roberto Rossellini, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Friedrich Murnau.

On the other hand, cult films have a unique status in the realm of popular culture. These films are sometimes independent production and typically did not perform well at the box office or receive critical acclaim upon release (Barefoot, 2017). However, over time, a loyal fan base emerges around the film, leading to its classification as a cult classic, such as in the case of *The Big Lebowski, Clerks,* and *The Holy Mountain*. Within cult consumption, "the notion of authenticity is used to produce distinctions not only between fans and the

broader culture, but also within fan ‘communities’ themselves“ (Jancovich, 2010, pp. 307). The cultural competencies and dispositions that exist within this field in opposition to the ‘mainstream’ construct the distinction as being a fan signifies uniqueness, rather than merely being an ordinary participant in popular culture (Jancovich, 2010, p. 308). Sarah Thorton highlights the importance of audience reception and subcultural communities (1995), but she neglects power relations (Jancovich, 2010). The legitimisation of cult films involves a complex interplay between the film, its fans, and cultural institutions. It requires critical reappraisal, academic analysis, and adoption into the pop-cultural canon, for instance, through influence on subsequent works of art, and challenging conventional notions of taste (Thorton, 1995).

2.3. FILM DISTRIBUTION AND ALGORITHMIC GATEKEEPERS

2.3.1. Cinematic Chronicles: Tracing the Evolution of German Film Theatres

In 1895, the Lumière brothers held the first-ever public screening of short films, with a paying audience at the *Salon Indien du Grand Cafe* in Paris, which is often regarded as the pivotal moment that gave birth to cinema. This event initiated a rapid development and expansion of cinema, which has now evolved into a global industry. As described above, cinema was initially conceived as light entertainment for the masses and had to follow a legitimisation discourse to achieve its status as an art form (Baumann, 2007; Becker, 2008; Bourdieu, 1984). The history of film theatres in Germany provides a unique lens through which to examine the socio-cultural and economic developments of each era.

During the early days of cinema, working-class neighbourhoods typically hosted makeshift film theatres targeted at lower-income audiences, these were typically venues, such as tents at fairgrounds, cafés, or municipality halls and charged low admission fees (Prommer, 2015; Altenloh, 1914). As the film industry expanded, purpose-built cinemas emerged, catering to larger audiences and the middle class. The theater-cinema-fight, a struggle for legitimacy between theatres and cinemas, which is detailed in the previous chapter (2.2.), began in tandem with the transition from short to feature-length films and the relocation of screenings from fairgrounds to film theatres (Reuband, 2017).

In *Zur Soziologie des Kino*, Emilie Altenloh conducted the first sociological study of the cinema and its visitors worldwide (Reuband, 2017). Altenloh is considered a pioneering figure in German sociological research on cinema, and her work has greatly contributed to a deeper understanding of the social significance of cinema in society. Although, from a present-day perspective the study published in 1914, displays certain methodological deficiencies, such as the small sample size and inadequate data analysis, it can still be considered groundbreaking from a scientific and historical standpoint (Reuband, 2017; Prommer, 2015). Regrettably, neither the author nor other social scientists have continued to build upon this pioneering work (Reuband, 2017, p. 316; Prommer, 2015). She found that cinema-going was predominantly an activity of the working class, who had limited leisure opportunities, and that the cinema provided a means of escape (Altenloh, 1914).

The Weimar era brought about ‘film palaces’ with luxurious amenities like cafés, lounges, and smoking rooms, catering to the upper class (Prommer, 2015). The emergence of the more luxurious cinemas must be seen as an answer to the demand from an economic point of view (Prommer, 2015). For instance, a few years earlier in 1913 the *Sendlingertor-Lichtspiele* in Munich opened its door with King Ludwig III and his entire court being present, which indicates that cinema was not frowned upon by Bavarian aristocracy (Prommer, 2015). Regarding the upper class, Altenloh noted that they had a wider range of leisure options and therefore visited the cinema less frequently (Altenloh, 1914). She suggested that some members of the upper class rather used the cinema as a place to socialise. Although the upper class viewed the cinema as mass entertainment, Altenloh recognised that many films shown at the cinema were designed to be enjoyed by a broad audience, including the upper class. Ultimately, Altenloh's work highlights that cinema has been consumed throughout all classes, however in different settings, for different reasons, and with different preferences.

During the Nazi era, cinemas were exploited as a manipulative propaganda tool, employing grand and imposing theatres designed to propagate and reinforce the ideology of the regime. After World War II, Germany's cinema landscape diversified to cater to a broader range of audiences, including functional theatres for the working-class and upscale cinemas for the middle and upper classes. Today, Germany's cinemas continue to serve diverse audiences with multiplexes for mainstream films as well as ‘*Programmkinos*’ for arthouse and independent niche tastes providing a unique cultural experience (Prommer, 2015).

2.3.2. German Cinema-Goers Today

Today's numbers of cinema visits once or several times a month are far below those common in the 1950s, yet, still noteworthy in comparison with the opera, theatre, or museum. Meanwhile, only 17 % visit the cinema once or more per month, according to a study from the *Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research* in 2014 (Reuband, 2017, p. 314). Traditionally cinema visits drawn in a younger audience, which has not changed significantly, although for some young people streaming online substitutes going to the cinema it still the youth that turns to cinema (Rössel, 2006). Albeit Rössel claim that younger cohorts primarily consume films at the cinema, throughout time there has been a constant demographic change of cinema visitors, leading to an ageing cinema audience (Prommer, 2015). Amongst the 18–29 year-olds, 32 % visit the cinema at least once per month, amongst the 30–44 it is 21 %, and 45–59 12 %, and above 60 only 8 %. In the long run, according to Reuband, the cinema visit frequency of young people from 2000 to 2014 declined (Reuband, 2017, p. 319).

Cinema-goers in Germany are traditionally over-represented by the younger and better-educated demographic, according to studies by Prommer (2010, p. 212) and Reuband (2017). However, Prommer's data suggests that the education effect is not cancelled out by age, indicating that education is an important factor. It is worth questioning whether this educational effect is due to better economic resources that the higher educated typically possess. Although the cost of going to the cinema is relatively low, disposable income may still play a role in the decision-making process for or against a cinema visit (Reuband, 2017, p. 319).

According to Reuband's research, visitors to multiplex and arthouse cinemas differ in their social composition (2017). Arthouse cinemas tend to attract more women, older people, and those with higher education levels (FFA 2005). If age is taken into account, the educational effect is even more pronounced in favour of arthouse cinemas (Reuband, 2017). Similar findings can be seen in the German Federal Film Board's surveys (FFA 2005). Arthouse cinema visitors also tend to be more frequent and intensive users than those of multiplex cinemas, with 69 % visiting at least once a month compared to 59 % for multiplex cinemas (Reuband, 2017). This trend of arthouse cinema's 'heavy users' has intensified over the years. While age composition may suggest otherwise, the educational effect is a significant factor that cancels it out. It is clear that arthouse cinema visitors are more likely to

be intensive users, even when age, education, and gender are considered as control variables (Reuband, 2017).

2.3.3. Theatrical Thrills or Couch Comfort: The Duality of Film Consumption and Habitus

In their article, Henk Roose and Alexander Vander Stichele (2010) discuss Bourdieu's theory of cultural consumption and its application to a private and public dimension of music consumption. Nonetheless, Bourdieu does not distinguish between “socially visible” practices such as attending concerts, and “activities that are not” like listening to music at home (Roose & Stichele, 2010, p. 185). According to Roose and Stichele, the habitus has a similar impact on both public and private music consumption, and influences preferences in both spheres (Roose & Stichele, 2010). Furthermore, the authors discuss the homology between social positions and lifestyles through the habitus, and how cultural practices are used to create social cohesion and differentiation.

The authors argue cultural capital is more important for public participation than for private consumption, as attending concerts involves not just information processing capacity but social barriers and familiarity with “decorum” (Roose & Stichele, 2010, p. 185). “Omnivorousness in music consumption is especially situated in the private sphere” (Roose & Stichele, 2010, p. 185). The social meaning of attending concerts is a more social way of experiencing music than listening at home (Roose & Stichele, 2010). Hereby, concert attendance, is a social happening par excellence; as it is more strongly related to distinctly social correlates, such as network size and the ability to display passing music knowledge as a way to gain status in a variety of social settings (Roose & Stichele, 2010). These social factors, along with the performance of knowledge to signify social status, can similarly be applied to the realm of film (Altenloh, 1914; Baumann, 2007).

2.3.4. Film Streaming: The Influence of Algorithmic Gatekeepers

The film distribution and consumption patterns have transcended beyond traditional film theatres and electronic media, and presently encompass diverse national and niche streaming services, resulting in a fragmented VoD market (Fontaine & Simone, 2017). This evolution of online film distribution and its associated systems may have implications for the films that are selected and viewed by audiences. Especially, “the relative accessibility of online methods of film distribution is evidenced through their regular, and often higher, use

among younger, lower income groups, and ethnic minorities within New Zealand" (Huffer, 2017, p. 15). Huffer stresses, "highly disparate engagement levels" in online participation might reflect different cultural competencies of film-viewers (2017). For example, considering the different catalogues of streaming providers like the largest global player *Netflix* or arthouse niche-focused *MUBI*. The algorithms of streaming platforms, particularly of *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime Video*, can have a significant influence on online film consumption as streaming services use them to recommend films to subscribers based on their viewing history, ratings, and preferences (Lobato, 2019).

