

Cultural lifestyle between generations

Exploring consumption pattern in ballet performances
and how they relate to other cultural consumption

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Master Thesis

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the interplay between cultural lifestyles across generations, focusing on consumption patterns within the realm of ballet performances and their relation to other cultural activities. With the increasing emphasis on cultural participation as a sign of social identity and symbolic boundary setting, it is crucial to understand how different age cohorts interact with and perceive cultural offerings. This master thesis takes a qualitative approach and provides an in-depth study of the preferences, motivations and attitudes of different age cohorts towards taste in ballet performance and other cultural activities.

Building on the foundation of distinction and habitus theory (Bourdieu, 1984) and cultural omnivorousness theory (Peterson, 1992) and using more specific theories of taste analysis that have emerged in the 21st century (e.g., Lahire, 2008; Jarness, 2015), a well-rounded interview guide forms a way of examining individuals' taste in ballet performance and its relation to preferences in other cultural activities. Starting from the roots and cultural background of individuals, it provides a comprehensive understanding of how their taste is shaped. This thesis is based on 14 semi-structured interviews with individuals between the ages of 21 and 57 who have attended at least one ballet performance in the Netherlands in 2023.

My first research question is *“how do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?”* and leads to my second and third research questions, *“how do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?”* and *“how do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?”* to look at the difference between generations and the diversity of cultural consumption patterns. Furthermore, this study explores the interconnectedness between individuals' taste in ballet and taste in other cultural activities, including theatre, opera, the visual arts, et cetera. Through qualitative interpretation, it seeks to uncover patterns of cultural consumption across generations, offering insights into the dynamics of contemporary cultural engagement. The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of how cultural preferences and behaviors are transmitted and transformed across different age cohorts, informing strategies for cultural institutions and policymakers aiming to enhance audience diversity and engagement.

Keywords: consumption pattern, ballet performance, intergenerational study, cultural lifestyle, cultural omnivorousness

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PREFACE

This thesis arose from a strong curiosity about the intricate interplay between cultural lifestyle and consumption patterns across generations. As a professional dancer who studied in Macao Conservatory School of Dance, I am passionate about cultural engagement and believe that my knowledge of dance combined with qualitative research can reveal deeper insights, so I set out to explore this phenomenon through a qualitative lens.

Guided by the invaluable mentorship of my supervisor dr. (Michaël) MJ Berghman and my thesis coordinator Professor Koen van Eijck, this work would not be possible without their insightful and to-the-point comments. Thank you for all the patience and trust in my research abilities, especially when I strayed from the direction of my research and when questions arose.

Secondly, I would like to thank all my interviewees, without whose participation and dedication, this study would not have been conducted. I would like to express my gratitude to all my interviewees for the time and trust they gave me and for sharing their personal experiences with me.

In addition, I would like to extend my sincere gratefulness to my friends who have always encouraged me, who have never let me walk alone on this journey, and whose support has lifted me up when I have been discouraged or lost my motivation.

Most importantly, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family in Macao, who have always supported my choice, pampered and believed in me in the most loving way, and given me mental support regardless of any odds.

1. INTRODUCTION

I started learning dance at the age of 3, and at the age of 11, I entered a professional secondary dance school, specializing in ballet for 6 years. I have participated in countless dance performances and performed countless times in different places. Growing up in the East, I learned a lot about Chinese folk dance, and my preference for dance has changed from just Chinese folk dance to ballet to contemporary dance. These changes in my personal preferences have inspired me to understand how individuals from different cultural backgrounds create meaning in taste. Besides enjoying dance, I have also developed a strong interest in other kinds of art and culture, such as visiting museums and attending concerts. Therefore, I would like to delve deeper into this topic to find academic explanations not only for myself but also for more generations.

Sociological research has amply demonstrated that cultural lifestyles are deeply rooted in society and are closely connected to an individual's social position, which is one of the most sustainable findings in the field of cultural sociology to date (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Gans, 2008; Veblen, 2017). From the distinction theory where the upper classes use their exclusive tastes to help maintain their social boundaries and status (Bourdieu, 1984); and to the cultural omnivorousness theory which emphasizes the increasing openness to both legitimate and popular culture (Peterson, 1992). Later, Jarness (2015) further expands this discussion by focusing on the specific motivations for cultural consumption. It is clear that social classes differ in what they appreciate in different forms of culture and how they do so, and their attitudes towards culture are changing over time. Individuals' tastes in cultural participation have been a central topic of scholarly interest and play an important role in revealing levels of social, cultural, and educational stratification.

Due to the increase in cultural diversity and accessibility, the lines of cultural boundaries in contemporary society are no longer as firmly established as they once were, and cultural legitimacy has not been valued as much as it once was (Bennett et al., 2009). As ballet is a relatively niche cultural form and audiences are predominantly older, I am interested in understanding how different generations understand and differentiate their tastes in ballet performances, as well as exploring how cultural capital influences taste.

Ballet is selected for this study as a starting point for investigating individuals' tastes because it is a traditional and institutionalized form of status culture that was often associated with elite circles and exclusivity in the past. Throughout history, ballet has symbolized refinement, exclusivity, and cultural sophistication among elite circles.

Classical ballet has continued to be considered a domain of high culture, characterized by strict technical standards, aesthetic formalism, and ties to legitimate cultural institutions such as opera houses and theaters (Lee, 2002). As Bourdieu (1984) identifies, ballet is an example of ‘legitimate’ culture, a high-status cultural activity. It requires specialized knowledge in order to appreciate its technical complexity and symbolic narrative, and its institutional settings often serve as gatekeepers of cultural legitimacy. Due to these factors, ballet offers an excellent place to examine how cultural capital and social position shape an individual’s tastes.

While ballet’s traditional association with elitism persists, it is also undeniably true that audiences in general are becoming more diverse, reflecting broader changes in cultural consumption patterns in present-day society. For example, the rise of ‘omnivorous’ tastes – where individuals engage with both highbrow and popular cultural forms – has opened new pathways for interpreting ballet and other cultural activities. In this context, individuals’ preferences for ballet may no longer solely signify adherence to classical conventions but could also reflect a broader eclecticism in cultural engagement. This rise in cultural omnivorousness can be attributed to both actual changes in lifestyles and social openness, as well as improvements in research frameworks that could capture a broader range of cultural preferences beyond the conventional divisions. As such, ballet becomes an intriguing case for studying how individuals negotiate their cultural identities and tastes in an increasingly pluralistic cultural landscape. The performative and visual nature of ballet also adds new dimensions to the study of taste. Ballet incorporates music, choreography, and sometimes storytelling, requiring the audience to synthesize multiple sensory and intellectual experiences (Lee, 2002). As a result, it may influence the manner in which individuals articulate their aesthetic preferences and cultural habits in connection with ballet.

In regard to production, tradition and institutional authority still play a crucial role in the formation of taste, as evidenced by the enduring prestige of classical ballet institutions such as the Dutch National Ballet. Meanwhile, contemporary ballet companies, such as the Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT), incorporate innovative choreography and diverse influences to challenge traditional norms. There has also been a shift among classical ballet companies to add more interesting elements and programs to their performances, going beyond traditions, breaking or even reorganizing traditions. In a similar manner, modern and contemporary ballet companies tend to hire classically trained dancers who are proficient in classical techniques but also open to exploring new styles

and choreography (Lee, 2002). This trend reflects a broader movement within the ballet world to attract younger audiences and innovate while still respecting the art form's traditional roots, which supports the claim that cultural boundaries in today's society seem less rigid and more flexible (Bennett et al., 2009). Observing this dynamic enables me to explore how individuals balance their appreciation for tradition and an openness to innovation in ballet performances, as well as the mutual influences between dance productions and audiences, such as how innovative dance productions may attract new audiences that incorporate dance into their cultural repertoire. Overall, ballet provides a rich and nuanced lens for exploring individual tastes, particularly in terms of how they reflect and shape broader cultural patterns. Considering its historical significance, evolving accessibility, and multifaceted nature in the art world, it is an ideal topic for exploring the interplay between tradition, innovation, and cultural capital.

In this study, I propose three research questions to explore in depth. My first research question is: *how do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?* in order to understand what they concern and prioritize when choosing to attend a ballet performance and what factors influence them to have such preferences. Which leads to my second and third research questions: *how do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?* and *how do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?* with the objective of finding out the relevance of taste patterns between the two and generational differences in them.

In fact, music tastes are often studied in the field of cultural tastes due to their accessibility, universality, and deep connection to identity formation (Nault et al., 2021). Music serves as a powerful form of art that expresses personal and social identities, making it an ideal focus for studies on how cultural capital and social distinctions are manifested in taste. This prominence extends to the visual arts and fashion industries, where scholars such as Jarness (2015) and Entwistle & Rocamora (2006) investigate aesthetic preferences and the role of cultural hierarchies in shaping individual engagement with art. These fields have developed frameworks for understanding tastes, such as the interplay between elite and popular forms, the construction of cultural legitimacy, and also the negotiation of tradition and innovation.

