

Consumer Research in the 2000s and 2010s

A Quantitative Assessment and Qualitative Review

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Abstract

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This thesis presents and analyses the results of a bibliometric mapping study of the field of consumer research between 2000 and 2019, aiming to provide a simultaneously descriptive and analytical account of consumer research that identifies the overall structure of the field, as well as the major sub-specializations within it. By utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's social theory and sociology of science, I analyse the central tendencies exhibited by consumer researchers with regards to the conventions they follow, the literatures they draw from and the way they relate to each other's texts. My empirical material is made up of bibliometric datasets relating to article publishing in a sample of academic journals specific to consumer research, which I analyse by utilizing the visualization of similarities (VOS) mapping technique and its associated software VOSviewer. After providing sections on previous studies, my theoretical framework, and the methodology I utilize, I present and analyse my findings, wherein I identify several trends within consumer research for the 2000–2019 period. I find that the field is largely split into two main camps, where one focuses on identifying causalities in individual consumer behaviour and the other focuses on social and cultural aspects of consumption. The gap between these two camps increases when comparing the 2000s to the 2010s. I also identify several prominent authorships and articles within consumer research and highlight the strategies by which these achieved prestige within the field, as well as provide a stylized map of the field.

Keywords: **consumer research, consumer culture theory, bibliometric mapping, VOS, VOSviewer, scientific fields, Pierre Bourdieu**

Popular Science Summary

In this text, I explore and analyse what social scientists active within *consumer research*, a field of study related to the marketing discipline, have written about so far during the 21st century. Since this is a master's thesis in sociology, it views the production of scientific knowledge as a social process that is related to, for instance, the social backgrounds of individual scientists. Therefore, I try to understand the social organization of consumer research by examining how different scientists in the field relate to each other in different ways.

By looking at which books and articles consumer researchers tend to cite when they write articles for academic journals, I showcase that there are certain groups of scientists that tend to cite the same sources. I also look at how consumer researchers cite each other's articles, and find that the same groups are visible here. By then examining specific consumer research authors and articles, I try to understand why these groups tend to behave in this way.

Overall, I find that writing in consumer research during the 21st century is split into two main groups: those that study individual, psychological issues related to consumption, and those that take a broader, cultural view of it. The split between these two consumer research groups seems to have become larger in the 2010s. Lastly, I provide a simplified map of the field of consumer research that shows its main groupings.

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Table of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Name	Category
ACR	Association for Consumer Research	Scientific association
BDT	Behavioural decision theory	Research specialization
CCT	Consumer culture theory	Research specialization
CM&C	<i>Consumption, Markets & Culture</i>	Academic journal
IJCS	<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	Academic journal
IP	Information processing	Research specialization
JCA	<i>Journal of Consumer Affairs</i>	Academic journal
JCB	<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>	Academic journal
JCC	<i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>	Academic journal
JCP	<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	Academic journal
JCR	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	Academic journal
P&M	<i>Psychology & Marketing</i>	Academic journal
SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index	Bibliometric database
VOS	Visualization of similarities	Mapping technique

1 Introduction

The field of consumer research began to assert its independence in the 1960's and crystallized itself as an autonomous research community by the founding own association in 1969 and the establishment of a flagship journal in 1974. These developments came at a time when business schools were beginning to shift their focus from vocational training towards more scholarly forms of knowledge production, and the initial emphasis of consumer research was to delimit itself from the marketing discipline by way of advocating the need for research focused on understanding consumers and consumption, as opposed to simply studying marketing managers. The founders of the field, united by “shared social ties and interests”, were then able “to act collectively to articulate the need for intellectual scholarship devoted to the study of consumers” (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010, p. 901), thus achieving the aforementioned foundation of the Association for Consumer Research (hereafter ACR) and the *Journal of Consumer Research* (hereafter JCR).

Though they make note of this historical genesis of consumer research as a field initially defining itself *against* marketing proper, Deborah J. MacInnis and Valerie S. Folkes (2010) utilize a sociology of science perspective to contend that the field is still best understood as a subfield located within the marketing discipline. They argue for this contextualization of the field primarily by way of considering its current social organization: “universities often have departments of marketing but rarely have consumer behavior departments” and, similarly, the “editorial review boards at the field’s flagship journal (JCR) are numerically dominated by marketing academics as opposed to academics from other disciplines” (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010, p. 902). Instead of simply defining the field in opposition to marketing, the authors hold that consumer research is best defined by its distinct subject matter:

Consumer behavior research is distinguished from other fields by the study of the acquisition, consumption, and disposal of marketplace products, services, and experiences by people operating in a consumer role. (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010, p. 905.)

Though MacInnis and Folkes (2010) use the term *consumer behaviour* to denote this field of study, I refer to the field as *consumer research* while maintaining their overall definition. Notably, while utilizing the above definition to advance the view of consumer research as a marketing subfield, MacInnis and Folkes (2010) also argue that the field is characterized by openness to perspectives and approaches from non-marketing disciplines such as sociology, anthropology,

psychology, economics and neuroscience. In line with this, the authors argue for “adopting an elevated view of marketing” (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010, p. 903) that does not forego the understanding of consumer research as a relatively autonomous field at liberty to address social and public policy issues by way of adopting a consumer-centric perspective.

The notion that consumer research is a marketing subfield open to perspectives from adjoining disciplines raises questions as to the nature and form of cross-disciplinary participation. In sociology, for instance, the publication of seminal works like *Distinction* by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and *The World of Goods* by Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood (1979) made way for the consolidation of the “*sociology of consumption* as a specialized branch of sociological knowledge” (Sassatelli, 2007, p. 91, my emphasis). To what extent is there then an intermingling of ideas and topics between the sociology of consumption and the field of consumer research? P. J. Rey and George Ritzer (2012, p. 445) argue that though sociologists have to a certain extent been published in journals such as the *JCR* and the *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* (hereafter *JCB*), “it was the (2001) founding of the *Journal of Consumer Culture* that created a home for sociologists interested in consumption”.¹ This notion that different approaches to consumer research warrant the creation of sub-specialized journals such as the *Journal of Consumer Culture* (hereafter *JCC*) is not sociology-specific, as the 1992 foundation of the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* (hereafter *JCP*) seems to have been provoked by what was seen by psychologists as “as a shift in the methodological focus” of the *JCR* towards more “postmodern approaches, compared to more positivistic approaches” (Alon, Morrin & Nasr Bechwati, 2002, p. 15). Does the foundation of consumer research journals affiliated with non-marketing disciplines then challenge the view of consumer research a collaborative and open field?

Though the contextualization of the field of consumer research provided by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) seemingly takes on a rather positive outlook regarding the potential of perspectival cross-pollination within consumer research, a recent article in the *Journal of Marketing* by several high-profile researchers in the field – including MacInnis herself – provides a rather more bleak view of the present state of research and suggests ways in which current dilemmas may be resolved. Drawing on earlier calls for consumer research to be more ‘discovery-oriented’ (e.g. Wells, 1993) and ‘meaningful’ (e.g. Dahl, Fischer, Johar & Morwitz, 2014), the authors contend

¹ Though Rey and Ritzer (2012, p. 445) actually allude to “the *International Journal of Consumer Research*”, George Ritzer (personal communication, 3 April 2020) has confirmed that they meant to refer to the *JCR*.

that many studies within the field of consumer research have become complacent to a set of implicit boundaries within the subfield. Specifically, the authors argue that contemporary consumer research is unnecessarily compliant in its adherence to pre-established sets of topics, theories and methodologies in the subfield, leading them to assert that “consumer research yields limited cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge diversity and is perceived to lack significance, despite its interdisciplinary and multistakeholder potential” (MacInnis, Morwitz, Botti, Hoffman, Kozinets, Lehmann, Lynch & Pechmann, 2020, p. 2). In line with this, the authors argue in favour of more innovative consumer research that breaks with implicit boundaries in order to generate more relevant knowledge that has the potential to influence non-consumer research academics, relevant stakeholders, as well as the interested general public.

The standpoint that contemporary researchers adhere to unnecessary restrictions that result in mediocre knowledge production voiced by MacInnis et al. (2020) echoes the criticisms expressed by Mats Alvesson, Yiannis Gabriel and Roland Paulsen (2017) in their book *Return to Meaning*. These authors argue that “the vast expansion of higher education in recent decades” (Alvesson, Gabriel & Paulsen, 2017, p. 13) has created a culture within the social sciences wherein too much emphasis is put on published output in academic journals, leading in turn to a cluttered environment of publications. Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017, p. 29) argue that the copious output of articles has in turn resulted in a “a fetishism of citations, where the worth of a piece of academic research is rigidly tied to the standing of the journal where it is published and the number of times it is cited”. Furthermore, they argue that the cluttered environment of publications has encouraged academics to specialize their research in order to publish articles within increasingly differentiated, and isolated, literatures. This drive towards specialization is largely fuelled by the incentive to declare “an original and unique ‘contribution’”, an incentive which Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017, p. 7) contend primarily results in a tendency from individual researchers to overspecialize their research in order to become members of “tiny research microtribes” that are characterized by “highly parochial interests and concerns”. Against this framework of social science research focused on quantitative indicators, incrementalism and filling perceived gaps in specialized literatures, Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017) put forward suggestions for generating more meaningful and diverse research with the potential to disseminate beyond the confines of academia.

In light of both the field-specific developments and larger social sciences context introduced above, I hold that the field of consumer research presents itself as an interesting object of sociological study for a multitude of reasons. Though *Return to Meaning* is perhaps more readily categorized as an argumentative text, the notion that social scientists tend to sub-specialize and generate research that they know works within the boundaries of their specific specializations echoes the criticisms voiced in MacInnis et al. (2020) to such a degree that it becomes interesting to wonder to what extent these phenomena exist within the field of consumer research. As such, I aim in this thesis to provide a simultaneously descriptive and analytical account of the field of consumer research that both illustrates central tendencies regarding the focus of academic journal publishing in the field and interprets what these tendencies imply with regards to the perspectives consumer researchers engage with in the production of scientific knowledge regarding consumers and consumption.

Other than the field presenting itself as an interesting object of study in general, I hold that studying its recent developments is highly relevant, leading me to focus my account of consumer research to the 2000s and 2010s. Though there have been studies attempting to outline consumer research up until in the 2000s, such as the already mentioned article by MacInnis and Folkes (2010), no such overviews exist for the only recently concluded 2010s. Furthermore, no comprehensive studies of the totality of the field of consumer research that utilize bibliometric data and sociological analysis, in the way that I do, currently exist.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The overall issue of my study is best categorized into two specific aims, where one aim is primarily explorative while the other one is more analytically oriented. Firstly, I aim to *produce a descriptive account* of influential academic journal publishing in consumer research during the 2000s and 2010s. Secondly, I aim to *sociologically construct* consumer research as a scientific field by utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's social theory and sociology of science. Whereas my first aim is not principally theory-dependent, the second aim utilizes Bourdieu's theoretical framework to conceptualize consumer research as an analytical object and make inferences as to how the field is organized and what guides the behaviour of the social agents active within it. Correspondingly to my twofold research issue, my aims relate to two major research questions:

- A. Based on academic journal publishing related to the field between 2000 and 2019, what are the major features of consumer research and which sub-specializations are visible within it?
- B. Utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's social theory and sociology of science, what characterizes consumer research as a scientific field?

These two major research questions are highly interrelated, as the descriptive account of A feeds into the analytical account of B. Each of these major research questions furthermore relate to two sub-questions. The first set of sub-questions relate to A:

- A1. How do consumer researchers relate to each other by way of the intellectual heritages they draw from?
- A2. What patterns are visible when considering how consumer researchers make use of texts authored by other researchers within the field?

As such, questions A1 and A2 provide specifications regarding the overarching question A. Questions B1 and B2 similarly indicate the central aspects of question B:

- B1. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of symbolic space, what constitutes the relative positions of consumer researchers?
- B2. Making use of Bourdieusian concepts like *illusio*, scientific habitus and symbolic capital, which logics appear to influence scientific practice within consumer research?

As I detail further below in my section on theory, the simultaneously descriptive and analytical aspirations of this thesis are entirely in line with Bourdieu's conceptualization of sociology, wherein he requires that researchers take great care in the construction of analytical objects.

The overarching aims of this study are accomplished by way of the presentation and analysis of a bibliometric mapping study based on citational data extracted from *Web of Science's* Social Sciences Citation Index (hereafter SSCI). By focusing on journals specific to consumer research and emphasizing authors and articles with high citation counts, I aim to provide graphical representations of this scientific field that provide an outline of the relative positions of influential researchers within it. By investigating the items that make up the resulting bibliometric maps, I also provide an illustrative review of central consumer research authors and articles. As such, this study combines the processing of quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a holistic account of the field of consumer research in the 2000s and 2010s.

Going forward, this thesis tackles its aims and research questions by way of presenting relevant previous studies of consumer research, the theoretical framework I utilize, and the methodologies I employ, after which my results and analysis are presented, leading in turn to the penultimate section of the thesis wherein I summarize and discuss my findings. Other than providing a foundation for my study to build upon, the section on previous studies interrelates with the one on theory as the previous studies offer substantial illustrations of the concepts I utilize. As such, I reiterate findings and arguments from previous studies in a more Bourdieusian terminology to show how I operationalize Bourdieu's conceptual tools in my analysis of the scientific field of consumer research. The section on method discusses the utilization of bibliometric data and thoroughly presents the *visualization of similarities* (hereafter VOS) technique of bibliometric mapping that I utilize, since the combination of this technique and Bourdieu's metatheory and conceptual tools is a novel contribution from this thesis. The methodological section also presents how I worked interactively with my data in order to provide a qualitative review of the literature represented in it. My results and analysis section firstly introduces the way in which I delimited my dataset and secondly presents and interprets the results of my bibliometric mapping. This second part of my analysis splits the data into two sections, 2000 to 2009 and 2010 to 2019, thus adding a comparative element to my analysis. In the final section of the thesis, I summarize my findings and present a conceptual map of the field of consumer research in the 2000s and 2010s extrapolated from my analysis (see Figure 10).

2 Previous Studies

In this section, I focus on presenting a selection of previous studies that relate to my own research issue and analysis. I have divided my discussion of these select articles into two main sections: one focused on the studies that provide *graphical representations* of the field of consumer research or relevant related fields, and one that focuses on studies that provide information regarding the *form and content* of consumer research.

2.1 Graphical Representations of Consumer Research

Though there are previous examples of bibliometric data being utilized to study marketing and marketing-related fields (see Martínez-López, Merigó, Gázquez-Abad & Ruiz-Real, 2020, for a brief review), very few of these have utilized visualization and mapping techniques, let alone made use of the rather recently made-available VOSviewer software. Two very recent marketing-related studies that do utilize VOSviewer are overview studies focused on published output over time in the journals *International Business Review* and *Industrial Marketing Management* respectively (Martínez-López, Merigó, Gázquez-Abad & Ruiz-Real, 2020; Rialp, Merigó, Cancino & Urbano, 2019), while a third study focuses on the dissemination of the portmanteau *prosumption*, “denoting simultaneous consumption and production”, in academic publishing (Shah, Lei, Ali, Doronin & Hussain, 2020, p. 1020). Another interesting vein of marketing-related bibliometric study is that of Noemi Sinkovics (2013, 2016), who focuses on exploring the usefulness of bibliometric mapping techniques in helping researchers in navigate the previously mentioned ever-increasing number of scholarly publications. Though these studies provide a frame of reference with regards to the analysis of bibliometric mapping results, their scopes are very different to mine and they do not provide findings that readily relate to my research issue.

The only recent bibliometric visualization study explicitly dealing with consumer research that I have identified is an article by Han Jia, Shuhua Zhou and Arthur W. Allaway (2018) that analyses a sample of articles published between 1942 and 2016 that connect to the term “consumer psychology”. Out of the 728 consumer psychology articles they analyse in this study, Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) find that these were primarily published in the *JCP* (286 articles). The authors furthermore find that texts authored by researchers based in the USA make up a lion share (61%) of the articles they analyse. Though this article provides some interesting indicative statistics as

well as potential methodological inspiration, it differs entirely from my study as it only focuses on consumer psychology, rather than attempting to map and conceptualize the entirety of the field of consumer research.

Arguably, the most relevant previous graphical representation of the field of consumer research in relation to the research issue of this thesis is the “model of consumer behavior as a multidisciplinary subfield of marketing” presented by MacInnis and Folkes (2010, p. 910). As previously mentioned, MacInnis and Folkes (2010) utilize a sociology of science perspective in order to analyse the emergence and development of the field of consumer research. In so doing, they argue against conceptualizations of consumer research that do not conceptualize it as a subfield to marketing – most importantly, they argue against the view that consumer research is simply a *topic* of research or “an interdisciplinary *process*” (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010, p. 908, my emphasis) without any autonomy. In contrast to these understandings of consumer research, MacInnis and Folkes (2010, p. 909) provide a model of the subfield that identifies its “three dominant specializations”: *information processing* (hereafter IP), which is focused around the study of the emotions, moods and attitudes of consumers; *consumer culture theory* (hereafter CCT), which focuses on matters like marketplace cultures and ideologies; and *behavioural decision theory* (hereafter BDT), which is concerned with different aspects of consumer choice and decision-making. While these three specializations are located within the subfield, MacInnis and Folkes (2010) simultaneously relate consumer research to the larger discipline of marketing. MacInnis and Folkes (2010) also attempt to visualize how consumer research and the marketing discipline relate to different *adjoining disciplines* by placing the names of these around their model, suggesting, for instance, a relatedness between CCT and anthropology, as well as a closeness between IP and psychology.