One of the primary benefits of algorithmic film recommendations is their ability to personalise the user experience by analysing viewing habits and thereby increase engagement by suggesting films consumers might otherwise not have discovered. This on the one hand can lead to a more engaging and enjoyable film-watching experience, algorithms, however, can have negative impacts on film consumption. Algorithms can create a 'filter bubble' effect, where users are only recommended films that align with their existing tastes and interests (Lobato, 2019; Huffer, 2017). Although VoD providers cater to a wide variety of consumer tastes, the algorithms of their systems may contribute to the rise of more pronounced stratification in film consumption patterns (Weingartner, 2020). Algorithms have a tendency to prioritise commercially successful over lesser-known films, making it harder for arthouse productions to gain visibility (Fontaine & Simone, 2017; Lobato, 2019; Huffer, 2017). Weingartner (2020) agrees, as individuals consume within their genre preferences digital media hardly contribute to democratising engagement. Nonetheless, it is relevant to note, Weingartner used data collected before the rise of VoD platforms, which could point to an increase in this film consumption pattern. In comparison, TV promotes omnivorous consumption much more than online streaming services (Weingartner, 2020). For instance, German publicly-funded TV broadcast channels curate arthouse film exposure, whereas algorithmic recommendations on streaming services (e.g. *Netflix)* do not expand choices but narrow them (Lobato, 2019; Huffer, 2017).

2.4. EXPANDING PERSPECTIVES: THE VALUE OF INCLUSIVITY IN FILM CONSUMPTION

Ample studies revealed, social inclusivity of audiences are crucial components of cultural consumption, as they enhance the richness and authenticity of cultural experiences

(BKJ, 2020). Cultural consumption, accompanied by its entailed cultural inequalities, is a multidimensional phenomenon with variations across nations, that ultimately can reflect broader social inequalities or as Prieur and Savage put it – "symbolic dominance in cultural matters" (2013, p. 253). By ensuring that people of all backgrounds can access and participate in cultural offerings, inclusivity fosters a sense of community and promotes social cohesion and equity (BKJ, 2020; bpb & Burow, 2010). Inclusivity in cultural consumption can foster greater creativity and innovation (BKJ, 2020; bpb & Burow, 2010). In a report, the Arts Council England (Mowlah et al., 2014) mentions, that children from low income families who are engaged in artistic activities at school are three times more likely to gain a degree than those students from disadvantaged families who do not take part in arts activities at school. These skills can be highly valuable in a range of academic, professional, and private settings, providing young people with greater opportunities for advancement (bpb & Burow, 2010; Bourdieu, 1984). Understanding the impact of social factors on German citizens' film consumption helps to intervene in the perpetuation of social structures in contemporary society (bpb & Burow, 2010). Accordingly, society would profit from educating young audiences in the seventh art. Film already has become an effective tool in cultural education, as it is a highly accessible medium, and allows for viewing, analysing, and creating audiovisual texts (bpb, 2011; Exner, 2013). Through film, individuals can explore new ideas, traditions, and perspectives, which can broaden their understanding of the world and foster a sense of belonging (Exner, 2013). Furthermore, developing skills in film-making and analysis can improve critical thinking (bpb, 2011; Exner, 2013).

Recognising the potential of film and culture as influential forces, the German government has taken steps to promote cultural education and research initiatives. One such initiative is *Kultur macht stark* (culture builds strength), which has been in operation since 2013 and is now entering its third cycle. This program, initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, acknowledges the significance of culture and provides funding to organisations that engage young citizens in artistic activities. Additionally, in 2015, the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research* published an announcement to allocate research funds specifically aimed at addressing the lack of reliable and systematic knowledge regarding cultural participation (BMBF, 2015). This proactive approach by the federal government highlights the importance of understanding cultural participation structures in order to shape and enhance cultural education processes.

2.7. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

2.7.1. Research Question and Sub-Questions

Drawing upon the previously discussed literature, it seems that relatively few studies researched contemporary stratification patterns in combination with aesthetic dispositions and participation in film consumption modes in Germany. In particular, the changes in film consumption and its media environments of the past years, within which taste patterns assume symbolic meaning, remain unaddressed. To respond to these gaps, the main research question asks: What is the relationship between contemporary societal patterns, distribution of capital, film taste, and engagement in film consumption practices within the context of Germany? The following two sets of sub-questions function to obtain all pertinent information to answer this question:

Firstly, what are prevailing patterns in the film tastes of respondents in Germany, and do these aesthetic preferences correspond to the composition and volume of capital, along with other societal factors? Specifically, is there evidence of elitist taste or, conversely, a tendency towards omnivorousness and univorousness? Furthermore, does the traditional notion of highbrow preferences persist, or are there emerging forms of cultural capital that challenge established symbolic boundaries? Lastly, are there indications of class-based exclusion of particular film genres within the realm of omnivorous consumption?

Secondly, what are the present patterns concerning cinema attendance and private film consumption amongst German respondents? Moreover, are there associations between societal factors, the distribution of capital, and varying levels of participation in film consumption practices?

2.7.2. Hypotheses

This section presents the hypotheses aimed at examining two main positions concerning potential social stratification in film consumption practices and genre preference by being subjected to a multiple correspondence analysis. The anticipated findings are expected to reveal links between capital indicators and film consumption variables.

Highbrow Film Taste and Habitus

> **H**$_1$ Individuals with a higher volume of capital tend to display a broader range of disliked film genres compared to individuals with a lower volume of cultural capital.

This implies, individuals with a higher volume of capital tend to exhibit a preference for genres that are widely considered legitimate, whereas those with a lower volume of cultural capital tend to express a dislike for such film genres. The first hypothesis is most likely to be rejected as ample studies have demonstrated the diminishing capacity of traditional highbrow culture as markers of distinction amongst the cultural elite, thereby challenging its ability to delineate class-based boundaries based on taste (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Bryson, 1996; Prommer, 2010; Rössel, 2006).

Traditional Cultural Capital Decline

> **H**$_2$ Younger individuals with higher levels of education like different types of film than do older individuals with higher levels of education.

As Prieur and Savage (2013) argue, signifiers of cultural capital can evolve over time, necessitating the cultural elite to remain attuned to these changes. This is crucial because previous signifiers, once considered markers of distinction, have now become obsolete. However, the emergence of new forms of cultural capital requires them to meet specific additional criteria, which are further elaborated upon in the operationalisation.

Film Omnivores

> **H**$_3$ Individuals with higher levels of cultural and economic capital like more film genres compared to individuals with lower capital volume.

This suggests that individuals classified as omnivores possess higher levels of cultural capital, whereas those with a lower volume of capital tend to be categorised as univores.

> **H**$_4$ Individuals with higher levels of cultural and economic capital dislike fewer film genres than do individuals with lower volume of capital.

Testing the weak interpretation of the cultural omnivore thesis ((De Vries & Reeves, 2021)) as proposed by Peterson and Kern (1996).

Class-based Exclusivity

H$_5$ Individuals with higher cultural capital are more inclined to dislike those types of films that are favoured by individuals with low cultural capital.

In other words, individuals who possess higher levels of education and thus a limited aversion to film genres are more inclined to dislike the specific types of films that are favoured by individuals with lower levels of education, as opposed to other genres (Bryson, 1996). Moreover, by focusing specifically on what highbrow consumers dislike, it is possible to test the strong interpretation of the omnivore thesis, which would require an egalitarian consumption of film (De Vries & Reeves, 2021).

Private and Public Film Consumption

H$_6$ Individuals with great volume of capital have a higher frequency of cinema attendance than do those with less capital volume.

Although cinema tickets in comparison with prices for high cultural institution are relatively low, those with less financial means might still have to consider spending it on a visit to the cinema or can visit less frequent (Roose & Stichele, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

This thesis is based on secondary data from the *Cultural Education and Cultural Participation in Germany 2018* (*KuBiPaD I)*. The survey was under the project lead of Gunnar Otte of the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, carried out by the *infas* institute for applied social sciences, and funded by the of the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research*. It is the first time this survey has been conducted. This involved a representative sample of the German population aged 15 and over (*n*= 2592) and includes a large variety of cultural practices, resources, and tastes (Otte et al., 2022). Through a multi-stage random sample, participants were interviewed in 2018 by means of computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI/CAMI). In a two-stage selection procedure, municipalities were drawn as the primary sampling unit, and persons from the local population registers as secondary. A valid and evaluable interview was obtained from 2.952 individuals, accounting for 22.9% of the resident registration sample. Multi-stage random sampling is cost-effective but can increase the standard error (Tarling, 2008) due to a disregarded source of variability between respondents (Bryman, 2012), for instance, through regional inequalities.

Using German survey data was a pragmatic and strategic choice. Knowing the German media landscape and language is a practical advantage. However, this practical advantage demands cautious uncovering and questioning of assumptions. With the *KuBiPaD I* survey (Otte et al., 2022) being one of a few recent data sets, German cultural participation data seems sparse and dispersed. As the questionnaire was conducted in German, translations will be provided where necessary (e.g. variables, categories, survey questions).

The analysis proceeded by subjecting the sample to a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) one main paradigm of Geometric Data Analysis (GDA), dedicated to categorical data (Roux & Rouanet, 2010). GDA has prompted a shift in the way statistical analysis is conducted in the social sciences, with an increasing recognition of the significance of studying the relational aspect of data by constructing a social space (Roux & Rouanet, 2010, p. 11). Bourdieu's concepts of homology, habitus, and field suggest that understanding a person's aesthetic dispositions and behaviour requires considering their relative position in a social space (Roose et al., 2012). This contrasts with traditional statistical practices that rely on numerical indicators and the use of significance levels (Roux & Rouanet, 2010, p. 11).

In the 1970s, Bourdieu developed the concept of field and realised that traditional statistical tools were limited because these dissemble complex relations by being constrained to independent and dependent variables. He believed, these tools failed to capture the complete system of relations that underlie the unique effects observed in specific correlations (Bourdieu, 1984; Roux & Rouanet, 2010, p. 4). Bourdieu finds this method to be a valuable tool for analysing social reality, as it adopts a relational perspective, consistent with his concept of field. In other words, Bourdieu reiterated that those familiar with the principles of MCA will recognise the similarities between this mathematical analysis and his concept of field (Bourdieu, 1991; Roux & Rouanet, 2010).