Several studies have examined different aspects of ballet and other cultural activities. For instance, Chan and Goldthorpe (2005) have developed a large-scale quantitative analysis of cultural attendance in various cultural activities, including ballet, with a focus on social class and occupational stratification, while Reason and Reynolds

(2010) have utilized a qualitative approach to examine the emotional and sensory experiences of dance audiences. These studies provide valuable insights into audience demographics and embodied responses, however, there is still a research gap in understanding the taste for ballet, how it is formed and how this taste relates to broader cultural preferences, and the intergenerational perspectives of it. Individuals' tastes for ballet may remain under-researched as it is considered a relatively niche art form that requires cultural capital to appreciate and engage with. Ballet is an art form that combines music, visuals and physical performance, placing it at the nexus of multiple sensory and cultural domains. The study of ballet as a form of high culture and its evolution into contemporary forms offers an interesting perspective on analyzing consumption patterns and negotiating between tradition and modernity.

Compared to music, which is more common and omnipresent in our daily lives, ballet often requires extra knowledge and effort, whether through attending ballet performances, learning about its history and techniques, or attending dance classes. Even though ballet is thought to have rich potential for illuminating how individuals relate to cultural hierarchies and aesthetic traditions, its exclusivity might have led to its marginalization in the broader discourse on cultural taste. Addressing this gap is crucial because studying ballet can provide insights into how individuals make sense of cultural forms that are less ubiquitous but carry significant cultural weight. Exploring these dimensions could enrich the understanding of taste formation, particularly in how individuals navigate the boundaries between elite and popular culture. In sum, while music and the visual arts have dominated the discourse on cultural tastes, ballet's underrepresentation presents an opportunity to expand the field.

Using a qualitative analysis of 14 semi-structured interviews, this study aims to gain insight into how individuals make sense of their tastes in ballet performances and to explore the relationship between ballet and broader taste patterns in different cultural activities, as well as the generational differences. This thesis will be divided into 5 chapters. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework of cultural distinction and intergenerational taste dynamics. The third chapter outlines the research design and methodology of this study. Chapter four and five present the results and conclusions of the study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural lifestyles are the result of acquired attitudes and values and are part of identity, which plays a role in revealing the social norms, expectations and behavioral patterns of a community. The unique feature of dance, compared to other art forms, is that it usually uses the body as a form of expression (Cross & Ticini, 2012). Considering that ballet is a traditional and prestigious form of culture (Bourdieu, 1984), it has been historically associated with elite circles and exclusivity, beginning with the court ballet of the Renaissance, despite its diminished status in contemporary society (Homans, 2013). However, ballet performances have now become gradually more accessible as channels have increased and thresholds have been lowered. For example, due to a lack of young audiences, cultural institutions such as the Dutch National Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater offer discounted tickets to younger audiences. Regarding the topic of this study, cultural tastes in ballet performance, there has been a lack of taste research on this art form. By extension, how individuals' tastes for ballet are intertwined with their broader taste patterns for cultural consumption, and how their tastes for ballet differ between generations, would provide new insights and academic directions for this particular field. In fact, dichotomies such as 'highbrow – lowbrow' or 'omnivore – univore' are insufficient to explain how and why individual tastes are formed (van Eijck & Lievens, 2008). This study aims to fill this gap and to examine individual's cultural preferences and motivation from a deeper and more open perspective.

2.1 Distinguishing between cultural taste and cultural participation

Speaking of taste in cultural activities, it is crucial to mention one of the most influential cultural theorists, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu demonstrated a systematic correlation between artistic preferences and social class positions, which implies that taste is a sign of class (Bourdieu, 2018). His theory of cultural capital suggests that different genres, schools and historical periods in the arts tend to align with class structures, but this alignment is also influenced by complex factors such as education and socialization. Therefore, it is not an absolute determinant, but it is still important to mention it in this study in order to lay a foundation for understanding the formation of cultural lifestyles and ballet taste. His 'concept of culture' opened the way for future cultural studies and introduced the forms of capital that classified the social, economic and cultural capital of individuals. However, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2018)

suggests that embodied cultural capital is reflected in an individual's manners, preferences, and rates of participation in cultural activities. Meir Yaish and Tally Katz-Gerro (2010) point out the importance of distinguishing between an individual's taste and rate of participation in cultural activities. Taste, according to their study, is largely correlated to an individual's socialization procedures and become a habitus to them later, whereas cultural participation relies more on economic resources and less on cultural resources. As this study recruited individuals who had already been to a ballet performance and my main focus was on how individuals make sense of their cultural tastes, individuals' cultural capital was more relevant in this study compared to economic capital.

2.2 Social stratification and distinction

Cultural capital, a concept introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), encompasses assets other than financial assets that promote social mobility and presents in three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. 1) Embodied cultural capital refers to knowledge, education, and tastes acquired by individuals that cannot be transferred instantaneously and require long-term personal effort and investment to acquire. 2) Objectified cultural capital refers to physical objects such as books and art that can be owned and have symbolic value, which can be transferred or sold, but require a certain level of embodied cultural capital in order to be appreciated. 3) Institutionalized cultural capital refers to the recognition and legitimization of cultural capital by social institutions, such as degrees, awards and professional titles, which recognize individual knowledge and skills. Since the focus of this study is to understand the tastes of individuals and how they appreciate different forms of culture, embodied cultural capital focusing on tastes over participation would be the key consideration.

Cultural capital also serves as a distinctive code for measuring class hierarchy and a solid foundation for the dominant class to maintain individuals' social position; it usually refers to an individual's cultural participation or understanding of legitimate culture (DiMaggio, 1982). The notion that cultural choices are determined by social status is one of the most significant insights of the sociology of taste (Bourdieu, 1984; Peterson, 1992). Bourdieu (1984) argues that an individual's cultural lifestyle is related to one's cultural taste, which in turn is molded by habitus and one's class position. Lifestyles constitute our daily lives; from the allocation of leisure time to art appreciation

(Weber, 2018; Veblen, 2017). Personal cultural choices are closely related to our lifestyles (López-Sintas & Katz-Gerro, 2005), which are linked to individuals' class status and align with their habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus is a symbolic competence that provides the embodied result of the internalization of cultural capital; it mirrors individuals' class position, strengthens their social class reproduction, creates broader and better life opportunities for the privileged (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, differences in personal habitus led individuals to pursue different types of leisure activities, such as attending ballet performances or concerts. These habitus gradually shape an individual's taste for cultural activities and differentiate the individual from others in terms of taste to reflect the class status of the individual.

Wright (2015) outlines that the social space in which individuals live plays a crucial role in shaping their cultural taste; it determines the exposure to different cultural resources and the interactions with different social groups, resulting in the formation of the individual's habitus. To a further extent, individuals' cultural preferences cluster and sustain group identities and boundaries (Warde, 1994; Lamont & Molnár, 2001); it also reflects individuals' social distinctions and symbolizes their identity in society (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Bryson, 1996; Katz-Gerro, 2002). In early research on taste in particular, individuals with higher-status were likely to participate in legitimate cultural activities, and conversely, individuals with lower-status were likely to participate in popular, mass-oriented cultural activities (Bourdieu, 1984). Although Bourdieu's theories have made the greatest impact on the study of taste, his concepts of cultural capital and social boundaries may not hold true universally. DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990) criticize Bourdieu's theories for having been formulated in culturally homogeneous France and thus inapplicable to the more culturally diverse United States, so it is necessary to refine the suitability of the concept of cultural capital. This requires a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which cultural capital is gained, valued and utilized in different cultural contexts, leading to a more holistic and inclusive analysis of social stratification and cultural dynamics.

2.3 Cultural omnivore and new forms of distinction

There has been a shift in the categorization of cultural taste among the privileged (Bennett et al., 2009; van Eijck & Knulst, 2005; DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Emmison, 2003). Cultural omnivorousness was a concept originally developed by Peterson (1992)

in his paper on audience segmentation, which argues that quantitative methods of measuring an individual's degree of participation in only legitimate cultural activities are outdated, and that omnivore is a more appropriate term to describe the cultural consumption of the upper-middle classes in a multicultural society such as the United States. Omnivores are characterized as 'being open to a variety of cultural forms' and represent individuals who appreciate both legitimate and popular culture in their cultural consumption (Friedman et al., 2015). Univores, on the other hand, are characterized by a narrow taste and tend to participate solely in popular culture due to their limited accumulation of personal cultural capital. Peterson's study demonstrates that higher social status individuals would not limit themselves to only legitimate culture but are also more open towards and tolerant of a wider variety of cultural forms (in their study, specifically music) than lower social status individuals. Cultural omnivores also exhibit other traits such as openness, tolerance, flexibility, cosmopolitanism, and the ability to learn and acquire knowledge (Ollivier, 2008). Cultural boundaries remain uneroded however (Prieur & Savage, 2013), since there remains evidence that well-educated and higher status individuals are still more likely to consume legitimate culture (Pedersen et al., 2018). The concept of 'omnivore' in mapping cultural taste is still controversial (e.g., Atkinson, 2011; Savage & Gayo, 2011) as there seems to be a lack of clarification and consistent operationalization of the definition of 'omnivorousness' (Nault et al., 2021). Van Eijck (2011) advocates a more nuanced view that accounts for both the breadth and intensity of cultural engagement in his refinement of cultural omnivore theory. His work counters Peterson's omnivore theory by providing weighted measurements that capture how deeply individuals engage in legitimate and popular culture. All my interviewees in this study had varying degrees of openness and distinct tastes in different cultural activities. The concept of the 'cultural omnivore' helps to distinguish between individuals in a more nuanced way to differentiate between individuals' tastes and provides direction for analyzing individuals' patterns of taste across different cultural activities.

