Cultural Logics and Modes of Consumption: Unraveling the Multiplicity of Symbolic Distinctions Among Concert Audiences

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Abstract
In this study, we examined how audiences for different types of concerts structure their musical preferences according to specific cultural logics and how this relates to the motives for going to the concert. We used large-scale audience data collected at 73 concerts in Belgium (n = 1594). Using Correlational Class Analysis, we inductively uncovered four different cultural logics: omnivore vs. disinterested; highbrow vs. lowbrow; acoustic vs. electric; and anything but/with distortion. Accordingly, besides the well-documented oppositions between highbrow and lowbrow, and between omnivorousness and univorousness, we found two other cultural logics among concert audiences. In subsequent analyses, we related these cultural logics to concert genre (e.g., classical and electronic) and mode of consuming concerts (e.g., music-centered and entertainment-centered). We demonstrate that mode of consumption is associated with both concert genre and the cultural logic to which one adheres.

Keywords
Correlational Class Analysis, cultural logics, modes of consumption, musical field, omnivorousness, highbrow/lowbrow, symbolic distinctions

Introduction
In social encounters, music is often a way of establishing personal connections. A mutual preference for (or aversion to) a specific piece of music can be a good conversation-starter for strangers and it can also lead to elaborate and animated discussions among friends. The psychology of music demonstrates that individuals use music to communicate information about their...
own personality and interpret information about musical preferences to assess the personalities of others (Dunn, de Ruyter, & Bouwhuis, 2011; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2011; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006; Rentfrow, McDonald, & Oldmeadow, 2009). On the group level, music often functions as an important constituent of social identity (Giles, Denes, Hamilton, & Hajda, 2009; Shepherd & Sigg, 2015). Especially in youth cultures, musical preferences can be used to signal in-group membership and to make group comparisons, whereas musical out-groups are stereotyped and evaluated less favorably (Lonsdale & North, 2009).

Because music is often used as a tool for implicit communication and because it shapes social groups, it is also a topic of interest for sociologists. Much of the sociological research agenda on this topic is inspired by Bourdieu’s analysis of taste differentiation in the cultural field and its consequences for social distinction and cultural reproduction (Leguina, Arancibia-Carvajal, & Widdop, 2015; van Eijck, 2001; Willekens & Lievens, 2014). This sociological account of musical preferences mainly focuses on the existence of oppositional musical taste patterns that are used to differentiate societal groups with different combinations of cultural, economic, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

The general focus on oppositional taste patterns in music in this strand of research is usually based on or related to the highbrow/lowbrow distinction. However, besides this well-known distinction, other distinctions may exist. Goldberg (2011) and Boutyline (2017) recently proposed a novel analytical approach to reveal the multiple cultural logics that groups use to structure musical preferences in opposition to each other.

In this paper, we analyzed the cultural logics that concertgoers use to structure their musical preferences and how this relates to different modes of consuming concerts. We used data from a large survey comparing audiences at 17 large concert venues in Flanders. Going to concerts can be seen as a form of communal consumption whereby like-minded music fans can feel a sense of belonging and community and in which in- and out-group dynamics are central (Hills, 2002; O’Sullivan, 2009). Furthermore, concertgoers hold relatively well-informed opinions on genre differentiation within the musical field. This allowed us to go beyond broad genre labels—such as classical music—which may be characterized by considerable internal variation in terms of origins, trajectories, and status attribution (Lena & Peterson, 2008; Peterson, 2005; Vlegels & Lievens, 2017). Concertgoers are therefore a very relevant population to study subtle patterns of taste differentiation and musical consumption. In the next step, we tested the extent to which modes of consumption are related to the: (a) genre of the concert consumed; (b) cultural logic used to structure musical preferences; and (c) interaction effect between the two. We included this moderation effect because we hypothesized that the way people consume musical concerts is influenced by the genre of the concert and the way this genre is structured within the cultural logic of the respondent. To test our expectations, we disentangled different cultural logics, as well as their relationships with modes of consumption, to further our understanding of symbolic differentiation between members of the audiences for concerts across and within different genres.

**Theory**

**Music as a Status Marker**

The musical field has proved to be one of the most fruitful cultural sub-fields in the sociology of culture to study the link between taste differentiation and social stratification (Leguina et al., 2015; Peterson, 1997, 2005). Based on data collected in the 1960s, (Bourdieu, 1984) offers a classic approach to these processes based on the opposition between highbrow
culture, which requires cultural competences exclusively mastered by cultural elites, and lowbrow culture, which is aimed at mainstream entertainment for lower social strata. He gives a detailed analysis of processes of distinction among people from higher social strata, who have the institutional power to legitimize certain cultural forms and dismiss other cultural forms as illegitimate. This distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture remains an important conceptual tool for contemporary research on musical consumption, albeit often in more complex constellations (e.g., Johnston, Baumann, & Oleschuk, 2019).