Overall, the sociology of science perspective utilized by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) make several elements from their study easy to incorporate into this thesis. Both their historical overview of the field of consumer research and their graphical representation of it provides important starting points for my own analysis. Particularly interesting for my research issue is their suggestion of specific lanes of disciplinary cross-pollination between consumer research and marketing-adjoining disciplines.

2.2 The Form and Content of Consumer Research

Other than the three sub-specializations identified by MacInnis and Folkes (2010), the article by MacInnis et al. (2020) mentioned above provides the most illuminating, as well as most recent, outline of the form and content of contemporary consumer research. In its attempt to suggest potential avenues of inquiry wherein scholars can “engage in boundary-breaking, marketing-relevant consumer research” (MacInnis et al., 2020, p. 2) the article also thoroughly describes the type of boundary-*adherent* research that it is critical of. In a series of figures, the authors of the article outline several *implicit boundaries* that they hold are present within the field of consumer research. These implicit boundaries constitute the current conventions within the field, as they suggest what the mainstream of consumer research is focused on.

Three main implicit boundaries identified by MacInnis et al. (2020) have bearing on my analysis: the boundaries regarding the overall *mode* of research; the boundaries related to the *methods* employed in research; and the boundaries related to the *unit of analysis* in research. MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 3) argue that descriptive and evaluative modes of research are currently under-utilized in consumer research, as “[t]he current default, at least among psychologically oriented consumer researchers, is to explain and predict consumer response by identifying cause–effect relationships”. Though they concede that this mode of research can help to explain or predict different consumer behaviours, MacInnis et al. (2020) argue that the over-emphasis on identifying causal mechanisms means that the type of theory-building that can be derived from descriptive studies, and the normative guidance resulting from evaluative research, are largely absent in contemporary research. The focus on causality corresponds to a body of research that principally employs experimental methods – specifically, above all, “[l]ab and online experiments” (MacInnis et al., 2020, p. 6). This methodological concentration in turn relates to the unit of analysis predominant in consumer research: “the implicit boundary is to study individual consumers, most often in the United States” (MacInnis et al., 2020, p. 5). The fact that the respondents in the experiments favoured by boundary-adherent consumer researchers tend to be either “students or paid workers” that do not relate to any other specific demographic further removes potential group, social or cultural effects from these types of studies. In sum, all these implicit boundaries taken together reinforce each other to produce a mainstream of consumer research that is overly concerned with pinpointing causalities in individual consumer behaviour by way of experiments where the respondents are largely detached from their social context.

Though they hold that research following the implicit boundaries of the field constitutes the majority of publishing in consumer research, MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 6) presents several articles whose boundary-breaking content “did not come at the expense of academic impact, as evidenced by traditional metrics such as citations”. Since I utilize the conventions suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020) to operationalize the Bourdieusian concept of *illusio*, described further below, this idea that going *against* implicit boundaries constitutes a viable strategy to achieve scientific impact is highly interesting to examine in the context of my study. As such, I discuss the impact of some boundary-breaking authorships and articles further below in my analysis.

The more qualitatively inclined descriptions of consumer research provided by MacInnis et al. (2020) can be further advanced by reference to quantitative data provided by Kaveh Peighambari, Setayesh Sattari, Arash Kordestani and Pejvak Oghazi (2016) in a recent content analysis of academic publishing on consumer research between 1998 and 2009. This content analysis largely follows an outline provided by a previous study in the *JCR* that analysed publishing trends in consumer research between 1950 and 1981 (Helgeson, Kluge, Mager & Taylor, 1984). The study in Peighambari et al. (2016) focuses on article publishing in five prestigious business journals, notably including the *JCR*. By coding a sample of over 1’000 articles dealing with consumer research from these journals, the study attempts to outline the major publishing trends of the period by classifying the topics treated and methodologies used in their sample of articles. Overall, Peighambari et al. (2016) find that consumer research articles made up about two fifths (43,3%) of all the articles published in these five business journals during the time period they sample.

Peighambari et al. (2016) categorize their sample of consumer research articles into four major categories: internal, external, purchase process, and miscellaneous. The *internal* category consists of articles that the authors deemed primarily focused on “topics associated with consumers’ individual and psychological factors”, while articles were categorized as *external* if they dealt more broadly with “situational and social factors” (Peighambari et al., 2016, p. 3). The *purchase process* category includes topics ranging from pre-consumption information seeking to post-purchase circumstances, while the *miscellaneous* category consists of a group of disparate topics, such as consumerism and public policy. The study found that the internal category encompassed the largest proportion of the articles (43%), with the purchase process (26%), external (23%), and miscellaneous (8%) categories falling rather far behind. The authors

furthermore found that a large majority (76%) of the consumer research articles were centred on quantitative methodologies, while the number of qualitative (11%) and mixed methods (13%) articles together only amount to roughly a fourth of the articles. Focusing more specifically on different research methodologies, the study found that experimental and survey methodologies amounted to equally large proportions (42% each) of the consumer research articles of the period. Notably, the overall focus on quantitative methods was visible in all of the four major categories.

Arguably, the findings of the content analysis by Peighambari et al. (2016) give further credence to the implicit boundaries outlined by MacInnis et al. (2020), while simultaneously raising some questions regarding the model of the field provided by MacInnis and Folkes (2010). Though Peighambari et al. (2016) conceptualize consumer research somewhat differently, specifically focusing as they do on five business journals, it is still interesting to note the predominance of experimental studies focused on explicating individual processes in their data. It is particularly interesting to note that articles manually extracted from journals that are not psychologically oriented still yields such a large proportion of this type of consumer research. Since my own study primarily deals with datasets of articles published in consumer research-specific journals, the findings presented by Peighambari et al. (2016) also constitute somewhat of an interesting contrast to my own results. The overemphasis on individuals as the unit of analysis and the use of experimental methods suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020) and presented by Peighambari et al. (2016) furthermore provides interesting contrasts to the model of consumer research suggested by MacInnis and Folkes (2010). In this model, MacInnis and Folkes (2010) give the three major consumer research sub-specializations almost equal shares of the field. Considering the arguments and findings presented above, an important question to consider going forward is how the less individual-focused sub-specialization CCT relates to the core of the field of consumer research.

Given the assertion by MacInnis et al. (2020) that the field of consumer research is highly focused on the study of individuals, a brief outline of CCT provides an interesting contrast. The term ‘consumer culture theory’ as used by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) was introduced in a review of culturally and socially oriented articles published in the *JCR* by Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson (2005). In this review, these authors describe what they hold to be a body of academic texts, disparate from the mainstream of consumer research, that is “fundamentally concerned with the cultural meanings, sociohistoric influences, and social dynamics that shape consumer

experiences and identities” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 875). In their review, Arnould and Thompson (2005) thus focus on outlining what they see as the central areas of research relevant to CCT, and, in doing so, identify several exemplary scholars within this sub-specialization. In the wake of this review by Arnould and Thompson (2005), the term CCT has “become a shorthand acronym recognized in all major marketing journals” for research that attempts to go beyond “the usual frames of economics and psychology” in the study of consumption phenomena.

3 Theoretical Framework

In line with sociological perspectives on knowledge, this thesis proceeds from a sociology of science perspective wherein the production of scientific knowledge is seen as a social process indebted to both the historical and current social organization of scientific fields. The notion of *field*, as well as most of the other conceptual tools I mobilize in my study, is derived from the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu. As mentioned further above, this section focuses on introducing Bourdieu's overarching conceptualization of the social world as well as briefly presenting his conceptual tools, after which I proceed to explicate his concepts by way of the manner in which I operationalize them in my analysis. As such, the concepts I introduce and discuss below are primarily concerned with the aspects of Bourdieusian sociology that relate specifically to the study of scientific fields – a more complete exposition of Bourdieu's scientific production is both beyond the scope of this thesis and superfluous in relation to my research issue. As will be seen, Bourdieu's theoretical as well as practical approach to social science has affected the totality of my study, from my utilization of previous studies to the methods I have chosen to utilize and the way in which I interpret my results.

Since Bourdieu's scientific production has fundamentally influenced sociological and anthropological approaches to the study of consumers and consumption, it is important to delimit my own study from other forms of Bourdieu-inspired scholarship within consumer research. Going forward, I proceed from the delimitation of consumer research provided by MacInnis and Folkes (2010, p. 905), whereby *the field of consumer research* designates the research community concerned with “the study of the acquisition, consumption, and disposal of marketplace products, services, and experiences by people operating in a consumer role”. I am here concerned with the Bourdieusian study of a specific scientific field, rather than being focused on producing an overview of Bourdieu-inspired scholarship within this field. For those interested in specifically Bourdieusian consumer research, I would suggest looking at the scientific production of Douglas B. Holt (e.g. Holt 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Üstüner & Holt, 2010) as well as a review by Gokcen Coskuner-Balli and Craig J. Thompson (2010) that outlines consumer research utilizing the concept of cultural capital.

3.1 Pierre Bourdieu: Metatheory and Conceptual Tools

Since Bourdieu's scientific *oeuvre* is so vast and multifaceted, the outline of his metatheory and conceptual tools provided below is delimited to that which is directly relevant to the research issue of my thesis. For the sake of relative brevity, I primarily focus on reiterating findings from my section on previous studies in a more Bourdieusian terminology to begin to suggest my operationalization of his concepts. Bourdieu developed his theoretical thinking in tandem with conducting research during the course of a career spanning several decades – remarkably, he was constantly augmenting and expanding his theory, while very rarely engaging in the specific exposition of it. As such, my presentation of the fundamental aspects of Bourdieu's thinking draws primarily on the few instances in which he did engage in exegesis: in *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1990) and *Practical Reason* (Bourdieu, 1998), as well as in the collection of texts in the book *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* co-authored with Loïc Wacquant (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 1992). In line with my research issue, I also refer to how Bourdieu (1988) operationalized some of his concepts for the study of the French intellectual field in the 1960's and 1970's in *Homo Academicus*. I furthermore reference Bourdieu's specific conceptualization of the sociology of science (i.e. Bourdieu, 1975, 1991, 2004) in order to account more specifically for his conceptualization of science.

I use the term *metatheory* to describe Bourdieu as his theories present a way of thinking about and conducting sociological research, rather than offering hypotheses to be validated. Bourdieu's sociology is made up of “a parsimonious set of conceptual tools and procedures for constructing objects” and can most profitably be seen, rather than a grand theory, “as a sociological *method* consisting essentially in a manner of posing problems” (Wacquant, 1992, p. 5). As such, Bourdieu's metatheory is meant to assist the researcher in generating relevant research questions, in constructing an empirical object of study, and in interpreting gathered empirical data.

Central to Bourdieusian metatheory is “the relational mode of thought” which Bourdieu (1990, p. 4) derived from his structuralist beginnings, wherein the social world is seen primarily as a configuration of *relations*: “not interactions between agents or intersubjective ties between individuals, but objective relations which exist ‘independently of individual consciousness and will’” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). For Bourdieu, these relations exist within what he refers to as *social space*, generally conceived by way of his concept of social fields introduced

below. The relational way of thinking and the notion of space provide the theoretical underpinnings of Bourdieusian sociology:

The notion of *space* contains, in itself, the principle of a relational understanding of the social world. It affirms that every “reality” it designates resides in the *mutual exteriority* of its composite elements. Apparent, directly visible beings, whether individuals or groups, exist and subsist in and through *difference*; that is, they occupy *relative positions* in a space of relations which, although invisible and always difficult to show empirically, is the most real reality (the *ens realissimum*, as scholasticism would say) and the real principle of the behaviour of individuals and groups. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 31.)

Relationality therefore characterizes Bourdieu’s entire mode of scientific inquiry, and in particular the concepts he generated to interpret empirical data.

To a certain extent, Bourdieu’s metatheory comprises of a specific terminology that denotes the above-mentioned *conceptual tools* so central to his relational way of conceiving the social world. These tools, most notably encompassing the terms field, habitus and capital, are specifically designed to be “*open concepts*” that deliberately “have no definition other than systemic ones, and are designed to be *put to work empirically in systematic fashion*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 95–96). As such, rather than creating rigorously delimited terms, Bourdieu requires the researcher to operationalize his concepts in the way that is relevant to any specific object of study. This use of open concepts is arguably what allows Bourdieu to, as Randall Collins (1989, p. 461) notes, make such fruitful use of data, “displaying them not just as a report of a particular time and place but as the exemplification of a structure, as a specific manifestation of what is universally possible”.

Congruent with his relational way of thinking about the social world, Bourdieu’s conceptual tools together make up a “theoretical system”, meaning that they are meant to be utilized together rather than “in isolation” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). Though I have made delimitations in order to focus this section on the relevant aspects of Bourdieu’s metatheory, I have tried to utilize as much of this theoretical system as possible. My own presentation of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools moves from field to habitus and onwards to capitals and struggles, meaning that I present them by moving from the structural towards the more agentic aspects of his metatheory. Though Bourdieu’s concepts are highly interrelated, I hold that presenting them in this way is useful in order to produce an accessible account of what is a very complex body of theory.

3.1.1 Field Theory and Scientific Fields

In Bourdieu's relational conceptualization of social reality, specific sites within social space can be delimited by constructing them as *fields*:

In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. ... In highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, i.e., spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97.)

The 'logic' specific to a field is generally termed *illusio* by Bourdieu, while the 'necessity' is termed its specific type of *capital*. The existence of a relative autonomy, a field-specific *illusio* and a field-specific capital together make up the minimum requirements for the construction of an analytically relevant field in Bourdieusian sociology (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; see also Sapiro, Leperlier & Brahim, 2018). Importantly for my research issue, Bourdieu (1975, p. 19) contended that science itself should be considered a field by arguing that "even the 'purest' science is a social field like any other". The field of science is then a relevant example of a field that fulfils Bourdieu's requirements: it has, through the course of its history, become relatively autonomous from fields such as religion and politics; it possesses its own *illusio*, best exemplified by how it "rewards disinterestedness" (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 53) in the pursuit of knowledge; and, it possesses field-specific forms of capital in, for example, scientific authority and scientific prestige (Bourdieu, 1975, 1988). In tandem with describing the entirety of the field of science, Bourdieu (1975, p. 21) also demonstrates the various levels on which the field concept can be conceptualized by noting that a particular scientific field can be variously delimited as "a discipline, a branch of that discipline, [or] a method".

Following this general outline of the conceptual tool of field theory, I argue that I am able to operationalize the field of consumer research in a relevant manner by utilizing the descriptions of the field presented further above. In line with MacInnis and Folkes' (2010) definition and delimitation, I see consumer research as a subfield of marketing – which is in turn a subfield of the field of business and economics, which is in turn a subfield of the field of social science, and so on. The field of consumer research began to assert its independence by way of the previously mentioned collective efforts of its founders, leading to relative autonomy by way of the foundation of the ACR. The *illusio* of the field of consumer research is best exemplified by way of the 'implicit boundaries' outlined by MacInnis et al. (2020). The capital that I hold is specific to

consumer research is a particular species of scientific prestige, which I describe below in the subsection concerning capitals and field struggles.

Since my study aims to provide graphical representations of the field of consumer research, a comparative discussion between how Bourdieu himself approached the ‘mapping’ of fields and how I do it in this thesis is necessary. As Frédéric Lebaron (2009, p. 11) has argued, a “somewhat neglected” aspect of Bourdieu’s research “is his constant concern for quantifying his data material”. In quantifying and formalizing the study of fields and their structure, Bourdieu favoured correspondence analysis, which he saw as “a relational technique of data analysis whose philosophy corresponds exactly to what, in my view, the reality of the social world is” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). Utilizing correspondence analysis allowed him to place different forms of capital on different axes, and, in so doing, allowed him to graphically locate social agents within a specific field with reference to their possession of different capitals (see, e.g., Bourdieu, 1984, p. 262; for a less technical map, see Bourdieu, 1998, p. 5). It was the resulting configuration of objective relations between agents endowed with differing quantities of capitals that Bourdieu referred to as *symbolic space*, which he held is always homologous to the organization of social space (Bourdieu, 1998). As such, though it is easier to empirically construct the symbolic space of a field, a position in this symbolic space will correspond to and signify an actual position within social space. Though I utilize bibliometric mapping rather than correspondence analysis to construct the symbolic space related to the field of consumer research, I hold that the VOS technique my bibliometric maps are generated from is entirely congruent with Bourdieu’s relational philosophy of fields. I discuss this compatibility more in depth in my section on methodology further below.

3.1.2 The Scientific Habitus

For Bourdieu, the principle organizing and guiding the behaviour of individuals is their habitus, and, correspondingly, what guides the behaviour of scientists is their scientific habitus. In Bourdieusian sociology, the term *habitus* denotes the social schemata internalized by individual agents through early socialization and, later, through continuous activity within different fields (Bourdieu, 1990; see also Wacquant, 2016). As such, the *scientific habitus* of any individual scientist is the result of their educational background, their scientific training, as well as their later activity within specific disciplines or specializations (Bourdieu, 1991, 2004). In the Bourdieusian

terminology, the behaviour and activity of social agents is termed *practice*, since the actions of individuals is seen as the result of “a *practical sense*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 120) rooted in their habitus. The scientific habitus will consequently structure both how agents conduct research and how they evaluate other research – in short, it becomes their “embodied sense of judgement in scientific matters” (Hylmö, 2018, p. 75) that guides the entirety of their scientific practice. In this regard, an individual scientist can be viewed as a personification of the scientific field in which they operate: Bourdieu (2004, p. 41) argued that they are, in a sense, “a scientific field made flesh” since their “cognitive structures are homologous with the structure of the field”.