In order to construct a social space similarly to Bourdieu's work in distinction (Le Roux et al. 2008; Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 251) a space of genre tastes and consumption practices was constructed while socio-demographic variables were plotted as supplementary variables (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 251; Bennett et al. 2009; Le Roux et al. 2008). As a form of multivariate analysis, MCA begins with a contingency table (Bennett et al. 2009; Le Roux et al. 2008). Whereby, the columns indicate binary responses, with one row for each individual. MCA examines the link between the different modalities (categories) using the contingency table and identifies axes that split out responses relationally, in relation to every other individual's response, in order to visualise the symbolic distances between items (Bennet et al., 2009, p. 46). To put it simply, the distance between points indicates the differences in response patterns, if everyone who enjoyed horror films equally liked dramas the two modalities would be positioned at the same point on the figure; if no one liked both, they would be located at diametrically opposed positions (Bennet et al., 2009; Roux & Rouanet, 2010, p. 7). The figures, where elements appear along different axes, provide a visually straightforward manner of assessing which genre tastes (modalities) "go together and which do not" (Bennet et al., 2009, p.46). MCA is a data analysis technique to visualise association of categorical variables (Roux & Rouanet, 2010).

3.1. OPERATIONALISATION AND VARIABLES

3.1.1. Operationalisation

This section provides an operationalisation of the homology and of the cultural omnivore thesis for the area of film, which will be subjected to an empirical examination in the following chapter. With these, it is possible to investigate the transferability of the cultural omnivore thesis on the example of film genre taste of German participants.

Habitus, Cultural Distinction, and Emerging Cultural Capital

Following Bourdieu's notion, in order for a good to function as capital, it must be associated with "legitimacy, convertibility, and domination" (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 262). The homology argument demonstrates that indicators of individuals with greater volume of capital are the consumption of film genres that are deemed legitimate, whilst rejecting popular ones to assert superiority through distinction. Drawing on prior research, an operationalisation of film genres classified as either highbrow or popular was established, a simplified categorisation that, while lacking nuance, facilitates analysis by revealing the hierarchical aesthetic dispositions of the more privileged.

The emerging cultural capital concept entails that the legitimacy of film genres may evolve over time, and individuals primarily consume those that align with their cultural capital. Nonetheless, it is not given that the film genres detailed here carry universal legitimacy, or are tied to domination, nor that these can be converted into economic or social capital. These are mere possibilities that require empirical research on attitudes and experiences. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this study does not take into account the participants' knowledge of specific film examples or films recently viewed, as Bryson and Rössel did due to the limitations of the survey data. As a result, it is important to acknowledge that participants may not comprehend the same genre demarcations in every instance (Rössel, 2006).

Hereby was the educational attainment the central indicator of cultural capital, however, beyond that socialisation of the individual was considered by expanding it to the parental educational attainment (Rössel, 2006). As indicators for economic capital, personal net income and property ownership were considered. Since in numerous cultural consumption studies, alongside education, age, gender, and nationality have proven to be the main determinants these function as supplementary variables here.

Cultural Tolerance and Egalitarianism

Highbrow culture is no longer characteristic of the well-educated (Prieur & Savage, 2013). This leads to the second step of the statistical analysis, the investigation of connections between, on the one hand, the indicators for the phenomenon of the cultural omnivore and, on the other hand, the socio-structural positions of the participants. On this basis, an operationalisation for four of the constructs from the discussion about the phenomenon of the

cultural omnivore were developed: As a first indicator, the number of preferred film genres is taken into account, which would operationalise the idea of the cultural omnivore in its classic variant presented by Peterson and Kern. It is analysed which social position individuals with a specifically broad genre taste have, following Emmison and Bryson argument, the focus here is primarily on the role of cultural capital (Rössel, 2006; De Vries & Reeves, 2021; Bryson 1996; Emmison, 2003). Secondly, the number of dislikes of film genres was measured as an indicator of Bryson's conception of the cultural omnivore (Rössel, 2006). De Vries and Reeves termed this the strong interpretation of the omnivore thesis. Following Bryson's argument, additionally should test whether cultural tolerance excludes such film genres that are consumed particularly by those with low cultural capital (Rössel, 2006).

In addition, a group division of the respondents into highly culture-oriented people and others was maintained (Rössel, 2006). In the third step, analogous to the approach of Peterson and Kern (1996), Neuhoff (2001), Rössel (2006), and De Vries and Reeves (2021), are on the hand high culture oriented and other respondents in terms of their approval of genres in number and type. Fourthly, and on the other hand, compared regarding their disapproval of genres in number and type. According to De Vries and Reeves, focusing on highbrows dislikes is a more appropriate indication of snobbish exclusion (and cultural tolerance), as actively rejecting a cultural form is not merely failing to like it (Bryson 1996; De Vries & Reeves, 2021). De Vries and Reeves based on Bryson operationalise high culture oriented person as 'highbrows' "if they participated in at least two of the following activities at least several times per year: attending an orchestral concert, attending the opera, attending a play at the theatre, visiting an art gallery" (De Vries & Reeves, 2021, p. 303). Based on this definition, 5.4% of the *KuBiPaD I* survey sample were highbrows. Since music has a highly hierarchical structure of genres, it is particularly suitable for classifying the 'highbrow' group of cultural consumers (Rössel, 2006).

3.1.2. Variables

The first group of variables focuses on the approval and disapproval of film genres. A second group of variables relates to cultural practices such as cinema attendance as well as amount of films viewed via television and streaming. There is a total amount of 48 active modalities. The variables were recoded with the help of the statistical programs IBM SPSS and STATA.

Film Taste and Symbolic Exclusion

Amongst the active variable are: *Genre preference* out of previously 17 genres, 14 were selected drawing upon previous literature indicating different levels of legitimacy (Rössel, 2006). A series of 14 dummy variables were introduced measuring approval and disapproval of each genre, with "not heard of" coded as missing due to infrequent occurrences. Hence, amounting to 28 categories. Disapproval was measured through scores four and five of the original five point Likert scale according to de Vries and Reeves operationalisation (2021; Bryson, 1996). Points one to three are measured as approval (see Table 1).

Furthermore, two variables with each four categories measured the number of liked and disliked types of films in groups based on the quartiles of each, these were grouped as followed: Liked film genres (0, 1– 4, 5–8, >8), disliked film genres (0, 1 –3, 4–6, >6).

Table 1 *Film genre preferences – approval and disapproval*

Legitimacy	*Variables with 28 categories*	*Operationalisation*
Highbrow	Classics, Auteur	
Middlebrow	Literary (film) adaption, Drama, History, Documentary, Animation	(1) 1 – 3 approval (2) 4 – 5 disapproval
Popular	Action, Horror, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Thriller, Comedy, Romance	

Engagement in Film Consumption Practices

Lastly, for public and private film consumption, three variables were selected and coded into groups based on quartiles (Table 3).

Table 2 *Film consumption practices*

Variable	*12 Categories*
Cinema attendance in the last 12 months	(1) Never; (2) l – 4; (3) 5 – 9; (4) ≥10
Films viewed via TV consumption in the last four weeks	(1) Never; (2) 1 – 2; (3) 3 – 6; (4) >6
Films viewed via streaming platform in the last four weeks	(1) Never; (2) 1 – 2; (3) 3 – 6; (4) >6

3.2.3 Supplementary Variables

The first group of variables considers demographics, while the second of variables relates to the volume and composition of cultural as well as economic capital. The above-mentioned active variables are complemented by supplementary variables that relate to respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, i.e. age, gender, income, education, and nationality all coded as categorical variables and mapped upon the space of film tastes and consumption modes.

Age, Gender, and Nationality

Gender is coded as bivariate variable male and female. *German Nationality* was re-coded into the bivariate variable with a yes and no value. Year of birth was recoded to age in years at the point of the survey in 2018 then coded into five *age groups*, namely: (1) < 18 years, (2) 18 – 29 years old, (3) 30 – 44 years old, (4) 45 – 59 years old, (5) +60 years.

Capital Volume and Composition

In line with Bourdieu's original methodology, although not exhausted, combines economic and cultural capital (1984). Economic capital being measured as income and cultural capital as education. *Individual monthly net income* was recoded into five values of previously 24. Merely the individual net income was considered, not the household net income or children living in the household. The *German Economic Institute* defined the following monthly net income brackets for 2019: (1) low-income, (2) lower middle, (3) middle, (4) upper middle, (5) high-income. Merging the findings of the *German Economic*

Institute and the quartiles of the sample, the categories in table 3 were identified. *Real estate ownership* was coded as a binary variable with the values yes and no.

Dissection of the concept reveals educational certificates represent institutionalised cultural capital. “However, they cannot capture all the nuances in the concept” as “the competencies that possibly serve as cultural capital appear to depend upon the social context” (Prieur et al., 2008, pp. 49). The institutionalised cultural capital of the respondents themselves is comprised out of one variable (Table 3): highest educational attainment. Originally, two variables had 19 categories in total. Furthermore, the socialisation of the respondents was taken into account through inherited cultural capital (Prieur et al., 2005). Parental cultural capital was reduced from four variables into one variable, indicating the highest level of education of father or mother (Table 3).

Table 3 *Cultural and economic capital supplementary variables*

Variable	*21 Categories*
Economic capital Individual net income per month	(1) Low-income– –: <1.000 Euro; (2) Lower middle–: 1.000 to under 1.500 Euro; (3) Middle+–: 1.500 to under 3.000 Euro; (4) Upper middle+: 3.000 to under 5.000 Euro; (5) High-income++: > 5.000 Euro
Real estate ownership	(1)Yes: Real estate+; (2) No: Real estate–
Cultural capital Respondent’s highest educational attainment	(1) Left school without diploma, (2) Hauptschule or Volksschule diploma, Polytechnische Oberschule DDR 8./9. Year diploma, (3) Realschule, Mittlere Reife, Polytechnische Oberschule DDR 10. Year diploma, (4) Abitur, Fachgebundene Hochschulreife, Fachhochschulreife, (5) Other educational degree of BRD or DDR, (6) Foreign diploma, (7) Bachelor, (8) Master,

	Diplom, Magister, Staatsexamen, Lehramtsprüfung, (9) PhD
Highest parental educational attainment	(1) Left school without diploma; (2) Hauptschule or Volksschule diploma; (3) Realschule, Mittlere Reife; (4) Abitur, fachgebundene Hochschulreife, Fachhochschulreife; (5) Academic degree

4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the interpretation of the MCA, focusing on two dimensions that best capture the space of film consumption in the German social context. The analysis reveals that the first axis, which represents aesthetic dispositions and participation, accounts for the majority of the explained variance (67%). Given that the first two dimensions explain the greatest portion of the variance (80%), they are given primary interpretation. The subsequent axes explain a smaller percentage of variance, suggesting that the first two axes offer a sufficient overview of film taste and participation. The cumulative modified weight of the first four axes exceeds 85%. .