As Hesmondhalgh (2006) argues, Bourdieu mostly focused on differentiation within the market of small-scale elite cultural production, while considering the larger market of popular culture as a homogenous field of mass production with little symbolic differentiation. This approach is problematic for studying more contemporary processes of taste differentiation, considering the continuing expansion and differentiation of the popular music industry since the 1960s (Mauch, MacCallum, Levy, & Leroi, 2015). For example, some artists (such as Bob Dylan) and genres (such as jazz) have become part of the classical canon of legitimate culture and can no longer be considered lowbrow (Regev, 1994). These legitimation processes are associated with the rise of new cultural intermediaries within the field of popular culture in the second half of the 20th century. These intermediaries (such as Rolling Stone magazine in the United States or the review section of The Guardian newspaper in the United Kingdom) have the power to ascribe legitimacy to different forms of popular culture, using a mixture of both traditional highbrow criteria and new popular aesthetic criteria (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Furthermore, most cultural institutions currently wish to avoid being associated with the elitist connotation of highbrow culture and tend to include new formats and elements of popular culture in their programming (Grebosz-Haring & Weichbold, 2018). These evolutions have added a considerable amount of complexity to the musical field and since then, many scholars have formulated fundamental critiques of the simple dichotomy between highbrow (elite) and lowbrow (mass) culture (DiMaggio, 1977; Goldberg, 2011; Lizardo & Skiles, 2008; Martin, 1979).

The complex structure of the contemporary musical field has clear repercussions for research on musical preferences. The vast amount of work on cultural omnivorousness is a case in point here. Comparing data from 1982 with data from 1992, Peterson and Kern (1996) claimed a historical shift in the nature of the structural homology between social positions and cultural taste patterns that Bourdieu described. In this move from snob to omnivore, cultural elites who used to show an exclusive preference for highbrow culture no longer shun all forms of popular culture. Instead, they now incorporate popular preferences in their taste palettes. The literature on omnivorousness maintains the idea of a homology between the social and the cultural space (omnivores have a higher prevalence in higher social strata in society), but argues for a redefinition of the content of elite culture.

Further research has shown that the conceptualization of omnivorousness, as a mixture of highbrow and lowbrow genres, conceals a wide variety of taste preferences (Bryson, 1996; Lahire, 2008; Sonnett, 2004). The results of these studies show that different systems of cultural classification may co-exist within a variety of local scenes in the musical field that do not necessarily oppose or incorporate highbrow culture (Hall, 1992; Straw, 1991; Thornton, 1995). These scenes are based on specific genres such as metal or dance music, and local cultural hierarchies are constantly renegotiated (Bennett, 2004; Cheyne & Binder, 2010; Laermans, 1993; Thornton, 1995). Furthermore, taste differentiation might not be based only on the social connotations of musical genres. The sonic characteristics of music, such as the extent to which it is mellow, loud, or energetic might be equally important (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin, 2011). This constitutes a complex web of co-existing cultural hierarchies that are difficult to capture if one relies on a priori constructed oppositions such as highbrow/lowbrow or univore/omnivore.
Another strand of research on consumption argues that eclectic, omnivore taste patterns can conceal differences between the ways that people consume culture and that these motivational factors also act as markers of status (Daenekindt & Roose, 2017; Holt, 1998). The motives for visiting an electronic music concert might be different for people exclusively embedded in rave culture and omnivores with a general curiosity for multiple genres (see Beate & Williams, 2019; Garcia, 2015). Thus, an apparent overlap in genre preferences can conceal both different structures of musical taste and different modes of consuming musical forms.

Cultural Logics

Inspired by Goldberg (2011), we use the concept of cultural logics to capture oppositional taste patterns among concert audiences. By analyzing both positive and negative correlations between genre preferences, Goldberg (2011) disentangles oppositional preference structures that indicate a mutual understanding of relevant genre distinctions in the musical field. Consider, for example, individuals A and B who both use the highbrow/lowbrow cultural logic. Individual A likes highbrow and dislikes lowbrow music. Individual B, on the other hand, likes lowbrow and dislikes highbrow music. While their preferences are diametrically opposed, both individuals share an understanding as to the way musical genres are structured and how they are related to each other. Bourdieu (1984) famously described this logic where both individuals share a mutual understanding of the musical field in the 1960s: individual A embraces highbrow culture and resents lowbrow culture because of its lower aesthetic qualities. Individual B recognizes the fine arts as a separate and superior realm of culture, but dismisses it as not for the likes of us and therefore prefers lowbrow culture. Thus, they both accept the demarcation between and the hierarchical structure of the highbrow/lowbrow cultural logic.

Goldberg’s (2011) main argument is that not all individuals use the same cultural logic when it comes to structuring cultural preferences. For example, both Goldberg (2011) and Boutyline (2017) identify another logic in the United States where the opposition between traditional (e.g., classical, blues, gospel, and country) and contemporary musical genres (e.g., rap and heavy metal) is central. Here, a preference for classical music does not indicate a demarcation between highbrow and lowbrow, because it is combined with a preference for blues and country. On the other hand, individuals preferring heavy metal within this logic do not like all lowbrow genres; they also dismiss traditional genres such as country. Thus, these oppositional taste patterns indicate a second relevant line of distinction between traditional and contemporary genres.

In this paper, we focus on the cultural logics of concertgoers in Belgium. Concert audiences are a population highly relevant to the study of coexisting logics. The musical field now comprises many sub-fields, ranging from entertainment culture with mass appeal, to specific genres aimed at particular audiences, and local scenes that coalesce around certain constellations of musical styles (Garcia, 2015; Straw, 1991). These latter musical scenes actively seek to renegotiate cultural hierarchies and establish alternative symbolic distinctions between both other musical scenes and dominant mainstream genres (cf. Frith, 2004). In this study, we inductively disentangle the different co-existing cultural logics of concertgoers to gain a deeper understanding of different audiences (and segments of these audiences), and how they structure their musical preferences.