Bernard Lahire (2008) argues the concept of 'cultural omnivore' over-idealizes the relationship between class position and aesthetic preferences. Challenging both Bourdieu's original framework and Peterson's subsequent omnivore theory, Lahire argues that an individual's cultural choices tend to be fragmented and influenced by situational factors such as life stage and social networks, rather than being determined by class position and the associated cultural preferences solely. His study contends Peterson's omnivore model is insufficient to capture the complexity of individual cultural

choices in real life, which often involves cultural preferences that cannot be simply categorized as highbrow or omnivorous. Cultural theorists have tried their best to classify individual's cultural pattern into their theoretical system to analysis, but every small context may have a different impact on the choices of individuals in the immediate moment. For example, why do individuals choose this particular art form over others? It does involve too many factors (e.g., family, compulsory education or obligation to accompany someone or a momentary impulse of curiosity), so it cannot be said that every situation is a reflection of personal taste or an expression of cultural identity (Lahire, 2008).

Therefore, Lahire establishes a new framework to examine the internal diversity of individual cultural preferences by distinguishing between consonant and dissonant taste patterns. Consonant individuals exhibit more homogeneous and predictable cultural preferences, whereas dissonant individuals exhibit eclectic or seemingly inconsistent combinations of tastes – such as mixing highbrow and lowbrow forms – challenging traditional models of cultural stratification. He suggests that researchers should examine the motivations of individuals in a microscopic realist manner with close attention to ‘intra-individual and inter-individual variations’ in cultural consumption for a full picture of individuals’ diverse lifestyle and taste. Crucially, Lahire points out that individuals’ cultural behavior may reflect external pressures rather than internal dispositions. This perspective challenges both Bourdieu’s emphasis on habitus and Peterson’s thesis on cultural omnivorousness, revealing the need for more nuanced frameworks that consider the social complexity behind cultural behavior.

2.4 From ‘what’ to ‘how’ of consumption patterns

It is crucial to acknowledge that appreciating the same cultural object does not imply having the same tastes (Friedman, 2014). According to Prieur and Savage (2013), the new status symbol is the knowledge of appreciating different cultures, and they suggest that more emphasis should be placed on individual’s attitude toward cultural activities. Building on recent study by Brien and Ianni (2023), contemporary cultural distinction appears to operate less through what individuals consume and more through how they engage with culture; it is more about the manner of consumption, the depth of appreciation, and the willingness to participate in the culture that distinguishes tastes. Their study finds out that the new cultural elite express their newfound good taste

through a rejection of snobbery, a sophisticated understanding, and a commitment to deeper participation in culture; it reveals that social distinctions and tastes remain a key factor in maintaining the exclusivity of the elite communities.

Therefore, moving from the ‘what’ to the ‘how’ of the individual is an up-and-coming method to categorize cultural taste more concretely (Coulangeon & Lemel, 2007; Jarness, 2015). The omnivore-univore approach of Peterson (1992) focuses on the range of genres individuals appreciate and his theory highlights the ‘what’ on cultural taste. In contrast, Jarness (2015) focuses on the ‘how’ of individuals’ cultural consumption and identifies the four modes of consumption in the visual arts: 1) intellectual – critical discourse-driven engagement; 2) luxurious – status-oriented conspicuous consumption; 3) educational – self-improvement focused participation; and 4) practical – socially mandated attendance, and in a refined manner reveals the capital that individuals possess in society. It is worth mentioning that the luxurious and practical modes in Jarness’ thesis are primarily geared toward material consumption, while the intellectual and educational modes reflect more on symbolic and intrinsic motivations. His study sheds light on the importance of analyzing individual modes of consumption in culture and takes a new step towards understanding the dynamics of cultural stratification and class reproduction.

2.5 Predictors of shaping individuals’ tastes

Looking specifically at taste, Bourdieu explains that individuals’ cultural resources acquired from their family upbringing and schooling divide them into different social groups. Building on this foundation, Jarness’ theory further elaborates on the patterns of cultural consumption. Intellectual and educational modes of consumption primarily refer to groups with higher educational levels and higher cultural capital, which theoretically may be categorized as ‘highbrows’ or ‘omnivores’. The luxurious mode of consumption places greater emphasis on displaying status and being recognized within the right social circles, so income is an important identifying factor of it. The practical mode of consumption is less tied to education or income but focuses more on specific contexts. In short, both highbrow and omnivorous are likely to be typically highly educated and rich in cultural capital, but they exhibit significant differences in how wide their cultural interests are and the depth of their critiques on cultural activities. These differences provide important clues for analyzing cultural taste patterns in contemporary society.

Many studies indicate that family background and level of education are two of the most influential factors explaining the exposure to legitimate culture activities among the youth (Nagel, 2010; Nagel & Ganzeboom, 2002). In particular, the role of the mother's social status is crucial in transmitting taste preferences to the next generation (Collins, 1992; Willekens & Lievens, 2014), while the education level is the major determinant of social status (de Graaf & Kalmijn, 2001). Erikson (1963) explains that adolescents undergo an identity formation process, they try on various social roles in a relatively low-risk environment. Therefore, it is important to understand how an individual is connected to broader society in this process of identity formation which is heavily influenced by the school context. Kracman (1996) claims that exposure to the arts at school and out-of-school such as extracurricular arts education has a significant impact on individual's long-term cultural orientations, especially toward legitimate forms of art. For example, an individual who received formal art training at school is 1.7 times as likely to visit a museum as a grown up as compared to an individual who did not receive formal art training. Borgonovi (2004) points out the importance of arts education, which offers an environment in which individuals can gain an understanding of the arts; as metaphors are often used in art to convey underlying meanings, and a certain level of skill and cultural capital is required in order to understand and appreciate these meanings.

2.6 Generational dynamics and cultural taste

Generational differences play an important role in shaping cultural tastes. Weingartner and Rössel's (2019) study finds that in today's society, both educational and occupational status are associated with broad cultural exposure, whereas in the 1970s, they tended to be associated with legitimized cultural activities. Consequently, age and generational cohorts have become primary structural factors in distinguishing legitimacy from popularity. Lizardo and Skiles (2012) illustrate the idea of 'symbolic exclusion' adopted by the younger generation in order to distance themselves from the older generation, focusing upon music genres such as rap and heavy metal, which were previously disliked, while they are now more accepted by the younger generation, and pointing to the willingness of the younger generation to embrace a wider range of music genres. However, Kracman (1996) argues that age is only a secondary influence, and more importantly, younger generations have more exposure to the arts in schools, and out-of-school arts education (e.g., extracurricular arts education) was relatively more prevalent in the past than it is today. Therefore, the younger generation has more access to the arts

at school, while the older generation had to be associated with a privileged social background in order to learn about the arts, in line with Bourdieu's (1984) habitus theory, which states that family upbringing is the main way of acquiring cultural capital in the past.

Van Eijck and Knulst (2005), in comparing younger and older generations with similar levels of education, find that the older generation is more enthusiastic about legitimate culture than the younger generation, and that the younger generation's lack of interest in legitimate culture is attributed to the fact that school curriculum nowadays is less focused on highbrow culture (Verboord & Van Rees, 2003). Van Eijck (2011) argues that the decreases in learning how to appreciate legitimate culture has led to art appreciation becoming less intellectualized. As a result, art appreciation has become more individualized and eclectic, reflecting a broader cultural shift from traditional modes of engagement that are constrained by primitive frameworks. On the one hand, legitimate culture has gradually lost significance in the cultural life of the younger generation and has been marginalized in a sense, it may no longer serve as a central role in everyday cultural life. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that legitimate culture still holds social value and is socially appreciated due to its association with privileged backgrounds (Gripsrud et al., 2011). Drawing on the existing literature, scholars have pointed out that cultural sociology has lacked research on how generational cohorts affect differences in taste (Friedman et al., 2015). Although it is challenging to clearly distinguish between the effects of age and cohort in this study, I believe that considering generational positioning still offers a valuable perspective in the field of cultural sociology.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim of the study

This study uses a qualitative research method to investigate three research questions.

- 1) *How do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?*
- 2) *How do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?*
- 3) *How do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?*

My first research question aims to explore and understand individuals' subjective experiences and interpretations of their taste in ballet performance, as well as to uncover the process of meaning-making in order to analyze how individuals articulate and construct their taste. My second research question aims to gain an understanding of how individuals integrate their taste for ballet into their overall cultural consumption and explore the connections between the two. My third research question aims to explore the differences in cultural tastes among different age cohorts and to understand how cultural tastes are shaped and evolved over time by different generations.

The advantages of qualitative research methods have already been demonstrated in post-Bourdieu research on cultural preferences (e.g. Lamont, 1992), particularly in terms of individuals' meaning making of cultural tastes, which cannot be answered and observed by quantitative research methods. Bryman (1984) noted that the strength of qualitative research lies in the richness of the data, which allows for the amount of detailed information that can be gathered compared to the abstract and generalized data resulting from quantitative research. Therefore, this study takes an interpretive paradigm which allows for an in-depth, contextualized and nuanced exploration of how individuals interpret and experience their cultural preferences (Rahi, 2017). Focusing on personal narratives, social backgrounds, and the subjective meanings individuals attach to their cultural tastes, qualitative research can provide rich insights in a more flexible and fluid manner than quantitative approaches that focus on measurement and generalization (Iacono et al., 2009). Interviews are the most popular method for collecting qualitative data (Taylor, 2005) and were taken for this study because they helped to better understand and explore the tastes and experiences of participants in relation to various cultural activities. Semi-structured interviews allow individuals to express their feelings and thoughts in a more open manner than unstructured interviews and also help

researchers to better grasp the topic and focus of the study (McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Brinkmann, 2014).

