

Museums and Social Inclusion: Exploring the geography of school visits to museums.

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Abstract

Recent government funding for museums in the UK has identified museums as vehicles for addressing socio-economic issues such as urban regeneration and social inclusion. This paper examines the role that geography can play in assessing whether museums are engaging with these issues. Between 2003-2006 three major evaluations were funded by government agencies to analyse the contribution that museum education events make to tackling social agendas. This paper builds on conclusions made in these previous studies by examining in closer detail the locations of the schools and museums and re-examining the geography of visits by considering alternative interpretations of it. The paper demonstrates that by considering the geography of school visits a greater understanding of the socio-economic contexts of museum audiences can be reached. The geography of school visits raises many questions about how museums address social inclusion and the specific contexts and impacts of each school visit, these issues are subjects for further qualitative analysis.

Key words: Social Inclusion, museums, geography, schools, deprivation

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Introduction

Between 2003 and 2006 The Research Group for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester was commissioned to evaluate the Renaissance in the Regions education programmes. The first evaluation focused on the phase one Renaissance in the Regions hubs in the South West, West Midlands and North East of England (Renaissance 1, hereon), the second evaluation (Renaissance 2, hereon), extended the analysis to also incorporate phase two hub museums located in the East Midlands, East of England, London, the North West, South East and Yorkshire. RCMG was also commissioned in 2004 to undertake a third evaluation (DCMS/DfES, hereon), this study considered a separate series of partnership education projects funded jointly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). A note should be made here about the criteria for selecting the museums involved with the Renaissance and DCMS/DfES funding programmes. The museums selected for the Renaissance funding were chosen because they had been designated as a regional hub museum, partner or satellite museum. A weighted ranking

system of different factors such as location, status and infrastructure was used to select the hubs and partner museums that were in the strongest position to deliver the aims of the programme (Resource, 2001). In the DCMS/DfES strategic commissioning programme, funding was distributed to projects consisting of museum education partnerships between national and regional museums. The 2003-2004 strategic commissioning programme funded 12 projects involving 38 national and regional museums.

The methodology employed for all three RCMG evaluations used questionnaires distributed by museum staff, to pupils and teachers, (Hooper-Greenhill et al 2004a, 2004b, 2006). The questionnaires asked about the museum visit that the group had just completed. Further qualitative information was gathered through case studies, interviews and focus groups. In total the three research projects produced a considerable amount of quantitative and qualitative data, including over 3,000 teacher questionnaires and over 63,000 pupil questionnaires, creating an unparalleled and rare dataset in the current museum context.

Data collected from these research projects was analysed by considering the impact of the museum education programme on schools, teachers and pupils, and used the generic learning outcomes conceptual framework developed by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG).ⁱ

One outcome that was not originally anticipated was the result of the school postcode analysis. School address information including postcode was recorded on each of the teachers' questionnaires. It was possible from this postcode data to geo-reference each school and from this to establish the deprivation ranking of the school location using the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) 2000 (in Renaissance 1 & DCMS/DfES evaluations) and IMD 2004 (In the Renaissance 2 evaluation).

In the Renaissance 1 project, for example just under half of the visits were from schools located in the top 20% most deprived areas in the country, with only 1% of the total visits coming from Independent schools (See Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2004a). The results of these studies showed that there is an unexpected and potentially highly significant geography of school visits which is surprising considering the widespread view of museums as elitist and exclusionary places (Sandell, 1998).

This paper will first establish the policy context of the research before moving on to interrogate the geography of school visits in more detail. The affects of using alternative measures of deprivation on the regional picture presented in the Renaissance 1 evaluation will be analysed, and methodological issues concerning the use of aggregated data explored. The final section of this paper will present some initial suggestions about the spatial relationship of schools to museums and what this could potentially mean for museums and policy makers in terms of social inclusion.

Policy context

The RCMG evaluations are situated within a specific policy context, involving wider political agendas. They are also indicative of a particular relationship of cultural organisations to government and the development of what Belfiore (2006) terms 'a process of attachment', whereby the culture sector has become connected to the social inclusion agenda. Belfiore argues that this process of attachment has successfully raised the visibility of the sector in policy making discourse. In the context of the Renaissance in the Regions programme there are at least two examples of policy attachment: first, the realisation that through the joint funding of the programme with the Department for Education and Skills, museums have the potential to contribute to the aims and objectives of other government departments, and second, that the Renaissance in the Regions programme steers the museum sector towards an explicit social agenda, in line with New Labour's discourse of social inclusion (e.g. Resource, 2001:43). Although the connection of museums to social inclusion is not specific to the Renaissance programme, (DCMS, 2000, Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2000), the Renaissance report explicitly links the regeneration of regional museums into a range of strategies and engagements with social and educational agendas. Hailed in the museum press as the most significant investment in regional museums in over 40 years (Heal, 2002), the Renaissance in the Regions programme in its entirety was allocated £70 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and along with the DCMS National/Regional education projects, the Department for Education and Skills made a £4.7million investment in museums. Although not the level of funding that was anticipated (Heal, 2002), this investment marks a significant signpost in the strategic direction of the museum sector.

