

Alles Buch. Studien der Erlanger Buchwissenschaft XII

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Bestsellerlisten 1962–2001. Eine statistische Analyse

Regular bestseller lists were established in Germany in 1957. Since then, different kinds of them have been published in a wide array of newspapers and magazines. Nevertheless, these lists have hardly been taken as the basis for research.

Whereas several books and research papers deal with the theoretical part of the bestseller business, for example with questions about the definition of the “bestseller”, this work was trying to broaden the approaches taken so far and look into the lists themselves. To do that, the yearly bestseller lists published in the respected news magazine *Der Spiegel* and the extended lists the trade journal *Buchreport* published since 1974 were taken as a basis for the investigation.

First, the fiction and non-fiction lists were analyzed separately. This statistical inquiry was further subdivided into the examination of the top 10 titles from 1962 to 2001 and the top 100 titles starting in 1974. This analysis looked at the developments over the course of time and dealt with matters of the publishing houses, the authors and the titles themselves. After the statistical inquiry was completed, a second part of the investigation was concerned with looking at the contents of the books on the yearly lists, trying to figure out patterns and trends that developed over the years.

All these inquiries led to a wide array of results, showing that there were hardly any changes in several aspects, whereas in others there was a wide array of developments taking place over the course of time. The final part of the paper brought the fiction and non-fiction results face to face to one another and compared them. This led to the realization that there are quite some similarities but also differences to be seen in the comparison of the statistical data. On the other hand the content analysis could hardly be compared as the results were so different from one another.

All in all, there were discoveries to be made during the investigation but it also had to be concluded that there is quite a lot left to inquiry. It is also a fact that many of the developments might not be completed yet, so that future data material also has to be considered to reach further results.