3.2 Sampling and Operationalization

The snowball sampling method was used for this study. According to the Dutch National Ballet (2015), ballet has a relatively specific audience base and faces the problem of an aging loyal audience. Therefore, the snowball sampling method allowed me to start with a handful of initial contacts who had attended a ballet performance and then have them refer to other contacts who met my research criteria (Parker et al., 2019). To gain insightful and useful information in this study, I aimed to find people who have attended at least one ballet performance in the Netherlands in 2023.

A total of 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted (more information in Appendix.1), ranging from 35 minutes to an hour. 10 of the 14 interviews were conducted face-to-face, while the other four were conducted online via WhatsApp online video chat, according to the participants' preference. Both interview methods worked well to fulfill the purpose of my study. Among them, seven were from the younger generation aged 21-34 and seven were from the older generation aged 51-57, who grew up in different places such as Germany, Russia, Colombia, the Netherlands and Austria. This is notable as their early exposure to culture influences their future consumption patterns and tastes to a great extent. In terms of educational background, five of them have a master's degree, eight have a bachelor's degree and one has a high school diploma.

Due to privacy concerns, the names of the participants in the transcripts and quotes have been anonymized. An interview guide (see Appendix 2) was framed with a number of open-ended questions designed to gather useful information about individuals' preferences and motivations in various cultural activities. These questions are designed to make concrete and measurable certain concepts.

In the first part of my interview, I aimed to answer my first research question '*How do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?*' and third research question '*How do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?*'. Therefore, I asked about an individual's frequency of attending ballet performances and delved into their preferences and taste within it. I asked participants what they like in ballet performance and what they disliked understanding how they differentiated their tastes (Bryson, 1996). I also asked about their motivations

for attending ballet performances. As Lahire (2008) suggests, individuals vary greatly and there are many factors affecting their cultural behavior, so it is important to approach this from the point of view of why and how individuals attend ballet performances.

In the second part of my interview, I aimed to examine my second research question '*How do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?*' I concentrated on how individuals allocate their leisure time to leisure and cultural activities in order to measure their omnivorousness and preferences, as well as the amount and weight of engagement in legitimate and popular culture. The goal was to discover how individuals understand and perceive the concept of 'omnivore' and how their ballet tastes related to their broader taste in cultural activities. Besides, I used Bryson's (1996) approach of cultural intolerance and personal dislikes to investigate what specific cultures or genres the individuals disliked and how they created distinctions to differentiate themselves from others.

In the third part of my interview, I asked individuals about their family background and upbringing to investigate how the habitus was formed. Additionally, I focused on the formal schooling and extracurricular activities that the individual attended when they were younger, and the final part of the interview was primarily intended to provide an understanding of how generation gaps are distinguished from each other from this perspective.

3.3 Research in practice

Prior to beginning the actual interview, I provided participants with a brief overview of the purpose and goals of the study and explained how long the interview would approximately take. For reasons of research ethics, I explained in advance that participation in this study was entirely voluntary and informed them that their data and name would be kept confidential and would not be disclosed to anyone. After obtaining verbal consent from the participants, I recorded their responses and audio-transcribed the interviews. My interview guide began by asking participants for basic information, followed by their preferences for ballet performances and other cultural activities, and ended with their habitus and family background. I encouraged my interviewees to elaborate on why they had such cultural preferences and the motivations behind them. At the same time, I maintained flexibility in the interview process to cope with different situations. Some questions were follow-up ones adjusted to the answers of specific

interviewees. This flexibility allowed me to gather more insightful information tailored to each interviewee's experiences.

This study sought to understand how tastes for ballet performances were shaped by different generations and how that related to their cultural lifestyles. Therefore, I created my interview questions such as, '*what do they value the most in a ballet performance?*', '*do they prefer only classical ballet, or do they see themselves being more open to other forms of dance?*', '*what other forms of leisure activities do they enjoy besides ballet performances?*'. The focus of this study is not on what kind of cultural consumption individuals from different generations prefer, but on the cultural sociological implications behind their cultural tastes.

3.4 Interview data analysis

After collecting a rich set of data, I transcribed the interviews and carefully read through all the transcripts to form familiarity before starting the data analyzing process. I used thematic analysis methods in conjunction with ATLAS.ti software to help me discover appropriate themes from the various codes. Thematic analysis is a flexible method of qualitative data analysis that helps to understand recurring patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006); it is a practical interpretive method for especially code selection and constructing themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Therefore, this method was chosen for this study to capture detailed information about individuals' cultural preferences, enabling me to capture the significance of their multiple culturally active behaviors in terms of their personal perspectives and tastes.

4. RESULTS

4.1 How do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?

Cultural familiarity

Four interviewees referred to their rooted cultural traditions and national background when discussing how they viewed ballet performances. Emily (25y), who grew up in Russia and currently works as a marketing manager for an arts organization, has a more traditional preference for ballet, refusing to mix ballet genres. When asked why she has such a preference for ballet, she replied:

For me it's part of the tradition. So once a year for my family traditionally to go to ballet performances. But beside that I think my parents just value a lot of classical arts in that sense and ballet falls for them in that region. Also accessibility played a big role because where I was where I grew up the traditional performing arts are more visible, was more accessible rather than contemporary. So I was not also exposed to contemporary so my taste also was brought up based on what was available for me.

Ballet, especially classical ballet, is known to be an important cultural tradition in Russia. Emily has mentioned many times in the interview that the tradition of Russia has created her preference for classical ballet, while her interest in contemporary dance is relatively low, since she had less exposure to contemporary dance when she was young. Therefore, she has a typical taste for ballet due to her upbringing. Victoria (54y), who grew up in Ukraine, also explained that her taste for ballet has been closely related to the culture and education she received while growing up.

In my early years, when I was living in Ukraine, I grew up near the opera and ballet theatre, so I was going every weekend. And it's something really an event for me, if I would go to the ballet performance. It's very common for our culture to do something like that, like classical music and ballet. So it kind of makes part of the education in school.

Both Emily and Victoria emphasized that their taste for ballet has to do with the traditions of the regions where they grew up (Russia and Ukraine). In addition to respondents from these regions, Priscilla (34), from Colombia, is another example of

early cultural exposure influencing her tastes. She is not much of a classical ballet fan, but likes to add folk elements to ballet, as Colombian folk-dance class was mandatory when she was growing up.

I do find it more interesting if they (ballet) have something added to it, so it's not just ballet but it has something more like folk dance...In Colombia is mandatory at school you take dance classes so not ballet but like a folk dance.

Interestingly, Priscilla was the only one of my 14 semi-structured interviews who mentioned a preference for folk elements in ballet. Folk dances were not common in the other interviewees' upbringing, making her taste very specific. This indicates that an individual's cultural background and familiarity with specific dance elements can greatly influence their taste for ballet as they grow up.

Recognition of the big-name

Among all the interviewees, their knowledge of ballet varied, with some knowing a lot and others knowing very little. Unquestionably, most individuals at least know classic ballets such as Swan Lake and The Nutcracker. Rachel (54y) said:

I like Swan Lake because it's very famous and everybody knows it. I don't really have a very big preference but I don't really know a lot of ballet and what I know ballet because my daughter goes to ballet school so that's why sometimes I would go for her performance, but Swan Lake is something that I will like.

Rachel went to ballet performances more for educational purposes and to spend time with her daughter, but it is clear from her answer that classical ballet still has a certain significance and recognition for the general public. While most people still honor the classics, in a contemporary context, classical ballet can sometimes be seen as boring, and people want to add fresh elements to it. Michelle (21y) grew up in Austria and lived near a theater as a child, with both parents working in the cultural sector and received plenty of education in the arts.

I feel like that's something then you go for like the Nutcracker or like something very like Swan Lake or something very classical and then I feel like it is very impressive but on a like not day-to-day basis but on a more general note. I think I value other styles more.

There's no doubt that she has a higher cultural capital in order to understand contemporary ballet and has a more atypical taste in ballet. This can be traced back to her upbringing in Austria, when asked about her taste in ballet performances and whether her parents took her to ballet performances as a child. She replied:

Since I was living close to the theater. I only went to that one theater when the elite ballet choreograph guy was there. He had more of like an experiential contemporary ballet, so not like the traditional, not old school...My mom was also a big fan of like the main choreographer we had at our local theater so she would be more inclined to go and then she would just take me with her.

Her taste for ballet is related to her upbringing as her mom had an atypical taste for ballet and also a fan of one specific contemporary artist, which fits with Bourdieu's (1984) notion of transmission of cultural capital and the theory of habitus. Additionally, the way she referred to my questions in the interview gave me a sense of privilege, as she was able to talk about a lot of insider knowledge and connections that had been largely inherited from her mother's cultural capital. Maria (21y) from Germany, currently studying arts & culture studies also has a preference to follow those big names in ballet. When asked about her taste for ballet, she replied:

I don't really like a specific style. I either like a specific project or I don't like it, but I do like to see the classics like Swan Lake, et cetera. But I also appreciate something that is very out of the box. For example, the Frankfurt Dresden Dance Company always did very out of the box things. The idea was kind of like the body can move so much more than what we do in classical ballet.