The increased profile of museums as vehicles for social agendas met with a mixed response from the museum sector. In the academic literature, the idea of sectoral change (Sandell, 2003) was explored, pointing towards the internal discord that the social inclusion agenda highlighted. The opinion that museums should not get involved with government agendas is also apparent in communication to various museum organisations (e.g. see Hawke-Smith, 2002). There is also a body of literature which critically discusses the role of museums in social policy (Appleton 2001, Mirza, 2006), and ongoing attempts to define and review how to measure the impact of the arts (e.g. see Matarasso 1997, Comedia 2004, Reeves, 2002 Scott, 2006). However, despite little agreement as to how impact can be measured, the necessity remains to evaluate the outcomes of increased funding so that museums can demonstrate to key stakeholders that they are value for money, (Belfiore, 2004). The three RCMG evaluations introduced here can be seen as products of this evidence based policy context, the emphasis being placed on measuring the impact of the DCMS and DfES investment in terms of proven, successful engagement with the social inclusion and education agendas. Methodologies used in the RCMG evaluations introduce a new route into ascertaining impact by studying the geography of school visits to museums.

Geography and space are inherently connected to the museum, demonstrated for example through the process of collecting (Hill, 2006), the arrangement of displays (Pile, 2005), the internal layout and design, (Psarra, 2005) and through the wider context of heritage and the urban environment, (Huysen, 1995). The geography of museum visits is a relatively neglected research area, particularly with regard to the assessment of the museum's impact on social inclusion agendas. However, the RCMG evaluations raised the idea of a specific geography of museum visits whereby museums are attracting children from some of the most deprived areas of England, suggesting that geography can aid our understanding of how museums are connecting to social inclusion. It is clear from current interim results of the DCMS 'Taking Part Survey' that museums are successfully engaging visitors from ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic groupsⁱⁱ. However, little is known about how museums might actually address social inclusion. Newman and Mclean (2006 & 2004) indicated that there is a lack of understanding in museums about how they can actually contribute to the social agendas. These authors make the link between identity and social exclusion but stress that '...broadening the audience enables the museum or gallery to act upon a greater range of the population, but tells very little about the impact that is being made upon visitors' (2004:176). Policies such as Renaissance in the Regions steer museums towards tackling social inclusion but do not highlight the nature of this inclusion. I would suggest that geography of museum visits holds the potential to explore the nature of this inclusion through further consideration of the neighbourhood contexts of the children that visited the museums in the RCMG studies.

Interrogating the geography of visits: Introduction

The postcode data from the three previous evaluations revealed some highly surprising results with possible far reaching implications (Hooper-Greenhill et al forthcoming). Regarding the kind of audience museums are attracting however, the validity of this result must be interrogated in order to understand the complexities of the picture presented.

The classification of a school's deprivation ranking was achieved using the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions' (DETR) Index of Multiple Deprivation 2001 (for Renaissance 1 and DCMS/DfES) and IMD 2004 (Renaissance 2). Seven differently weighted domains based on data from the 2001 census were used in the construction of the index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, with income and employment deprivation forming 45% of the index. The IMD 2004 ranks all 32,482 census super output areas in England with a ranking of 1 being the most deprived to 32,482 being the least deprived. The deprivation ranking of a school is therefore located by comparing the school postcode with a postcode to super output area 'lookup table'ⁱⁱⁱ. This procedure was repeated for each school postcode across the three RCMG evaluations with the following results.

Name of Evaluation	% of class visits from the top 20% most deprived areas in England
Renaissance 1	46% (IMD 2000)
Renaissance 2	32% (IMD 2004)
DCMS/ DfES strategic partnerships	43% (IMD 2000)

Table 1: Summarised results of the three RCMG evaluations.
Source: Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2004a, 2004b & 2006^v

There are several potential explanations for this geography which need to be confirmed or rejected in order to consider how museums are connecting to the inclusion agenda.

Can the geography of school visits be accounted for as an ‘artefact’ of the particular index of deprivation used?

A simple way to view this question is to consider whether other methods of defining or classifying deprivation that rely on alternative or differently weighted variables would produce the same results. There are a variety of alternative indices which aim to describe deprivation (see Morris & Carstairs, 1991), and there are also examples of comparative analysis between indices. Hoare (2003) for instance considered the effect of using two different indices, the IMD 2000 and the Townsend index, on data relating to health inequalities in England, and suggested that the same pattern of health inequalities exist using either index. Hoare’s conclusions indicate that using a different index of deprivation made no difference to the over all pattern. Transferring this conclusion to the current study, it could be suggested that the different indices of deprivation such as the Townsend index would make little or no difference to the geography of school visits presented using the IMD 2000. In support of this conclusion, the Renaissance 1 study which originally used the IMD 2000 was also reassessed using the IMD 2004. This updated deprivation index which incorporated several new variables produced little variation from the original results.

