CultureCase

How household bargaining between men and women affects arts attendance

This research was conducted by **Caterina Adelaide Mauri** and **Alexander Friedrich Wolf** at **University of Southern Denmark** and **Compass Lexecon, Belgium**

Summary

This paper attempts to understand the dynamics of household decision-making as it pertains to arts attendance. It is especially interested in what happens when there is a disparity between age, income or education within a household unit of one man and one woman (and any number of children). We already know that arts attendance is highly gendered, with some activities much more popular with women. These female-dominated activities include opera, ballet and other dance performances. The authors find that (all other things being equal) ‘when men’s share of household income is larger, the probability of men’s attendance at female-dominated high culture events decreases’. This also turns out to be the case when the man is older or has a higher degree of education than the woman. This leads the researchers to conclude ‘that when men have more bargaining power, they tend to attend such events less frequently’.

The data for this study comes from the 2008 and 2012 waves of the US Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

This pooling of data gives a sample of 3,271 couples. In accordance with other research, the survey found that jazz music, Latin and salsa performances, and museum visits are attended equally by men and women, but ballet, live dance and opera are much more popular among women. We also know that higher than average income and education are associated with increased arts

attendance, as is living in a neighbourhood close to an abundance of cultural venues. These explanatory factors do not take account of the effects of different household structures.

Household bargaining is known to affect what people do and how they behave

It's easy to see why household decisions are made through bargaining between household members: couples tend to opt for joint leisure activities, with their income pooled and their individual decisions on how to spend time and money consequential for the other.

Keywords

attendance **survey** **USA** **gender**

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