Maria mentioned many contemporary dance companies and names of choreographers during the interview section, such as Frankfurt Ballet, Elvin Ailey and

William Forsythe, and it was clear that she embraced a variety of ballet performances. She also fits in Jarness' (2015) intellectual mode of consumption as she pursues art for art's sake while watching ballet performances. Later, she also mentioned her personal connection to dance, as her godfather was one of the company's principal dancers and her mother was a ballet agent. When asked if she liked classical ballet or something more out of the box. She replied:

I think if I see like advertisements or whatever, and then I decide what performance I'm going to go to, I'm very much driven by names...like if I know the choreographer or the company or the piece, that chances are higher that I will go if I'm being honest. That's how I see most of my ballet performances are because I am interested in that specific thing.

Maria has high standards for ballet, as she was immersed in the artistic bubble throughout her youth. This also implies that she has a high level of cultural capital to understand more contemporary forms of ballet, and her knowledge of ballet has been enriched by her family upbringing which has led to her relatively eclectic taste. Overall, we can see a tendency in this theme that big names of ballet companies and choreographers are still important for individuals to choose ballet performances, but as individuals' cultural capital increases, cultural boundaries on legitimacy become more fluid and blurred, and individuals begin to focus on something more alternative or creative. Finally, the originality of the ballet itself for Michelle and Maria becomes less crucial as long as the quality of the performance remains high, as demonstrated in this theme.

Music matters

Ballet is an art form accomplished through the combination of music and dance, and music is undoubtedly an important element in the overall ballet experience (Hagendoorn, 2004). Seven interviewees responded that they really enjoyed the combination of music and dance in ballet performances. Some of them even said that they would not be interested in ballet if the music was not good. Therefore, individuals who prefer the perfect combination of music and dance in a ballet performance can also be seen as having a specific taste. Alex (31y), a graphic designer in the cultural sector, explained his taste for ballet:

I have to be honest I'm pretty critical for some stuff of ballet...I like a lot the orchestra for example, I know that it's not just that...but I like the fact that it's some sort of like communication through the (ballerina) bodies and from the musician like at the moment, so I really like this sort of like experience.

Indeed, music plays an important role in ballet performances and is one of the main threads of ballet performances, which are integrated with and complementary to ballet performances. Alex enjoyed the full experience of the ballet performance and his critical thinking about the ballet fits the intellectual consumption mode of Jarness (2015). Robert (54y), a former music journalist, attaches great importance to music in dance performances. When asked his preference for ballet performance, he replied:

I like Prokofiev for the music... I'm a music journalist since 1989, so I do like music a lot. But the ballet, I like watching it because you know there's obviously a sort of a link between the two.

As Robert works in the field of music, it is understandable that he focuses on it. The link between classical ballet and music is clearly inseparable. But for contemporary ballet, music is not as recognizable as it is for classical ballet. Michelle (21y) stated that she did not like it when the music was too abstract for her to understand.

I think if I dislike something it has more to do with the music that is being played than the performance because if the music gets too modern and too abstract, I just have difficulties understanding the music and then I don't understand the performance as well.

When the music in ballet performances becomes too abstract to be understood and confusing, it is understandable that dislike arises. Although Michelle enjoys contemporary ballet, her taste in contemporary ballet music is fairly down to earth, rejecting snobbery and pretentiousness (Brien & Ianni, 2023). In addition, she possesses a relatively high level of cultural capital, which is revealed in the fact that the more one knows about ballet, the higher the level of expectation for a ballet performance because they know how to differentiate ballet and have their own tastes and standards rather than following the crowd. Iris (21y), who is currently an illustration major, has similar tastes to Michelle. When asked what she values most in a ballet performance. She said:

I definitely like a combination of music and storytelling. Like if the story is boring or if it's like too abstract, then it's not exciting for me...I don't like it as much if it's like a very abstract, modern thing.

Iris often emphasizes storytelling in her interview, and this is where her interest in the arts comes in, as she enjoyed both telling and listening to stories when she was young. Classical ballet always has a storyline that runs through the whole performance, and neither Michelle nor Iris likes the performance to be too abstract, which can often be the case with modern or contemporary ballet performances. As a result, they both tend to be more of a typical hybrid of tastes and enjoy the conventions of ballet.

Rejecting convention forms

Seven of my interviewees preferred a more contemporary or experimental form of ballet. Stephanie (53y) is a ballet enthusiast and when asked why she only liked contemporary ballet she replied:

(It is) because in classical ballet, they always have a very straight rule and it's always like the classical ones, they are like, oh, this should be like this. But in contemporary ballet, it's more flexible and has more chance to express themselves.

Stephanie clearly dislikes the very strict rules of classical ballet, and her desire to see performers express themselves in a more free-flowing way reflects her opposition to rigid structures in artistic expression. She values the creativity and freedom of dancers and choreographers to allow them to explore new styles and narratives on stage. Emmy (51y) similarly favors originality in ballet. When asking about her preference for ballet performance, she replied:

I think if it will become more experimental, it will attract more people to the show and it really shows that the people that are performing would like to break with the classical rules of ballet and make it their own performance.

They both aim to break the rules of classical ballet and find a more liberal and light-hearted ballet. But in contrast to Stephanie's vast experience in ballet, Emmy has such a taste because of her previous study of fine arts, and later in the interview she claimed to enjoy looking at experimental works of art because she wanted to see

something more different. Alex (31y), who works in the cultural sector, explains why he prefers contemporary ballet from another perspective.

I think like ballet to me (has) many problems and talking about many things like body shaming about unhealthy environment most of the times and also like this sort of a standard like binarism of dancers is what doesn't make me feel like excited...(It) never happened that I saw (the body shaming issue in) contemporary ballet (but always in) the classic one.

Body shaming in ballet has always been an issue in the dance world, especially in classical ballet, as it is the norm for ballerinas to maintain the slender, elongated bodies of historical traditions. However, these days more and more people are becoming concerned about the issue of 'body shaming' in ballet. Alex sees classical ballet as having an unhealthy tradition which leads his tastes to lean toward the atypical. In sum, this theme suggests that breaking with tradition in ballet has its own charm, but at the same time it is implicitly meant to oppose unhealthy physical lifestyles and the overly strict narrative of classical ballet.

4.2 How do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?

Cultural dignity and integration of diverse cultural experiences

Individuals with higher cultural capital pursue a high-quality lifestyle and have higher expectations and standards for cultural activities in the allocation of their leisure time. Nick (57y) has a refined taste for ballet performances but dislike when it goes too abstract, and he has a higher standard for cultural activities in his leisure time. When I asked him to try to explain how he spends his leisure time on cultural activities other than the legitimate ones, this is how he responded:

Tasting of a good wine or good champagne, it's also a way of life spending...I'm really open to rock concerts. I do like visiting modern bands. So it's not only about some like really classical and formal time spending now, I also like concert gigs and even of not really popular brands. If it sounds good, if it has good quality, for sure, no problem. And also if it's good performing, let's say some CD celebrations, I'm always keen on it.

In Nick's case, the weight of 'omnivorousness' is evenly balanced. He enjoys both a variety of legitimate and popular cultures, as long as they are of 'good quality'. Iris (21y) has a similar way of distributing her tastes and places a high value on time spent in cultural activities. When asked about how she spends leisure time, she said:

I play the violin. So I play in an orchestra and I practice for that. I do sports, I do a lot of yoga and I run and I go bouldering. I really like to cook especially with friends...I love going to concerts. I also like traveling a lot but I don't know if that counts for leisure time because if I could, I would travel all the time in my leisure time...I have my classical vibe which is a completely different concert for me than like going to a pop concert like it's two different worlds and I love them equally.

Iris' taste in ballet is on the contemporary side, but she dislikes music in ballet that is too abstract and has a relatively omnivorous taste in cultural activities, which is similar to Nick's taste. Both have a high appreciation for culture, which coincides with the definition of the concept of the new cultural elite (Brien & Ianni, 2023). Later she explained how she liked the idea of mixing genres in music.

I have those crossover concerts as well...I really love that because I feel like especially nowadays a lot of younger people are not as tolerant against classical music like a lot of people feel like it's retarded or like it's not cool they don't like it because they don't understand it. And bringing then some elements of pop into it I think makes for a really cool like fusion mix that is attractive for a broader audience of especially younger people.

Iris embraces a variety of cultures and likes the idea of mixing genres as she believes it appeals to a wider audience. She distinguishes her taste from others who think classical music is not cool enough and implies that she has a deeper understanding than others. She later mentioned that Austria is a very cultural country and that she grew up surrounded by art and culture, which gives her a uniquely different perspective now when attending cultural events. Emily (25y) has a background in studying arts history and now works in the cultural sector, has a taste for appreciating ballet performances in an intellectual mode. When I asked what she enjoyed doing in her leisure time other than attending ballet performance, she replied:

All the fine arts like museums, galleries...Also one is visual aesthetics. I'm interested in observing a lot. And in comparison to dance, it doesn't give me that much feelings. So it's rather passive. While with performances like ballet and dancing, it's more active engagement. I like art forms that are mostly passive.