Table 4 *Principle Inertia, modified rates: space of film consumption*

Axes	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Principle Inertia	.0903	.0181	.0046	.0018
Modified Rates (%)	66.93	13.44	3.43	1.36
Cumulated modified rate	66.93	80.38	83.81	85.17

MCA allows estimating contribution of active categories (modalities) by film genre, degree of approval or disapproval, and consumption mode according to whether they measure taste for the two principal dimensions (Fig. 1). Contributions in terms of whether these coordinates are positive or negative are reported in table 5 for film genres and in table 6 for highbrows, consumption modes, and number of genres approved and disapproved.

Table 5. *Contributions of film genre taste modalities*

	Contribution in % with	Axis 1		Axis 2	
		Positive Coordinates	Negative Coordinates	Positive Coordinates	Negative Coordinates
Action	+	0.7		**3.6**	
	–	1.2			**5.7**
Horror	+	1.3		**6.1**	
	–		0.3		1.5
Sci-Fi	+	**3.4**		**4.4**	
	–		**3.0**		**3.9**
Fantasy	+	2.7		**7.0**	
	–		2.1		**5.4**
Thriller	+	1.4		0	
	–		**3.1**		0.1
Drama	+	2.9			1.7
	–		**3.1**	1.8	
Comedy	+	0.5			0.3
	–		2.6	1.4	
Romance	+	0.7			1.3
	–		0.9	1.7	
Literature Adaption	+	1.7			2.0
	–		**4.3**	**5.0**	
Auteur	+	**3.4**			**2.3**
	–		**4.2**	**2.9**	
History	+	0.6			0.3
	–		**3.2**	1.9	
Classics	+	0.7			1.5
	–		**2.2**	**4.5**	
Documentary	+	0			0.1
	–		0.5	**2.5**	
Animation	+	**2.5**		1.6	
	–		**2.1**		1.3

Figure 1 *Contributions of active modalities on axis 1 and 2*

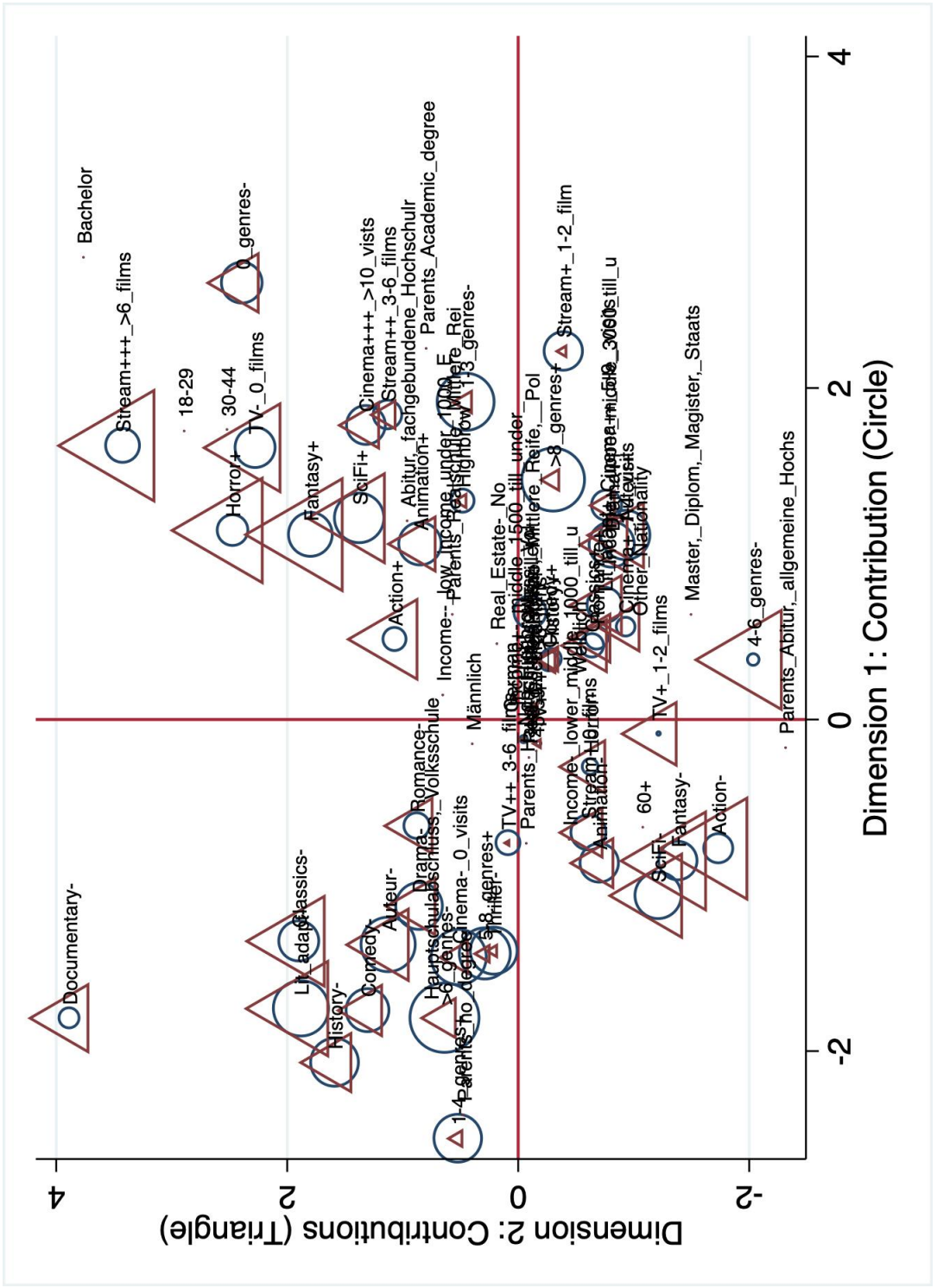


Table 6 *Contributions of taste variety and participation modalities*

	Contribution in % with	Axis 1		Axis 2	
		Positive Coordinates	Negative Coordinates	Positive Coordinates	Negative Coordinates
Highbrow consumption	Highbrows	0.7		0.1	
	Others		0.1		0.0
Number of genres liked	1–4		**3.2**	0.1	
	5–8		**3.7**	0.2	
	> 8	**5.6**			0.2
Number of genres disliked	0	**2.3**		1.9	
	1–3	**4.6**		0.3	
	4–6	0.2			**5.5**
	> 6		**6.8**	0.9	
Cinema attendance	– 0		**4.3**	0.6	
	+ 1–4	0.5			1.3
	++ 5–9	1.3			0.4
	+++ >10	**2.1**		1.2	
TV	– 0	**2.2**		**4.3**	
	+ 1–2		0		**2.2**
	++ 3–6		0.8	0	
	+++ >6		0		0
Streaming	– 0		1.7		1.3
	+ 1–2	**2.1**			0.1
	++ 3–6	1.1			0.4
	+++ >6	1.6		**6.9**	

4.1. DIMENSION 1

4.1.1. Approval-Disapproval and Engagement-Disengagement

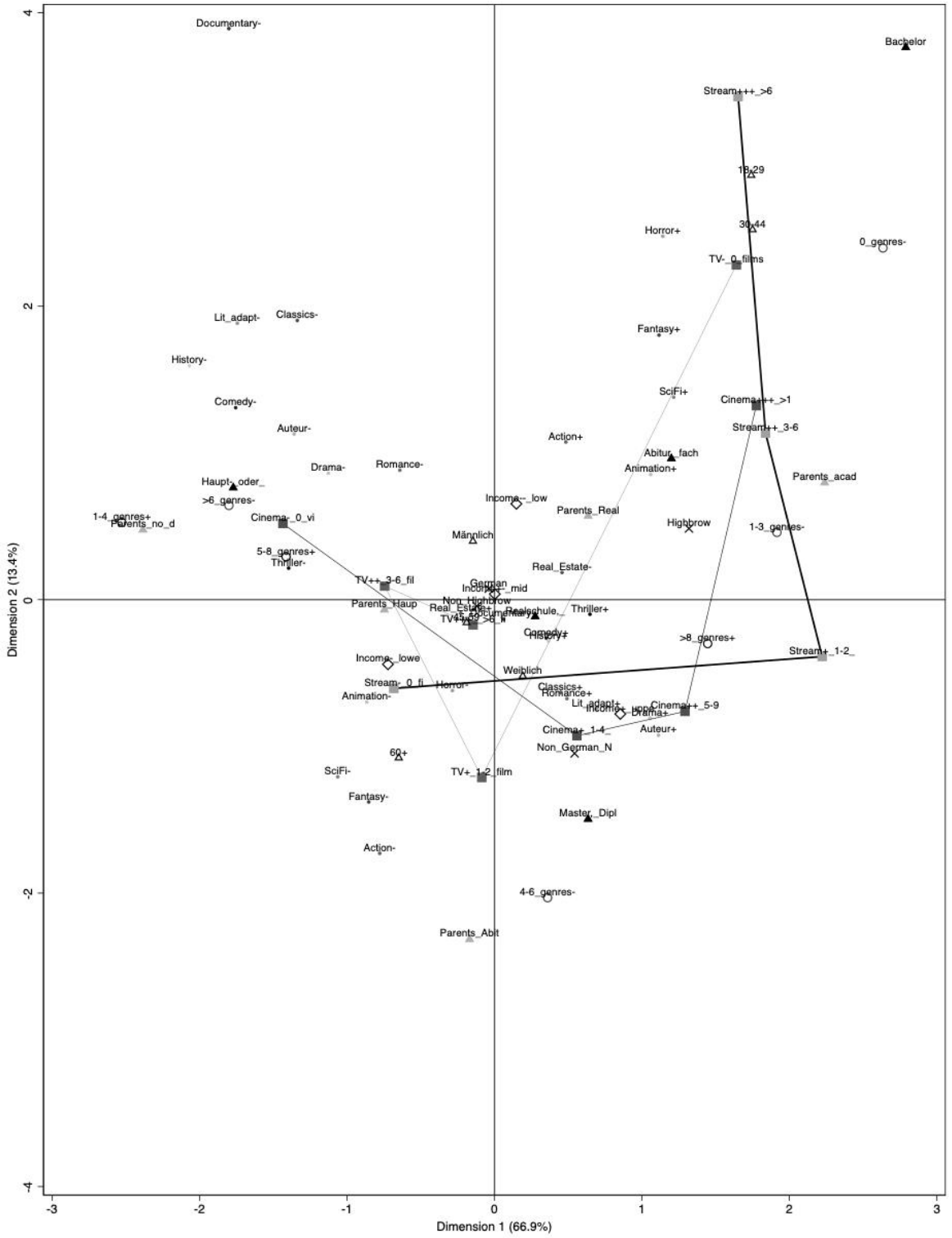
To facilitate easier reading, the quadrants will be numbered counter-clockwise, starting at the top right named first quadrant ending at the bottom right as fourth quadrant (Fig. 2). Overall, the modalities contribute in a balanced manner to both the left (44%) and right (48%) sides of the first axis. A glance at Figure 2 reveals, that the first axis is primarily structured by the approval (right) and disapproval (left) of specific genres. The greatest contributions of aesthetic dispositions (55%), mainly stemming from the variables related to literary