Modes of Consumption

In this subsection, we turn to the consumption of concerts and the ways concertgoers approach them. The way a cultural product is consumed can be determined by both the
characteristics of the cultural product itself and individual characteristics of the consumers. Early post-Bourdieuian quantitative research on consumption tended to focus on the characteristics of the cultural product. Holt (1997) has criticized this *object-significant approach* for assuming that certain meanings are inextricably linked to specific cultural objects and interpreted by everyone in a universal manner. For example, it was often assumed that consuming highbrow culture always required an aesthetic orientation, while lowbrow culture was always consumed for mere entertainment. Also, this position assumes that individuals have only one dominant (e.g., aesthetic or functional) disposition that is used to consume a wide range of specific cultural products (Daenekindt, 2017). Both mechanisms lead to the caricature of the highbrow snob, who only consumes highbrow culture with a rigid aesthetic disposition that applies to every aspect of daily life.

More recent research on consumer practices reveals great variety in the ways that specific cultural products are consumed (Berghman & van Eijck, 2009; Jarness, 2015, Rössel, 2011). Daenekindt and Roose (2017) argue that people who express preferences for the same cultural objects can have different styles of appreciation or *ways of consuming*. Accordingly, to understand the complex web of cultural consumption practices in a cultural field, we need to complement a focus on *what* is being consumed with one on *how* products are consumed (e.g., motives, evaluations, and ways of preferring). Jarness (2015) distinguishes three relevant modes of consuming cultural goods that correspond to different motives people describe for going to concerts (Brown & Knox, 2016).

The first is an intellectual mode of consumption, where the consumption of cultural products is an end in itself.1 This relates to the aesthetic disposition described by Bourdieu, where art is consumed *for art’s sake*. For concerts, this implies attending for the intrinsic qualities of the music or the performance. Therefore, we label this mode of consumption as *music-centered*. The second is an educational mode of consumption, where discovery and learning is the primary motive for consumption. This mode of consumption aligns with societal trends towards multiculturalism and greater inclusivity, and is associated with more omnivorous taste patterns (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Prieur, Rosenlund, & Skjott-Larsen, 2008). A concertgoer with this mode of consumption is focused on discovering new music and experiences. Therefore, we label this mode of consumption as *discovery-centered*. The third is a practical mode of consumption, where products are consumed to fulfill more straightforward needs, such as having fun and being entertained. For concerts, we label this as an *entertainment-centered* mode of consumption.

In addition to these general modes of consumption, a fourth mode of consumption that is related to the constellation of likeminded fans around a certain musical genre can be found among concertgoers. Music is a strong symbolic tool for self-representation (Larsen, Lawson, & Todd, 2009). In particular, people who are part of specific music scenes with a distinctive group style use concert-going as a way of affirming their social identity through identification with the in-crowd, thus cultivating a sense of belonging and negative affects towards out-groups with other musical preferences (Frith, 1996b; Shepherd & Sigg, 2015; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002). Accordingly, we label this as a *group-centered* mode of consumption, which relates to belonging to a specific group or scene.

**Conceptual Model and Hypotheses**

As discussed in the previous subsection, the way a cultural product is consumed can be determined by both characteristics of the cultural product itself (object-significance approach) and characteristics of the consumers (ways-of-preferring approach). In our conceptual model, we test the extent to which modes of consuming concerts are determined by both concert-level characteristics (genre) and individual-level characteristics (cultural logic).
The population investigated in this study were concertgoers in Flanders from a wide range of concerts. This implies a multilevel structure, with cultural logics at the individual level (Level 1) and the genre of the concert visited as a concert-level variable (Level 2). The general structure of the conceptual model is presented in Figure 1. We tested two possible ways that cultural logics and concert genre can influence concertgoers’ modes of consumption, indicated by A and B.

A: **Main effect of concert genre on mode of consumption.** First, we tested whether the genre of the concert leads to a specific mode of consumption. Here, we followed the object-significance approach because we assume that certain characteristics of the concert can trigger a certain mode of consumption. However, we do not necessarily assume that people have one fixed set of dispositions that determines both cultural consumption choices and the motivation for consuming culture (e.g., highbrow snobs with an aesthetic disposition who only attend highbrow cultural events to fulfill their aesthetic needs). Instead, we follow Lahire (2003) who argues that people have a plurality of dispositions that are triggered in different social contexts (see also Daenekindt, 2017). For example, going to see an exotic unfamiliar artist one week can trigger a discovery-centered mode of consumption, while attending a pop concert the following week could trigger an entertainment-centered mode of consumption.

B. **Cultural logic as a moderator for the effect of concert genre on mode of consumption.** In principle it would be possible to test the direct effect of cultural logics on modes of consumption. However, it does not always make sense to relate cultural logics to mode of consumption directly, because the effect might be different according to (a) the genre of the concert and (b) the end of the spectrum of a cultural logic at which a person is situated. In order to address the latter issue, we used the genre of the music played at the concert as an indicator for specific music preferences within a cultural logic. For example, we assumed that a person with a highbrow/lowbrow cultural logic who is going to a classical music concert is situated at the highbrow end and likes other highbrow genres while dismissing more popular genres. Therefore, we introduced cultural logic as a moderator (B) for the effect of concert genre on modes of consumption (A). This approach allowed us to test whether people with a different cultural logic who are at the same concert consume it in the same or in a different way. For example, concertgoers who do not structure their preferences according to a highbrow/lowbrow logic might still go to a classical music concert, but their mode of consumption may be more strongly discovery-oriented than that of the consumer of exclusively highbrow music described by Bourdieu. Introducing a moderation effect between concert genre and cultural logic also allowed us to test whether the effect of cultural logic is different according to the type of concert attended. Staying with the highbrow/lowbrow example, we allow for the possibility that concertgoers with this logic at concerts of classical music consume...
them with a music-centered mode of consumption, while concertgoers with this logic at a pop concert consume them with an entertainment mode of consumption.