Emily's taste is more towards a legitimate culture as she is very much into visual arts and enjoys observing and being exposed to art in a passive way. Her quote also demonstrates that she has a deep understanding of art, and as a result she has a very clear idea of what she likes about it, rather than just following the crowd. She later commented that there was one genre of art that she particularly disliked.

I don't like improvisation as a genre. Both in music, in dance and also like fine arts and stuff. And usually such experiences the improvisation ones tend to be very emotional and very much about here and now. I'm more interested to learn about the bigger picture and the longer story. And it's nice to see the involvement of so many people for the end product rather than one person here at the same time.

Emily clarified that she disliked improvisation because she wanted to see the hard work and craftsmanship behind the art. For her, the process and completeness of the artwork is crucial to the formation of quality in the art, which reflects her appreciation of conventional art forms, as the decision of the moment to improvise is not in line with convention. Thus, it can be argued that individuals on this theme value highbrow traditions and authorship in terms of taste. They mentioned a wide variety of other cultural activities, and it was self-evident from their quotes that they did take some time beforehand to find out what they really liked about the arts to come up with their own summaries and opinions.

Rejecting popularity and hardcore type of art

Bourdieu (1984) states that highly educated individuals are more likely to value the quality and aesthetic form of art over its quantity or entertainment value. Three of the interviewees strongly claimed that they disliked the Schlager music genre because they could not see the cultural connotations behind it. Michelle (21y) when asking of the specific genre that her dislike. She answered:

...It's called schlager. It's like a very German Dutch kind of thing. It's like the things they play in upper ski like ski huts which have like terrible melodies and terrible songs and stuff. That's maybe something I don't like because I don't see the cultural value in this except for people screaming or being drunk.

Michelle's taste for ballet is more experimental but she dislikes the genre of popular music-Schlager. She considers Schlager music to be too straightforward, with 'terrible melodies and songs', and felt that she ought to acquire some insightful taste in other, more culturally valuable cultural activities. In fact, most interviewees in this study disliked the chaotic environment of popular culture, such as rave, club, and hardcore music. They view ballet as a relatively refined art form, whether classical or contemporary that contains a degree of artistry and originality. Maria (21y) enjoys the variety of ballet but prefers contemporary ballet because she likes to see dances that break the mold. She also shares Michelle's dislike of Schlager and further explains that she dislikes the current culture of ignorance and fakeness.

I'm not the biggest techno fan, so I don't like raves. I don't like schlager...I do use my phone a lot...But for example, I don't have TikTok. I didn't have Instagram until like two years ago, one and a half years ago. And I don't like...a lot of pop culture products are created that are just like created for the algorithm which to me is quite annoying...There is parts of pop culture, especially like the ones that are very obviously not really that creative or not really like seem to have a low artistic value and a very big importance money wise...I don't like cultural products that are very ignorant.

Maria believes that much of pop and internet culture has little artistic value and is often only suitable for use in algorithms. She distances herself from pop culture content, which she sees as only driven by algorithms and superficial appeal. She is highly critical of the explanation of her own tastes throughout her quotes, indicating that she holds high values for originality, artistic integrity, and creativity in the arts. Her rejection of 'ignorance' and 'fake' culture is not just a matter of taste, but also seems to reflect moral boundaries (Lamont, 1992) and makes taste a symbol of distinction. In sum, Maria's objections are directed not only at specific genres, such as Schlager or techno music, but also at a broader system of cultural production that compromises originality

for virality. Rather than valuing the arts on the basis of its marketability or popularity, her cultural preferences reflect a desire for more autonomous cultural products. Next, Alex (31y) explained why he was against rave culture in the following part:

Yeah nonsense...I don't want to like blame on anyone. Like yes because of course like I'm talking...people are doing...like cool stuff but I think like in the Netherlands and like in Berlin for example. There are like people that are trying too much to make something cool than like bringing actually like a real message you know.

Alex prefers contemporary ballet because classical ballet involves negative issues such as body shaming. As a result of working in the cultural field, he has a clear understanding of different art scenes. He remains accepting of cultural variety but is against doing things that look cool and yet don't have their own point of view. This can show that Alex values the meaning behind cultural activities, with a focus on its originality and authenticity, which is what makes art valuable, rather than simply copying and pasting. His quote also reveals his criticism of following trends blindly. He further shared his experience during his study in art academy:

I remember like in the second year at university here I had a kind of like burnout because I was kind of like forcing myself to do like important projects you know. I have to talk about capitalism, I have to talk about air pollution, I have to talk about this kind of things and at some point...I was really burning out.

Nowadays, political correctness is a hit or miss topic in the art world. Finding the right balance between self-interpretation, social significance, and public acceptance can be challenging when creating the arts. Compared to the previous part, individuals in this part emphasize more on the value of cultural activity itself, and not their feelings towards it. However, in this part, it can be interpreted that regardless of an individual's choice of classical or modern (contemporary) ballet, individuals with high cultural capital still place great importance on socio-cultural values and originality when participating in different forms of cultural activities, which is in line with Bourdieu's (1984) notion of quality over quantity when choosing to participate in the arts among the highly educated.

4.3 How do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?

The great classics

In my study, interviewees from the older cohort tended to spontaneously provide classic and famous ballet titles in their interviews. For example, Robert (54y) addressed his preference for ballet:

I like Romeo and Juliet...I like Prokofiev for the music...I like Tchaikovsky. I mean Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake Ballet, so I like a lot of Russian ballet. And I also like Shostakovich, Rite of Spring.

By contrast, none of the younger generation of interviewees mentioned any of the above names. This suggests that the older generation seems to have more expertise and a greater willingness to demonstrate their educated knowledge than the younger generation. They are often more passionate towards legitimate culture, which resonates with Van Eijck and Knulst's (2005) study. Nick (57y) said that he preferred classical ballet and associated ballet with historical books in the following quote:

I really like when it's something about classical works, such as, it could be about the book, it could be about some famous periods of history. Let's say I really like ballet Aida, which is probably one of the most classical performing. So I'm really keen on if it's connected with the classical art, let's say it could be a book as I mentioned or historical period. And also I can say that if it has classical, academical music.

Nick has a big respect for classical art itself, and in his words I sensed a deep sense of nostalgia and cherished pride when he spoke about it in my interview. In addition to this, he explained his motivation for attending ballet performances and used the following quote to draw a distinction between his preferences for classical art.

Good music, good atmosphere, I can see that ballet is the product of the hard work and it's just beautiful. All these dancers, clothes, music, atmosphere, it helped me to be more connected with art, with the high-level art, as you can say, because opera and ballet, it's not the consumable art, if I can say.

He differentiated his tastes from other forms of culture such as the mass popular culture by claiming that what he enjoyed was a legitimate form of culture because it was not consumable art. He rejects mass culture due to its association with commercialism and clearly prefers more authentic (typical) art forms. Although cultural boundaries seem to be less strict nowadays, it is clear from Nick's quotes that he still places his taste in the classics and sees this as an important distinction of his taste. He claimed that he disliked and did not understand when ballet became atypical or too modern.

I don't like when it goes way too modern...it's really unformal, it doesn't have the exact meaning and it's pretty hard to understand...So when it goes way too artistic, it's hard for me to understand, because when it has no structure, it's way too abstract, I just cannot understand.

Nick's preference for structured, classical forms of art is in line with Bourdieu's (1984) description of the economic elite's preference for conservative and recognized cultural forms. His intolerance and rejection of overly abstract art can be seen as a sign that the distinction and appreciation of traditional culture still exists, especially among the older generation.

Tolerance and openness

Most of the younger generation individuals appear to be open and tolerant of a variety of ballet compared to the older generation. They usually accepted both classical and contemporary ballet as long as long as it harmonized and blended with the idea of the work. As Maria (21y) said,

I need to see that there is a clear idea and then they follow through with it. So that can either be, they want to do the most beautiful rendition of Swan Lake and they follow through with it, or that can be like, they want to do something super crazy and bizarre and out of the box and then follow through with it, but kind of having an idea behind and going with that and not just a little bit of this and a little bit of that.

Maria mentioned in the quote that she likes both classical ballet and contemporary dance if there is a clear vision behind the work, but doesn't like mixing uncreative, cluttered dance together. She is open to 'super crazy' and 'bizarre' art forms, which

contrasts sharply with Nick's taste. Her preference can be described as typical of progressive cultural elite, who embrace innovation, value originality and are willing to take creative risks (Bourdieu, 1984). The differences between Nick and Maria not only reflects generational differences but also aligns with Bourdieu's theory of internal differentiation among the elite class, particularly the distinction between economic and cultural capital (Brisson & Bianchi, 2017). Indeed, the greater the variety of cultures they were exposed to early on, the more tolerant they became of each culture as they grew up. The younger generation may tend to be more omnivorous than the older generation, as there are many emerging dance styles that didn't exist or were just emerging in the older generation's time. Even though the older generation, with great cultural capital, is also keen to catch up with the new arts, there is still a gap between them and the younger generation in terms of catching new trends. Michelle (21y) also has eclectic taste when it comes to dance, she said.

I think if you're interested in dance...you always kind of have one eye on other dance directions as well especially when it comes to like jazz or contemporary because that's very close to ballet...I just find the performative act behind it as well like the sport acts just a very incredible (demonstration) of what like bodies can do and what people can do and how they're able to like move themselves.

