CultureCase

Ticket sales data reveals the exclusivity of activities like ballet and literary events

This research was conducted by **Laurie Hanquinet, Dave O'Brien** and **Mark Taylor** at the **University of York, University of Edinburgh** and **University of Sheffield**

Summary

This paper compared survey data with ticket sales data to better understand who attends literary events and dance performances in England. It found that people from wealthier areas tend to buy more tickets than those from less well-off areas for dance and literary activities. The data revealed that 'literary talks' and ballet are two of the most exclusive kinds of events, whereas spoken word/ poetry and contemporary dance are among the least exclusive.

The paper used the national Index of Multiple Deprivation

This allowed the researchers to compare different data sets which contained a geographical marker (such as a postcode). Niche events which are often ticketed are ideal subjects to study using sales data rather than survey data. A new data set which pools ticket sales data in England called Audience Finder allows just this sort of analysis.

Although many types of arts engagement are included in the data, the paper focuses on dance and literary events

By looking at the number of tickets sold in each geographic area the paper is able to reveal that 'the audience for contemporary dance appears very different from the audience for both traditional and contemporary ballet' with

ballet audiences being drawn from the least deprived areas. This is especially true for non-subsidised venues.

Literary events in the Audience Finder system include spoken word/poetry and author readings

The data shows that ‘literary talks’ (as an event type) are the most exclusive form of activity, with many more tickets being bought by people from wealthy areas than those from poorer neighbourhoods. Poetry/spoken word events (of all the types of literary event) seem to be the least exclusive.

Keywords

ballet **survey** **box office** **literature** **UK** **attendance**

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