adaptions, science fiction, and auteur films as shown in table 5. Followed by the degree of engagement in consumption practices (22%) with low participation on the left and higher rates on the right, particularly in terms of cinema attendance, but streaming consumption to some degree as well (Table 6).

4.1.2. Private-Public Participation

On an undertone, this dimension can be interpreted as a continuum of film consumption, ranging from private on the left to public on the right (Fig. 2). In this context, cinema attendance is indicative of public consumption, while TV and streaming represent forms of private consumption. The variables that make the highest contributions to engagement in film consumption on the axis 1 are the most frequent cinema attendance, minimal involvement in streaming activities, and a tendency of not watching films on TV. Given that these patterns seem intricately linked to age and capital volume, a comprehensive exploration of specific consumption practices in relation to other modalities will be presented in the supplementary variable section and discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Figure 2 *Space of film consumption with trajectories of participation practices*



4.1.3. Genre Repertoire

Furthermore, the degree of approval (13 %) and disapproval (12 %) of film genres, contributing to a greater extent to this first dimension. Here the plot depicts a smaller repertoire on the left which is monotonically increasing in terms of approval along the first axis to the right (Fig. 3). By the same token, the number of disliked genres decreases from the left to right of the plot. As we move from left to right on the plot, taking into account the supplementary variables of cultural capital, there is an observable increase in its volume. This increase in education level and socialisation through such is particularly associated with broader repertoire of film genres.

4.1.4. Highbrows

Only a small proportion, 5.4% (*n*=2592), of the total sample falls into the highbrow category. Positioned in the top right section of the map, highbrows are characterised by their elevated levels of engagement, including frequent cinema attendance, occasional streaming, and occasional film viewing on television. Despite expressing a dislike for romance and horror films, highbrows typically dislike only one to three genres, while demonstrating an appreciation for a wide range of genres. Notably, their preferred genres often include animated films, auteur works, dramas, and science fiction. There seems to be little difference between the individuals belonging to the origin cluster and the highbrow modality. However, there is a more pronounced difference between the highbrow individuals as operationalised above and the cluster that could be characterised as film highbrows. As indicated in table 7 there is not much difference between high culture consumers and other groups in the mean regarding number of genres liked and disliked. The implications of this assertion will be explored and discussed in the following chapter.

Table 7 *Mean of liked and disliked film genres by highbrows and others*

	Number of genres liked	Number of genres disliked
Highbrows	6.78	4.02
Other	6.16	4.09
Difference	0.62	0.07

4.2. DIMENSION 2

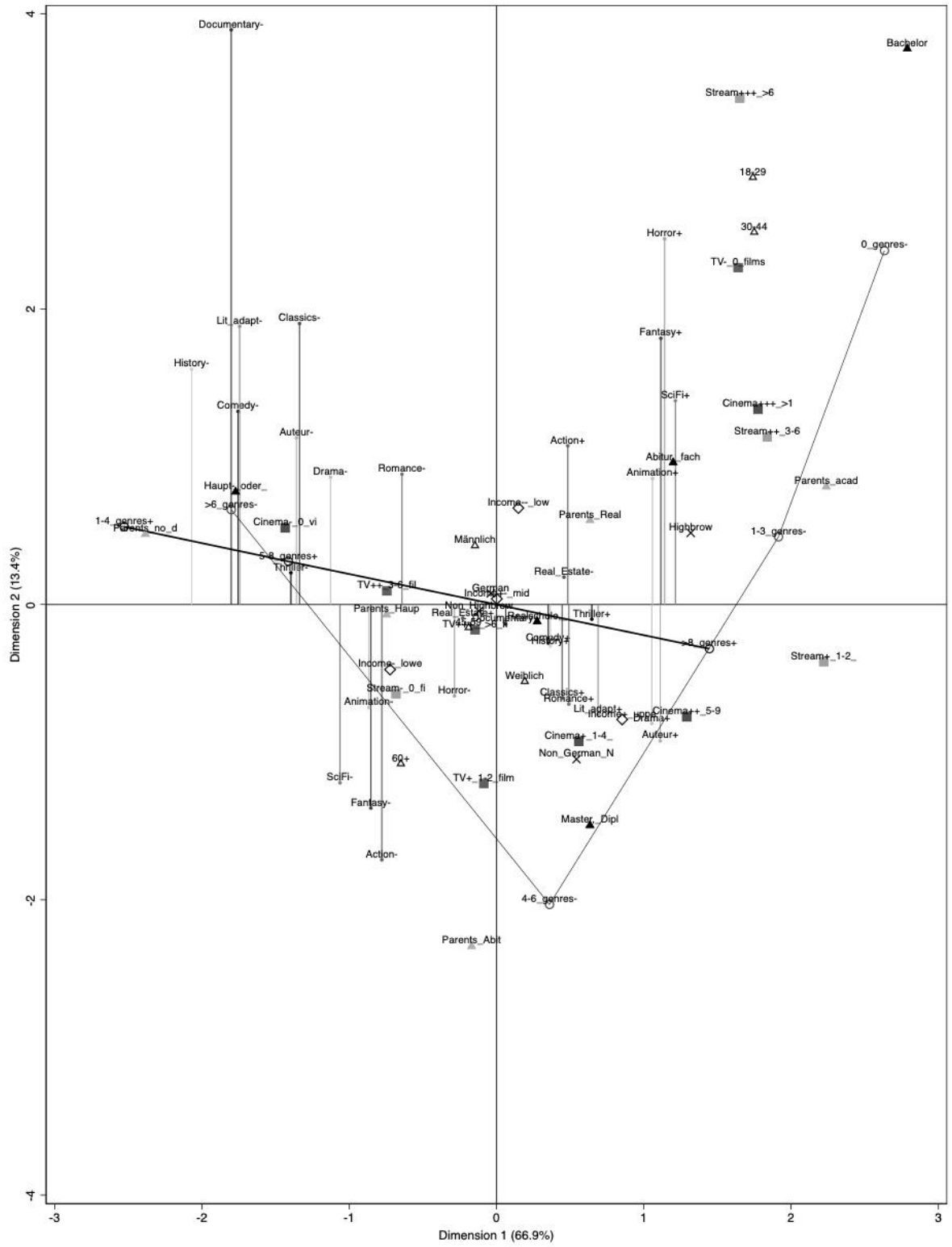
4.2.1. Entertainment-Intellectual and Symbolic Exclusion

Primary orientation of the second dimension are likewise aesthetic dispositions towards film genres, accounting for 71% of variance. Yet here, these reveal preference towards more popular taste patterns dominate the upper end and more exclusive preferences in the bottom of the axis (Fig. 3), which will be of higher interest in the later discussion. In other words, this dimension can be described as an entertainment and intellectual one. The lower part of figure 3 reveals a tendency to dislike more entertainment-focused film genres such action, science fiction, and fantasy, which weight the heaviest here. This cluster is accompanied by a more selected repertoire, with auteur and literary adaption having higher contributions here. The structure of popular and more refined aesthetic dispositions appears to be associated to both cultural capital and age. This selective range of appreciation may is associated with a dislike for genres often perceived as less legitimate and therefore serves for distinction, which will be further elaborated in the discussion section. As a side note, it can be said is that disliking documentaries rarely occurs with any of the other categories.

A prevalent ultimate tolerance cluster, in the top left (Quadrant I), meaning no disapproval of any genre is most closely associated with the approval of horror, fantasy, and science fiction. With slightly further distance, animated and action films. Individuals who score high on both the first and second dimensions demonstrate an appreciation for mainstream cinema as well as a diverse range of genres. They exhibit high levels of engagement with streaming platforms, regularly attend cinema screenings, and display a high degree of tolerance towards various genres. These characteristics are associated with a younger and more educated demographic. Whereas, the upper left (Quadrant II) is characterised by a high number of dislikes and by the same token limited number of liked film genres. The highest scoring disliked genres in the second quadrant are literary adaptions, classics, and auteur films.

Two distinct clusters of genre preferences emerge in the lower-right quadrant (IV) of the plot. Firstly, films belonging to the classics, auteur, romance, drama, and literature adaptations genres are strongly associated with female viewers who possess an upper-middle-class income and high levels of education. Furthermore, individuals within this cluster demonstrate an inclination towards a diverse range of genres, except for horror, science fiction, fantasy, and action films. The supplementary variable section and subsequent discussion will delve deeper into this phenomenon, exploring the possibility of symbolic exclusion occurring within this cluster.