Both Maria and Michelle show an openness to other forms of dance and have the mindset to acquire knowledge of dance, which is in line with the idea of Peterson's omnivore theory. Iris (21y) enjoys storytelling in the arts as it is how she first got into the arts, she is always open to new elements in ballet performances and has a special taste for ballet. When asked what she would be interested in if there were other new elements in ballet performance besides classical ballet, she replied:

I also love circus ballet...like when they combine acrobatics and stuff, but I guess that's something different a bit...I don't want ballet and like hip-hop and I don't want ballet and like voguing. I don't want ballet and whacking. I only want ballet, but if there's a circus show and they want to incorporate like ballet and circus, that's cool.

Circus ballet is obviously not the typical kind of ballet, and in my opinion, it is a special combination because she highlighted circus ballet but then argued against adding other elements such as voguing or hip-hop to ballet performances. She later mentioned when ballet performances go too realistic then she would not be interested in. When asked about what she dislikes in a ballet performance, she answered:

I don't like it when they're too realistic. Like I once well the last ballet show that I watched it was based on covid. There were doctors dancing and like people wearing masks and it was way too based on real life and that was disgusting for me. I want there to be fantasy or like just something just not like based on like something super real. I want it to be a little magical.

Her taste for ballet was the most extraordinary of all the interviews, and her creativity and imagination for ballet was the most remarkable of all the interviews. Lydia (22y) is also open to see more elements added into a ballet performance.

I would love to see more things added to ballet. I know sometimes people now play instrument as well on stage. With like proper dancer next to them, not just the orchestra playing but people also on stage and I also know that lately there's this trying like people are putting some contemporary already mixed with ballet doing performances and I really like that it's really nice.

Alex (31y) also has a hybrid taste for ballet performances. He is very music-oriented when watching ballet performances and claims to like both classical and contemporary ballet but prefers contemporary ballet because he dislikes the idea of body shaming in classical ballet.

Early exposure matters

In exploring generational differences in preferences for ballet performances, it is noteworthy that age is not the primary factor in shaping individuals' broad or narrow preferences, but rather the environment in which they grow up — including their family cultural practices and national background. This coincides with the argument of Bourdieu (1984) and Wright (2015) that the social spaces and class in which individuals are situated early in life have a great impact on their future consumption patterns. An individual's upbringing influences their habitus; for example, in my study, individuals

who were raised in Russia, regardless of their age, had a strong interest in classical ballet performances. Emily (25y) is currently a marketing manager for an arts organization. When asked about her preferences and motivations to attend ballet performances, she answered:

There are two reasons for me to go (to ballet performances). One is either on holiday season. So for example I always go to ballet during Christmas. Usually it's nutcracker. It is a tradition (in Russia), and another reason is just aesthetic appreciation of the dance. As I mentioned before, as a tradition, interest in the aesthetics of it. So it includes all the visual aspects, costumes, dance itself and the theater. Last but not least, I also like the ambience on the performance. Also when it comes to traditional ballet, it's also associated with rituals of getting ready to it and be looking proper which is also part of the experience.

She mentioned 'tradition' and 'aesthetic appreciation', and according to Jarness's (2015) framework, she has an intellectual taste pattern as she loves ballet for its own sake. The 'rituals' she mentioned above are not just personal, but rooted in generations, and the reason behind this can be traced back to her upbringing in Russia. She explained that as a child, her parents would take her to a cultural event once a week. Her continued exposure to classical forms of legitimate culture reflects the cultural legacy her parents passed down to her generation, especially in Russia, where ballet has strong symbolic and institutional significance. According to Emily's response, her upbringing and family environment echoed Bourdieu's (1984) theory of habitus, which led her to a love of classical ballet because it was more accessible to her from an early age. Michelle (21y) from Austria has a different taste in ballet and is rather fascinated by contemporary ballet.

(I) like the traditional ballet but more modern touch on it. Music wise, choreography wise, dance style wise and I really like that because I think it's very impressive. However, the old-style traditional ballet with a lot of pointe and everything, but I really did appreciate the kind of creative and more unconventional style of ballet.

Her preference in ballet is more on the unconventional side, which goes back to her upbringing and accessibility to the theater. She had a lot of exposure and education in culture when she was young. When I asked if her parents were supportive of the cultural activities she grew up participating in, she replied:

I started playing the violin when I was like four and a half. It's not like my parents forced me to do that but more they encouraged me to do, and my aunt was playing the violin as well. I was also always more exposed to it and then they always supported me and I was a theater kid so I sang in the theater and I took singing lessons as well. Then I started dancing at some point. I was playing the violin, I was singing in a choir, I was acting in the theater and I was dancing contemporary jazz.

It is worth noting that in this study, individuals who were exposed to multiple cultures early in life tended to become more omnivorous. Since they are exposed to multiple cultures from a young age, it is understandable that they are more adaptable and open to these cultures. Moreover, she mentioned that her mother was very much into culture and that this upbringing gave her exposure to culture.

I think my mom always valued cultural activities a lot herself because she was also in that bubble, so it was always free for me to go or not to go. However, she always encouraged me to just see it because it's the experiences that you like and it's always something handy to have you know like being cultured and being knowledgeable...she always emphasized that even if I don't have to love it but as long as I take something away from it, it would be a valuable experience.

Michelle is actually a very nice example of having resources and connections with the art world in regards to her supportive parenting and the advantage of her living environment itself. Lydia (22y) grew up in Italy and has an omnivore taste for ballet performances. She also used to live near the theater when she was young. When asked if her parents took her to cultural activities and if she attended dance classes as a child, she replied:

I was a kid as well going to (the theater) because I live in Italy close to Milan so we have La Scala which is the main theater and my dad would

often take me there when I was a kid. My mom she enjoyed (ballet) herself as well so she would just watch it also because she enjoyed it and then to share something with me. I did ballet when I was younger so it was kind of kind of came naturally that I also enjoyed watching it. (For dance classes), I started when I was six years old to do ballet and for some years, I also did contemporary.

Findings of this part find out that the social status or education level of individual's parents had little effect on the consumption patterns of the next generation but taking children to cultural venues or cultural classes at an early age and raising their awareness of cultural needs seemed to be more relevant in influencing the consumption patterns of the next generation. In fact, the parents of Michelle and Lydia did not attend university, but they were actively engaged in cultural life and shared it with their daughters from an early age. Moreover, Michelle's parents worked in the cultural field, her familial background in the cultural sector provided her with both greater exposure to and familiarity with cultural institutions, reflecting Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital transmission through family socialization. These examples highlight that differences in taste are less a matter of individual age and more a reflection of cohort-based cultural socialization. Rather than their age, what distinguishes them is where and when they grew up, and what kind of cultural resources they had during their formative years. These findings also imply that parental education levels may be less important than cultural habits and values transmitted within the household. Taking into account how individuals engage with ballet and other arts through the lens of generational cohorts provides a more nuanced understanding of how individuals' cultural tastes are formed and how their taste patterns are passed down through generations.

5. CONCLUSION

The intergenerational exploration of cultural lifestyles reveals a multi-layered landscape shaped by the interplay of tradition, creativity and social transformation. Intrigued by the formation of intergenerational tastes, I chose ballet as a starting point for my investigation of individual taste patterns. To answer my research questions, I utilized a qualitative research methodology by collecting 14 in-depth interviews with individuals from different generations, ranging from 21 to 57 years old. With regards to my first research question ‘*how do individuals make sense of their taste in ballet performance?*’, four themes were identified, namely *Cultural familiarity*, *Recognition of the big-name*, *Music matters* and *Rejecting convention forms*.

First, cultural familiarity plays a crucial role in individuals’ understanding of ballet performance, with participants such as Emily and Victoria (who are from Russia and Ukraine) demonstrating how deep-rooted traditions and early exposure have shaped their tastes in classical ballet. In contrast, Priscilla’s atypical tastes come through her initial exposure to dancing in mandatory dance classes in Colombia, which lead to her interest in dances with more folkloric elements. This aligns with Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, which suggests that tastes are ingrained through early socialization and cultural capital. The influence of ‘big names’ and well-known classical ballets, such as Swan Lake and The Nutcracker, highlight how iconic works serve as entry points for a wider audience while reinforcing their cultural significance. Yet, participants with more cultural capital (who in this study tend to be from the younger generation) tend to express a preference for innovation and diversity, seeking out choreographers and companies known for pushing boundaries, rather than just the classics. Music matters emerge as another essential element in shaping ballet tastes, with participants like Alex and Robert highlighting the integral role of music in creating a cohesive artistic experience. However, contemporary works and abstract music often challenge some audiences who emphasize the need for ballet performance to be more accessible, and that music should be integrated into the ballet performance but not overwhelm the ballet itself. Especially in modern or contemporary ballet performances, the music should not exceed the general audience’s level of understanding of the ballet performance. Rejecting conventional forms resonates with individuals seeking artistic liberation and inclusivity in ballet. Participants like Stephanie and Alex value contemporary ballet for its departure from rigid classical structures, allowing for more expressive and socially conscious

performances. Issues such as body shaming and adherence to traditional aesthetics in classical ballet also surfaced, pushing certain audiences toward more experimental and inclusive works. Together, these results for my first research question emphasize that individuals' tastes in ballet performances are not static, but are influenced by the dynamics of cultural, social, and aesthetic dimensions, demonstrating that the ways in which individuals manifest their preferences for ballet performance are complex but still traceable.