The openness in consumer research to perspectives from non-marketing disciplines, notably psychology and sociology, means that the scientific habitus of different consumer researchers will potentially reflect extra-disciplinary schemas for judgement *as well as* the overall *illusio* specific to the field of consumer research. Consumer researchers may have received their primary training outside the field of marketing, or they may have engaged with the work of non-marketing scholars to such an extent that their scientific habitus has shifted. Since they are active in the field of consumer research, however, I hold that their work will generally reflect the specific *illusio* identified by MacInnis et al. (2020). The openness to the perspectives of other disciplines is nonetheless one of the reasons that I hold that consumer research presents such an interesting case for the Bourdieusian study of scientific fields.

3.1.3 Capitals and Field Struggles

Another central conceptual tool in Bourdieu’s sociology is his notion of different forms of *capital*, which are resources that structure the relative positions of agents within different fields, in addition to endowing agents and the groups they belong to with specific forms of power or influence. The position of individual agents is indebted to their possession of different kinds of capital relative to the other agents within a field, and, taken together, this “structure of the distribution of different kinds of capital” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 12) is what constitutes the overall structure, i.e. the symbolic space, of a field. The main forms of capital are economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Bourdieu, 2011), though, as mentioned, specific fields tend to have specialized varieties of these main forms of capital. Economic capital is perhaps the most familiar, as this is the form of capital “recognized by economic theory” (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 78), while cultural capital denotes the possession of non-economic assets such as cultural goods or education,

and social capital denotes membership in specific networks or alliances. All of these types of capital have the potential of becoming *symbolic capital* when they are recognized as an indication of authority or prestige within a specific field (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It is when capitals take on their symbolic form that individual agents or specific groups can utilize them in order to influence the structure or content of a field (Bourdieu, 1998), and it is this strategic utilization of capitals towards a specific end that constitutes a *field struggle*.

The specific capitals valued within a field and the way in which agents pursue them is largely indebted to the *illusio* of the field, which agents tend to internalize into their habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The notion that *illusio* specifies the value of capitals, the possession of which both defines the structure of a field and facilitates its alteration by way of field struggles, points to the substantial interrelatedness of Bourdieu's conceptual tools. Perhaps most notably, objective structures and subjective perceptions are seen to converge within individual agents in their habitus, since Bourdieu (1998, p. 8) holds that habitus constitutes a "generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices".

Taken together, the descriptions of the field of consumer research offered by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) and MacInnis et al. (2020) conceptualize the field in a way that I hold is compatible with Bourdieu's metatheory and conceptual tools. By tracing the history of consumer research from the collective efforts of its founders up to the contemporary social organization of the field, MacInnis and Folkes (2010) showcase how early consumer researchers utilized different strategies in order to gain legitimacy and recognition for their specialization, and how, at the aggregate level, these strategies eventually manifested themselves as the field struggle by which consumer research established itself as a relatively autonomous subfield of marketing. The implicit boundaries described by MacInnis et al. (2020) imply the content of the *illusio* and scientific habitus specific to consumer research, since these boundaries exercise an influence on the overall mode of research in the field, as well as the methods and unit of analysis chosen by consumer researchers. What remains to be identified is a capital specific to the field of consumer research.

In his sociology of science writings, Bourdieu indicated several different kinds of capital related to the field of science. Importantly, some of the capitals that he considers are symbolic forms related to other forms of capital – for instance, Bourdieu (1975, p. 23, my emphasis) considered scientific authority to be "a particular kind of *social capital*" since it requires the

recognition of other members in the scientific field. In *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu (1988, p. 40) expands the list of capitals he sees as relevant to the intellectual field and suggests a specifically *symbolic* capital related to the scientific field: “the capital of scientific prestige”. Notably for the data analysed in this thesis, Bourdieu (1988, p. 236) even mentions an earlier incarnation of the SSCI as having enabled him and his research team to obtain a “sure indicator of scientific prestige (albeit limited to the social sciences)”.

The capital that I focus on in this thesis is then a form of the capital of scientific prestige that is specific to the field of consumer research, namely the symbolic capital associated with publishing in journals specific to this field. From the current “fetishism of citations” suggested by Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017, p. 29), as well as from notions regarding bibliometrics in a text that I discuss in my section on methodology further below (i.e. Gläser & Laudel, 2007), I hold that citation counts present themselves as the symbolic capital *par excellence* in the 21st century field of social science. I discuss my operationalization of the capital of scientific prestige and my sampling of consumer research journals more in depth in my sections on methodology and analysis further below.

3.2 On Interested Pluralism in Consumer Research

Considering the critical perspectives offered regarding the field of social science by Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017), as well as those specifically regarding field of consumer research by MacInnis et al. (2020), a brief discussion regarding the existence of sub-specializations and knowledge diversity within consumer research is warranted. In line with MacInnis (2020, p. 4), I see the current “overemphasis on individuals” as indicative of there being “significant opportunities to learn more about the behavior of groups and populations” in consumer research. As such, I hold that Gordon R. Foxall (2015, p. 20) is correct in his assessment that the continued existence of consumer research as a pluralistic scientific field “is preferable to the development of consumer psychology and consumer sociology as separate and competitive fields”. I furthermore agree with Foxall’s (2015, p. 20) assertion that a development towards separate fields of consumer research “would only preserve an artificial dichotomy and would not add to our knowledge of the interplay of a variety of factors which influences the behaviour of individuals and groups.” As such, I see knowledge diversity and critical interaction between divergent perspectives as conducive to the advancement of knowledge regarding consumers and consumption.

In a discussion regarding the preferred conduct of inquiry within the field of economics, Leonhard Dobusch and Jakob Kapeller (2012) introduce the idea of *interested pluralism*. They describe this approach to pluralism as one that encourages “constructive interaction between different theoretical traditions in order to come up with an improved and expanded set of relevant explanatory statements” (Dobusch & Kapeller, 2012, p. 1043). They describe their vision for interested pluralism by contrasting it to what they term ‘disinterested pluralism’, which they see as a mode of mere “coexistence between different theoretical traditions or schools of thought” (Dobusch & Kapeller, p. 1043), rather than the active interaction between divergent perspectives. Notably for the graphical aspirations of this thesis, Dobusch and Kapeller (2012, p. 1036) provide what they refer to as “a stylized overview of the current economic discourse” that, together with the model presented by MacInnis and Folkes (2010), inspired my own map of the field of consumer research (see Figure 10). Similarly to how Dobusch and Kapeller (2012) utilize their map of the current conduct of inquiry within economics to argue in favour of a more actively interested pluralism, I then utilize my map of consumer research to both clarify the results of my bibliometric mapping analyses and to outline how consumer researchers can increase knowledge diversity within their field.

Arguably, the notion of interested pluralism is in line with my overall Bourdieusian framework: it is largely Bourdieu’s own synthesis of perspectives from different theoretical traditions that enable him to provide such an illuminating metatheory of social science (Brubaker, 1985). Bourdieu was committed to what can be termed an “epistemic reflexivity” (Wacquant, 1992, p. 36), wherein the sociologist is constantly required to critically reflect upon potential social influences on the production of scientific knowledge. This notion of reflexivity is one of the most central tenets of Bourdieusian scientific inquiry, and it is arguably by way of reflexivity that Bourdieu (1990, p. 25) holds that the researcher can move beyond “the oppositions that artificially divide social science”. The artificial opposition that Bourdieu (1990, p. 25) held is “the most ruinous” to social science research is the one “set up between subjectivism and objectivism”, leading him to hold that researchers should strive “[t]o move beyond the antagonism between these two modes of knowledge, while preserving the gains from each of them”. In line with this, “the dialogic of public debate and mutual critique” and “the antagonistic and complementary positions which constitute the scientific field” (Wacquant, 1992, p. 41) are both essential aspects of scientific production for Bourdieu.

Bourdieu's commitment to reflexivity and his rejection of the subjectivism–objectivism divide are largely what lead me to agree with Will Atkinson (2016, p. 148, my emphasis) and hold that “Bourdieu's epistemology and sociology of science ... remain *realist* at their cores”. The epistemological position associated with realism is, to put it very briefly, one that is neither fully constructivist, i.e. subjectivist, nor fully positivist, i.e. objectivist (Jackson, 2011; Sayer, 2000). In contrast to constructivists, realists view knowledge as socially constructed while maintaining that objective structures and causal mechanisms do exist; in contrast to positivists, realists argue that causal forces can be identified by means other than testing hypotheses in relation to directly observable phenomena (Jackson, 2011). As such, I assume a realist epistemological position in this thesis, since I hold that this enables me to analyse the production of knowledge within consumer research from somewhat of a vantage point. Realist social science facilitates “synthesizing the insights of many situated knowledges” (Sayer, 2000, p. 75), regardless of whether these are the result of experimental studies of individuals or qualitative studies of groups. As such, my realist position-taking enables me to argue in favour of interested pluralism.

It should be noted that the arguments regarding the preferred conduct of inquiry within the field of consumer research I make are made by way of a specifically scientific and epistemological view of knowledge production, which contrasts to some of the arguments regarding scientific knowledge voiced by Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017) and MacInnis et al. (2020). Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017) hold that scientific knowledge production should be evaluated not only on academic grounds, but societal grounds as well. In line with this, they argue that the value of scientific knowledge should be measured by way of “public impact” and “expert impact” (Alvesson, Gabriel & Paulsen, p. 129) in addition to academic value. MacInnis et al. (2020) similarly argue that consumer research should be relevant to business practitioners and policymakers. Regardless of the benefits of these aspirations, I focus on analysing and critiquing consumer research as I am able to see it in my data – which does not include any indicators of extra-scientific use.

4 Methodology

Below, I provide an account of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies I employ in my study. The first section treats my utilization of bibliometric data, the mapping technique VOS and the related VOSviewer software, as well as my operationalization of Bourdieu's conceptual tools. The second section presents my way of overviewing the content of the research presented in my study, which I term an illustrative review.

4.1 Quantitative: Bibliometric Mapping

By extracting bibliometric data from Web of Science and analysing the resulting datasets in VOSviewer, I generated the bibliometric maps I present, review and analyse below. Specifically, I extracted my data from the SSCI in *Web of Science's* "Core Collection". The first sample I present and interpret in my analysis consists of articles published during the entire 2000–2019 period that connect to a selection of consumer research-related keywords. The sample for the 2000–2009 period is instead focused around four journals found to be relevant specifically to the field of consumer research: the *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*, the *Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)*, the *Journal of Consumer Affairs (JCA)* and *Psychology & Marketing (P&M)*. The sample for the 2010–2019 contained these four journals, but was expanded to include articles published in four additional consumer research journals: the *Journal of Consumer Culture (JCC)*, the *Journal of Consumer Behaviour (JCB)*, the *International Journal of Consumer Studies (IJCS)* and *Consumption, Markets & Culture (CM&C)*. The search strategies I utilized in identifying and extracting my datasets from *Web of Science* are included in the Appendix.

4.1.1 On Bibliometric Modalities

When implementing bibliometric methods, several considerations regarding the selection and interpretation of bibliometric data have to be made. Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel (2007) term these methodological considerations the important *modalities* of bibliometrics and contend that the omission of these modalities risks the production of unreliable or invalid results. Somewhat in line with Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017), Gläser and Laudel (2007, p. 102) argue that increasing scientific, managerial and political interest in bibliometric evaluations has resulted in the rise of "amateur bibliometricians ... who apply bibliometrics in all sorts of ways without having the

necessary professional background”. In line with this, Gläser and Laudel (2007) outline what they consider to be the most central methodological modalities for researchers to consider when conducting bibliometric studies.

Although my more visually oriented bibliometric study does not necessarily relate to certain aspects of the modalities presented by Gläser and Laudel (2007), a brief account of them is still warranted for the context of my study. Two of the modalities presented by Gläser and Laudel (2007, p. 104, 105) have to do with statistical considerations: “[b]ibliometric methods must be applied to a larger number of publications for the statistics to become reliable”; “one missing well-cited publication can create a significant error”. The consideration of potential insufficiencies or absent bits of data is then central to bibliometric inquiry. Two further modalities have to do with the aspects of time and field-specific citation practices: how long does it take for an article to reach an amount of citations representative of its impact, and how does the period and number of citations vary between fields? Gläser and Laudel (2007, p. 105) hold that three years has been established as “the minimal ‘citation window’” in several fields of natural science, while bigger windows are conceivably needed in other fields of research. Lastly, Gläser and Laudel (2007, p. 110) hold that “the results of bibliometric measurements need to be interpreted by scientists from the field” in order for them to be meaningful.

In conducting my study, the implications of the modalities presented above have been considered. Bearing in mind modalities in general, I limited my datasets to data from one specific citation index available in *Web of Science*: the SSCI. This choice was made to exclude the possibility of misconstruing my data due to differences between citation indices: by focusing on one specific index only concerned with social science publications, I avoid distorting my maps by combining data produced from different categorization procedures. I also commit to concentrating my study on the social sciences, as per my research issue. Though my study is visual and does not directly relate to statistical modalities, I continually make note of *how large a proportion* of my data is represented in the visualizations, so as to give an indication as to how representative they are. Regarding the time modality, it is interesting to note that three of the previously mentioned marketing-related VOS-studies (Martínez-López et al., 2020; Rialp et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2020) have all limited their data in line with the three-year minimal citation window mentioned by Gläser and Laudel (2007). My own analysis breaks this praxis by including the entirety of the 2010–2019 period, allowing the exclusion of authors or articles in my maps to instead be made by

way of the parametric threshold values I impose on my data in VOSviewer: the only items (journals, authors, articles) visualized in any specific map are those that fulfil the minimum number of publications and minimum citation counts I have specified for that map. To a certain extent, both of these methods result in similar samples due to more recently published articles having much lower citation counts. My inclusion of the whole 2000–2019 period means that citations made to publications issued later than 2017 still contribute to the overall citation count of authors, while, notably, only two articles published after 2017 (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Humphreys & Wang, 2018) were included in my visualization of bibliographic coupling for the 2010 to 2019 period since no other post-2017 articles in the dataset met the threshold parameters (see Figure 9). The modality of field-specific citation practices is mediated by the fact that I focus on one properly delimited scientific field – through I do discuss some differences in specialization-specific citation practices in my analysis. The qualitative review aspects of this thesis conceivably combat the omission of expert interpretation of my bibliometric maps by scientists active in the field.

4.1.2 On the Visualization of Similarities and VOSviewer

The VOS technique for visualizing the relationship between objects was introduced by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman in the late 2000s, with the VOSviewer software being introduced a few years later in 2010 (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). As previously mentioned, VOS “is an abbreviation for *visualization of similarities*” and the aim of the technique “is to provide a low-dimensional visualization in which objects are located in such a way that the distance between any pair of objects reflects their similarity as accurately as possible” (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007, p. 299). When utilized for bibliometric mapping, the VOSviewer software does this by creating a graphical representation of a network wherein items are clustered together by way of their relationship to each other. The items, which can represent everything from individual authors and publications to entire organizations or countries, are by default represented by *circles* with a *label* designating the name of item. Each circle is not only grouped close to similar items, but is also assigned a colour representing the *cluster* or *community* that the VOS technique has assigned to the item. To visualize specific associations between the items in a map, *links* can be utilized. The circles of the items are furthermore weighted by their significance: “[t]he more important an item, the larger its label and its circle” (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 526). The

scale by which the bibliometric items are weighted can be customized to, for instance, reflect the number of publications or the number of citations each item represents. Correspondingly, links between items can indicate relationships like citations or shared sources between them.

The VOS technique's approach to mapping and clustering and VOSviewer's functionality for examining and customizing the graphical representation resulting from this technique are exceedingly important in the context of this thesis. The VOS technique distinguishes itself from other approaches to the mapping and clustering of bibliometric networks by way of its *unified* approach to these two techniques. Though mapping and clustering are often used together in bibliometric analyses, they have historically been developed in isolation, resulting in techniques that are largely "based on different ideas" and correspondingly "rely on different assumptions" (Waltman, Van Eck & Noyons, 2010, p. 630). In contrast to this, VOS generates maps and clusters based on principles that are as similar and possible, thereby preventing potential inconsistencies. The VOSviewer software then visualizes the overall map and its clusters in a way that highlights the *relational* aspect of the items in the data by distancing dissimilar items from each other, assigning them to a specific cluster, and displaying the significance of individual items by way of their weight. Having generated a map, VOSviewer then facilitates the detailed analysis of the map with functionalities such as "zooming, scrolling, and searching" (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524). As outlined below, these functionalities were extensively utilized for my review.