Our research strategy consisted of two parts. First, we inductively analyzed the cultural logics that concert audiences use to structure their musical preferences. Second, we constructed a multilevel model, whereby we tested whether the genre of the concert has an effect on the mode of consuming musical concerts and we allowed this effect to vary according to the cultural logic of the concertgoers. Considering the inductive nature of our analytical strategy, it is not possible to offer a comprehensive list of hypothesized relations between cultural logics, genres of concerts, and modes of consumption. Instead, we relate the results from this inductive approach to existing theories on taste differentiation in the conclusion of this paper.

**Data and Methods**

**Data**

We used data from a large-scale survey of audiences at larger city-based concert venues in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. In the first stage, a random sample of participants was recruited at 73 concerts in 17 venues located in eight different cities in Flanders. We selected concerts of music in different genres, that is, classical, jazz, pop and rock, roots and folk, and hip hop and electronic music (the number of concerts per genre was proportional to the number of concerts given in Flanders between January and May 2014). A random-selection procedure was used to collect data. We contacted those who entered the venue according to fixed intervals (dependent on the number of people expected to attend the concert). Because the interval varied according to the size of the audience at the concert, a weighting procedure was used to correct proportional differences in selecting respondents at different types of concert. In total, 5386 concertgoers were contacted. This contact was made face-to-face by an interviewer and entailed the administration of a short questionnaire to assess socio-demographic characteristics and the collection of email addresses to be used for sending out our follow-up survey. We collected 3645 valid email addresses and a total of 1568 respondents took part in the survey via email. The interviewer provided the respondent’s sex and an approximation of their age in case of non-response in the contact phase (i.e., if the respondent did not participate in the contact survey). Based on this information, secondary weights were calculated for each cell in a crosstabulation of sex (male, female), age (16–29; 30–59; 60+) and concert venue. All analyses were performed with and without weights. There were only very minor numerical differences between the results of the two kinds of analysis and no differences between the interpretations and conclusions that could be drawn. The results reported in this paper are based on the analysis with weights.

**Measures**

*Concert genre*. All the venues classified their programs by genre category for the purposes of communicating with their audiences. We used these classifications to categorize the type of concert: (a) classical; (b) pop/rock; (c) roots/folk/jazz; and (d) hip hop/electronic.

*Musical genres*. The respondents were presented with a list of musical genres and asked whether they knew each of them and—if so—the extent to which they enjoyed listening to each of them. We used a 7-point Likert scale for their answers, which ranged from *don’t like to listen to it at all* to...
like to listen to it very much. In line with Goldberg (2011) and Boutyline (2017), we recoded the don’t knows to the neutral/middle position on the scale. Twenty-two musical genres were included in the analysis: blues; chanson; classic rhythm and blues; classic rock; contemporary classical; contemporary rock; country and bluegrass; dance; folk; funk and soul; heavy metal; hip hop/urban/R&B; house; jazz (swing, big band, and Dixieland); opera; pop music; punk/hardcore; reggae/dub; schlager; symphonic classical music; techno; and world music.

**Modes of consumption.** To understand the different modes of consumption, we performed an exploratory factor analysis with Promax rotation on a Likert scale (7 points, ranging from completely not important to very important) assessing motivations for attending. This resulted in a three-factor solution (see Table 1). The first factor included items such as Because of the musical genre, band or performers and Because the music moves you. These items are specifically related to the music and the performance itself and indicate a music-centered mode of consumption. The second factor represents an entertainment-centered mode of consumption, emphasizing social and relaxation motives (with items including To be out with friends or To have a pleasant evening/afternoon out). The third factor, which includes the two items To get to know this sort of music better and To be surprised by something unfamiliar relates to curiosity and indicates a discovery-centered mode of consumption. These three factors clearly relate to the different modes of consumption identified in the literature (e.g., Jarness, 2015).

We also included a separate item that was not included as a latent construct, but measures an important motivational element that is closely related to more explicit distinction practices within the cultural field, namely To be among like-minded people. This item is used as an indicator of a group-centered mode of consumption. In order to create comparable scales, we used the average score of all the items loading on each dimension, and the score for the single item on the group-centered mode of consumption (minimum = 1; maximum = 7).

**Socio-demographic variables.** Level of education was included as a control variable and consisted of four categories: secondary education or lower (27.7%); higher education (35.9%); university (26.1%); and still enrolled (10.3%). Sex (48.4% female) and age (mean age of 30.8 years) were also included in the analyses as control variables in the multilevel analysis.³

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**Table 1. Factor analysis: modes of consumption.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Music-centered</th>
<th>Entertainment-centered</th>
<th>Discovery-centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out of interest in the musical performance</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because certain musicians/singers are performing</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-0.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the musical genre, band or performers</td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>-0.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because the music moves you</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To relax</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be out with friends</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a pleasant evening/afternoon out</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get to know this sort of music better</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be surprised by something unfamiliar</td>
<td>-0.177</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: extra item: to be among like-minded people (group-centered).

Factor loadings in bold are higher than 0.4, indicating that the scale item (for example ‘Out of interest in the musical performance’) is attributed to the latent factor of that column (‘music-centered). All items with a factor loading shown in bold were used/combined to construct the latent variable of that column.
Results

Correlational Class Analysis (CCA) to Reveal Cultural Logics

We used CCA to reveal different cultural logics by clustering individuals with similar configurations of musical preferences (Boutyline, 2017; Daenekindt, 2019; Goldberg, 2011). The CCA yielded four clusters of similar sizes. A correlation matrix of the 22 musical genre preferences was created for each cluster, and these are visualized as networks in Figures 2–5. The nodes correspond to the musical genres and the edges between them represent the correlations. Dashed edges represent negative correlations, while solid edges represent positive correlations. Additionally, the width and shade of the edges is proportional to their strength.