A further classification system, Experian Mosaic public sector classification, has also been applied to the Renaissance 1 data. This classification system is used because of the difference between the types of data used to construct it compared with the IMD 2000/2004. The Mosaic classification system claims to give an insight into the socio-demographics, lifestyles, culture and behaviour of UK citizens and has been applied to the education context by Singleton (2004). This classification system is based on census data, consumer habits, lifestyle survey information, and consumer credit activity as well as information contained within the electoral roll, house prices and council tax information^v. Mosaic is considered an appropriate alternative to the IMD in this context because it links consumption to identity. As museums are also associated

with identity formation (Newman & Mclean, 2006), Mosaic classification may offer a different and perhaps more appropriate interpretation of the geographical picture of museum visits than other popular indices of deprivation. Experian Mosaic classification therefore is used here to test whether it will present a different picture of the regions that the schools in the three evaluations are located in.

The school postcode data for the Renaissance 1 study has been categorised using the Experian Mosaic public sector classification system. This data has been made available to the academic community via the Census Dissemination Unit^{vi}. Mosaic categorises all UK consumers into 11 groups and 61 lifestyle types which Experian suggests describe the socio-economic and socio-cultural behaviour of all UK consumers (Experian, no date). For the Renaissance 1 data, for example, the composition of different neighbourhood types showed that within the data set there were households present from all neighbourhood groups, although the group that contained the highest percentage across the dataset was group D which comprised 19% of the total households, and group C which comprised 14% of the households. In the accompanying documentation provided by Experian, Group D is given the name 'Ties of the Community' this group is described as: '...people whose lives are mostly played out within the confines of close knit communities. Living mostly in older houses in inner city neighbourhoods or in small industrial towns, most of these people own their homes, drive their own cars and hold down responsible jobs' (Experian, no date). The description goes on to emphasize that this type of neighbourhood group is common in old coalfield regions, steel and shipbuilding towns, which it is possible to argue all three regions in the Renaissance 1 study (the North East, South West & West Midlands), contain. However a closer inspection of this data by region (see figures 1, 2 & 3 and accompanying key), highlights that only the West Midlands has the highest composition of this group. The North East in fact has a higher percentage of group G households, which are described as mostly containing '...families on lower incomes who live on large municipal council estates' (Experian, no date). Interestingly in the South West the highest percentage of households is from group K, which is entitled 'summer playgrounds', these are mainly rural areas, where '...urban people own second homes and where bed and breakfasts and other agro-tourism provide important sources of seasonal income' (Experian, no date).

The Mosaic system supports the region by region picture of the Renaissance 1 data that the IMD 2000 provides, where the North East and West Midlands have the highest percentages of visits from schools located in the top 20% most deprived areas of the country (Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2004a). Mosaic classification groups actually add much finer contextual detail at the individual region level, allowing for consideration of the specific identities of each region. It should be noted however that the scope of the labels given to specific groups and types, as Experian makes clear, focus on the statistical bias in a type of neighbourhood. There will therefore be households which do not fit into these labels. Leading on from this point, using indices composed from

aggregated data has its own potential pitfall, namely the ecological fallacy which should be briefly considered here.