The interactive visualizations of VOSviewer are the result of one of its *raison d'être*: to pay "special attention to the graphical representation of bibliometric maps" (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524). The creators of VOS argue this aspect of bibliographic mapping had received "considerably less attention" before the launch of VOSviewer, often resulting in "inadequate" graphical representations when analysing large amounts of items (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524). Overall, the VOS technique has been found to generate maps more true to data when compared to, for example, multidimensional scaling, another prominent technique for bibliometric mapping, which tends to impose an artificial circular structure on maps (Van Eck, Waltman, Dekker & Van den Berg, 2010). By avoiding this pitfall, VOS generates maps that appropriately reflect the overall landscape of the data, while VOSviewer facilitates the detailed examination of specific aspects of this landscape.

My results and analysis section is primarily concerned with the presentation and interpretation of maps generated from two of the bibliometric mapping techniques available in

VOSviewer: *bibliographic coupling* and *citation analysis*. The central maps I present utilize *authors* and *documents* as the units of analysis (see Figures 4–9), meaning that each circle represents either an individual researcher or a specific journal article. Though there have been recent calls to utilize fractional counting, which diminishes the effect of highly cited publications on the bibliometric maps generated (see Perianes-Rodriguez, Waltman & Van Eck, 2016), my analyses consistently utilize *full counting* since I hold that this is more aligned with the Bourdieusian conceptualization of scientific fields: authors and articles imbued with much symbolic capital *are* capable of influencing the structure of a field, meaning that graphical representations of the field should account for this. In order to further combat the implications of the time modality discussed above, I weight items by the *normalized citations* they represent:

The normalized number of citations of a document equals the number of citations of the document divided by the average number of citations of all documents published in the same year and included in the data that is provided to VOSviewer. The normalization corrects for the fact that older documents have had more time to receive citations than more recent documents. (Van Eck & Waltman, 2020, p. 37.)

In bibliographic coupling analysis, the bibliometric map is constructed by calculating the relatedness of items by way of the number of references they share. This means that links between items “are created when two publications both cite the same third publication” (Perianes-Rodriguez, Waltman & Van Eck, 2016, p. 1180), with items being correspondingly graphically represented as closer to each other the higher the number of publications they both cite as references. In citation analysis, the map is instead constructed by calculating the relatedness of items by way of the number of times they cite each other. This type of map thus generates a graphical representation that can highlight how the authors within a specific sample actively engage with each other’s texts – for instance, if two clusters of authors are grouped at opposite sides of a map, this can be interpreted to mean that these authors primarily engage with texts authored by researchers within their own cluster, while they neglect to reference the articles published by the opposite cluster.

4.1.3 Operationalization of Concepts

The operationalization I make of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools, suggested above in my section on theory, requires some reiteration in relation to my presentation of bibliometrics and VOS. Overall, I hold that the interplay between the VOS technique, whose holistic approach to mapping and

clustering generates graphical representations that do not distort the actual relationship between the objects under analysis, and the visual capabilities of the VOSviewer software, which allows detailed and interactive analysis, allows for a comprehensive overview and review of the field of consumer research. Furthermore, I contend that the relational visualizations of VOS are entirely compatible with Bourdieu's notion of space and his conceptual tool of field.

As mentioned, I hold that citation counts and publishing in academic journals specific to consumer research constitutes the symbolic capital specific to this scientific field. Rather than attempting to construct the field by way of a correspondence analysis relating to several forms of capital, I then focus my study on the capital specific to consumer research and attempt to map the symbolic space of the field by way of the VOS technique and VOSviewer. In lieu of utilizing different axes to indicate the relative possession of capital among the analytical items, my study indicates the level of capital among items by way of their relative weight in VOSviewer, i.e. by their *size* in the bibliometric maps.

Though VOS bibliometric mapping, in a sense, constitutes a more one-sided method of constructing symbolic space than Bourdieu himself favoured, I hold that it presents a novel and meaningful way of conceiving scientific fields. A focus on the capital of scientific prestige combined with the utilization of bibliographic and citation analyses facilitates the construction of the symbolic space of a scientific field in a way that relates to both scientific habitus and scientific practice. Since bibliographic coupling graphically represents the relationship between items by way of the literatures they draw from, it suggests the scientific habitus of article authors. Correspondingly, citation analysis graphically represents the relationship between items by way of how they draw on each other's texts, suggesting scientific practice. Both bibliographic coupling and citation analyses therefore showcase how researchers within a scientific field relate to each other in a way that can furthermore visually identify specific sub-specializations with regards to literatures drawn from or other researchers engaged with. As such, these types of analyses allow me to graphically represent and analyse the field of consumer research in a way that focuses on aspects of the field relating to my research questions, rather than overextending my analysis to other forms of capital.

4.2 Qualitative: Illustrative Review

The *review* aspects of this thesis are primarily the result of my examination of specific parts of the *Web of Science* data represented as items in my bibliometric maps. As such, the qualitative aspect of my study is largely indebted to the above-described functionalities of VOSviewer, which allow for the detailed examination of specific pieces of data by way of the software's advanced graphical representations. By working iteratively with the items in VOSviewer and checking their corresponding entries in the SSCI database, I have attempted to provide both references to, and brief summaries of, authors and articles that are either highly prominent in the maps, or those that present some other interesting relational property in the bibliometric configurations. The referencing of individual authors and specific articles endowed with much symbolic capital furthermore serves to illuminate which actors and what types of scientific practice that accumulates the most prestige within the field of consumer research.

In providing brief synopses of the content of individual authorships in the field or specific articles concerned with consumer research, I have proceeded somewhat similarly to the *content analysis* method as utilized by Peighambari et al. (2016). Though the authorships and publications I have reviewed are much fewer than the articles processed by Peighambari et al. (2016, p. 3), I have strived to appraise the content of research in a similar fashion to them: by evaluating "each article's title, abstract, and keywords" and, when failing to grasp the research through this method, I also "inspected and skimmed through" the full texts of each article. Rather than providing tables and quantitative data regarding the content of research, I then primarily utilize this content review method in order to provide illustrative examples of the research related to a specific VOS cluster, an individual consumer researcher or a specific journal article.

By providing illustrative references that add to the understanding of the items visualized in my maps, I hope to add a qualitative aspect to my study that compensates for the absence of systematic expert evaluations regarding the bibliometric data represented in this thesis. In lieu of expert interpretation of the consumer researchers and consumer research articles visualized in my maps, my qualitative review is meant to suggest the overall content within the quantitatively and structurally oriented graphical representations, thus providing both elucidation and complementary data. The absence of evaluating and synthesizing review aspects of my study is the reason why I have termed this qualitative method an *illustrative review*.

5 Results and Analysis

This section presents the findings of my bibliometric mapping and illustrative review. Firstly, I present my specification of *Web of Science* data, contrasting my method to those of previous studies. Secondly, I proceed with my analysis of the 2000–2009 period. Lastly, I analyse the 2010–2019 period, expanding my analysis of the 2000s by adding a comparative element.

5.1 Exploring and Delimiting the Sampled Data

In line with the explorative aspirations of my research issue and the Bourdieusian requirement that sociologists take great care in the empirical operationalization of Bourdieu's 'open' conceptual tools, I here present the central aspects of my exploration and delimitation of *Web of Science* data leading up to the datasets analysed below. As mentioned in my section on methodology, the bibliometric maps that I analyse below were generated from two select samples of central consumer research journals: the *JCR*, *JCP*, *JCA* and *P&M* for the 2000–2009 period, with the sample for the 2010–2019 period furthermore being supplemented with the *JCC*, *JCB*, *IJCS* and *CM&C*. The selection of these samples of journals arose from a combination of two criteria of relevance:

1. Prevalence in the bibliometric map visualizing journals central to consumer research publishing during 2000–2019 (Figure 2).
2. Journal self-description relating to areas of study specifically relevant to the field of consumer research.

As previously mentioned, I further required that the journals had to be available in the SSCI in order to avoid potentially distorting modalities. The two relevance measures above were utilized in order for this study to avoid mechanistically following pre-specified samples of journals in the way observed in previous research. Furthermore, I include reviews and proceedings papers into the overall category *article*, since I hold that these types of texts together represent non-editorial content in academic journals: a *review* is a specific, synthesising type of article, while a *proceedings paper* is an article resulting from a conference or a seminar. To illustrate academic journal publishing relating to central consumer research topics during the 2000s and 2010s, I utilized a search strategy based on a selection of consumer research-related keywords (see

Appendix) and extracted all the resulting articles, including papers and reviews, from *Web of Science*. This process yielded a sizeable sample of 8'852 articles published in 1'328 journals – the yearly publication rate of articles is indicated in Figure 1. As can be seen, the number of articles connecting to consumer research topics grew in popularity during this period.

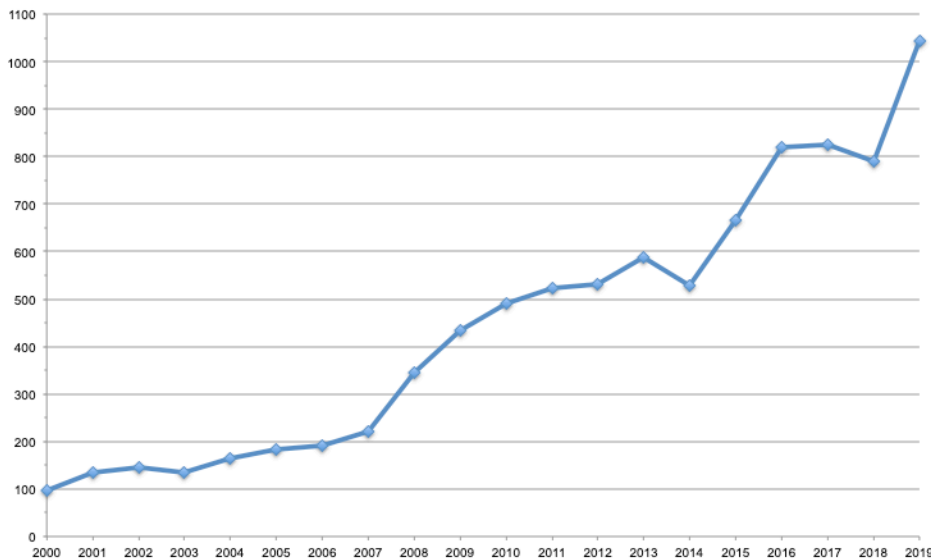


Figure 1. Yearly publication rate of consumer research-related articles, 2000–2019.

Rather than simply equating the above-mentioned keyword sample to the field of consumer research, I examined this dataset and analysed it in VOSviewer in order to achieve my aforementioned sample of relevant journals specific to the field. Specifically, I generated a citation analysis map of the most central journals pertaining to consumer research-related publishing during the entirety of the 2000–2019 period (see Figure 2). In this citation analysis, I set sources, i.e. *journals*, as the unit of analysis, specifying that to be included the journal must have published at least five articles relating to my keywords and must have collected at least 100 citations. This yielded the map seen in Figure 2, which visualizes the relationship between 189 journals and highlights how these journals tend to cite each other, with specific clusters indicating closely related journals. As previously mentioned, in Figure 2, as in all bibliographic maps presented in the body text of this thesis, the items are weighted by their *normalized citations*. A map weighted instead by the number of document per journal highlights slightly different relationships, since the relative importance of journals like the *JCC* and *CM&C* becomes greater (see Figure A1 in the Appendix). These differently weighted relationships had no particular bearing on my sampling,

since the *JCC* and *CM&C* have relevant self-descriptions (see SAGE Journals, 2020; Taylor & Francis, 2020) and are sufficiently prevalent in Figure 2 already.

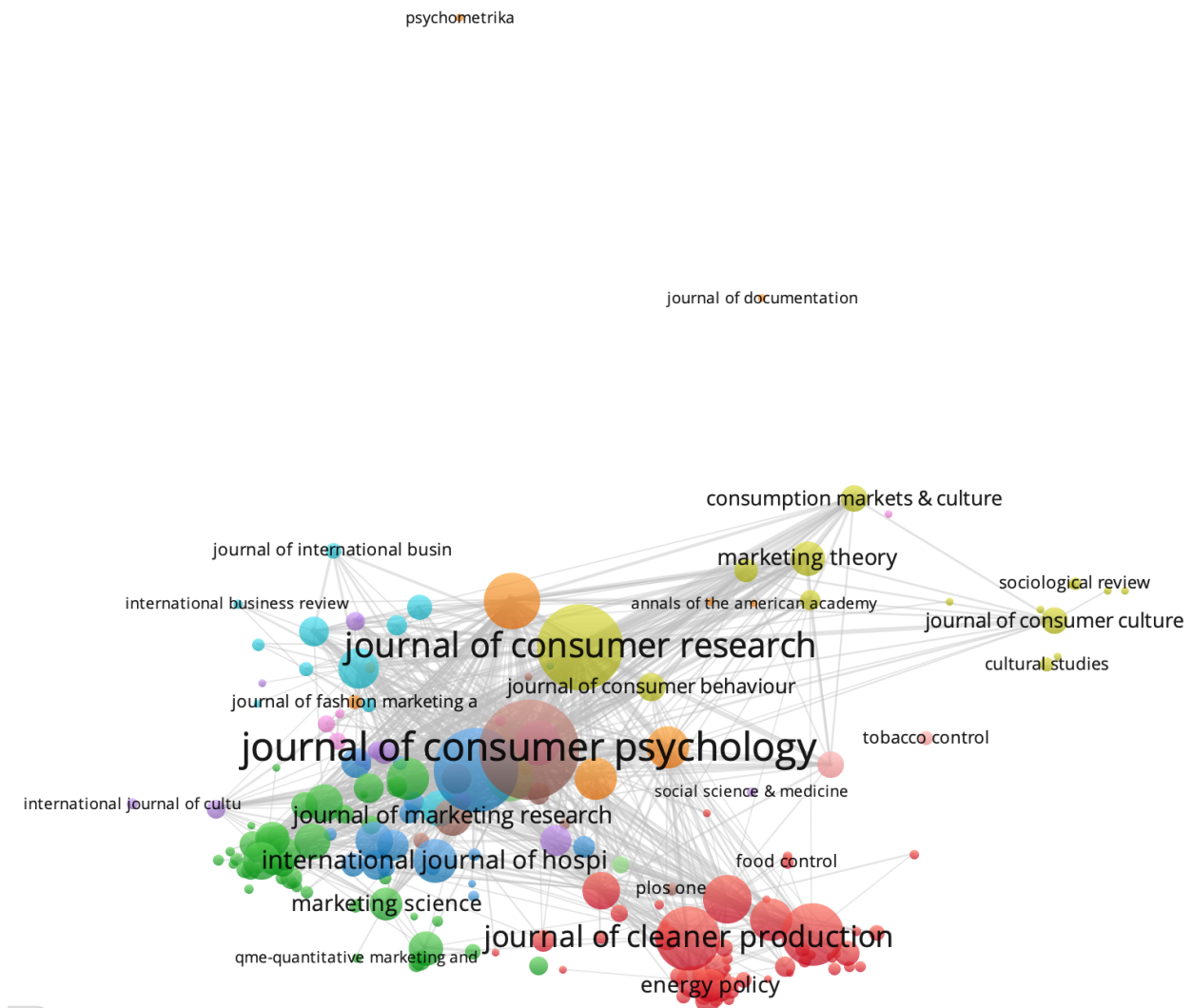


Figure 2. Citation analysis of 189 consumer research-related journals, 2000–2019. Minimum number of articles per journal = 5, minimum number of citations of a journal = 100. Percentage of journals in dataset represented in map: 14,2%.

The positioning of journals in Figure 2 corroborates several categorizations suggested by previous studies of the field. Overall, I hold that this bibliometric map confirms the centrality of the *JCR* and *JCP* to academic publishing on consumer research topics: these journals are placed close to the middle of the map, while their sizes furthermore indicate high levels of scientific prestige. The fact that Figure 2 also locates the *JCR* and *JCP* in close proximity to journals like the

Journal of Marketing, the *Journal of Marketing Research* and the *European Journal of Marketing Science* empirically demonstrates the close relationship between consumer research and the larger field of marketing as put forward by MacInnis and Folkes (2010). When examining the yellow cluster assigned to the flagship *JCR*, I was able to confirm the relevance of journals previously mentioned as important by Arnould and Thompson (2005) and Rey and Ritzer (2012), such as the *JCC*, *JCB* and *CM&C*. This yellow cluster and the extended area around it furthermore helped me identify the *IJCS* and *JCA* as field-relevant journals. The middle of the bibliometric map, containing *JCP* and *P&M*, in combination with the area around the yellow cluster in the upper right quadrant of Figure 2, roughly corresponds to the symbolic space associated with the field of consumer research as I analyse it below, since my selection of journals with self-descriptions connecting them specifically to consumer research (see *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2020; *SAGE Journals*, 2020; *Taylor & Francis*, 2020; *Wiley*, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e) are all located within this area.

The relative positions of the journals in Figure 2 highlight important relationships between the journals included in my dataset. The *JCP* and *P&M*, both focused on the interplay between psychology and consumption, are conspicuously positioned very close to each other, partly on top of each other, suggesting that the VOS technique does indeed correctly indicate similarity between objects. Focusing on the yellow cluster, it is therefore interesting to note that while the *JCR*, *JCC* and *CM&C* have all been assigned to the same community of journals and should therefore be highly related, these three journals seem to drag their cluster in different directions. The basic interpretation of this is that while these three journals *are* related, the *JCR* is more frequently cited by marketing and business-related journals that, in turn, rarely cite the *JCC* or *CM&C*.