For my second research question '*how do individuals' tastes in ballet performance relate to their broader taste patterns?*', two themes were identified, namely *Cultural dignity and integration of diverse cultural experiences*, *Rejecting popularity and hardcore type of art*.

For the first theme of this research question, participants such as Nick and Iris demonstrate cultural dignity and prioritize quality in their cultural engagements, balancing legitimate and popular cultural activities as long as they meet their own standards. They value broad, refined cultural engagement while maintaining a preference for certain forms, such as rejecting abstraction or preferring a fusion that bridges classical and contemporary elements. In response to theme two, while embracing cultural diversity, Michelle and Maria reject elements of popular culture they perceive as lacking depth or cultural value. Their preference for contemporary ballet or other atypical forms underscores their pursuit of originality and creativity. They also demonstrate a nuanced appreciation of art that provides authenticity and avoids superficiality. Most ballet audiences in this study have a habit of participating in different cultural activities, some of whom are critical of superficial and commercialized art types. They value the impact of art for its own sake, realize that some cultural activities do contradict what they believe to be the message of art, and agree that some activities or cultures are too superficial and that certain themes are over-represented in today's art world, such as capitalism and air pollution. Moreover, in this theme, Alex and Emily underscore the importance of craftsmanship and originality in cultural experiences. They critique trend that prioritize superficial appeal over meaningful content, highlighting a broader dissatisfaction with cultural products perceived as trend focused. Their views emphasize the significance of 'real' value and authenticity in art creation.

A recurring pattern across the study is the tension between traditional and experimental ballet. Some audiences are attracted to the historical significance, formal beauty and traditional aesthetics of classical ballet, while others prefer contemporary

forms that challenge tradition and introduce innovation. Despite their different preferences, both groups of works emphasize high standards of artistry, craftsmanship, and emotional resonance. In light of these findings, ballet companies may face the challenge of navigating diverse audience expectations. While some companies may attempt to balance tradition and innovation by programming both classical and contemporary works or blending elements of each within a single production, but this approach may not suit all companies. It is crucial for ballet companies to consider their positioning within the cultural field, and to establish a clear artistic profile that reflects their identity, resources, and target audience. When designing their productions, ballet companies should carefully consider the different expectations of their audiences, analyze the dominant tastes of different generations, reflect on what each audience group values most, and think critically about the artistic message they wish to convey to the public. By doing so, ballet companies can both honor tradition and advance the art form, ensuring relevance and engagement with a wider, more diverse audience. However, they may also need to accept that striving for both innovation and tradition within a single production can lead to minor inconsistencies or tensions, which are not necessarily flaws but part of the creative process and style formation.

For my third research question '*how do individuals' tastes in cultural activities relate to the generation to which they belong?*', three themes were identified, namely *The great classics*, *Tolerance and openness* and *Early exposure matters*.

The great classics shows that the older respondents still favor the legitimate classical ballet and uses it to differentiate and draw cultural boundaries in order to maintain their own taste. Their preferences are deeply rooted in a sense of cultural distinction, as reflected in their admiration for iconic works such as Swan Lake and Aida, and their rejection of more commercialized or consumer-driven art forms. The older generation, in particular, demonstrates a strong respect for the classics, viewing them as central to their own cultural identity and refined taste. While they often claim openness to contemporary forms, their primary loyalty remains with the traditional canon. In contrast, tolerance and openness represent the younger generation, who are more open to different forms of dance. Younger participants demonstrate a more eclectic and omnivorous taste, embracing both classical and contemporary ballet as long as the performances display coherence and creativity. They are open to innovative fusions and new interpretations, including atypical elements like circus ballet or experimental storytelling. Early exposure matters point out the importance of early exposure to explain their future taste in ballet

performances. The influence of upbringing plays a pivotal role in shaping tastes across generations. Regardless of age, individuals raised in culturally rich environments, such as those in Russia, Austria, or Italy, display a broader appreciation of ballet, influenced by their upbringing and access to cultural institutions. Parents' encouragement of participation in arts and exposure to diverse cultural forms further cultivates a lifelong appreciation for both traditional and innovative performances. To sum up my third research question, generational differences in ballet preferences reveal a dynamic interplay of tradition, openness, and the impact of cultural upbringing, reflecting broader societal shifts in how art is consumed and valued.

This study fills the gap between how individuals make sense of their taste in ballet across generations and the relationship between individuals' ballet taste and broader taste pattern in cultural activities. The findings emphasize the importance of accessibility and exposure in fostering a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Institutions and policymakers should recognize the value of early cultural education and create opportunities for diverse and inclusive artistic experiences. By catering to both traditional and innovative preferences, cultural organizations can bridge generational divides and attract a broader, more engaged audience. Future research could extend this exploration to other art forms or investigate how digital media might influence the evolving landscape of cultural engagement. As society continues to change, understanding the interplay of tradition, innovation, and cultural upbringing will remain essential for fostering meaningful connections between individuals and the arts.

While this study offers insights into intergenerational patterns of ballet appreciation, several limitations should be acknowledged, pointing toward directions for future research. First, the relatively small sample size of 14 participants limits the generalizability of the findings. Although qualitative research aims for depth over breadth, future studies could benefit from engaging a larger and more varied participant pool to strengthen the robustness of the conclusions. I would suggest a longitudinal design to track the evolution of tastes throughout the life course, or a quantitative research approach to collect larger stratified samples to validate the observed patterns. Second, while participants in this study came from diverse national backgrounds, this diversity also introduced variations in cultural context that may have influenced their responses in complex ways. Future research could consider focusing on participants from a single national or cultural background to provide a more controlled comparison of

intergenerational taste patterns within a specific socio-cultural framework. Last but not least, inspired by the Chinese Zen concept of 'seeing mountains as mountains again', which is also my personal experience of changing tastes in dance performances, future works can explore the cyclical nature of artistic tastes, where early awe and wonder at classical forms may gradually turn into experimental curiosity and eventually return back to the re-evolution of traditional forms as the individual matures. Exploring these longitudinal changes can add rich complexity to the study of cultural engagement across the life course.

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Appendix 1. Overview of the interview participants (anonymous)

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Highest education/Major	Occupation
Emily	Female	25	German / Russian	MA in cultural economics and entrepreneurship	Marketing manager
Priscilla	Female	34	Colombian	MA in arts, culture and society	Graphic designer
Lydia	Female	22	Italian	BA in international history	Student
Michelle	Female	21	Austrian	BA in communication and media	Student
Alex	Male	31	Italian	BA in sonography / BA in graphic design	Graphic designer
Iris	Female	21	Bosnian / Dutch	BA in illustration	Student
Maria	Female	21	German	BA in arts and culture studies	Student
Ida	Female	51	Dutch	BA in management	Office manager
Nick	Male	57	Ukrainian / Russian	MA in coastal oceanology	Purchaser in shipping company
Robert	Male	54	British	MA in modern history	Author / music journalist
Victoria	Female	54	Brazilian	MA in business administration	Entrepreneur
Ella	Female	51	Dutch	BA in fine art	Hairdresser
Stephanie	Female	53	Dutch	BA in accounting	Investment banker
Rachel	Female	54	Dutch	High school diploma	Office worker

Appendix 2. Interview guide

Welcome and thank you for participating in this research study. My aim is to investigate individual's cultural lifestyle and consumption patterns in different cultural activities, specifically focusing on ballet. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all information provided will be kept confidential. Your insights are invaluable to the success of this research, and I greatly appreciate your time and contribution. If you have any questions or concerns about the research objectives or interview procedure, please don't hesitate to ask. Thank you once again for your participation.

Basic information of the participant

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is your highest level of education?
- What is your nationality?
- What is your current occupation?

About taste in ballet performance

- How often do you attend ballet performances throughout the year?
- Speaking of your preferences in ballet performance: could you give an overview of what you like? (e.g., Nutcracker)
- What do you value the most in a ballet performance? (e.g., aesthetic, education, entertainment)
- What types of ballet performance would attract you to go?
 - Do you prefer only classical ballet, or do you see yourself being more open to other forms of dance (e.g., folk dance/street dance/contemporary dance) as well?
- Do you like if some new elements add into a ballet performance? (e.g., theatrical elements or experimental) Or would you prefer the originality of the show more?
- What type or style of ballet performance do you dislike? And why? Can you elaborate it more?
- What motivate you to go to a ballet performance? (e.g., family upbringing, open to new experience, ballet enthusiasts)

Omnivorousness in other cultural activities

- How do you spend your leisure time normally?
- Other than ballet / dance performances, could you tell me what other forms of leisure activities that you like? (e.g., theatre, opera, museum visits, travelling)
- What kind of activities do you consider cultural activities?
- What motivate you to go to other cultural activities normally?
- What do you value the most in cultural activities?
- Are there forms of culture that you do not like and why?
- Are there styles or genres of cultural activities that you specifically do not like and why?

About individual's habitus

- Did your parents support you to go to cultural activities? And ballet specifically?
- How did they support you? Financially or in the other way?
- Did your parents often take you to ballet performance(s) when you were young?
- Why do you think that they took you there? Did they tell you that?
- Did you attend any dance or ballet class when you were young?
- Did you have any art education / training at high school?
- How important do you think art education in school?
- Where does your interest in art come from?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your parents? (e.g., education level, occupation)