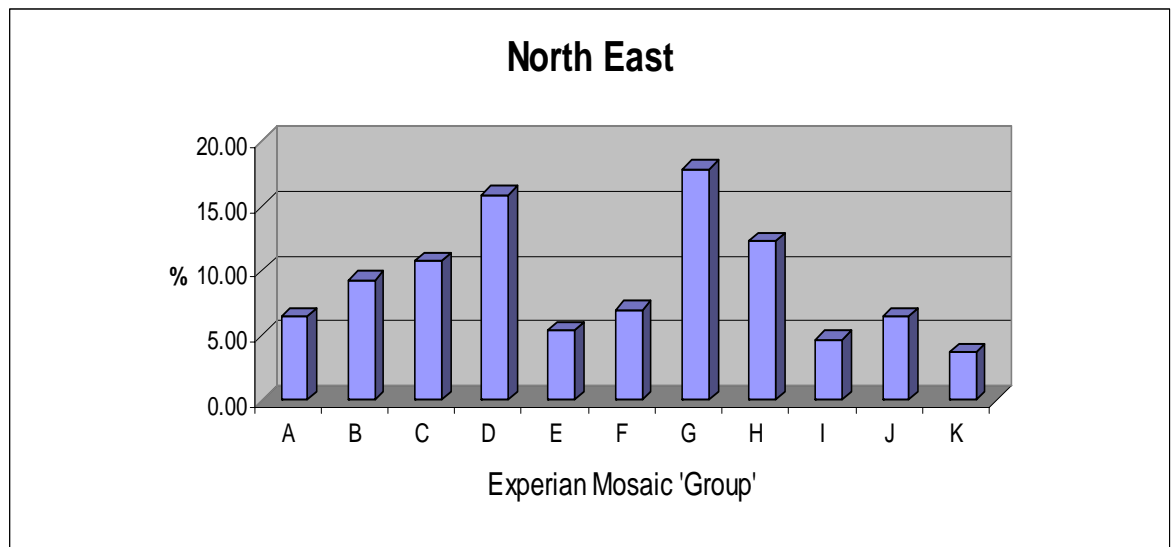


Figure 1: Renaissance 1 Experian Mosaic Groups, Schools in North East Region
Base: 257 school visits, approximately 8937 pupils.

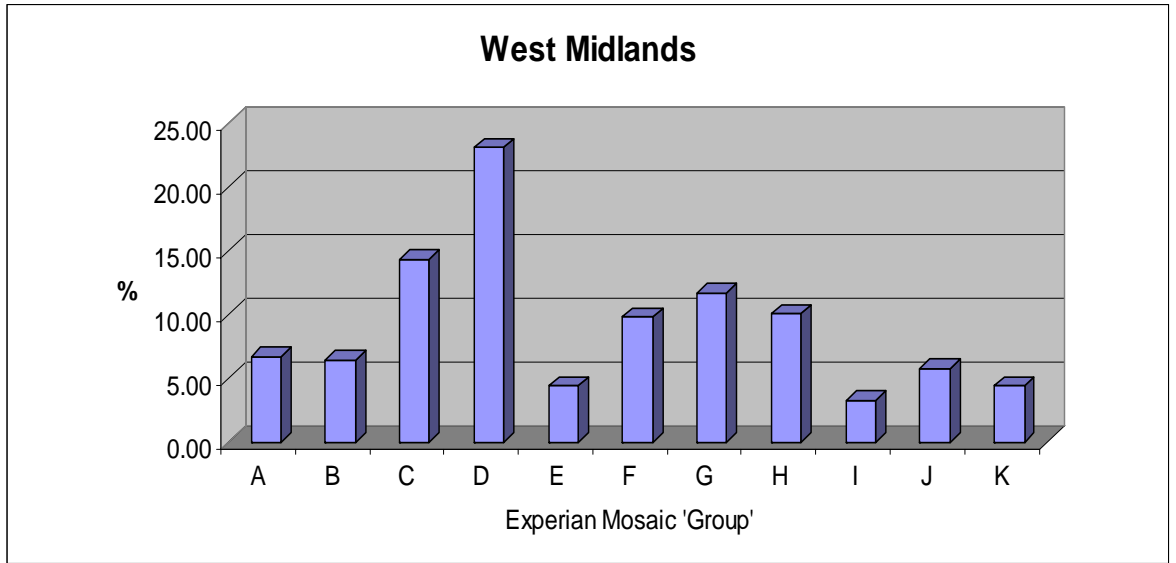


Figure 2: Renaissance 1 Experian Mosaic Groups, Schools in West Midlands
Base: 359 school visits, approximately 12983 pupils.

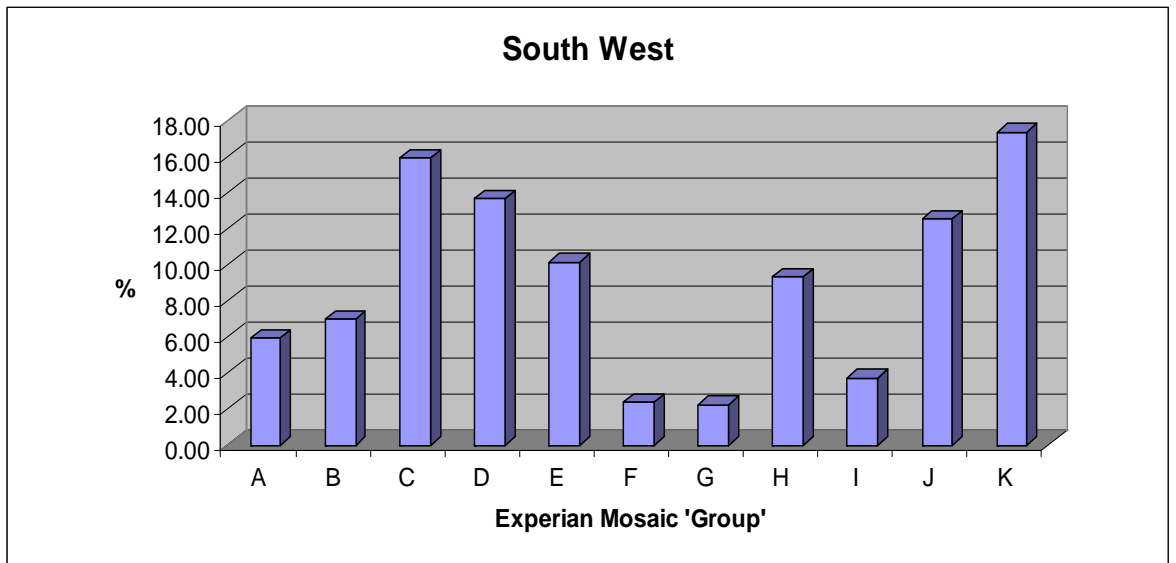


Figure 3: Renaissance 1 Experian Mosaic Groups, Schools in South West Region
Base: 176 school visits, approximately 5958 pupils.