Importantly, several clusters and specific items in Figure 2 were excluded from the next sections of my analysis – for a variety of reasons. Though the map shows several clusters of journals seemingly related to consumer research, notably an information management cluster exemplified by *MIS Quarterly* and a foodstuffs-oriented cluster exemplified by the *British Food Journal*, I hold that these clusters correspond to other, if possibly adjoining, scientific fields. Regarding specific journals, I have had to make two somewhat unfortunate exclusions: *Advances in Consumer Research* and the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. The latter journal was excluded from my analysis regardless of it being both prevalent in the map and having a relevant self-description (see Elsevier, 2020) due to it not being available in the SSCI during the entirety of

the 2010–2019 period. *Advances in Consumer Research*, a proceedings journal from the ACR (see Association for Consumer Research, 2020), had to be excluded due to the entirely inconsistent cataloguing of its issues in the *Web of Science*: rather than one publication with many issues, it is categorized individually, and its numbering furthermore inconsistently jumps from Arabic to Roman numerals (vol. 20 to vol. XXI, etc.). Had it been included in my datasets, this incorrect categorization would have resulted in *Advances in Consumer Research* diluting my bibliometric maps by being represented as several, rather than one, items. While the exclusion of these two journals from the rest of my analysis may have negatively impacted my graphical representations, per the bibliometric modality concerning absent data presented further above, I hold that the visual nature of my study and the great number of items examined in it still enables me to analyse the field of consumer research in a way that suggests its overall structure.

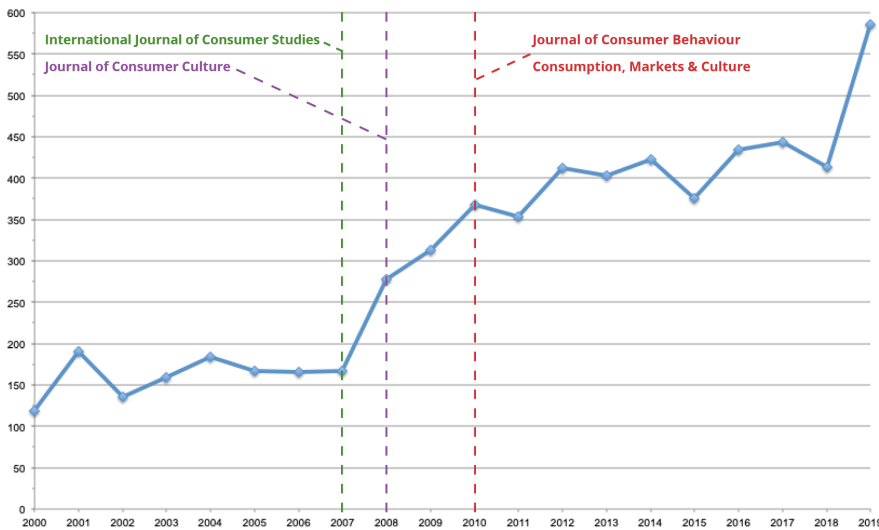


Figure 3. Number of articles in central consumer research journals, 2000–2019. Year of availability in the SSCI marked for journals not available before 2000.

Figure 3 shows how the data pertaining to my selection of journals increases over time due to the inclusion of more journals into the SSCI. Though the addition of four more journals into my dataset for the 2010–2019 period naturally leads to an increased number of articles, it should be noted that there is also an overall increase in the article output of my selected journals *in toto*. The journal *P&M*, for instance, increased its yearly article output during this period, going from averaging around 50 articles to averaging more than 80.

Whereas I generated the sample of journals for my datasets by working iteratively with the data available in the SSCI and by looking for arenas specific to consumer research, previous studies have attempted to study the field by analysing the content of pre-specified journals or keywords. Arnould and Thompson (2005, p. 868), for instance, limit their review of CCT-oriented articles to only those published in the *JCR* “[o]wing to the length constraints” imposed on their article. Peighambari et al. (2016) limit their sample specifically to prestigious business journals, while Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) focus on the term “consumer psychology”. Overall, I call into question to what extent these types of foci are theoretically and empirically relevant. By purposefully limiting their sample to five of “the top consumer behavior journals and business journals”, Peighambari et al. (2016, p. 2) run the risk of unnecessarily overstating the influence of ‘top’ journals in themselves while also neglecting publications in non-business journals. This latter neglect seems particularly detrimental to their study, since they review publishing during a period of time where many non-business consumer research journals were on the rise – notably the *JCP*, which began publication in 1992, and the *JCC*, which began publication in 2001. Correspondingly, the way Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) focus one-sidedly on articles connecting to the search term “consumer psychology” inherently produces bibliometric representations that do not correspond to an actual field. Though the reasoning behind these authors’ delimitations are presented in their articles, the contrast between their delimitations and my own serves as an illuminating contrast of the difference my sociological and Bourdieusian conceptualization of scientific fields creates in my treatment of data.

The explorative approach I took in my delimitation of empirical data contrasts to those of previous studies in several important ways. While my keyword search strategy (see Appendix) yielded a sample of articles from 1’328 journals, only 189 of these amounted to more than five keyword-related articles amassing more than 100 citations over the span of two decades. In my view, the fact that the journals represented in Figure 2 only account for 14,2% of the journals in the sample highlights one of the dangers in conducting an analysis along the lines of Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) or Sinkovics (2013, 2016): namely, that focusing on the totality of published output connecting to specific keywords means risking the inclusion of literature that is entirely peripheral to the field under analysis. Where Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) focus one-sidedly on consumer psychology and therefore misconstrue the network connected to this topic as the sum of its publishing, Sinkovics (2013, 2016) similarly focuses only on visualizing *text* data, rather than

bibliometric data, which entirely misses out on aspects concerning the social organization related to the research she examines. Though the types of bibliometric mapping strategies utilized by Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) and Sinkovics (2013, 2016) can be said to highlight the most *voluminous* themes in a body of research by way of analysing and visualizing frequently used terms and phrases, these approaches miss out on sociology of science aspects of academic publishing since they fail to analyse the influence of sociological forces on the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge. Though this type of study can showcase the totality of publishing pertaining to a specific subject, it can make no assertions as to the actual structure of a scientific field, or its change over time.

5.2 Mapping the Field 2000–2009

As a graphical representation of the cited bibliographies utilized by authors active in the field of consumer research, Figure 4 shows two interesting characteristics: firstly, a main body of items that is more or less circular, with different clusters being highly intermingled; and secondly, a more distanced blue cluster culminating in an arrow-like protrusion from this main body of items. The intermingling of clusters within the main body of items suggests that the authors located within this circular structure, though seemingly concerned with different topics of study, all readily relate to each other. The arrow-shaped cluster, by contrast, includes a group of authors that draw from what appears to be a much more isolated literature. Working interactively with the bibliographic map in Figure 4, I can furthermore note that authors assigned to different clusters and located at opposite ends of the central structure are often still linked by shared sources, while authors in the arrowhead, i.e. the most isolated part of the protruding cluster, principally share bibliographic items with other authors *within* their own cluster. The remoteness attributed to some of the items in arrowhead is especially notable given that no other large cluster exhibits this diffused pattern: the only similarly distanced items in Figure 4 are located within a small cluster in its upper right corner. This cluster represents two articles introducing ‘terror management theory’ “as a way to understand how the human awareness of death affects materialism, conspicuous consumption, and consumer decisions” (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser & Sheldon, 2004a, p. 198; see also 2004b). Though this morbidly inclined cluster is more or less entirely isolated from the rest of Figure 4, unlike the protruding cluster, the fact that it is similarly distanced as the authors in the arrowhead of the blue cluster is noteworthy.

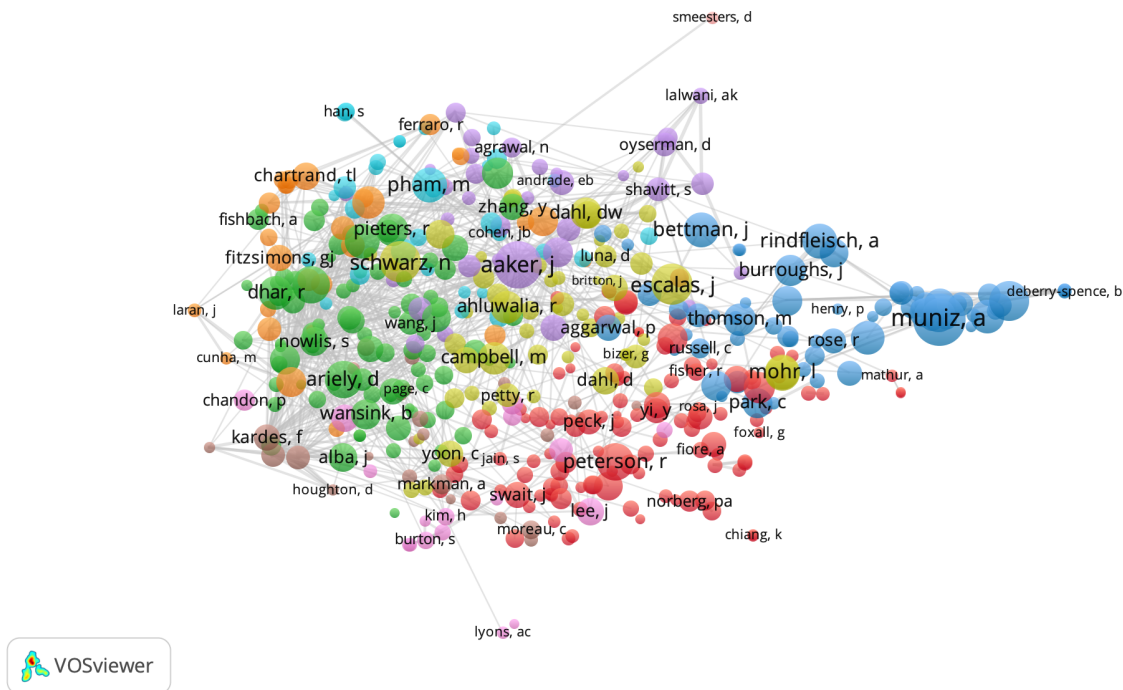


Figure 4. Bibliographic coupling of 460 top consumer researchers, 2000–2009. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 100. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 20,9%.

Having explored the published output of prominent authors assigned to the protruding cluster in Figure 4 by VOSviewer, I contend that this cluster and the area around it corresponds to the consumer research sub-specialization of CCT. This categorization is strengthened by the fact that Arnould and Thompson (2005) mention several of the most prominent authors in the arrow-shaped cluster – such as Douglas B. Holt, Robert V. Kozinets and Albert M. Muniz – as being exemplary CCT scholars. Exemplifying these authors by their most-cited articles in the 2000–2009 dataset provides further information regarding the content of the research represented. Arguably, the top articles from the previously mentioned CCT scholars would all have been categorized by Peighambari et al. (2016) into their less-prominent ‘external’ category, dealing as they do with group-level topics such as: theorizing the dialectical relationship between brands and

countercultural movements (Holt, 2002); the festival and “antimarket event” Burning Man (Kozinets, 2002, p. 20); and, the concept of brand communities (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Importantly, these articles all draw on anthropologically and sociologically oriented texts, ranging from classics like Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Max Weber, to more contemporary researchers like Randall Collins, Mark Granovetter and George Ritzer.

Turning instead to an exploration of highly cited articles from prominent authors in the central structure of Figure 4, such as Jennifer L. Aaker, Dan Ariely, Jennifer Edson Escalas, Robin T. Peterson and Norbert Schwarz, I contend that these showcase the IP and BDT sub-specializations suggested by MacInnis and Folkes (2010). These authors furthermore exhibit the overall emphasis on experimental methods and the individual as the unit of analysis outlined by MacInnis et al. (2020) and observed in Peighambari et al. (2016). Arguably, the top articles from these central authors all exhibit the inclination to “investigate outcomes” suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 3), dealing as they do with the following topics: the *influence* of individual self-regulation goals on information processing and susceptibility to persuasion (Aaker & Lee, 2001); the proposal of a general model for the *influence* of information flow on consumer decision-making (Ariely, 2000); the *influence* of individual self-concept on consumers’ brand choices (Escalas & Bettman, 2005); the *influence* of switching costs on customer loyalty in e-commerce (Yang & Peterson, 2004); and the *influence* of metacognitive experiences on consumer decisions and judgements (Schwarz, 2004). As far as I have been able to ascertain, none of the authors in the isolated section of the CCT cluster share this concern with pinpointing causal forces, being rather more explorative and descriptive in content.

Though the articles from prominent authors in Figure 4 that I have introduced above cover a wide variety of topics and modes of research, it should be noted that six out of these eight articles were published in the *JCR* (i.e. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Ariely, 2000; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Holt, 2002; Kozinets, 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). This means that widely disparate authorships, represented as items at opposite sides of the bibliometric map, such as the items of Ariely and Muniz, can still have their work published in the same, field-specific journal. Other than highlighting the wide perspectival scope of the *JCR*, this ostensibly also empirically confirms the flagship status of this journal within the field of consumer research.

Before moving on to an interpretation of the citation analysis showcased in Figure 5 below, I want to discuss elements of this map that I hold could risk muddling the interpretation of it.

Arguably, the shape of the map in Figure 5 is less clear than the one in Figure 4. This is largely due to the high number of items *encircling* the main structure of the map. These surrounding items represent authors writing about consumer research topics that relate to external yet adjoining fields of research, such as those identified in Figure 2 above. Notably, several articles from these authors concern different aspects of food choice (e.g. Burton & Creyer, 2004; Loureiro, McCluskey & Mittelhammer, 2002; Wilcox, Vallen, Block & Fitzsimons, 2009), suggesting a relationship to the previously identified foodstuffs-oriented cluster in Figure 2. The small cluster located under the red cluster in the lower right corresponds to authors writing in the *JCA* on the topic of consumer privacy (see Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Rifon, LaRose & Choi, 2005; Youn, 2009). Setting aside these distanced authors, I hold that the interpretation of the citation analysis for the 2000–2009 period becomes clearer.

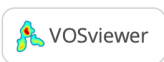
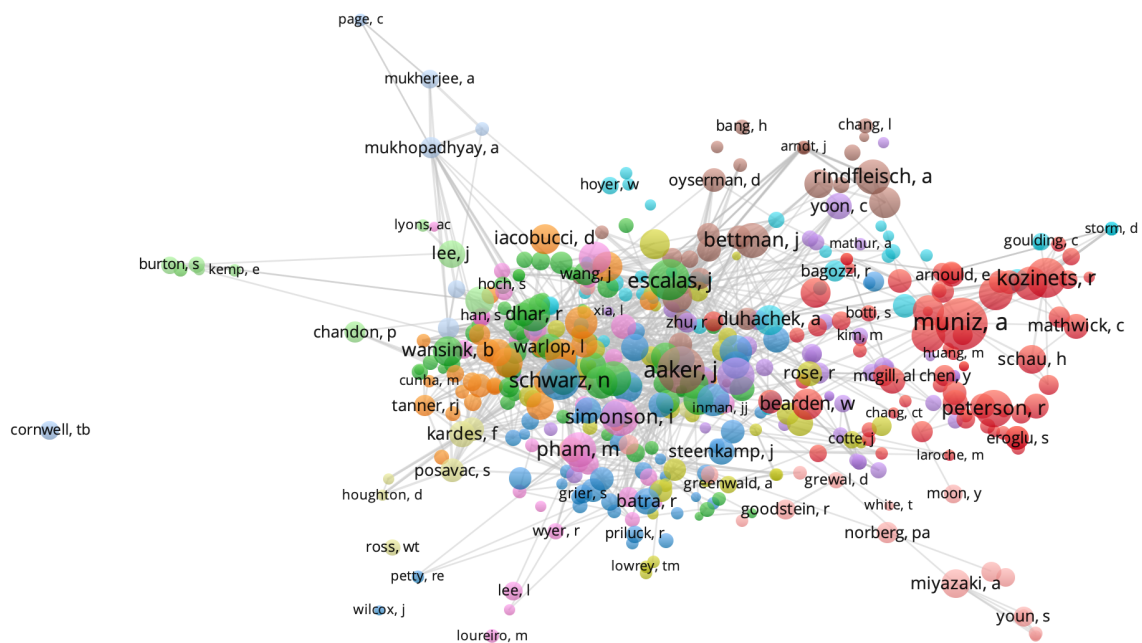


Figure 5. Citation analysis of 450 top consumer researchers, 2000–2009. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 100. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 20,5%.

Though the structure of Figure 5 is less easily legible than Figure 4, the overall *pattern* is the same, especially when the encircling items are put aside: the protrusion on the right-hand side of the map, this time in red, corresponds to CCT researchers, while the central figure contains BDT- and IP-focused scholars. This is particularly interesting since these two bibliometric maps visualize different types of analyses: where Figure 4 showcases the overall bibliographies of consumer researchers during the period, the map presented in Figure 5 is a graphical representation of the specific citation practices *between* consumer researchers during the 2000s. As such, while they proceed from different analytical procedures and have somewhat different shapes, it is notable that both of these maps showcase the same overall configuration of consumer research authors.