Table 2 presents the crosstabulation between cultural logic and genre of concert attended.

Figure 2. Visualization of the different cultural logics: omnivore vs. disinterested.
Note. Bl, blues; Ch, chanson; Rnb, classic rhythm and blues; ClRck, classic rock; CoCl, contemporary classical; CoRck, contemporary rock; Cntr, country and bluegrass; Dnc, dance; Flk, folk; Fnk, funk and soul; HMet, heavy metal; HH, hip hop/urban/R&B; Hse, house; Swg, jazz (swing, bigband, and dixieland); Op, opera; Pop, pop music; Pnk, punk/hardcore; Rgg, reggae/dub; Schl, schlager; Smf, symphonic classical music; Tchn, techno; and World, world music.
Dashed lines, negative correlations; solid lines, positive correlations; and width and shade of the lines proportional to the correlation strength.
The first two clusters very much resemble two clusters Goldberg (2011) found among the U.S. population, and are labeled as omnivore vs. disinterested and highbrow vs. lowbrow. Our third cluster is somewhat related to the contemporary/traditional opposition that was found for the U.S. population by both Goldberg (2011) and Boutyline (2017), but the opposition we found for concertgoers in Flanders seems to be between the traditional (especially highbrow) genres with acoustic instruments and the more subcultural genres that are related to a specific musical scene with electric guitars (punk and heavy metal) or electronic instruments (house, dance, and techno). We therefore term this group acoustic vs. electric. The fourth cluster resembles the anything (but) heavy metal cluster that Boutyline (2017) describes, but heavy metal is complemented with punk/hardcore and classic rock. We term this cultural logic anything but/with distortion. We describe each cluster in more detail below.
Cluster 1. Omnivore vs. disinterested. This group shows some clustering of genres with electronic genres at the top, classical genres on the left, pop and rock at the bottom and roots, world and folk music on the right, but all of them are connected with full lines, which means there are only positive correlations (Figure 2). The term omnivore seems appropriate for visitors on one end of this cultural logic, who like most musical genres without disliking others. For example, an audience member with this cultural logic, who went to a classical concert and likes classical music, will also like most of the other genres in this list and will not have any dislikes. In theory, it is also possible to find concertgoers on the other end of this cultural logic, for whom a dislike for one genre implies a dislike for all the genres on our list. Because the opposite of omnivorousness within this cultural logic implies a complete dislike of music without really differentiating between genres, we label this group as disinterested. Since we are studying a population of concertgoers, we can assume that
most of those who belong to this cluster actually have some preferences and are therefore situated at the omnivore end.\(^6\)

The largest proportion of concertgoers who use omnivore versus disinterested logic was found at roots/folk/jazz concerts (38%). This is reminiscent of the findings of DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004), who depict jazz as an exemplary genre for an omnivorous taste pattern, because of its trajectory from a lowbrow genre in origin to a legitimate genre in contemporary *highbrow* musical institutions. In addition, the folk scene has been described as having very socially inclusive attitudes, which results in an openness towards the musical genres of other cultures (Miller, 2014; Schulze, 1992). Also, this logic was found relatively often at pop/rock (20%) and hip hop/electronic (27%) concerts. Only 14% of our respondents with omnivore versus disinterested logic were found at classical concerts.
Cluster 2. Highbrow vs. lowbrow. In this cultural logic, there is a clear, segregated position for opera, symphonic classical music and contemporary classical music, situated on the right of Figure 3. This group of highbrow genres clusters together and shows clear, negative correlations with all the other musical genres, especially electronic genres, and pop and rock. Accordingly, individuals in this cluster who prefer highbrow music do not like any other kind of music and those in this cluster who prefer lowbrow music do not like highbrow music. Thus, individuals in this group adhere to the traditional distinction between lowbrow and highbrow music, and clearly perceive a symbolic demarcation line between them.

A surprising finding is that a large proportion of concertgoers with a highbrow/lowbrow cultural logic were found at hip hop/electronic (43%) and pop/rock concerts (32%), but only a small proportion at classical concerts (10%). Accordingly, people with this cultural logic are mostly fans of lowbrow musical genres: they are open to other pop, electronic and rock genres, but reject highbrow genres such as classical music.

Cluster 3. Acoustic vs. electric. In this cultural logic, there is a stronger opposition between acoustic, more traditional genres (e.g., opera, symphonic classical music, chanson, and blues) and contemporary, scene-based genres in which electric and electronic instruments are central (see Lena & Peterson, 2008). This logic was most commonly found among the audiences for concerts of classical music (63%), followed by roots/folk/jazz (17%), and only a small proportion was found at concerts of pop/rock (11%) or hip hop/electronic music (9%). Accordingly, we conclude that a large proportion of the members of this group are highbrow enthusiasts who accept acoustic forms of popular culture, but not the louder, more obscure genres. This audience was reminiscent of the selective omnivore described by Bryson (1996), who likes a large number of genres (including highbrow) but also explicitly dislikes more marginalized genres such as heavy metal and rap.