Figures 1-3: Key

Experian Mosaic Group	Description ^{vii}
A	Symbols of Success People with rewarding careers who live in sought after locations, affording luxuries and premium quality products.
B	Happy Families Families with focus on career and home, mostly younger age groups now raising children.
C	Suburban Comfort Families who are successfully established in comfortable, mature homes. Children are growing up and finances are easier.
D	Ties of Community People living in close-knit inner city and manufacturing town communities, responsible workers with unsophisticated tastes.
E	Urban Intelligence Young, single and mostly well-educated, these people are cosmopolitan in tastes and liberal in attitudes.
F	Welfare Borderline People who are struggling to achieve rewards and are mostly reliant on the council for accommodation and benefits.
G	Municipal Dependency Families on lower incomes who often live in large council estates where there is little owner-occupation.
H	Blue Collar Enterprise People who though not well-educated are practical and enterprising and may well have exercised their right to buy.
I	Twilight Subsistence Elderly people subsisting on meagre incomes in council accommodation.
J	Grey Perspectives Independent pensioners living in their own homes who are relatively active in their lifestyles.
K	Rural Isolation People living in rural areas where country life has not been influenced by urban consumption patterns

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The ecological fallacy concerns the problem of making causal inferences about individuals based on aggregated data (O'Sullivan & Unwin, 2003). In the context of this research for example, the ecological fallacy would be to assume that every pupil in the school is suffering from deprivation because of the deprivation ranking of the super output area the school is located in.

A way of avoiding these assumptions is to consider school catchment areas rather than school address. Gibson and Asthana (2000) suggest that the postcode of a school alone may not accurately describe the socio-economic picture of the pupils that attend that school, therefore looking at school

catchment areas will help to consider the picture of deprivation at a finer resolution. However conceptually, catchment areas are vague spatial areas to define (Pearce, 2000), and it should not be assumed that a school's catchment area is the immediate area surrounding the school. Pupil place of residence will therefore provide an individual map for each school of the home location of each pupil, allowing for an interpretation of how deprived that school is based on the pupils that go to it. Pupil postcodes offer an alternative view of the geography of school visits. As this is work in progress, access to pupil postcode information is currently being negotiated.

Focusing again on school specific data, another way of interrogating the geography of visits presented in the three previous evaluations is to consider free school meal data. Eligibility for free school meals is based on whether a pupil's parents receive a range of support payments, including Income Support.^{viii} The percentage of eligible pupils at each school is a way of considering the individual home context of the pupils and avoiding the perils of the ecological fallacy, it is possible that a school that is not in a deprived area could have a high percentage of free school meal eligibility and vice versa. In the Renaissance 2 evaluation (Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2006), free school meal data was included as part of the evaluation and it confirmed the results of the postcode analysis. This methodology has subsequently been applied to the Renaissance 1 evaluation (see table 2 & figure 4), again confirming the interpretation of the postcode analysis, namely that museums are attracting visits from schools with high levels of pupil deprivation. As the distribution of pupils eligible for free school meals nationally is highly skewed, with large amounts of schools containing a low percentage of eligible pupils and a small number of schools containing very high numbers of eligible pupils, the schools appearing in the Renaissance 1 evaluation were classified according to their position within DfES national 'quartiles'. Each quartile contains a quarter of schools nationally, but when applied to the distribution of the Renaissance 1 schools, 34.2% of these schools feature in the fourth quartile. This result suggests that there are a disproportionate number of schools from the Renaissance 1 data that are eligible for free school meals.

Free school meal data however, is based on a measure of income deprivation, as indeed are the IMD 2000 and IMD 2004, which place income along with employment as the highest weighted variables. The picture of deprivation these indices give is therefore bias towards economic factors. Unlike the Experian Mosaic classification, these indices do not consider factors connected to identity.

National Quartile	Range of % of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of school visits to museums	% of school visits
First	0 - 4.6%	121	16.4
Second	4.7 -10.9	175	23.6
Third	11.0 - 24.2	191	25.8
Fourth	24.3 -100	253	34.2

Base = 740 single school visits

Table 2: Percentage of Renaissance 1 school visits ranked by DfES national Quartiles for range of pupils (%) eligible for free school meals.