The structural homology between Figures 4 and 5 arguably enables me to make rather decisive assertions regarding the configuration of the symbolic space related to consumer research. Having identified the research foci of several authorships in the 2000–2009 dataset, I hold that what is structurally visible in the field of consumer research is, rather than the three sub-specializations suggested by MacInnis and Folkes (2010), an *individual–social divide* regarding the unit of analysis. This divide appears highly related to the implicit boundary regarding the currently conventional unit of analysis in consumer research as identified by MacInnis et al. (2020). The bibliometric and citational positioning of researchers focused on individual consumer behaviour furthermore shows that these authors represent the predominant community of the field, in line with the quantitative data provided by Peighambari et al. (2016). As such, going forward, I will refer to the authors and articles located in the central cloud of my bibliometric map as the *mainstream* of consumer research. This mainstream community then includes both of the psychologically oriented consumer research sub-specializations, i.e. IP and BDT, outlined by MacInnis and Folkes (2010). I hold that categorizing the IP and BDT sub-specializations as ‘mainstream’ is more true to my data than treating them as empirically disconnected. In my view, the fact that CCT researchers are *not* located within the central cloud in neither Figure 4 nor 5 means that this sub-specialization is not readily categorized as mainstream, again calling into question the visualization of consumer research sub-specializations in MacInnis and Folkes’ (2010) model of the field. Rather than being uniformly positioned within the field of consumer research, I hold that mainstream consumer research and CCT research are largely located at opposite sides of the individual–social divide.

Where Figure 4 suggests the wide range of scientific habitus extant among researchers within the field, Figure 5 primarily showcases the citational practices generated by these habitus. The homologous localization of items between Figures 4 and 5 therefore constitutes a striking exemplification of the scientific habitus in action: the graphical representation of intellectual heritage (Figure 4) produces the same overall structure as the representation of field-specific interaction (Figure 5). In my view, this constitutes a prominent exemplification of the “unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices” that Bourdieu (1998, p. 8) argues is generated by the habitus. In this way, I argue that the operationalization of the ‘open’ conceptual tool of habitus that I utilize in this thesis has proved itself relevant in relation to my empirical material.

Taken together, the structures of the symbolic space related to habitus and practice in Figures 4 and 5 suggest where the scientific habitus and scientific practice of consumer researchers work towards *integration* and where they work towards *distancing*. Most importantly, Figures 4 and 5 highlight how both of these tendencies are simultaneously visible in both the mainstream and in the CCT cluster, though in rather different ways. For instance, the CCT cluster is only distanced in its relationship to the mainstream – otherwise, CCT authors seemingly draw from a very specialized body of literature, suggesting that these researchers share similar scientific habitus. Correspondingly, the mainstream is distanced from the CCT cluster, but, *in toto*, this central cloud shows much more integration between different literatures than CCT does. There does then seem to be credence in the assertion that consumer research is characterized by perspectival openness (MacInnis and Folkes, 2010), *as well as* in the assertion that the field is defined by an adherence to certain conventions (MacInnis et al., 2020), highlighting the usefulness in considering relationality when studying specific scientific fields.

The fact that Figure 4 and 5 represent the consistent bibliographic and citational practices of consumer researchers for a period of time so far in the past, where the bibliometric modality of time must be considered to have dissipated, makes it particularly interesting to consider the differences between items located on either side of the individual–social divide. Though there is a distance between authors at opposite ends of the central cloud in Figure 4, this distance is mediated by an overall closeness and a large number of links – i.e. shared references – between authors. This pattern holds true in Figure 5 as well, where mainstream authors appear even more unified by way of how they cite each other’s texts: the items of authors are located in close proximity and have a high number of links – i.e. citations – between them. Authors like Aaker and

Escalas are particularly noteworthy due to the high number of citation links they showcase. The distribution of symbolic capital is also notably rather *even* among authors in the mainstream. In the CCT arrowhead of Figure 4, it is, by contrast, primarily very specialized authors that possess large volumes of symbolic capital. Some prominent CCT authors, like Kozinets and Muniz, do, however, still showcase a large influence by way of far-reaching links to other authors. As such, though the mainstream arguably represents authors whose scientific habitus are focused around the study of individuals, these habitus show more interest in distanced perspectives than does the habitus of CCT researchers – though the items of the latter become more dispersed in Figure 5, suggesting somewhat widened citation practices, the CCT authors are still just as distanced from the mainstream as they are in Figure 4.

It is interesting to consider the individual–social divide in consumer research in relation to the levels of capital amassed by authors on either side of it. Just as suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 6), producing research that goes against the implicit boundaries – i.e. the *illusio* – of the field does not seem to necessarily “come at the expense of academic impact”, as evidenced by the prominent items located in the CCT clusters of Figures 4 and 5. That CCT scholars like Holt, Kozinets and Muniz can amass such large amounts of field-specific symbolic capital suggests that there may be an *illusio* specific to CCT, or, at least, that the scientific habitus of CCT researchers mediates the effect of the *illusio* of consumer research to produce divergent, yet similarly rewarded, strategies and practice.

The visualizations of the intellectual heritages of consumer researchers (Figure 4) and the active engagement of these researchers with one another’s texts (Figure 5) allow me to begin discussing the relationship between the mainstream and CCT of consumer research with regards to interested pluralism. Though, as previously mentioned, articles from highly cited authors located in the mainstream seemingly tend to obey the implicit boundaries identified by MacInnis et al. (2020), it does not necessarily follow that CCT research is commensurate with pluralism. Some CCT authorships ostensibly encapsulate the opportunities suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020), since these authors mention CCT-oriented articles like Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) by way of exemplifying ‘boundary-breaking’ research. It does not necessarily follow that the research exemplified by MacInnis et al. (2020) represents the type of interested pluralism that I hold would lead to true knowledge diversity regarding consumers and consumption. Since the prominent CCT scholars represented in my 2000–2009 dataset appear to draw on very narrow literatures, as

evidenced by the fact that they are not only grouped together, but also on top of each other, in Figure 4, I hold that the CCT sub-specialization of the 2000s does not appear to sufficiently engage with different traditions or schools of thought to be categorized as interested pluralism. By contrast, the mainstream of consumer research, though insufficiently engaged with authorships on the other side of the individual–social divide, appears at least more pluralist than does CCT. Naturally, I can primarily make these inferences by way of the manner in which VOS graphically represents the items in my dataset, but I hold that these visualizations begin to suggest a pattern that appears to hold true going forward to Figure 6, as well as into the 2010–2019 period.

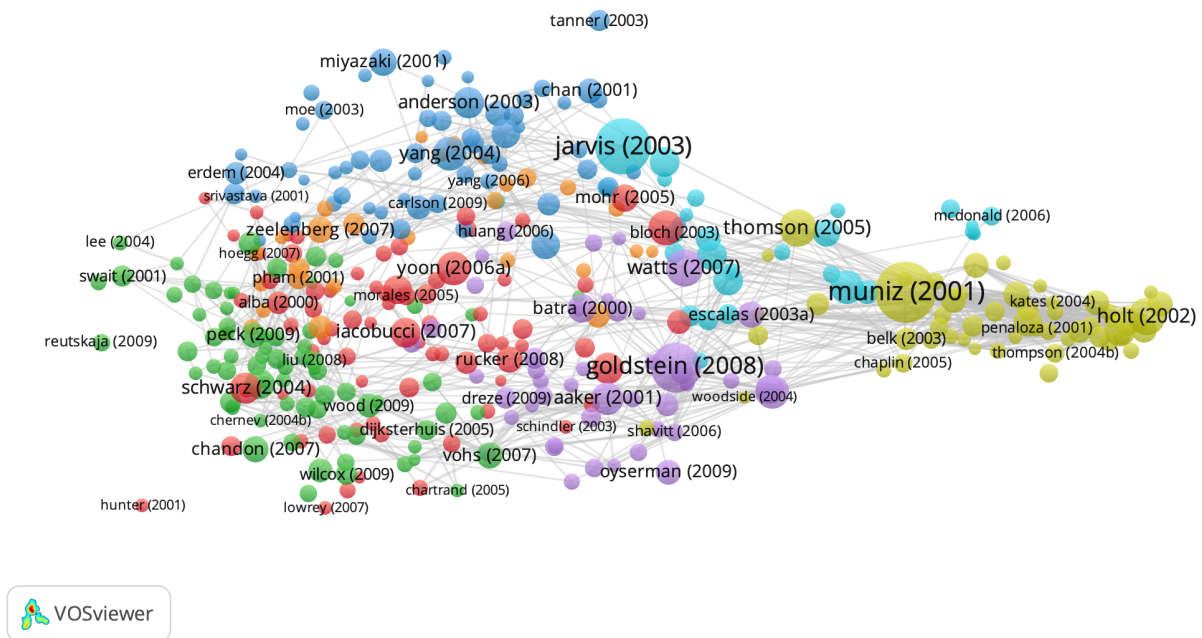


Figure 6. Bibliographic coupling of highly-cited consumer research articles, 2000–2009. Minimum number of citations per document = 100. Percentage of articles in dataset represented in map: 21,8%.

The bibliographic coupling analysis presented in Figure 6, which has *articles* rather than authors as the unit of analysis, shows the relationship between key publications in the field with regards to their bibliographies. As examples of inputs into consumer research, they provide specific examples of scientific practice – specifically, the items in Figure 6 offer a micro-level visualization of specific bibliographic strategies in the field. Intuitively, this micro-level visualization is structurally homologous to Figures 4 and 5: items focused on identifying

causalities in individual behaviour, i.e. mainstream articles, are located in a circular, central cloud, while socially oriented items, i.e. CCT articles, are represented somewhat separately to the right.

While some articles seemingly mediate the boundaries between different literatures by way of sharing references with articles dispersed in the map, there are very few mainstream articles that share sources with the most distanced articles in the CCT-cluster. An example of a prestigious yet distanced article is Holt (2002), which only shares sources with other articles within the CCT-cluster. An example of an article that seemingly unites references cited by both mainstream and CCT articles is one which that, interestingly enough, combines an interest in culture with a focus on causality by striving to “measure the *influence* of culture on consumers’ impulsive buying behavior” (Kacen & Lee, 2002, p. 166, my emphasis). Though there are some additional, prominent items that combine mainstream and CCT sources (e.g. Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005) the individual–social divide is overall highly discernible in the bibliometric map of Figure 6.

As it visualizes the levels of symbolic capital associated with specific articles, rather than entire authorships, Figure 6 emphasizes what I see as two different strategies to amass symbolic capital that consumer researchers seem to utilize: *conceptual innovation* or *specification of methodological rigour*. These strategies are best exemplified by noting that the only other article with a comparative level of symbolic capital to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) in Figure 6 is a methodologically oriented paper that reviews and critiques the extent of model misspecification in quantitative marketing research (Jarvis, Mackenzie & Podsakoff, 2003). As will be seen, the two scientific strategies of conceptual innovation and methodological rigour become even more prominent moving forward into the 2010–2019 dataset.

5.3 Mapping the field 2010–2019

This section presents and analyses the maps of bibliographic coupling of authors, citation analysis of authors, and bibliographic coupling of documents for the next decade under analysis. As such, it continues the conceptualizations and analyses from the previous section, but furthers the analysis by adding a longitudinal and comparative element to it, highlighting the development of the field and the practice within it. Though the visualizations in this section have slightly different parameters owing to how much closer this period is to the current year, as well as a few more journals added to the sample, I argue that several overall patterns are still visible.

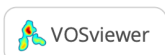
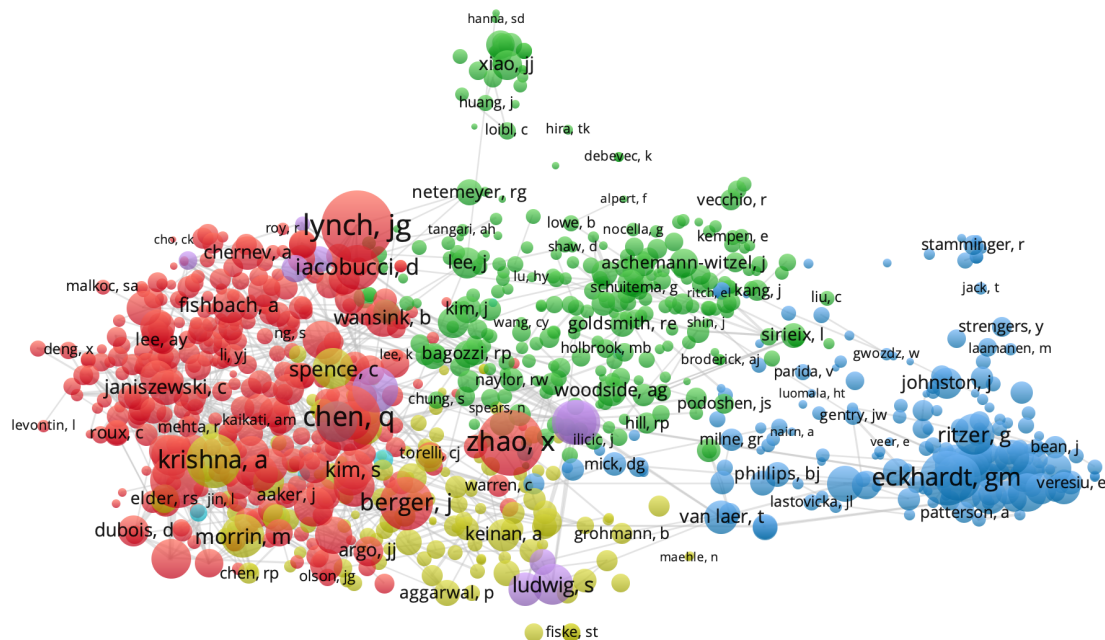


Figure 7. Bibliographic coupling of 952 top consumer researchers, 2010–2019. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 30. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 14,3%.

To a large extent, Figure 7 suggests a structure that corresponds to those of the bibliometric maps pertaining to the 2000–2009 period: the mainstream is again located in the left-hand side of the map, while CCT appears as an isolated, protruding cluster. The implicit boundaries related to the mode of research, methods utilized and unit of analysis suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020) are largely followed in the articles authored by the researchers located in the mainstream. Examples of published output from the authors within this mainstream body of items include articles concerning: the influence of consumer intentions on their propensity to contribute to word-of-mouth marketing (Berger, 2014); the influence of nearby people’s body types on consumers’ food choices (McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons & Morales, 2010a, 2010b); and, the influence of mind-sets on consumers’ goal-oriented activities (Wyer & Xu, 2010). Though the articles on food

choice (McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons & Morales, 2010a, 2010b) do go into matters of *social* influence, their methods are still experimental and the overall focus is lies on the effect of social surroundings on the individual. The blue cluster located to the right in Figure 7 corresponds to CCT scholars in a similar way to the correspondingly coloured and located cluster in Figure 4. Articles authored by notable researchers located in the CCT cluster in Figure 7 include: a study of ‘access-based consumption’ by Fleura Bardhi and Giana M. Eckhardt (2012); an article on theory relating to the concept of sharing by Russell Belk (2010); and, a discussion of the term ‘prosumption’ by George Ritzer and Nathan Jurgenson (2010).² Considering all these correspondences, I maintain my categorization from the previous period wherein the main body of items represents the mainstream of the field, while the distanced cluster to the right is CCT.

As was the case in Figure 4, the CCT authors in Figure 7 primarily share bibliographic items with other authors within their own cluster, as evidenced by the links between the items in VOSviewer. It is furthermore interesting to note that the most prominent items, i.e., the most-cited authors, in this map are again those that are the highly distanced from the mainstream. Notably, very few items endowed with much symbolic capital mediate the distance between the significant CCT authors and the mainstream, suggesting that there are few rewards associated with combining the literatures favoured by these two groups.

Notable for the 2010–2019 period is the phenomenon that the most symbolically significant items are often the result of influential review articles – primarily methodologically oriented ones. For instance, the size of the items representing Xinshu Zhao, John G. Lynch and Qimei Chen are largely the result of their co-authoring a highly cited article on mediation analysis (i.e. Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010). Other significant items of this type located in the mainstream are, for example, seemingly the result of as a synthesizing review concerning ‘sensory marketing’ (Krishna, 2012) as well as a meta-analytic review of ‘narrative transportation’ (Van Laer, De Ruyter, Visconti & Wetzels, 2014). The symbolic capital amassed by the authors of these methodological reviews arguably corroborates my assertion that the *specification of*

² Prosumption is the concept that was recently explored in the previously mentioned VOS-study by Syed Hamad Hassan Shah, Shen Lei, Muhammad Ali, Dmitrii Doronin and Syed Talib Hussain (2020).

methodological rigour constitutes a highly viable strategy for attaining scientific prestige in the field of consumer research.

The symbolically significant authorships in the 2010–2019 period that are not the result of methodologically oriented reviews correspondingly tend to be the result of *conceptual innovation*. The previously referenced CCT articles all exemplify this strategy. Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) and Belk (2010) provide innovative accounts of different aspects of *sharing*, relating it to central issues in the study of consumption and consumer behaviour. Ritzer and Jurgenson’s (2010, p. 13) innovation respectively lies in them breathing new conceptual life into the neologism *prosumption*, arguing that the concept has become highly relevant given the contemporaneous “explosion of user-generated content online”.