Cluster 4. Anything but/with distortion. In this cluster—much as in the first—most correlations are positive, which indicate musical preferences that are grouped together. The exception to this pattern relates to the segregated genres on the right, which are punk, classic rock and heavy metal, in all of which heavy guitars with distortion are an important musical characteristic. This resembles the anything (but) heavy metal cluster found by Boutyline (2017), but the heavy metal side also includes punk and classic rock, which are two genres with a musical trajectory different from that of heavy metal (cf. Lena & Peterson, 2008). This indicates that this opposition is less based on one genre in particular but on a common musical characteristic in this genre, namely distorted guitars. Therefore, we label this cluster based on the shared musical characteristics of these three genres: anything but/with distortion.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of cultural logics and type of concert.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Omnivore vs. disinterested</th>
<th>Highbrow vs. lowbrow</th>
<th>Acoustic vs. electric</th>
<th>Anything but/with distortion</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concert Folk</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electro</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sixty-eight percent of this cluster attended pop/rock concerts, from which we can conclude that a large part of this cluster has a strong preference for classic rock, punk and metal, but rejects everything else. This group of exclusive rockers resembles the description of the traditional univore with very narrow cultural preferences. However, their specific adherence to pop/rock music shows that the members of this group are actively involved in the musical field and clearly demarcate their preferences. This suggests that they are conceptually different from the original description of a passive univore group with a limited interest in highbrow or lowbrow cultural forms (Jæger & Katz-Gerro, 2011). Another 16% were found at concerts of hip hop/electronic music, which implies that these concertgoers represent members of a musical scene who go to concerts of electronic music and accept most other genres apart from classic rock, punk, and metal.

**Cultural Logics and Modes of Consumption: Multilevel Analyses**

Our data are characterized by a multilevel structure, as individual concertgoers are grouped together (or nested) according to the concert visited. Our dependent variables were modes of consumption, which are allowed to vary according to individual level characteristics (cultural logics and socio-demographic variables as control variables) and concert level characteristics (musical genre of the concert). The omnivores versus the disinterested were the reference group for cultural logic and the roots/folk/jazz concerts the reference group for the type of concert. Omnivores functioned as the reference group for cultural logic because we wanted to highlight differences between omnivores as an established category in the literature on musical preference structures and more specific/less well-known preference structures. For type of concert, we chose roots/folk/jazz concerts as a reference group, because these genres hold a middle ground between traditional genres (such as classical music) and more scene-based genres (such as rock and electronic music) in commonly used musical classification systems (Lena & Peterson, 2008).

Using cross-level interactions, we analyzed whether the modes of consuming musical concerts of a particular genre differed according to the concertgoer’s cultural logic. Table 3 presents the multilevel models for each mode of consumption.

**Discovery-centered.** Discovery/curiosity appeared to be a less relevant motivation for those attending pop/rock concerts and hip hop/electronic music concerts than for those attending roots/folk/jazz concerts. There was no significant difference between the audiences for roots/folk/jazz and classical music so far as this mode of consumption was concerned. Cultural logic had no effect, and also there was no cross-level interaction between cultural logic and the type of concert. This implies that the discovery-centered mode of consumption is only related to the type of concert one is attending (classical, roots, folk, or jazz).

**Entertainment-centered.** As expected, we found this mode of consumption less frequently at classical concerts. Moreover, cultural logic had no effect and there were no significant cross-level interaction terms. Thus, this mode of consumption is relevant for consuming all types of concerts except classical music, regardless of the concertgoer’s cultural logic. Relaxation and sociability as a motivation to attend concerts was strongly related to socio-demographic control variables. This was a more important motivation for women and younger attendees. Those with a degree in higher education (other than a university degree), went to concerts more often to relax or to be social than was the case for those with a university degree.
Table 3. Multilevel analysis of modes of consumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Discovery-centered (B)</th>
<th>Entertainment-centered (B)</th>
<th>Music-centered (B)</th>
<th>Group-centered (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.185 ***</td>
<td>5.873 ***</td>
<td>5.488 ***</td>
<td>5.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.204 **</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.010 **</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/secondary education</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>0.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education—not university</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.240 **</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.204 **</td>
<td>0.047</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-0.008</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education—not university</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.240 **</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnivore vs. univore (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highbrow vs. lowbrow</td>
<td>-0.229</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic vs. electric</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>-0.120</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>-0.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything but/with distortion</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>-0.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots/folk/jazz (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip hop/electronic</td>
<td>-0.559 *</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>-0.483 **</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>-0.591 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop/rock</td>
<td>-0.655 *</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td>0.632 ***</td>
<td>0.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>6285.403</td>
<td>5128.631</td>
<td>5603.844</td>
<td>5546.595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. LL refers to -2*loglikelihood statistic for explained variance.
Music-centered. Attending concerts for the intrinsic qualities of the music or the performance was not related to any socio-demographic variable. It was, however, related to the type of concert attended. The model without interaction terms shows that pop/rock concerts are attended more often than roots/folk/jazz concerts because of the intrinsic qualities of the music. However, when we looked at the cross-level interaction, we found that this was only the case for people with an anything but/with distortion logic. Accordingly, fans who exclusively like metal, punk and hard rock were more inclined to have a music-centered mode of consumption when they attended rock concerts.

The model with the interaction terms also shows that the cluster with an acoustic versus electric cultural logic had more highly music-centered motivations when they attended classical concerts. Thus, the dominant segment of the audience at a classical music concert, which rejects electric/electronic genres, also tends to have a more music centered mode of consumption.