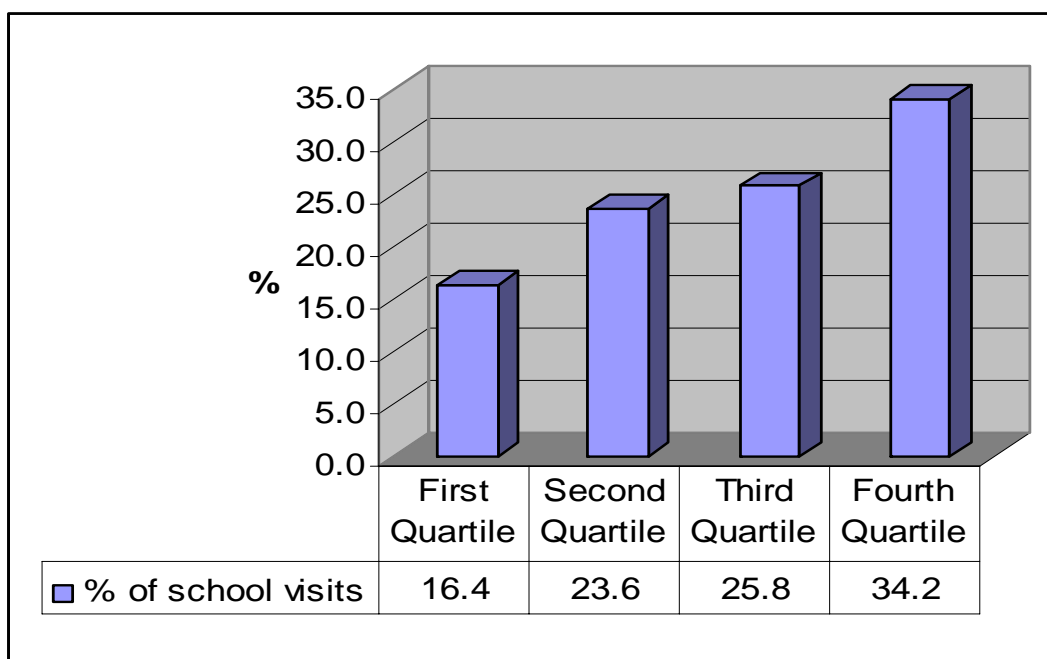


Figure 4. Percentage of Renaissance 1 school visits ranked by DfES national quartiles for range of pupils (%) eligible for free school meal data.

The question posed at the beginning of this section asked whether the geography of school visits can be interpreted as an artefact of the index of deprivation used in the original evaluations. Initial interrogations of this geography using different measures of deprivation such as the Experian Mosaic classification that consider households through lifestyle profiles, and data which analyses the school level picture of deprivation through free school meal eligibility, support the conclusions from the postcode analysis made in the original Renaissance 1 evaluation.

Analysing the geography of school visits using the methodologies discussed here highlights the potential for museums to use such techniques to evaluate and their own work. Understanding the socio-economic geography locally, regionally and even nationally may also help museums to recognise what geographic areas they should be targeting.

A discussion of the picture presented through the analysis so far does not consider the spatial relationship of schools to museums. In order to begin to tackle this subject it is first necessary to establish the general patterns that are displayed by the locations of schools and museums that took part in the Renaissance 1 evaluation.

Using the Rural and Urban Area Classification of Output Areas 2005^{ix}. The super output area of each school and museum has been classified according to different settlement type and context categories. Table 3 shows the percentage of, museums and schools in each of the 3 categories. From this table it is possible to see that 98% of the museums that took part in the Renaissance 1 evaluation were located in heavily urbanised areas. Similarly across the whole evaluation, 82% of the schools that visited these museums were also located in urban areas. Bearing in mind that beyond classifying both school and museum locations as ‘Urban’ we can not assume that they are in the same urban areas; however we can begin to explore the potential significance of this ‘urban’ relationship.

	% Urban/Rural Classification type 1 (Urban >10K Less sparse)	% Urban/Rural classification type 2 (Town & Fringe less sparse)	% Urban/Rural classification type 3 (Village, Hamlet & isolated Dwelling)
Museums in Renaissance 1 evaluation	98%	2%	-
All schools in Renaissance 1 evaluation	82%	8%	10%
Schools in Renaissance 1 evaluation from top 20% most deprived areas in England	97%	2%	0.5%

Table 3: % of Renaissance 1 Museums, schools and schools in the top 20% most deprived areas of England in each of the Urban/Rural classification types.