More isolated items in Figure 7 represent authors with more specialized research foci. The highly isolated cluster in the far upper right of Figure 7 is best exemplified by an article by Peter Beresford (2010, p. 495) in the *IJCS* that focuses on “public partnerships and governance from a service user perspective”, a topic that leads him to draw on a different literature compared to other consumer researchers. Similarly, the distanced part of the green cluster located above the mainstream body of items consists of authors publishing articles focused on the influence of financial knowledge on consumer behaviour (e.g. Lusardi, Mitchell & Curto, 2010; Xiao, Ahn, Serido & Shim, 2014), meaning that these items also draw on external literatures – though not to the same degree as the previously mentioned Beresford (2010). The authors in the green cluster that do not focus on finance topics are oriented towards issues relating to sustainability and ethical consumption – I present and discuss these authors more in my interpretation of Figure 8 below.

Overall for the period represented in Figure 7, the detachment between the mainstream and CCT, with regards to their bibliographies, has increased. While the CCT items are again located to the right of the figure in an arrow-like protrusion, this protrusion appears much more distanced and isolated than the arrowhead in Figure 4. This simultaneous *distancing*, evidenced by mere increased spread in the graphical representation, and *isolation*, evidenced by the fewer number and lesser symbolic significance of items located in the ‘gap’ between the mainstream and the CCT cluster, begins to suggest what I hold is the most interesting aspect of my comparative analysis. Though this aspect of the map can be partly explained by the inclusion of the *JCC*, *JCB*, *IJCS* and *CM&C* in the 2010–2019 dataset, the increased bibliographic distance and isolation is still observable if the analysis of the 2010–2019 period is restricted to the four journals in the 2000–

2009 dataset (see Figure A2 in the Appendix). While I hold that the increased isolation of CCT is highly interesting, it is difficult for me to identify its direction by way of my illustrative review – in short, I cannot readily answer the question of whether is it mainstream authors or CCT authors that have changed their bibliographic strategies so as to make the VOS technique assign an increased distance between these clusters.

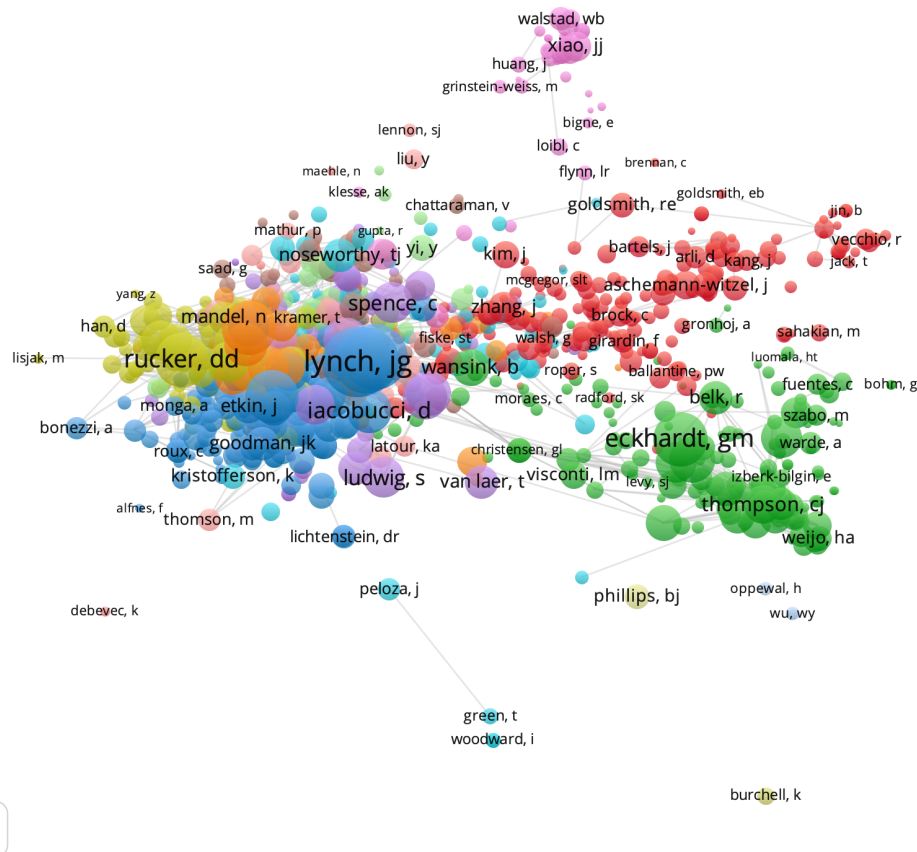


Figure 8. Citation analysis of 940 top consumer researchers, 2010–2019. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 30. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 14,1%.

While the location of some clusters in Figure 8 present interesting features regarding the academic journal publishing for this period, the same overall location of main items as in Figure 7 are observable. Prominent items in the mainstream are still authors like Lynch (e.g. Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010) and CCT researchers like Eckhardt (e.g. Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) are still located

to the right of the map. Furthermore, financially oriented authors like Jing Jian Xiao (e.g. Xiao, Ahn, Serido & Shim, 2014) are still located above the middle of the figure.

The red cluster located above the green CCT cluster corresponds to authors focused on aspects of sustainability primarily published in the *IJCS* and *JCA* (see, e.g., Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017; Geppert & Stamminger, 2010; Sirieix, Delanchy, Remaud, Zepeda & Gurviez, 2013; Vecchio, Van Loo & Annunziata, 2016). Such a prominent cluster of sustainability-oriented consumer researchers is not visible in Figures 3 to 4, highlighting that matters related to climate change and green consumption have become much more prominent in the 2010s. By way of understanding the relationship between the mainstream and the sustainability cluster, it is interesting to note that the position of Ronald E. Goldsmith, an otherwise seemingly psychologically focused researcher (see, e.g., Pagani, Hofacker & Goldsmith, 2011), mediates between the mainstream and the sustainability cluster by way of co-authoring a sustainability-focused article (i.e. Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011). Though the sustainability cluster is overall similarly distanced from the mainstream as the CCT cluster, the distance between sustainability authors and the mainstream is *mediated* by a large number of items and links, while there are much fewer items and links mediating the space between CCT and the sustainability cluster.

The change in position of the finance-oriented cluster (e.g. Lusardi, Mitchell & Curto, 2010; Xiao, Ahn, Serido & Shim, 2014) between Figure 7 and Figure 8 exemplifies what I see as a central tendency in the field of consumer research: that a self-imposed distance in symbolic space made by way of bibliographic strategy results in a corresponding socially-imposed isolation by way of the citation practices of other actors in the field. This tendency is also visible for items in Figures 4 and 5, though not as clearly as in the specific case of the financial cluster in Figures 7 and 8. Possibly, the isolation of the finance-oriented cluster in Figure 8 has to do with an incompatibility between an interest in financial issues and the *illusio* of the field of consumer research, leading the schemes of valuation in the scientific habitus of researchers in this field to perceive the topic as irrelevant.

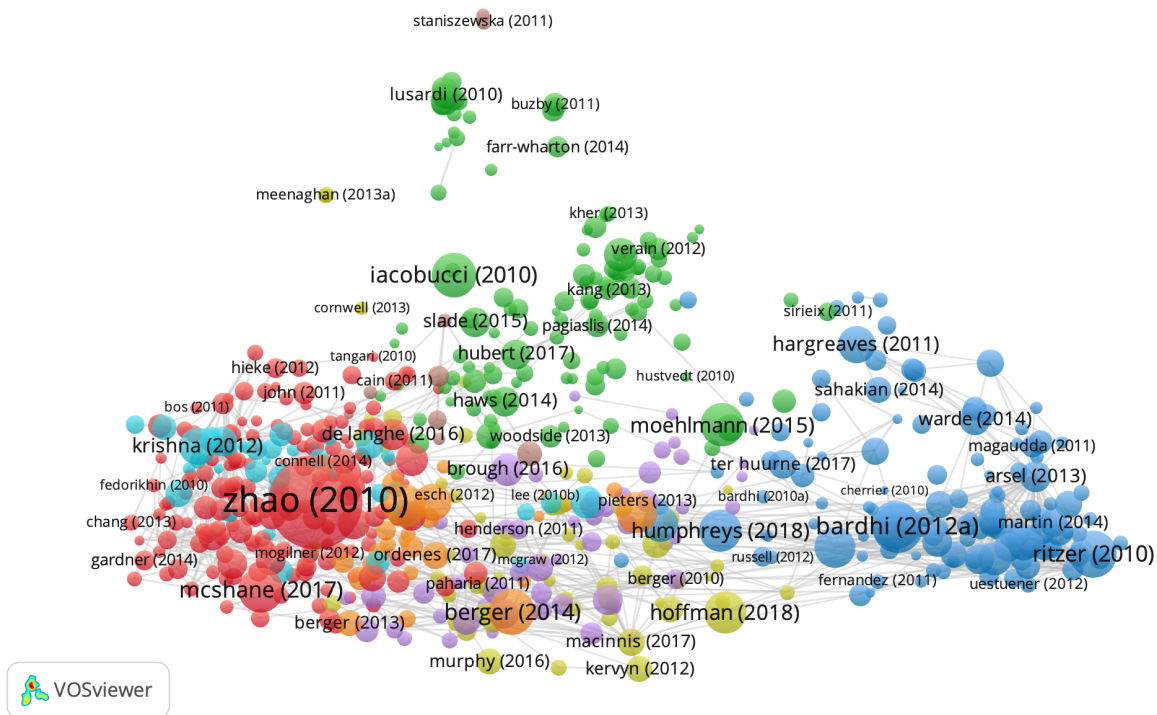


Figure 9. Bibliographic coupling of highly-cited consumer research articles, 2010–2019. Minimum number of citations per document = 30. Percentage of articles in dataset represented in map: 14,7%.

Figure 9 presents a structure that is entirely homologous with Figures 7 and 8, highlighting the increased distance between the mainstream and CCT in the symbolic space of the field of consumer research for the 2010–2019 period. Looking at Figure 8, it can be observed that mainstream authors have become even more unified by way of their citations during the 2010–2019 period, highlighting the prominence of the implicit boundaries suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020). The bibliographic analyses of Figures 7 and 9 furthermore arguably showcase the type of increased sub-specialization suggested by Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen (2017), as they highlight how the mainstream of consumer research and CCT have become much more distanced from each other by way of their utilization of more isolated literatures. These figures, along with the increase in published output evidenced in Figures 1 and 3, showcase the relevance of Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen’s (2017) grievances regarding the social sciences to the field of consumer research.

The increased distances assigned between the items in the 2010–2019 dataset by the VOS technique compared to the distance in the maps relating to the 2000s has negative connotations in relation to the notion of interested pluralism. Rather than mediating the distance between them by

way of engaging with each other's literatures and each other's texts, the mainstream and CCT have done the opposite. As such, it is in my bibliometric mapping study difficult to identify any active interaction between divergent perspectives. Other than an incompatibility with the ideas expressed by Dobusch and Kapeller (2012), the apparent inexistence of active debate and critique in my figures is incongruent with Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) ideals of reflexivity. Seemingly, the field of consumer research does not reward mediation across the *individual–social divide*, as evidenced by the previously mentioned sparse items located between the mainstream and CCT in Figure 7. Rather, the space between mainstream and CCT authors in Figures 7 and 8 evidence the previously mentioned socially-imposed isolation inflicted on authors that draw on cross-pollinated literatures.

Focusing specifically on Figure 8, both the mainstream and CCT researchers can be implicated in the lack of pluralism and reflexivity in the field of consumer research, since the citation analysis visualized in this figure does not imply a 'positive' relationship. Items located in close proximity to each other in Figures 5 or 8 can, as such, be the result of citations made by way of *critique* just as well as support. Other than 'incriminating' both the mainstream and CCT in my own criticism, this again highlights a deficiency in the VOSviewer-focused bibliometric methodology utilized in this thesis: that this way of treating data does not readily enable me to identify the causal forces behind such phenomena as integration and specialization.

In comparing the bibliometric maps of the 2000–2009 period with those of the 2010–2019 period, I hold that it is possible to identify an ongoing *field struggle*, the process of which is increasing the distance in symbolic space between researchers focused on individual consumer behaviour, i.e. the mainstream, and those focused on social and cultural aspects of consumption, i.e. CCT scholars. To borrow a term from biology, I would assert that something reminiscent of *mitosis* becomes visible when comparing the graphical representations of the field of consumer research in the 2000s to those of it in the 2010s. In the development between Figure 4 and 7, between Figure 5 and 8, and between Figure 6 and 9, I hold that both increased sub-specialization and lessened interested pluralism is visible. These developments, rather than suggesting increased knowledge diversity, exemplify Foxall's (2015, p. 20) "separate and competitive" sub-specializations, suggesting that the type of "artificial dichotomy" that he argues against is developing within consumer research. Though the thresholds imposed on the dataset for the 2010–2019 period are somewhat different to those for the 2000–2009 period, I hold that it is still

possible to utilize these comparisons to suggest ongoing developments in the field. That the developments in Figures 7–9 are also largely evident in Figures A2–A4 (see Appendix) strengthens this argument: even when controlling for articles from the journals added to the 2010–2019 dataset, the patterns I have identified remain.

Whether the field struggle that has resulted in the increased mitosis evidenced in the field of consumer research is the result of a shift in scientific habitus or the emergence of conflicting *illud* within the field is difficult for me to identify. The fact that consumer researchers can achieve comparative levels of scientific prestige by committing either to the mainstream or the CCT sub-specialization suggests that the strategies followed by researchers from both these camps can result in the amassment of symbolic capital. Comparative levels of symbolic capital are, however, *not* achieved by authors who mediate between the mainstream and CCT, which I would hold points towards an overall split in the strategies of scientific practice in consumer research – there is seemingly no symbolic reward for encouraging aspects of interested pluralism in the field. Possibly, this split will continue to enforce the difference in bibliographic and citational strategies to such a degree that the distance in symbolic space between researchers on either side of the individual–social divide becomes so great that it becomes possible to construct these camps as separate and autonomous scientific fields.

6 Concluding Discussion

In this penultimate section of the thesis, I summarize the findings of my study, discuss my results and make suggestions for future research. I hold that my findings are best summarized by way of providing answers to my research questions, while my results are most profitably discussed by way of their limitations. The suggestions I make for future research relate specifically to the Bourdieusian study of the field of consumer research as well as to the general sociological study of scientific fields.

Answers to my descriptive and analytical research questions have been provided in an interrelated fashion throughout this thesis, above all in the section on results and analysis above. As such, I believe that I have provided an appropriate response to my simultaneously descriptive and analytical research issue. Along with its subfield location within the marketing discipline as identified by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) and its adherence to the conventions suggested by MacInnis et al. (2020), it is the *individual–social divide* that I have explicated above that best exemplifies the major feature of academic journal publishing in consumer research, per my research question A. *Consumer culture theory* also constitutes the most visually significant sub-specialization in my bibliometric mapping study overall, supplemented with an emerging *sustainability-oriented* research community during the 2010s, also per question A. The eight journals whose article output I included in my datasets, as well as the excluded journals *Advances in Consumer Research* and *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, constitute the field-specific publishing arenas that characterize the *scientific field of consumer research*, per my research question B.

Moving on to my sub-questions, further descriptive–Bourdieusian findings can be highlighted. Questions A1 and A2 primarily relate to my bibliographic coupling and citation analyses, meaning that the answers to these questions are best illustrated by Figures 4, 6, 7 and 9 and Figures 5 and 8 respectively. My direct interpretation of these figures, wherein I provide illustrative references to specific authors and articles, furthermore provide responses to these questions, while, in turn, the Bourdieusian conceptual tools mentioned in questions B1 and B2 have allowed be to expand on these responses analytically. The answers to questions B1 and B2 are visually best answered by my map of consumer research below (Figure 10). In my VOS-derived conceptualization of the *symbolic space* associated with the scientific field of consumer research, it is largely the relative possession of the *field-specific symbolic capital of scientific*

prestige – associated with publishing in the above-mentioned journals – that highlights the relative position of consumer researchers. Furthermore, my use of the VOSviewer software has enabled me to graphically represent *scientific habitus* by way of *bibliographic strategies* as well as *scientific practice* by way of *citation strategies*. The fact that all of my figures are largely structurally homologous highlights how the logics embedded in the *illusio* of the field and the scientific habitus of consumer researchers combine to generate a largely unitary symbolic space.