Group-centered. Concert genre did not have a direct effect on the group-centered mode of consumption, but when we looked at the cross-level interaction terms, we found that people who went to pop and rock concerts with an anything but/with distortion logic had a more group-centered mode of consumption. Furthermore, concertgoers at hip hop/electronic concerts with the same cultural logic also had a more group-centered mode of consumption. This suggests that the segment of the audience at a hip hop/electronic concert who specifically reject heavy rock music also strongly identify with audiences for hip hop and electronic music.

There was a second segment of the audience for electronic music that had a more group-oriented mode of consumption. Their cultural logic placed electronic music in opposition to acoustic music. Accordingly, this group was sympathetic towards the more extreme (and scene-based) rock and electronic genres but rejected more traditional and acoustic genres. In general, we also noticed a negative effect of education (people with university degrees tended to be less group-centered) and an effect of sex (women were more group-centered).

Discussion

In this paper, we report research that took a field-analytic approach to the study of the genre preferences and musical consumption practices of concert audiences. Different audiences and audience segments were placed in this field on the basis of three interrelated characteristics. The most basic differentiating mechanism was the genre of the concert attended. Here we distinguish between concerts of classical music, pop and rock, electronic music, and roots/folk/jazz. Second, we brought in the oppositional musical taste patterns of these audiences, using the cultural logic approach proposed by Goldberg (2011) and Boutyline (2017). Third, we looked at how the interaction between concert genre and the cultural logic of the concertgoer influences their mode of consuming concerts. Applying this methodological strategy, we were able to focus on different audiences and segments of those audiences simultaneously, while remaining attentive to the different and interrelated symbolic distinctions they make. This approach nevertheless had some limitations, which we address before turning to the main conclusions of this paper.

Limitations

As Goldberg (2011) has already made clear, using a relational approach to study musical preferences offers new ways for disentangling the underlying logics that structure musical preferences. However, a major challenge related to this technique is the level of abstraction of cultural logics. By focusing on similarities in the schematic representations used to structure musical
preferences, it is not possible to ascribe actual preferences directly. We addressed this problem by relating cultural logics to overt cultural practices (attending concerts of music in a specific genre). This allowed us to place individuals at one end of the spectrum of a specific cultural logic and deduce their actual preference structure. This approach could introduce some random noise in our results, because it is possible (but not plausible) that some concertgoers attend a concert of music in a specific genre while actually disliking that genre.

Second, the causal structure of our model states that the mode of consumption for a specific concert is determined by both the genre of the concert and the cultural logic of the concertgoer. By including concert genre as a second-level variable in our model, we treated it as a contextual variable. Therefore, we assumed that the content and context of the concert experience triggers a specific mode of consumption at the individual level. This can lead to a problem of reverse causality, since it is possible that people have a specific mode of consumption in mind when they choose to attend a concert of music in a specific genre. However, research on cultural consumption practices shows that people do not always have predetermined motivations for consuming culture and are able to switch their mindset according to the context (Holt, 1997; Trizzulla, Garcia-Bardidia, & Rémy, 2016). However, there is no way of disentangling this process completely from our methodology, so we can only make cautious claims for causality.

Lastly, the cultural logic approach focuses on oppositional taste patterns, which presupposes diametrically opposed taste groups in the population. This fits with the field-analytic approach introduced by Bourdieu, whereby actors in the cultural field establish their position redundant through evaluative judgments of taste and consumption practices within this field. This approach does not consider individual listening experiences, however, or how musical preferences are actually formed. Both have been investigated extensively in studies of the psychology of music (Hargreaves & Bonneville-Roussy, 2017; Schubert, Hargreaves, & North, 2014) using cognitive–behavioral models that acknowledge the social and contextual aspect of musical preference formation, the sonic properties of specific pieces of music, and cognitive processes such as imagination and networks of association. Our relational approach did not take these cognitive processes directly into account, but we tried to be attentive to findings from studies in this field. For example, when possible, our discussion of oppositional taste patterns is based not on delimited genres, but on the sonic characteristics they share (with or without distortion, acoustic, electric, etc.). It could be inferred that cultural logics based on sonic features are not necessarily based on explicit hierarchies for different genres of music. However, the social consequences of likes and dislikes for sonic features can still be very real. For example, people tend to associate music with distorted guitars or electric instruments as aggressive and less complex, less intelligent, or less inspiring than music with acoustic instruments (Rentfrow et al., 2011).

**Conclusion**

The inductive nature of our approach provides us with some specific taste and consumption profiles that we can relate to other profiles that have already been established in the literature.

First, we identified a large group of omnivores, mostly found at roots, folk, and jazz concerts. Their main distinctive characteristic was an absence of dislikes and an openness to all styles of music, which implies that they do not structure their preferences according to a perceived symbolic distinction in the musical field. On the one hand, some studies link this open-mindedness to a discovery-centered mode of consumption (see Tampubolon, 2010), but we did not find evidence for this. Omnivores do not have a distinctive mode with respect to consuming concerts, although they are music- or group-centered to a lesser extent than the core audience for
both concerts of pop/rock and classical music. On the other hand, the open-mindedness of omnivores can also point to an ability to apply different frames of references when they engage in cultural activities (Emmison, 2003). This is more in line with our results. The fact that omnivorousness does not imply a distinctive mode of consumption could mean that omnivores are able to adapt their mode of consumption to concerts of music in different genres.

In Peterson and Kern’s (1996) conceptualization, omnivorousness is considered as a broadening of interest in more lowbrow genres on the part of the classical music audience, which indicates that the importance of the highbrow/lowbrow distinction (from snob to omnivore) is diminishing. We do not find many omnivores in the classical music audience, nor a large group of concertgoers who would make the highbrow–lowbrow distinction. The largest segment of the audience for concerts of classical music used an acoustic versus electric logic, which means that they like acoustic genres (including chanson and blues) but dislike genres such as heavy metal and techno that make use of electric or electronic instruments. In our multilevel model, we also found that going to concerts of classical music with this logic led to a mode of consumption that was more music-centered. Such concertgoers attended concerts more often for the intrinsic qualities of the music, which indicates that this is the most invested, core audience for classical music concerts.