As noted previously one of the factors for selection of the hub museums in the Renaissance programme is the geographic location of the museum. The location criteria included consideration of proximity to other registered museums, population catchment and social-deprivation indices (Resource, 2001:117). This raises the possibility that the selection of museums as hubs, partners or satellites favoured museums in heavily populated, socially deprived areas which we would expect to also be classified as heavily urbanised, it is therefore possible to consider the picture of school and museum locations as indicative of the relationship that museums in the evaluation have to their local area. Schools are perhaps more likely to choose to go to a local museum because of its close proximity rather than venture further a field which offers the potential that the geography of school visits is explained more by the convenience of the museum to the school rather than the presence of successful social inclusion agendas in that museum. However, this picture is also indicative of the importance of the location of museums in heavily urbanised, inner-city locations.

Interestingly when the mean IMD 2004 ranking of all super output areas in England is compared alongside the mean IMD 2004 ranking for the three regions in the Renaissance 1 report (See Table 4 below) it is possible to see that in two of the three regions in this study, the mean IMD ranking is less than the national ranking, signifying that compared with the national picture there is a higher proportion of deprived areas in these regions.

Region	Mean IMD 2004 ranking
England	16,241
South West	17,172
North East	10,028
West Midlands	10,723

Table 4: Mean IMD 2004 ranking across England and by participating region.

The potential is therefore greater for the museums in the North East and West Midlands to have contact with schools from deprived areas. It may also support the selection made by Resource of these museums for the Renaissance in the Regions programme, as they appear to be well located for social programming.

If potentially the majority of the museums' audience in the Renaissance 1 evaluation is also located in these urban areas, this is suggestive of the potential for these museums to link to their local communities. Even if a museum does not have a proactive social inclusion policy, or is resistant to engagement with this agenda, by being located in a heavily urbanised area

the museum may already be a good vehicle for education and social inclusion agendas simply because of this location.

An issue not so far considered in detail is the reasons behind choice of venues for a school visit, which may depend on a variety of different concerns. Proximity of school to museum is potentially one of these issues but there are many others. In the original three evaluations, the views of school teachers about museums as venues for school trips were considered, however such issues as possible economic restrictions schools face, the potential competition for school visits from other venues, and the kind of relationships that museums are developing with school teachers were not originally explored to any great extent due to time restrictions.

How issues such as those mentioned above affect the number and location of schools that visit museums is therefore under researched in this context. The following example demonstrates the need for further qualitative research in this area. Figure 5 shows the North of England with the location of Arbeia Roman Fort, along with the locations of the schools which visited. The site attracted schools from a variety of distances ranging from very local, to medium distances, and one school which travelled over 130km. This particular school is a Church of England Primary school located in a rural setting, which although not in the 20% most deprived areas in England, is also not in the top 20% least deprived areas either. The question of why this school travelled such a long distance to visit Arbeia Roman Fort when there are other Roman fort sites far nearer would benefit from further investigation. However, mapping the school and museum points is a useful tool for analysing the geographic reach of a museum and will be applied across the study data. Theoretically, a school from a deprived area which is shown to be visiting a museum some distance away could suggest that proximity of the museum comes second to what this venue potentially offers; it could also suggest that some museums are being particularly far reaching, building relationships in excluded communities across the country.