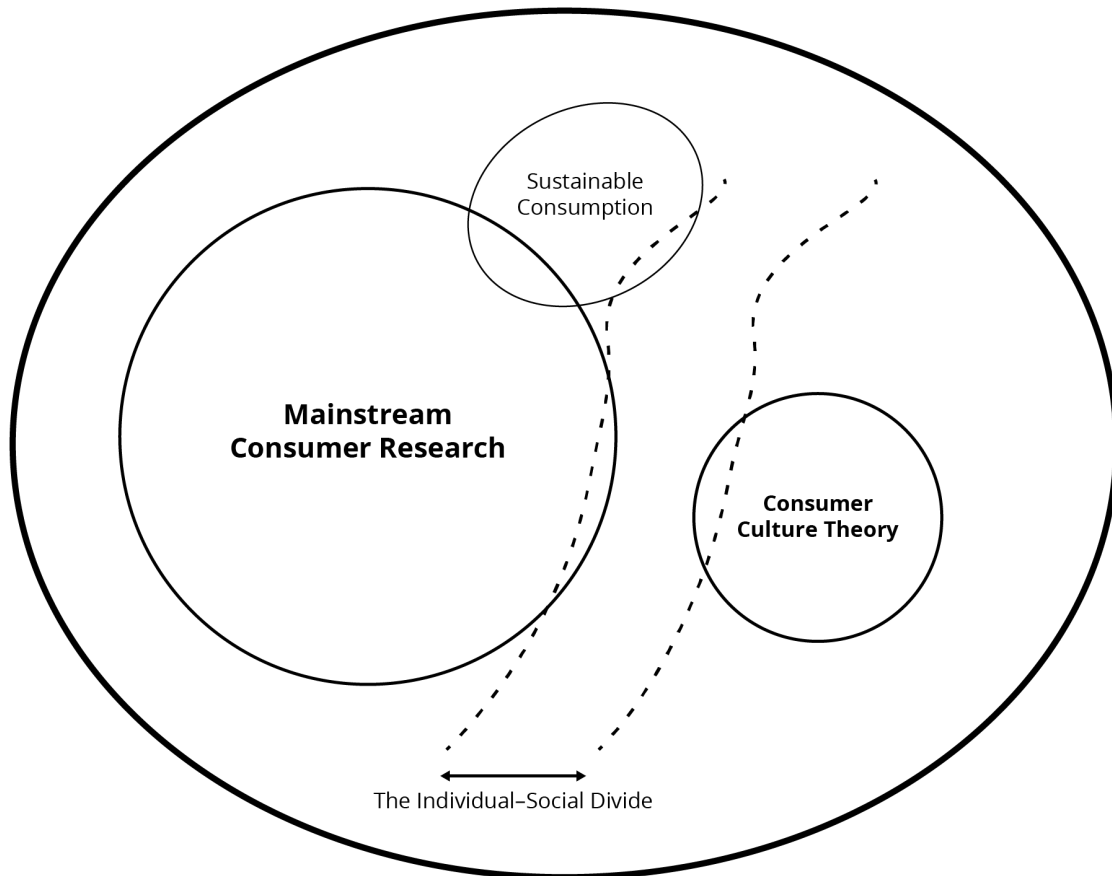


Figure 10. Map of the field of consumer research in the 2000s and 2010s. Stylized representation of symbolic space derived from bibliometric mapping data.

The unitary symbolic space of consumer research, derived from my bibliometric maps, is what I have attempted to outline in Figure 10. It should be noted that my conceptualization and analysis of consumer research is entirely indebted to my utilization of Bourdieu’s metatheory and conceptual tools – had I utilized a different sociological framework, the graphical representation of the field could have been entirely different. Even so, I hold that the map provided in Figure 10

is, by definition, more *true to data* than the model provided by MacInnis and Folkes (2010) since it is to such a large degree derived from my bibliometric mapping study.

Though I hold that my study can make strong inferences regarding the symbolic structure of consumer research, my operationalization of Bourdieu's conceptual tools could have been greatly expanded. A more conventional Bourdieusian study could, for instance, have mobilized more forms of capital than the symbolic one I focus on here. Utilizing Bourdieu's favoured correspondence analysis (see Lebaron, 2009), these other forms of capital would no doubt have provided an expanded understanding of the symbolic space associated with the field. Furthermore analysing data pertaining to, for instance, the educational background (cultural capital) and membership in field-relevant organizations (social capital) of consumer researchers could have yielded interesting results that further illuminate the social organization of the field.

Two specific aspects regarding the social organization of consumer research that I have not considered in my analysis is the distribution of symbolic capital between countries and the country-specific foci of consumer researchers. Jia, Zhou and Allaway (2018) find that research pertaining to the topic of consumer psychology predominantly originates from the USA and MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 4, my emphasis) argue that the focus in contemporary consumer research "is to study individual consumers, *most often in the United States*", meaning that these aspects very likely present interesting objects of analysis. The consideration of national boundaries in consumer research is therefore another pathway that I would suggest for future research.

Overall, I hold that the VOS-enabled Bourdieusian study of consumer research that I have presented in this thesis exemplifies a novel and useful way of conceptualizing scientific fields in a sociologically relevant manner. Even though the consideration of additional forms of capital would necessitate going beyond bibliometric mapping, aspects like the predominance of US-focused research is readily analysed using VOSviewer. Furthermore, though I have argued against Sinkovics' (2013, 2016) specific utilizations of bibliometric mapping, I agree with her assertions that this method can provide a foundation from which to suggest meaningful future avenues of research and theorization. In line with this, I hope that this thesis has provided an exemplification of the sociological use of bibliometric mapping that inspires both future studies in the sociology of science and reflexive studies from scientists wishing to meaningfully contribute to the conduct of inquiry within their respective scientific fields.

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8 Appendix

The appendix includes the search strategies I employed when gathering and extracting data from *Web of Science* as well as some additional bibliometric maps.

8.1 Search Strategies

The dataset resulting from the 7.1.1 search strategy was used to generate Figure 2, while the search 7.1.2 and 7.1.4 strategies were utilized for Figures 4–6 and Figures 7–9 respectively. The bibliometric maps related to the 7.1.3 search strategy are presented further below in the appendix.

8.1.1 Explorative Keyword Search

(TS=(“consumer behaviour” OR “consumer behavior” OR “consumer culture” OR “consumer psychology” OR “consumer studies” OR “consumer research”)) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article OR Proceedings Paper OR Review)

Indexes=SSCI Timespan=2000-2019

8.1.2 Search for the 2000 to 2009 Period (Four Journals)

(SO=(“Journal of Consumer Research” OR “Journal of Consumer Psychology” OR “Journal of Consumer Affairs” OR “Psychology Marketing”)) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article OR Proceedings Paper OR Review)

Indexes=SSCI Timespan=2000-2009

8.1.3 Search for the 2010 to 2019 Period (Four Journals)

(SO=(“Journal of Consumer Research” OR “Journal of Consumer Psychology” OR “Journal of Consumer Affairs” OR “Psychology Marketing”)) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article OR Proceedings Paper OR Review)

Indexes=SSCI Timespan=2010-2019

8.1.4 Search for the 2010 to 2019 Period (Eight Journals)

(SO=(“Journal of Consumer Research” OR “Journal of Consumer Psychology” OR “Journal of Consumer Affairs” OR “Psychology Marketing” OR “Journal of Consumer Culture” OR “Journal of Consumer Behaviour” OR “International Journal of Consumer Studies” OR “Consumption Markets & Culture”)) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article OR Proceedings Paper OR Review)

Indexes=SSCI Timespan=2010-2019

8.2 Figure 2 Weighted by Number of Documents

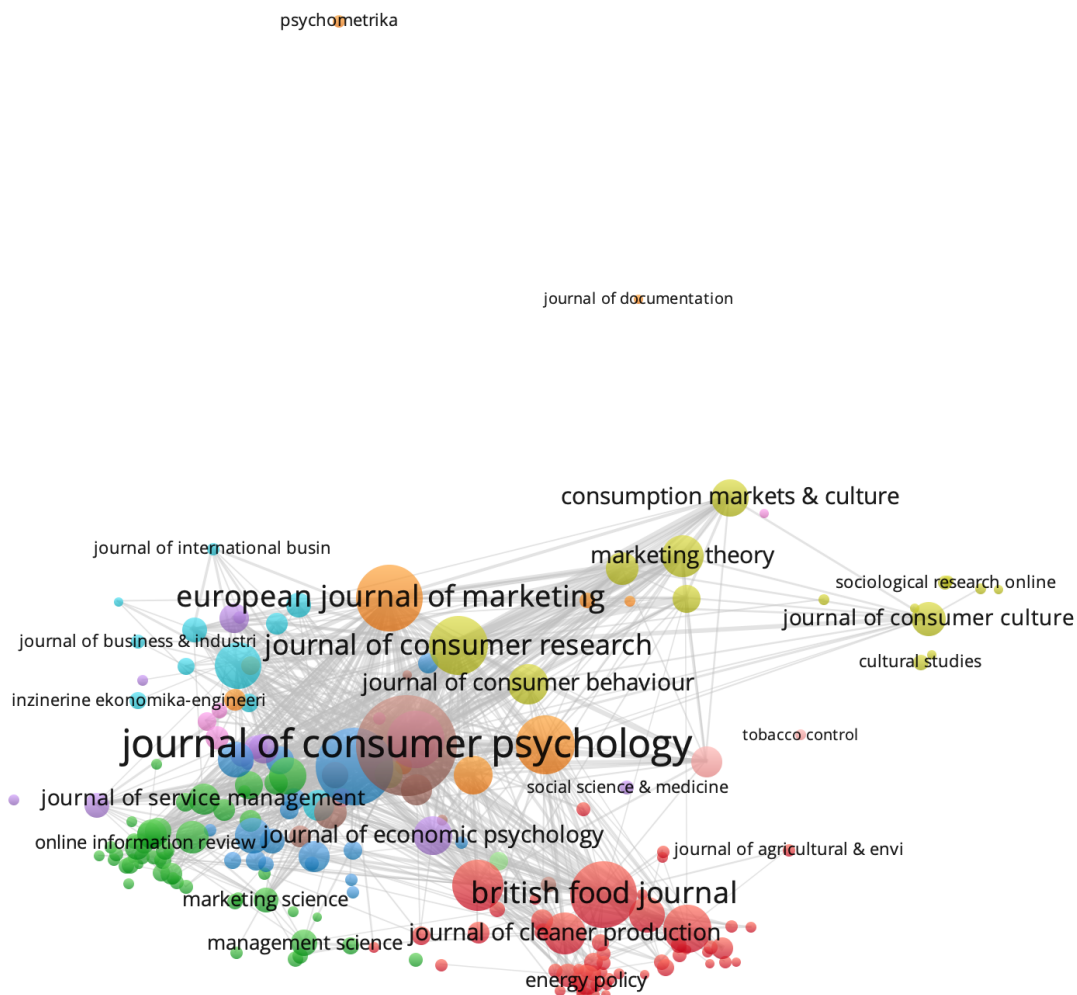


Figure A1. Citation analysis of 189 consumer research-related journals, 2000–2019. Minimum number of articles per journal = 5, minimum number of citations of a journal = 100. Percentage of journals in dataset represented in map: 14,2%.

8.3 Complementary Bibliometric Maps, 2010–2019

This subsection presents bibliometric maps for the 2010 to 2019 period resulting from only the journals included in for the 2000 to 2009 period. As such, these maps were generated from the dataset resulting from the search strategy presented in subsection 7.1.3 above.

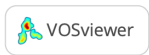
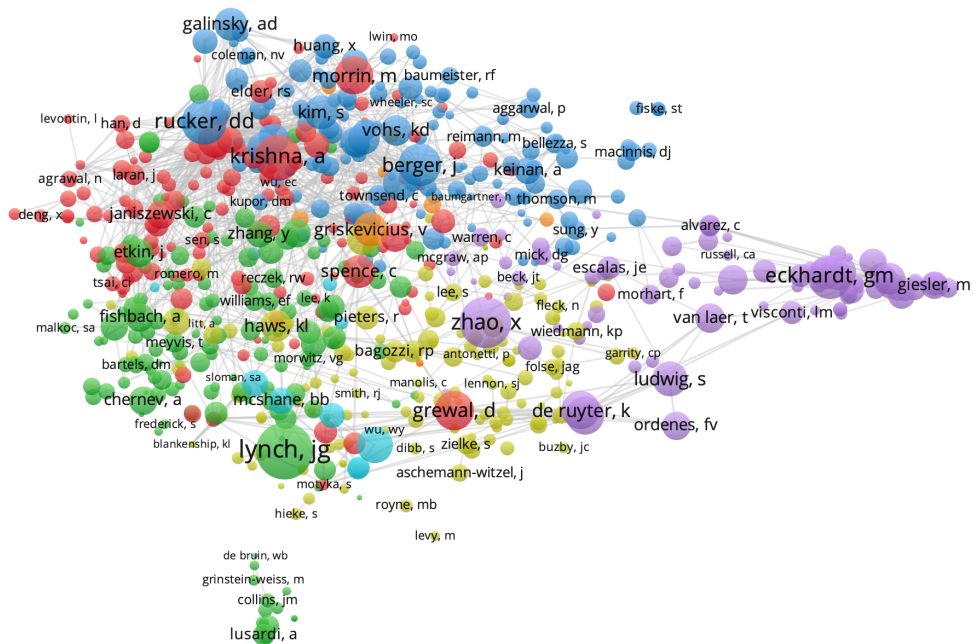


Figure A2. Bibliographic coupling of 651 top consumer researchers, 2010–2019. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 30. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 17,5%.

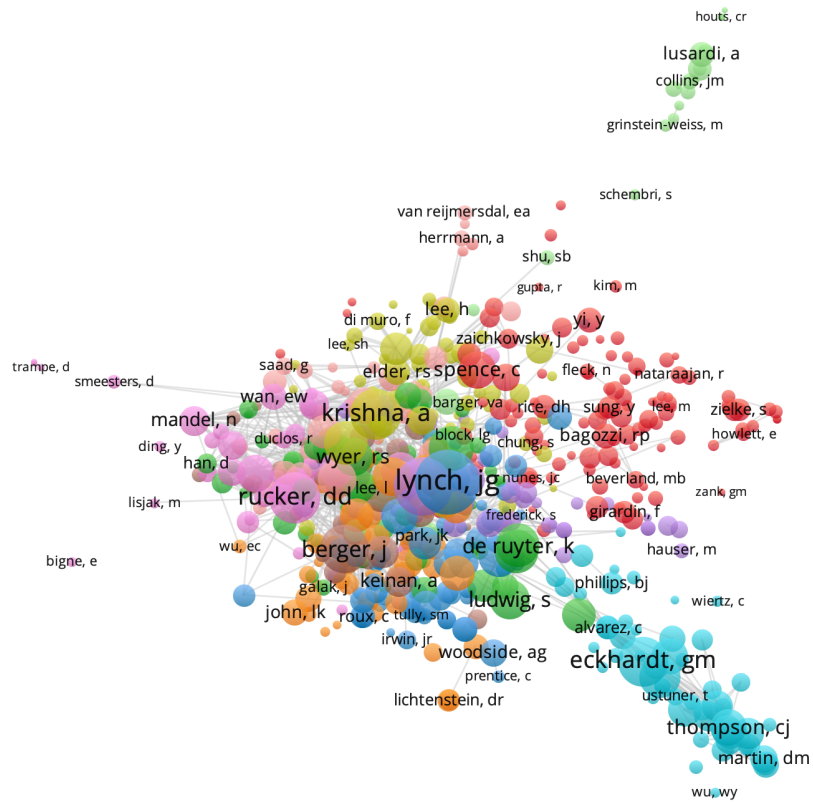


Figure A3. Citation analysis of 647 top consumer researchers, 2010–2019. Minimum number of documents per author = 2, minimum number of citations per author = 30. Percentage of authors in dataset represented in map: 17,3%.

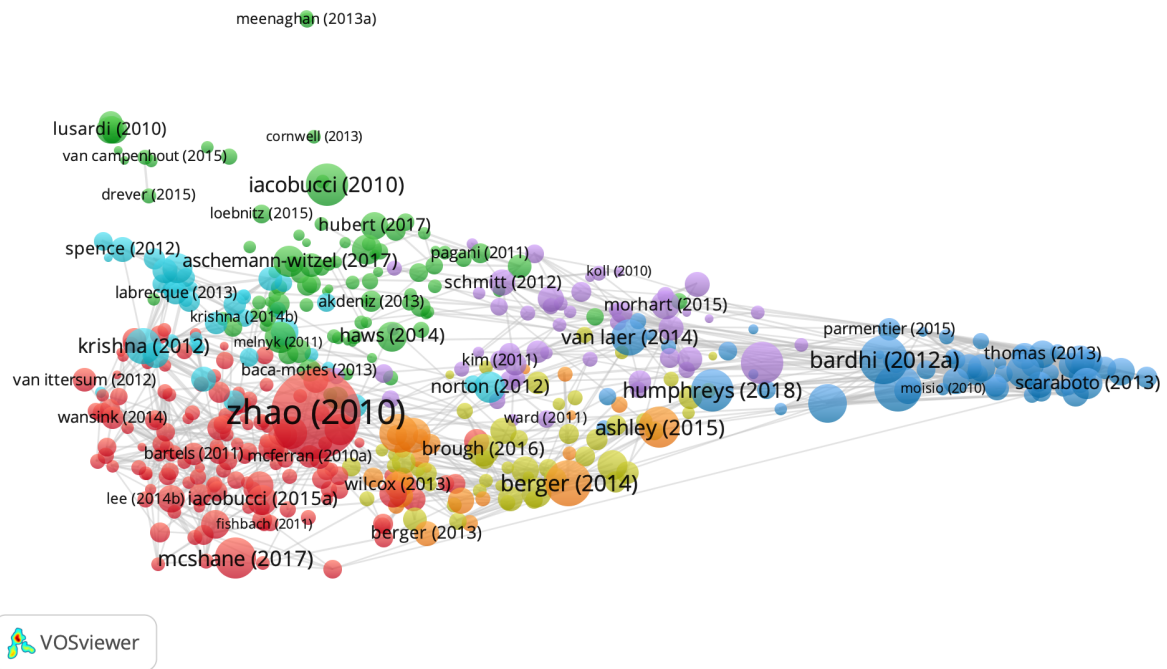


Figure A4. Bibliographic coupling of highly-cited consumer research articles, 2010–2019. Minimum number of citations per document = 30. Percentage of articles in dataset represented in map: 19,7%.