The low prevalence of highbrow snobs (cf. Peterson & Kern, 1996) in the audience for classical music does not mean that the oppositional logic between highbrow and lowbrow genres is no longer relevant. There is still a large group that structures its preference according to this logic but such concertgoers are found most often at concerts of pop/rock and electronic music. Therefore, this group closely resembles the lowbrow omnivore described by Bennett, Emmison, and Frow (1999). Its members tend to be open to a wide range of genres emerging from popular culture but they explicitly dismiss the traditional highbrow genres. Because this highbrow vs. lowbrow logic is more dominant in audiences at concerts of pop, rock and electronic music concerts, and they do not have a clear counterpart in audiences at concerts of classical music, nor a clear differentiation between their modes of consumption, it seems unlikely that those who go to pop and rock concerts with this logic experience any sense of inferiority such as that described by Bourdieu (1984; but see Daenekindt, 2019). It is far more likely that members of this group apply their own aesthetic standards to ascribe quality to popular music, which might imply the dismissal of highbrow culture as elitist or boring (Frith, 1996a; Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Disentangling these evaluative components of musical genres associated with different cultural logics could be a fruitful path for further research.

Another audience of interest comprises those with an anything but/with distortion cultural logic who attend pop and rock concerts. We conclude that this group appreciates music with distorted guitars (punk, metal, and classic rock) and disregards all other genres. Its members’ exclusive preference for metal punk and classic rock could lead one to label them as a univore audience. However, they have a distinctive mode of consuming pop and rock concerts that does not fit with the description of univores as passive consumers with few cultural interests: they are more music centered and more group oriented. Therefore, they show greater resemblance to ethnographic descriptions of members of the heavy metal scene, where there are strong group boundaries and clear divisions of subcultural capital based on knowledge and preferences for obscure sub-genres and artists (Miller, 2014). This could imply that a group-oriented attitude and a music-centered mode of consuming metal and rock concerts can generate subcultural capital for visitors who adhere to the anything but/with distortion logic, while this is less relevant for members of the audience at the same concert who use a different cultural logic.
Among audiences at concerts of electronic and hip hop, we discovered two cultural logics that are associated with a more group-centered mode of consumption. The first group can be viewed as an explicit counterpart of the segment of the pop/rock audience that likes metal, punk and classic rock exclusively, because its members use the same cultural logic and also have a more group-oriented mode of consumption. Their presence at electronic and hip-hop concerts implies that they dislike heavy metal, punk and classic rock, exclusively, while they remain open to all other genres. Both heavy metal/punk and electronic music/hip-hop originated as scene-based and *avant-garde* genres with a strong subcultural following among their audiences (Lena & Peterson, 2008). For segments of the audiences for both genres, musical taste structures are diametrically opposed to each other. The second segment of the audience for concerts of electronic music, with a more group-oriented mode of consumption, is actually sympathetic to other subcultural genres such as metal and punk while dismissing more traditional and acoustic genres so the contemporary/traditional distinction appears most relevant to this group. This link between the group-centered mode of consumption and the oppositional musical taste patterns of the audience for both rock and electronic music spurs us to imagine micro-processes that constitute these symbolic distinctions, but our results do not allow us to discuss these micro-processes adequately. Other research strategies are necessary to gain a more profound understanding of the formation of oppositional group identities based on the musical preferences of concertgoers within musical scenes and subcultures (Bennett, 2004; Giles et al., 2009; Lonsdale & North, 2009, Shepherd & Sigg, 2015).

Thus, our research approach reveals a complex web of symbolic distinctions and modes of consumption among those who go to concerts, which cannot be captured by *a priori* categorizations such as the *highbrow snob* or the *open-minded omnivore*. Focusing on the modes of consumption and cultural logics of actual concertgoers can help to situate the relevant distinctions made by different audiences and different segments of those audiences, and further our understanding of how musical experiences shape the musical field.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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**Notes**

1. Jarness (2015) also distinguishes a second mode, namely the luxurious mode of consumption, where the consumption of material luxury items is an end in itself. This mode of consumption was not really applicable to consuming non-material goods such as musical concerts and was therefore not included in the analysis.
2. Only relatively large concert venues (with a capacity larger than 100) located in cities were sampled.
3. Age was recoded, with the minimum age (14) coded as 1.
4. Correlational Class Analysis (CCA) is a correlational-based extension of Relational Class Analysis (RCA: Goldberg, 2011), which is more accurate and reliable than RCA (Boutyline, 2017). Like RCA, CCA divides respondents into different clusters in the data so that the members of each cluster have similar patterns of association between variables. The CCA was performed using the corclass package in R (Boutyline, 2016).
5. The visualizations were created using the qgraph package in R (Epskamp, Cramer, Waldorp, Schmittmann, & Borsboom, 2012) and by applying the Fruchterman–Reingold algorithm.
6. Only 17% of the omnivore versus disinterested cluster has preferences limited to one meta-genre (for example, roots/folk/jazz) and can be defined as univores in the traditional sense. Thus, 83% have more inclusive preferences that span multiple meta-genres.
7. We only present the cross-level interactions when there is a significant improvement of fit to the model and when at least one of the interactions is significant.

References