Figure 3 *Space of film consumption with trajectories of number of liked and disliked genres*



4.2.2. Traditional and Contemporary Film Consumption

In addition, the consumption mode variables, primarily streaming and TV, explain 18% of the variance in the plot. There is a stronger inclination for contemporary modes of film consumption in the upper portion, while the highest rates of traditional TV viewing habits are observed near the origin and in the lower portion of the plot. Moreover, a notable trend is observed where the upper end of the plot displays a lower number of disliked genres, while the number increases towards the bottom, potentially associated with education level and age. The second axis reveals an imbalance in modalities, with 61% contributing to the upper portion and 39% to the lower portion.

4.3. SUPPLEMENTARY VARIABLES

4.3.1. Capital volume and composition

As previously, stated in the methodology chapter, socio-demographic variables measuring capital volume as well as age, gender, and nationality were included in the analysis. With these socio-demographic 'passive' variables, a social space is constructed and superimposed upon the space of film tastes and participation. A frequency table of the supplementary variable can be found in the appendix (Table A). Each point on the plot represents the mean coordinates of a particular modality, for example, having a Master's degree or being older than 60 years. To aid interpretation, trajectories are inserted in figure 4 connecting three key supplementary variables: age, educational level, and income.

Similarly to income, education level, of both parents and respondent, increases from the left to the right along the first axis, as does the degree of eclecticism and openness towards film and participation in consumption practices. Highest capital volume is located in the bottom right (Quadrant IV) of the plot. Overall, a higher level of cultural tolerance towards film genres is linked to greater capital volume, as seen on the right along axis 1. Additionally, as parental cultural capital increases, the number of liked genres generally tend to rise as well. For example, the lowest taste variety is located in the top left (Quadrant II), closely associated with "parents with no diploma" and individuals with low levels of education. Interestingly, there is a cluster of highly educated upper-middle class individuals in the bottom right quadrant of figure x that exhibit a degree of exclusion towards four to six genres. It is noteworthy that individuals with the highest level of education position

themselves towards the upper end of the disapproval range. This cultural intolerance, despite their largely eclectic taste and broad repertoire, may serve to establish symbolic boundaries within film consumption, which will be elaborated on in the discussion section. It becomes evident that individuals with higher levels of cultural capital, particularly at the Bachelor's level aged 30 to 44, exhibit a remarkable degree of acceptance towards a wide range of genres. More concretely, they most frequently do not dislike any of the chosen genres. Moreover, this link can be observed in the youngest age group (18–29) too.

The upper left quadrant (Quadrant II), comprising individuals with lower cultural capital, is predominantly characterised by a higher number of disliked genres. A closer look at the particular disapproved genres of individuals with lower education levels reveal, that these commonly can be understood as holding more artistic legitimacy, as stated at the end of section 4.2.1. Middle class household income as well increases from left to right along the first axis. Individuals with low education level and income are in proximity of not visiting the cinema, but watching a moderate amount of (3–6) films per month on TV. Therefore, there seems to be a link between age, income, and education and the private-public dimension (axis 1).

Individuals (Quadrant IV) with Master’s degrees and parents with higher education levels (Abitur) in the bottom right (Quadrant IV) actively participate in film consumption through moderate to high levels of engagement in various consumption practices, including contemporary private consumption. Specifically, this includes a range of behaviours such as attending the cinema on a low (1–4 times) to moderate (5–9 times) frequency per year, as well as regularly watching films on television and streaming platforms, typically once or twice per month. A look at the top left of the plot (Quadrant II) reveals, a cluster around not attending cinema with having the highest variance of consumption practices on axis 1. First and foremost, this low engagement in public consumption is linked with low levels of education of respondents and their parents. Moreover, there is a relationship between lower levels of income and not having been to the cinema in the past 12 months, interpretation of these findings will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Engaging in online film consumption practices seems to be associated with both age and capital volume.

4.3.2. Age

Age is increasing from the top right where younger age groups are located to the bottom left in which the oldest age cohort is located, so along the second axis, whose three structuring factors are: entertainment-intellectual preferences, traditional-contemporary

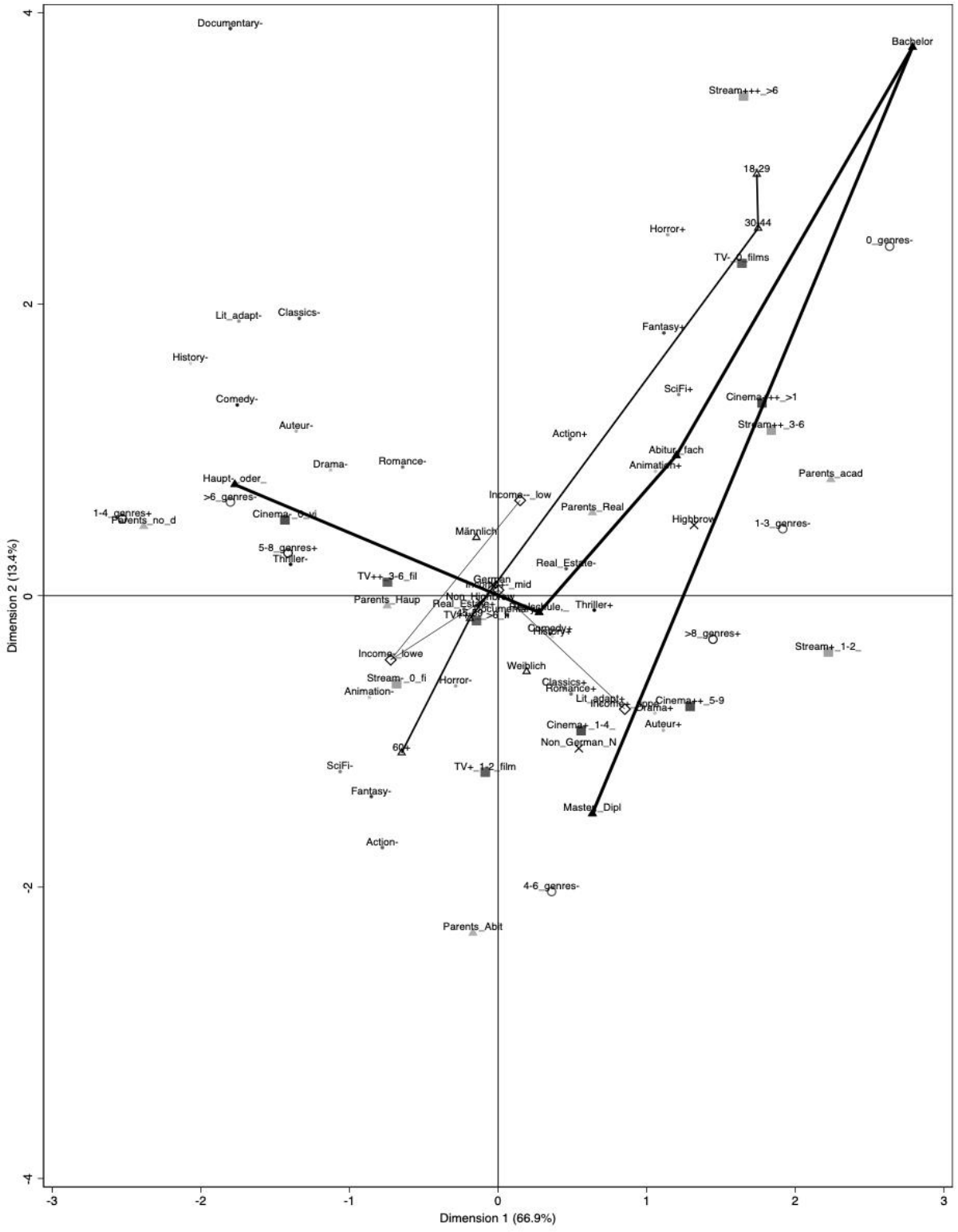
practices, and exclusive taste. As expected, engagement in film consumption practices generally decreases with age. The analysis reveals a cohort effect in that younger generations have a stronger affinity for the online consumption of film, while the oldest age group rarely engages in such. The top right of the plot shows that young adults (18–29) have the highest rates of film streaming, followed by middle-aged individuals (30–44). Vice versa, the oldest age groups (60+), located in the bottom left, unlikely engages in online consumption practices at all. In contrast, these two younger age cohorts are associated with not watching films on TV at all, with the middle-aged group being the closest to this consumption pattern, followed by the youngest age group. The elderly cohort (Quadrant III) is associated with particularly disliking science fiction, fantasy, and action films. Additionally, animation and horror films are more likely to be among the dislikes of participants older than 60 years.

The 45 to 59 age group is most closely located to watching films on TV with a frequency of over six per month, being the highest frequency, but the modality three to six films per month being not far either. These individuals (45–59) are more associated with low streaming frequency (1–2 films). Moreover, people aged 45 to 59 are closest located to no cinema attendance to low cinema attendance (1–4 films per year). As mentioned above, the oldest age cohort (60+) generally shows lower engagement rates, with infrequently watching films on TV (1–2 per month) and rarely visiting film theatres.

4.3.3. Gender

Women (Quadrant IV) exhibit a higher appreciation for classics, romance, and literature adaptations. Furthermore, they tend to dislike horror films and are more inclined towards highbrow tastes with affinity for genres such as auteur films and classics. On the other hand, men demonstrate a distaste for romance films and dramas, but exhibit a higher frequency of liking action-oriented films. This suggests that men are more inclined towards genres with an emphasis on action and real-life subject matter. Hence, this analysis supports the notion of gender-based differences in film preferences.

Figure 4 *Main supplementary variables with trajectories*



4.4. DISCUSSION

The MCA conducted on German film taste and participation has unveiled two distinct dimensions that are linked to aesthetic disposition and consumption modes. Additionally, a social space constructed by the supplementary variables is plotted upon the space of film tastes and participation. Here, we can further discuss what appear to be the structuring features of the dimension and societal factors amongst clusters identified in this preceding chapter.

