



SHORT PORTRAIT OF THE STUDY · FOR RECIPIENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

Your answer counts — whether you go or not

Decisions about culture in Düsseldorf are often based on visitor numbers. They show how many came. They do not show who would have liked to come and what stood in the way. The Düsseldorfer Freizeit- und Kulturpanel is the first to ask the city's population itself, systematically — including those who never go. If you have received a letter from us, you are one of the people whose answer matters.

What is being studied

We ask about the use of leisure and cultural offers in all their breadth — stage and music, museums and libraries, parks, the Rhine embankment, neighbourhood festivals — and about the reasons offers go unused: price, time of day, the journey, or the feeling of not being the intended audience. Whether you go often, rarely or never makes no difference — every answer counts the same.

The guiding question is: **Do institutions and their public look past each other?** Every institution has a picture of whom it is there for, and every person has a sense of whether they are meant. Where the two diverge, people stay away — even when time, money and interest are there.

Why a panel and not a one-off survey

A one-off survey shows a state, but not a change. Asking the same households again at intervals is the only way to trace the effects of programme changes, prices or new venues. We begin in October 2026 with a **pilot study in city district 1** — so that letters, questionnaire and technology can be tested in the field before the rest of the city is written to. Extension to all ten city districts is planned; the analysis will decide when. At the end of the questionnaire we therefore ask whether you would take part again in about a year. You are free to say no — your questionnaire counts just the same.

Who is behind it

Christian Sondergeld, sociologist in Düsseldorf. First visitor survey in 2013 at the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus, since then empirical work on the use of cultural and leisure offers — among others at the Cologne Gymnasiasten Panel, one of the few German long-term studies, and on both state cultural reports of North Rhine-Westphalia. Member of the German Association of Market and Social Researchers (BVM) and thus bound by its professional code.

He is a doctoral candidate at the University of Duisburg-Essen. **The panel is not part of this doctoral project** but an independent undertaking with its own research question and its own timetable; a subset of the results will also be analysed for the dissertation. The university is neither sponsor nor client, does not fund it and receives no data. The survey is conducted privately and from own funds — without a client and without sponsors.

What we ask of you

Around twelve minutes. Your address was drawn at random from the official geodata of the state — not because you registered somewhere or are considered interested in culture. That is why no one can take your place: every missing answer makes the picture a little less accurate.

The access code is in your letter. With it you open the questionnaire at **www.duesseldorfer-kulturpanel.de** — no account, no password; Participation is voluntary; you can pause or stop at any time. Your answers are stored separately from your address and analysed only in groups.

At a glance

Survey area
Düsseldorf, city district 1 (pilot study)

Sample
Random selection of addresses from official geodata of NRW

Field period
from October 2026

Participation
voluntary, with access code, no account

Survey modes
Online; anyone unable to do so gets in touch with us

Duration per survey
around 12 minutes

Responsible
Christian Sondergeld, privately and at his own expense

Client
none

Portal
www.duesseldorfer-kulturpanel.de

What we let ourselves be measured against

Independent. No one commissioned this survey, and no one pays for a particular result. Institutions that support the panel have no influence on the questionnaire, the analysis or the publication.

Neutral. Unaffiliated in worldview and party politics. Close to no party, church or association.

No interference with artistic freedom. The survey describes conditions of use; it does not recommend what should be staged or shown.

No educating of audiences. Those who do not go have no deficit — they have reasons. Understanding them is the purpose.

Results will be published, including the uncomfortable ones.