

Cultural Participation in the Main Colombian cities, 2008-2015

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Abstract

This paper aims to explain the evolution of the cultural participation in Colombia between 2008 and 2015, and to empirically analyse the factors associated to the decision of participating in cultural activities in the five main cities during this period. In Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla and Cartagena, half of the urban population resides. The effects of a set of individual variables, household and context are evaluated, exploring alongside the traditional determinants, a set of new variables such as the kind of education that children receive, the poverty situation and others concerning the habitat, the social capital and macroeconomic ones. Microdata from households from the Quality of Life Survey – from programmes of citizen monitoring- are used, with which a binomial model is estimated. The results highlight the importance of including the context variables so as to widen the knowledge of the individual decisions of participation.

Keywords: economics of culture; cultural participation; structural factors; *probit* models.

JEL classification: Z11; D120; C250.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Latin America the studies that take into account the economic dimension of cultural participation are scarce. Even though, in Colombia knowledge about people's decisions on cultural participation has been brought, most of the studies have a national analytic scope, not a regional one. Following this path, different authors have studied the theatre attendance, the consumption of recorded music, book and newspaper reading, and the attendance to libraries¹, using as a base of information the Cultural Consumption Survey (ECC) from the National Administrative Statistics Department (DANE).

Despite this, this survey does not have the desired continuity nor the regional representativeness (in municipalities and provinces), reason why it gets more difficult to

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understand the dynamics of the decisions of participation made by individuals, and no supplies are offered to improve the focusing of the national cultural policies. In fact, since the mid-90s, Colombia takes a step forward on fiscal and administrative decentralization, process that gives municipalities and provinces greater room for autonomy on investment decisions, among which the cultural sector is found.

The regionalized analysis has been even scarcer. [Espinosa and Toro \(2016\)](#) study the case of Cartagena, the fifth most populated Colombian city. The authors try to explain the cultural participation applying the idea of structural factors raised by [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#). Despite having expanded the role of the local context in the case of Cartagena, Espinosa and Toro do not take into account the effect of the macroeconomic processes, neither the regional ones. Among the macroeconomic processes are, for example, the role of economic inequality, and among the regional ones, the levels of social capital and the culture policies of each city.

This set of national and local studies allows us to identify different challenges for the analysis of cultural participation in Colombia. The first of them is the need to improve the understanding of the local context effects, in order to determine, for example, if the spatial segregation patterns or the above said regional processes explain the differences in participation. The second of them, is to widen the comprehension of the nature of individual decisions, introducing aspects from the cultural offer and the household, such as the poverty situation and the kind of education that children receive.

The present work finds its purpose in analysing the evolution of cultural participation in the main Colombian cities between 2008 and 2015, and in empirically analysing the determinant factors on the decision of participating in cultural activities made by the inhabitants of the five main Colombian cities: Bogota, Cali, Medellin, Barranquilla and Cartagena. In these cities half of the urban population of the country live.

To achieve this objective, the structural factors of the cultural participation are evaluated according to that proposed by [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#), that is, of those that modify the economic and social assessment to participate in the cultural life. This evaluation is made, in the first place, through the effects of a set of variables of the traditional individuals, such as gender and educational level, to which new ones are added, such as the kind of education that children receive. In the second place, through household variables, being the socioeconomic status the traditional ones, and adding others like the poverty situation and environment aspects such as the habitat, safety and the social capital. Finally, macroeconomics constraints are analysed, such as economic inequality and regional effects, and others related to the offer that are explained through time shocks, governance and cultural policies.

Microdata obtained from the programmes of citizen monitoring *Cómo Vamos* from these cities are used. They carry out each year a survey in order to evaluate the representative quality of lives per households². The results are obtained by estimating a *Probit* model for the set of the five cities, using control variables depending on the kind of explicative factors. Also, conclusions for each of the five analysed cities are shown. The article contributes to the economic literature on culture in Colombia and Latin America by adding to the traditional scope and the empiric validation of cultural participation a set of structural factors for a representative group of cities, absent until now in this literature.

In the section that follows this introduction a revision on cultural participation literature is presented, literature that is related to the conceptual framework of the study and status of this argument in Colombia, making reference to the path that has followed the cultural participation

as an object of study. The third part of the work introduces the data and methodology used to find the factors that explain cultural participation, taking as a starting point the Evaluation of Life Quality survey (ECV, onwards), that are carried out by the already mentioned programmes of citizen control. In the fourth section, the results of the empirical exercise on the associated factors to cultural participation in the five Colombian cities are introduced. It is finished with a presentation on the conclusions and a discussion on politics challenges.

2. CULTURAL PARTICIPATION: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND EVIDENCE IN COLOMBIA

2.1 Review on the general literature

The theoretical referents that maintain this work collect the thoughts about cultural life participation. We use the scope of economy to understand why people choose cultural activities and leisure ones versus other actions that require a usage of time. These other ones can be working and studying, activities that restrict the voluntary action to participate, and that therefore condition the structure of the individual's preferences.