As previously established, the first dimension captures a spectrum that encompasses both engagement (right) and disengagement (left) in film consumption, as well as the distinction between private (left) and public (right) modes of engagement. This dimension is strongly associated with capital volume, as higher participation in film consumption practices in general is prominent amongst individuals with higher educational levels and income (Prommer, 2010; Reuband, 2017). This includes public consumption of films, which is in accordance with findings of Roose and Stichele (2010). Moreover, as asserted by Roose et al. (2012), the highest levels of engagement are predominantly observed amongst individuals with the higher incomes and educational attainment. This finding aligns with this analysis, further reinforcing the association between socioeconomic factors and the extent of engagement in film consumption. Looking at the top left quadrant (Fig. 2), it becomes apparent that there are disengage individuals in terms of public and contemporary consumption modes, thereby showing an antithesis of the bottom right quadrant. This tendency could be associated with the financial resources available to individuals. Despite the relatively low cost of visiting the cinema, people may carefully consider the expenses and opt for a film night at home as a cost-saving measure. Furthermore, when taking into account the significance of the life cycle, it can be suggested that this pattern partially arises from the greater amount of available time, particularly amongst younger age groups.

In addition to the factors discussed above, it is unsurprising that age plays a significant role, with younger individuals displaying higher levels of engagement in comparison to older age groups (Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Rössel, 2006; Roose et al., 2012; 2005; Prommer, 2010; Reuband; 2017). Furthermore, it appears that axis 2 represents a dimension of contemporary versus traditional film consumption modes. Online film consumption modes are more commonly engaged in by the younger generation as opposed to their elderly counterparts. The occasional streaming behaviour observed amongst older, highly educated individuals may signify a form of cultural capital, as they possess knowledge

of current discourses and selectively choose films that align with their aesthetic preferences. Once again, financial considerations, such as the subscription fees of streaming providers, may play a role in this pattern. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the influence of the digital divide, not in terms of generational gaps, but in relation to informational capital (Prieur & Savage, 2013; DiMaggio & Hargittai, 2001; Stiakakis et al., 2010). Additionally, frequent television viewing can carry a certain stigma. Although younger audiences rarely or completely abstain from traditional private film consumption, they may opt for the streaming options provided by publicly-funded German channels known as "Mediatheken."

The second dimension of aesthetic disposition in film encompasses a spectrum from entertainment-oriented genres to more intellectually engaging ones, which can generally can be characterised as illegitimate to legitimate. In the upper-right quadrant (Fig. 3), preferences lean towards commercial cinema, which aims to entertain a wide audience through popular genres such as action, animation, science fiction, horror, and fantasy. These films prioritise entertainment value and mass appeal, featuring straightforward narratives, clear character motivations, a focus on spectacle with fast-paced cuts, and special effects. It is worth noting, that the boundaries between these categories are fluid and open to interpretation of their texts, as detailed in the limitations section. Moreover, there can be overlaps and exceptions in both mainstream and arthouse cinema, where some films successfully blend commercial elements with artistic ambition, while others defy easy categorisation altogether.

In contrast, preferences in the lower-right quadrant, exemplified by classic and auteur films, prioritise artistic expression. These films delve into complex characters, experimental narratives, distinct visual style as well as composition, and explore philosophical or social themes. They challenge traditional conventions and may appeal to cinephiles, film critics, and viewers seeking intellectually stimulating or artistically challenging experiences, often sparking discussions amongst film enthusiasts (Bauman, 2007). Rössel’s findings indicated, that persons with a higher education rarely disapprove of literature adaptions, satires, and auteur films but often disapprove horror, thriller, and comedy films (Rössel, 2006). Here, the findings only partially align with Rössel's research in terms of the appreciation of literary films and auteur films. However, slight differences are observed in terms of dislikes of comedies and thrillers, as these are not particularly disliked by those with higher capital volume (Quadrant IV). These difference in aesthetic dispositions towards genres can serve as marker of distinction.

This observation amongst older more educated individuals with higher income, in the bottom right of the plot, suggests an inclination towards omnivorous consumption, wherein

individuals demonstrate a willingness to engage with film genres that span the spectrum of legitimacy and illegitimacy within the public canon (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Yet, the highly educated upper-middle class individuals in the bottom right quadrant show some seemingly class-based exclusion towards a higher number of genres, which can serve to establish symbolic boundaries (Bryson, 1996) within film consumption despite their eclectic taste. They appear to consume action, horror, fantasy, science fiction, and animated films with symbolic exclusion. Conversely, individuals falling within the pattern in the top left quadrant could be described as "*univores*" as they possess a smaller repertoire of genre appreciation and often exhibit a greater number of disliked genres, particularly highbrow films.

In line with Prommer's findings (2015), age difference are observable in genre preferences. High cultural tolerance towards film genres is, as previously described, linked to greater capital volume, particularly on the right side of axis 1, and amongst younger people in the upper part. This ultimate tolerance cluster, most frequently, does not explicitly dislike any of the included genres and exhibit a strong association with the approval of horror, fantasy, and science fiction. This might be partly related to their life phase, in which tastes are still forming and evolving. The notable association between younger individuals with a Bachelor's degree and their strong affinity for horror films may initially seem like a general shift towards popular culture (Eijk & Knulst, 2005). However, this link can possibly be understood as an indication of emerging cultural capital (Prieur & Savage, 2013). Particularly A24, an indie production company, has gained recognition and acclaim, particularly in the realm of horror films. Renowned newspapers and scholars have extensively covered A24's rise to prominence, highlighting its impact on the film industry. The company's appeal to the younger generation can be attributed to its artistic style, boundary-pushing approach, and exploration of contemporary themes (Higgs, 2020). A24 has achieved success with films like The Witch (2015), Hereditary (2018), and Midsommar (2021), which offer unique and thought-provoking horror experiences (Lodge, 2023; Higgs, 2020). "These films are not your typical predictable slashers, but are unnerving and terrify viewers through their strangeness" (Higgs, 2020). The company's savvy distribution strategies, combining traditional theatrical releases with strategic streaming partnerships and marketing efforts, have contributed to its success (Higgs, 2020). However, further research is needed to fully understand this phenomenon, and qualitative or complementary quantitative approaches could be suitable for exploring this topic.

Similar to Prommer's and Reuband's findings, the MCA revealed a notable gender difference in film preferences. According to Prommer (2015), women are shown to have a preference for romantic comedies, while men tend to enjoy more action-oriented films. Although differences in film taste between men and women can vary based on individual preferences, some general taste patterns have been observed. The plot reveals men tend to have a higher preference for action and science fiction films, which often feature elements such as intense action sequences, special effects, and heroic protagonists. These genres are traditionally associated with masculine stereotypes and may appeal to those who enjoy high-energy and visually stimulating narratives. On the other hand, women in this analysis are having a greater affinity for dramas and romantic dramas. These genres frequently focus on relationships, emotions, and character development, which may resonate more with persons who appreciate storytelling in terms of interpersonal dynamics. It is important to note film preferences are not universally determined by gender, as individuals of any gender can have diverse tastes, influenced by other societal and cultural factors.

4.5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations were partly influenced by practical considerations, including factors such as time constraints and the scope. By acknowledging these limitations, we can better understand the constraints of this master thesis and the areas where further investigation or refinement may be necessary.

The absence of film examples or knowledge (e.g. directors) in the analysis is a notable limitation as film genres can be subject to diverse interpretations, and the inclusion of specific film examples would have enriched the understanding of genre preferences and knowledge. It is important to acknowledge that the coding of genre preferences solely as either approval or disapproval, without considering indifference or lack of knowledge, introduces a limitation to the analysis. As a result, the analysis may be skewed towards a positive inclination towards genres. However, it is worth noting that the number of cases with responses classified as "unknown" was minimal and would not have been included in the MCA analysis. Furthermore, on a more general note, it is important to acknowledge that this study has certain limitations, such as the exclusion of lifestyle choices including food preferences and preferences for other forms of art. The inclusion of lifestyle choices could have provided a more comprehensive understanding and contextualisation of participants' tastes and consumption patterns. The limitations of this paragraph highlight promising

avenues for future research, particularly regarding the utilisation of the *KuBiPaD I* survey data employed in this master thesis. One final limitation worth noting is that the data used predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the enduring impact of COVID-19 on the cinema industry (FFA, 2022), this temporal limitation may hinder the applicability of the findings in a post-pandemic context.

Rather than focusing solely on the examination of cultural objects that are consumed, future research could explore the intricacies of how and why these objects are consumed (Altenloh, 1914; Prieur and Savage, 2013). For instance, as to why individuals from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds tend to express dislike towards auteur films and film classics. This would provide valuable insights into their processes of meaning-making in relation to these consumption practices and reception of film genres. Regrettably, the reception variables of the *KuBiPaD I* survey were under embargo during the time the analysis was conducted. In that sense, future research should focus on analysing the symbolic transgressions of the mainstream-arthouse divide, their underlying social foundations, and specific manifestations (Rössel, 2006). In conjunction with this argument, there is a potential need for the expansion of research on social distinction, lifestyles, and social structure in the context of Germany.

It is imperative for research to broaden its focus beyond the social structure and lifestyles of cultural consumers and instead incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of the structure and dynamics of cultural providers. The formation of lifestyles and taste preferences is not solely shaped by changes in social structure and individual values, but is influenced by the institutionalisation of specific cultural production forms and the corresponding structure of cultural markets (Peterson & Berger 1975; DiMaggio 1992; 2001; Rössel, 2006).

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this thesis has shed light on contemporary patterns of film tastes and participation in Germany by means of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and constructing a superimposed social space based on socio-demographic variables. Examining the space of film consumption revealed that stratification mechanisms remain highly relevant in terms of both private and public participation. Furthermore, the findings revealed compelling evidence for social stratification in aesthetic dispositions towards film genres in the German context. Specifically, the findings of Bryson (1996), as well as Peterson and Kern (1996) regarding the socio-structural underpinnings of cultural omnivores were only partially corroborated. This conclusion gains further support through additional empirical analyses, which are elaborated upon below.