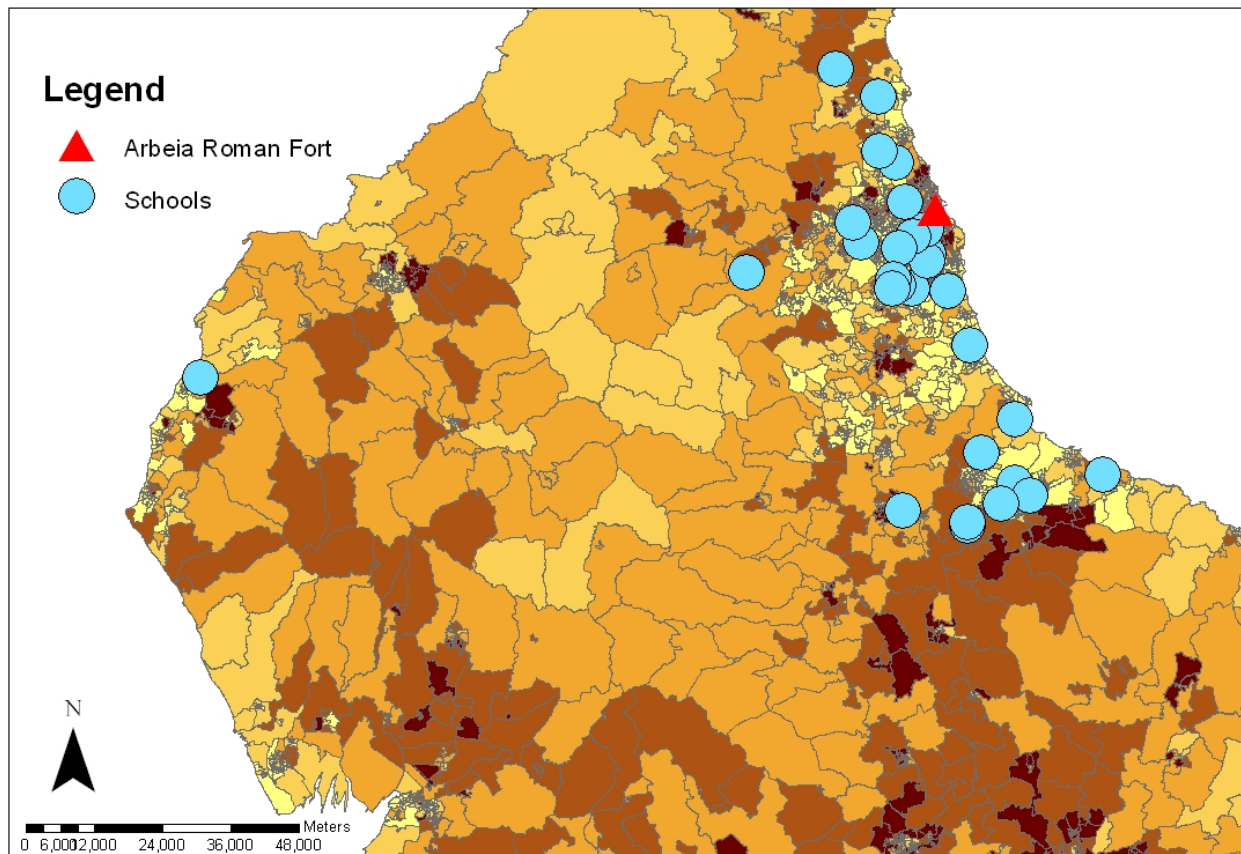


Figure 5: North of England showing the location of Arbeia Roman Fort and the Schools that visited it. (Renaissance 1). This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is copyright of the Crown

Conclusions

The three evaluations conducted by RCMG of museum education programmes that took place as a consequence of increased funding for museums revealed through postcode analysis of school addresses that museums, contrary to popular opinion, are attracting a significant audience from the most deprived areas of England. This gave rise to the suggestion that the geography of school visits to museums can indicate the positive engagement of museums with social inclusion issues.

Initial interrogation of this geographical pattern of visits using the Experian Mosaic classification system suggests that the picture remains broadly similar despite the different composition of this classification system. In fact this particular classification system, taking into consideration the potential generalisation that it offers, seems to give a more detailed area by area picture highlighting local contextual information that may be contributing to the deprivation ranking of that neighbourhood. Investigating the geography of school visits by using alternative measures of deprivation also helps to highlight the problems of how we interpret deprivation using these different indices. Social inclusion is viewed by policy makers as a concept which

concerns a number of different interrelated problems.^x The IMD 2000 & 2004 try to reflect this idea by using a range of different social variables, but emphasis is still placed on a view of deprivation which is primarily linked to income and economics. The application of such indices to the three evaluations therefore establishes a connection from museums and potentially other cultural organisations to economics.

The possibility of using pupil place of residence information and free school meal eligibility allows the geography of school visits to be analysed at a finer resolution, the initial free school meal data supports the overall image that museums are reaching schools which serve a socially deprived community.

By considering the location of schools and museums in the data presented, an image of the majority of schools and museums being located in heavily urbanized areas has been created, with the suggestion that schools are visiting their nearest cultural organization. However, rather than viewing this as picture as an indication that museums are not reaching out to far away communities, it highlights the importance of the museum as a feature of the urban context and suggests that by their location, they make good institutions to use for tackling social policies regardless or not of whether they are explicitly trying to do this.

Geographical analysis of school postcodes provides a way of assessing the potential and actual social reach that museums are having. In the three RCMG evaluations the geography of museum visits indicated that those museums that took part in the evaluations, whether intending to or not, are attracting an audience from deprived areas, framing museums as vehicles for social inclusion.

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Notes

i RCMG was commissioned in 2001 by MLA to develop a way of measuring learning across museums, libraries and archives, see www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk, for more information.

ii See the most recent statistical release from the DCMS 'Taking Part' Survey (14th December). www.culture.gov.uk

iii Available to the academic community via www.edina.ac.uk/ukborders

iv For the purposes of this paper only the percentage of class visits in the top 20% most deprived areas in England have been given, for a more detailed picture please refer to the individual evaluation reports (Hooper-Greenhill et al, 2004a, 2004b & 2006).

v See <http://census.ac.uk/cdu/experian/documentation.htm> (windows help file) for a more detailed breakdown of the data used in the Mosaic classification.

vi See <http://census.ac.uk/cdu/>

vii Short descriptions from <http://census.ac.uk/cdu/experian/documentation.htm>

viii For information on free school meal eligibility criteria see www.governornet.co.uk/publishArticle.cfm?ContentID=724

ix Available from National Statistics online. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp>

x See the Social Exclusion Unit definition of exclusion <http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/page.asp?id=213>