Becker (1965) and later Stigler and Becker (1977) show how the goods and services consumption of this nature produces cultural experiences. These goods do not represent by themselves the satisfiers of cultural need, but they are combined with time and resources under the hypothetical form of an individual production function.

The set of factors that restrain the decision of participation in cultural activities has been studied in the last years for regions and countries (Ateca-Amestoy, 2010; Casarin and Moretti, 2011; Falk and Katz-Gerro, 2016), and also for a big group of activities such as scenic arts (Seaman, 2006; Ateca-Amestoy, 2008, 2010; Zieba, 2016), the book and newspaper demand and the reading habits (Villarroya and Escardibul, 2010; Fernández Blanco and Prieto Rodríguez, 2009; Ringstad and Loyland, 2006), the consumption of folk music (Montoro-Pons *et al.*, 2013) and the attendance to folk parties (Palma *et al.*, 2014), among others.

The cultural participation gains strength in the concept of gap of participation raised more than fifty years ago by Baumol and Bowen in order to analyse the consumption in scenic arts (Baumol and Bowen, 1966). For these authors the differences in the level of cultural activity of people are the result of certain individual and household characteristics (for example, parents that are sensitive and growers of certain habits, practices and cultural expressions).

This way, it is understood that the width and intensity of cultural participation can be explained through the role that the intergenerational transference of skills of cultural consumption of accrued cultural capital plays (Ateca-Amestoy, 2009). The gap presumes the concentration of participation on certain population groups (a small proportion), almost always seated in urban centres, with high levels of education and income due to their high working profile.

In the explanation to this gap, the taste for goods and cultural services plays a key role that, according to Throsby (2001) and McCain (2003), is accumulative and increases with time and with the bigger exposure to art. The taste comes from the previous cultural consumption experiences through mechanisms of *rational addiction* and the *learning through consumption*. The rational addiction depends, according to Stigler and Becker (1977), on the time intended for cultural consumption, and on the human accumulated capital. At the same time, this stock comes from the past cultural experience and the

investment on cultural education, generating again a process of rational addiction that casts the tastes of those who participate in the cultural life.

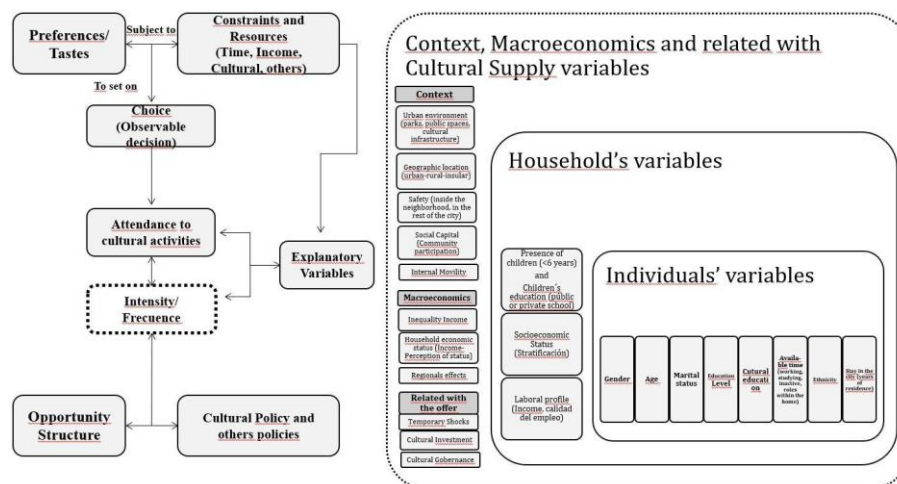
For the purposes of this article, it is started off from the hypothesis that there exists a set of structural factors that have an effect on cultural participation. For [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#), it is factors added to those raised by [Stigler and Becker \(1977\)](#), that condition and modify the social and economic assessment of the realisation of cultural activities, and that make cultural participation to be placed in a little segment of the population.

The main premise of these authors is that “cultural participation is determined in a joint way by the typical variables of the rational expectations models –‘rational addiction’ and ‘acknowledgement through consumption’- as well as by a framework of structural factors ([Aguado and Palma, 2015, p. 59](#)).

In retrospect, for Aguado and Palma the main factors are the “illness of the costs” ([Baumol and Bowen, 1966](#)); the observation of the harassed leisure class of [Linder \(1970\)](#); the rational bias against culture of [Scitovsky \(1976\)](#); the cultivation of demand of [Zakaras and Lowell \(2008\)](#), and the assessment of cultural diversity of the UNESCO (Organisation of the United Nations for Education, Science and Culture, UNESCO, 2005).