In the film consumption map presented in Figure 2, it becomes evident that individuals with a greater volume of capital exhibit higher levels of public participation compared to those with less capital volume (Roose & Stichele, 2010). In addition, the findings indicate the existence of a digital divide in terms of the two modes of private film consumption, with less privileged and older individuals showing limited engagement with streaming platforms in comparison with television.

As anticipated, the findings did not indicate mere preference of films with greater perceived legitimacy as basis for social distinction. Hence, this challenges a straightforward interpretation of Bourdieu's homology thesis (1984; Prieur & Savage, 2013), which suggests the consumption of legitimate culture aligned with higher social status and class would serve as marker of distinctions within society. However, it is worth noting that amongst younger generations, new forms of cultural capital might emerge (Prieur & Savage, 2013). Amongst younger individuals with higher levels of education, we observe a preference for different types of films compared to their older counterparts who possess similar educational backgrounds. These film preferences amongst the younger generation could potentially act as new indicators of cultural capital. Nevertheless, the establishment of a definitive link between these film preferences and cultural capital within this context cannot be confirmed based on the current research and requires further investigation.

A clearer differentiation amongst ‘highbrows’ emerged when examining the weak interpretation (De Vries & Reeves, 2021) of omnivorousness, as initially proposed by Peterson and Kern (1996). The present findings provide support for this claim, as they

indicate that culturally tolerant individuals categorised as highbrows indeed exhibit differences in their preferences for various types of films. Specifically, those with medium and high levels of institutionalised cultural capital exhibit a greater appreciation for a wider range of film genres compared to those with lower levels. The consumers of traditional high culture, as operationalised here, align most closely with the concept put forth by Peterson and Kern. They embody the notion of egalitarian consumption and the potential for distinction through a broader repertoire of cultural tastes. Consequently, it seems that these 'traditional' highbrows possess greater capital volume, exhibit a more diverse range of preferences, and display a seemingly more egalitarian inclination in their cinematic choices. These highbrows are typically characterised by their older age and higher volume of capital.

A notable distinction arises between 'traditional highbrows' and 'film highbrows' in their dislike for certain genres. The former group exhibits a disinterest in a few similar genres, while the latter establishes distinction by demonstrating a stronger aversion towards commonly mainstream genres. This observation challenges a neat fit of Peterson and Kern's thesis, as individuals with the highest capital volume tend to dislike a greater number of genres compared to those with medium capital volume, albeit still more than those with low capital volume. Hence, the concept as proposed by Perterson and Kern (1996) only aligns well with 'traditional highbrows' and when distinguishing between individuals with low and medium capital volume. Age appears to play a role in this context, as younger generations tend to display the lowest level of dislike towards film genres. Moreover, younger individuals demonstrate a tendency to gravitate towards genres that frequently give rise to mainstream films and are often commonly perceived as having lower levels of cultural legitimacy. As a result, the absence of a solid social foundation for the processes of distinction based on cultural omnivorousness becomes evident.

The results partially challenge the thesis postulated by Bryson, which suggests that tolerance towards cultural genres diminishes when those genres are predominantly preferred by individuals of lower status or education when compared with individuals who regularly participate in highbrow activities. Interestingly, the presence of a distinct cluster composed of individuals, here labelled as 'film highbrows', with the highest capital volume aligns more closely with Bryson's findings. These 'film highbrows' demonstrate a stronger dislike towards a greater number of genres that can be classified as mainstream, which are simultaneously favoured by individuals with lower capital volume. This observation implies

the existence of specific symbolic exclusion that are more closely associated with the ‘film highbrows’ cluster, based on the number and kind of genres excluded.

Thus, the indicators of highbrow taste utilised in this study did not demonstrate a clear socio-structural positioning associated with the construct as operationalised by Bryson. This divergence may be attributed to the fact that previous research has predominantly focused on highbrow preferences and consumption within the realm of music. For instance, studies such as Rössel's (2006), as well as De Vries and Reeves (2021), which heavily influenced the operationalisation of highbrows in this study, have largely based theirs on traditional highbrow cultural participation in the realm of music. However, when applying the concept of highbrows specifically to the cultural domain of film and establishing an operationalisation of film highbrows, the outcomes may differ.

It is plausible that an affinity for a particular medium, such as film, serves as basis for distinctions instead of preferences in other cultural domains, such as classical music. Film highbrows, for example, may be characterised by their high levels of participation and knowledge in the realm of film, with a specific focus on differentiating between attending arthouse and multiplex cinema or even film festival attendance. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the exploration of other interpretations and forms of cultural capital, such as subcultural capital (Thorton, 1995), emerging cultural capital, or informational capital (Prieur & Savage, 2013). These notions may shed light on the exclusion of certain mainstream film genres by highly educated individuals who demonstrate an appreciation for highbrow films, potentially functioning as class-based distinctions.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Table A *Frequencies of supplementary variables*

Variable	Modalities	Frequency
Gender	Male	1250
	Female	1342
Age	<18	96
	18–29	428
	30–44	500
	45–59	728
	60+	833
Education level	No diploma	76
	Student	25
	Hauptschule etc.	548
	Realschule, Mittlere Reife etc.	736
	Abitur etc.	464
	Other degree	5
	Degree in other country	65
	Bachelor	103
	Master, Diplom etc.	514
	PhD	39
Parental education level	No diploma	78
	Hauptschule etc.	1156
	Realschule, Mittlere Reife etc.	534
	Abitur etc.	226
	Academic degree	479
Personal net Income	< 1.000 EUR	766
	1.000 to under 1.500 EUR	446
	1.500 to under 3.000 EUR	825
	3.000 to under 5.000 EUR	232
	>5.000 EUR ++	63
Real estate ownership	Yes	1565
	No	975

Appendix B

STATA Codes

MCA

.mca FPact FPhor FPsci FPfan FPthr FPdra FPcom FProm FPlit FPaut FPhis FPclas FPdoc FPani Cine_FI03 TV_FI06a Stream_FI06d gr_app_genre gr_dis_genre C_Hibr, sup(SD01 GER_N age_gr EDU_com EDU_par P_NIgr_new SD55)

.mca FPact FPhor FPsci FPfan FPthr FPdra FPcom FProm FPlit FPaut FPhis FPclas FPdoc FPani Cine_FI03 TV_FI06a Stream_FI06d gr_app_genre gr_dis_genre C_Hibr, dim(4) sup(SD01 GER_N age_gr EDU_com EDU_par P_NIgr_new SD55)

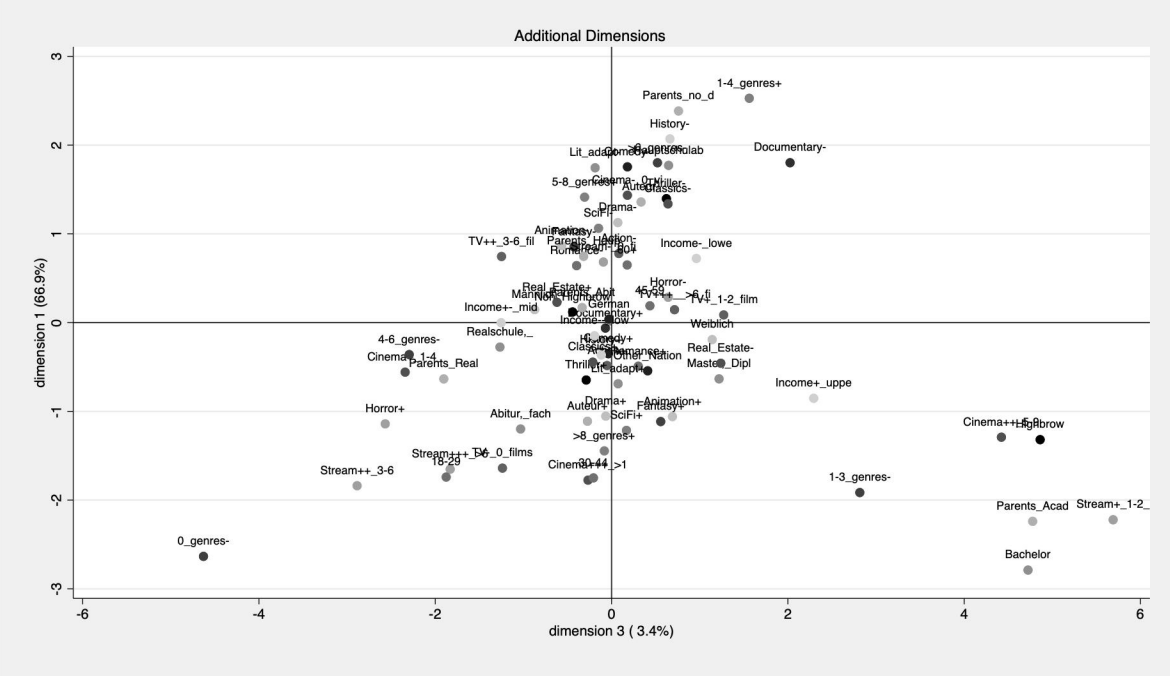
MCA Plots

.mcaplot, overlay xline(0) yline(0) legend(off) mlabpos(12) msymbol(point) mlabgap(0) title(" ", size(zero)) note("",size(zero)) scheme(s1mono) scale(.3)

.twoway (scatter co1 co2 [aweight=abs1], xline(0) yline(0) mlabsize(vsmall) msymbol(oh) msize(small) legend(off)) (scatter co1 co2 [aweight=abs2], xline(0) yline(0) mlabsize(vsmall) msymbol(Th) msize(small) legend(off)) (scatter co1 co2, mlabsize(vsmall) msymbol(i) mlabel(varname) legend(off))
xsc(r(0 4)) ysc(r(0 4))

Appendix C

Figure C *Space of film consumption dimension 1 and 3*



Appendix D

Figure D *Space of film consumption dimension 2 and 4*