# How can cultural institutions measure social outcomes of their activities?
## Finding out a visitors`s social milieu affiliation by 'subjective assessment' – results of a pilot study –

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## To measure the social outcomes of audience development and community building strategies cultural institutions need insights on the social milieus of their (potential) visitors

- Western societies have changed from 'class societies' to 'lifestyle societies' or 'social milieu societies'[1]
- To understand interests and needs of (potential) visitors social milieus have more explanatory power than sociodemographic data[2]

## How can cultural institutions find out empirically what social milieus their (potential) visitors can be affiliated with?

- Traditionally information about social milieus is gathered via quantitative studies
- The data collection effort concerning these milieu instruments is high, often large samples are needed
- Milieu instruments and evaluation methods are often not freely available
- Milieu instruments and evaluation methods are often very complex, utilizing them requires a high degree of specialist knowledge[3]



Picture: Sinus-Milieus® in Germany[4]

## Research question

Is there a way to gather information about milieu-affiliations of visitors and non-visitors…

- … using qualitative methods
- … without complex evaluation methods
- … requiring only small samples



## Ways to collect milieu data without extensive milieu instruments using 'subjective assessment'?

- Asking participants of a survey to assess their milieu affiliation by choosing one of eight SINUS Milieus©[4] they think is best suited via the social milieu titles (Dangschat/Alisch 1990)[5]
  - **+** Quick & easy  **–** The method lead to results that deviated significantly from the distribution of the original SINUS Milieus®
- Offering participants of a survey very short descriptions of several social milieus and asking them to choose the one they think suits them best (Spellerberg 1993)[6]
  - **+** Quick & Easy  **–** The ones questioned preferred indestinct and nice milieus while mileus associated negatively were not chosen

→ Is a 'subjective assessment' of a person`s social milieu affiliation possible at all?

→ Maybe only a more detailed description of social milieus is needed and therefore conducting a qualitative study would be a more suitable evaluation method?
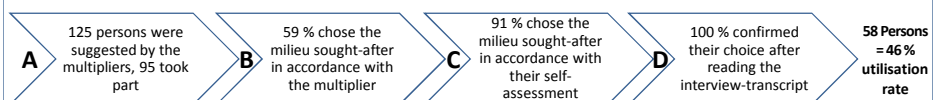
Picture: www.openclipart.org

## A step back: 'Subjective assessment' of a person' s social milieu affiliation – theoretical assumptions

- Social milieus really exist in society ('semi-groups')[7]
- A person`s social milieu affiliation is recognizable by himself/herself and by others ('destinction')[8]

## 'Subjective assessment'– a pilot study using Sinus-Milieus®[9]

- Step 1: Creating a detailed description of all the Sinus-Milieus® (used here: Sinus-Migrant-Milieus®[10])
  - Including values, sociodemographics, migration biographies, status of integration, attitudes and opinions relating to cultural preferences and the use of cultural offerings (each DIN A4 page)
- Step 2: Developing a system with alternately used external- and self- assessment of social milieu affiliations
  - A - External (multiplier reads all descriptions and suggests person he/she thinks is affiliated with the social milieu sought-after)
  - B - Self (this person reads all social milieu descriptions and chooses the one he/she think suits best )
  - C - External (this person and an interviewer go through milieu descriptions within a qualitative interview, the interviewee explains his/her milieu-choice, the interviewer checks if this affiliation is plausible)
  - D - Self (person reads interview transcript and checks again if affiliation is still plausible after some time)

## Success of the pilot study

| A | B | C | D | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 125 persons were suggested by the multipliers, 95 took part | 59 % chose the milieu sought-after in accordance with the multiplier | 91 % chose the milieu sought-after in accordance with their self-assessment | 100 % confirmed their choice after reading the interview-transcript | **58 Persons = 46 % utilisation rate** |

- The better the multipliers know the person they suggest and the more thoroughly all the participants read the descriptions the higher the likelihood that they both choose the milieu in accordance
- The factors within the milieu descriptions that lead to the identification of the social milieu someone can be affiliated with best are values, cultural preferences and the use of cultural offerings
- There is every likelihood that after four assessments the milieu affiliations can be determined correctly

## Contact

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