This set of structural factors can be evaluated by means of traditional variables such as the incomes and leisure time, the cultural capital that involves the level and creation of human capital. Also, through other ones focused on the cultural demand and offer, being in the first place the insertion of artistic education in the curriculum to cultivate the demand and the availability of resources different to the incomes (like cultural infrastructure) and, in a second place, the application of policies that create proper atmospheres for the creation ([Aguado and Palma, 2015, p. 67](#)).

In this work, the scope of these structural factor is widened, the “framework of factors” that are raised, positioned towards local analysis, and pointing out that there exist additional characteristics of households and their urban context, of types of policies and cultural regulation, and of macro-processes (specially processes of distribution of incomes and opportunities) in cities that explain the action of participating in cultural activities ([Figure no. 1](#)).



Source: Own elaboration based in [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#) and [Stigler and Becker \(1977\)](#)

Figure no. 1 – Structural Factors of Cultural Participation

2.2 Evidence in Colombia

As above propounded, in Colombia, the studies on cultural participation that have an economic point of view on culture have gained importance in the last years.

The most recent one examines the case of newspaper reading. [Aguado et al. \(2018\)](#), bring empirical evidence that would have usually been analysed by sociological and communication studies. Using the Encuesta de Consumo Cultural (ECC) of 2012, the study shows that the traditional socioeconomic variables (age, genre and educational level) explain the decision of reading digital and printed newspapers in Colombia. This points out the existence of socioeconomic and demographic participation gaps, as it is raised in similar studies in West Europe and Chile ([Aguado et al., 2018](#)).

[Bermudez et al. \(2016\)](#) analyse the factors that explain the decision of listening to recorded music in the Colombian aggregate. The authors have estimated participation equations through *probit* models, using data from the 2008 ECC³, and have found out that those who have a higher education and belong to the medium and high socioeconomic status of the Colombian population increase the probability of listening to recorded music. These authors find that the ethnic condition, in particular the self-acknowledgement of afrodescendant, reduces the cultural participation in this activity ([Bermudez et al., 2016](#)).

[Andrade \(2016\)](#) studies the determinants of attendance to museums in Colombia. For the author, that explains the level of attendance as well as the frequency of that attendance, those variables that reflect the inequality of Colombian society are relevant, variables such as socioeconomic status and educational level. Although she recognises the role of poverty and inequality, she does not put this statement under empirical validation.

After planning an empirical strategy based on the appraisal of a *Probit* model and data from de 2012 ECC, she finds that the differences in museum attendance are explained by age, race, socioeconomic status and, specially, by the available free time, the size of the residence city and the educational level.

Regarding education, Andrade finds that the change in likelihood of an individual attending to a museum with at least one year of postgraduate education is six times higher than that of someone with primary education. With less explanatory level, these same factors satisfactorily explain the attendance to museums in occasional, frequent and assiduous way ([Andrade, 2016](#)).

At the same time, [Palma et al. \(2014\)](#) study the factors that have an influence on the reading of books and the attendance to libraries in Colombia, the above mentioned information base: the 2008 ECC. The authors estimate multilevel logistic regressions, and the results show that both the educational level and the socioeconomic status have positive effects on the decision of reading, although it is not clear the effect on the attendance to libraries of this last variable. Judging by the measure of variation estimated for the work, a significant proportion of the tendency to read can be ascribed to the non-observed aspects of the neighbourhood ([Palma et al., 2014](#)).

Finally, inside this set of studies on cultural participation that use the ECC, the Aguado analysis on scenic arts ([2011](#)) is highlighted. According to the empirical exercise of this author, the variables that best explain the attendance to scenic arts are the educational level, the participation on other forms of art and the socioeconomic status.

The profile of scenic art's consumer is that of a "more educated, richer and with higher experience on the consumption of cultural goods" individual ([Aguado, 2011, p. 219](#)). In

addition to the mentioned ones, other factors positively influence the attendance to scenic arts: being single, belonging to households with no children under 5 years old, and living in the main Colombian cities: Bogota and Medellin. Despite this, the ethnic and genre condition, the self-acknowledgement as afrodescendant and being a woman in particular, reduces the likelihood of assistance.

The above reviewed studies analyse the participation in individual activities and produce results at a national scale, because of the representativeness of the database used. As said before, the ECC of the DANE does not have a regional representativeness⁴. In a study made at a local scale, [Espinosa and Toro \(2016\)](#) explain the cinema attendance, the visiting of museums and the attendance to folk parties in the city of Cartagena, the fifth most populated city in Colombia, in the 2008-2013 period.

These authors use the Survey for the Quality of Life Evaluation from the citizen programme *Cartagena Cómo Vamos*, taking into account the effects of a set of explicative variables from the context that are added to the traditional microeconomic variables. Among the variables from the context there can be found: the habitat, the location of the population in the area (urban-rural, continental-insular) and temporary effects, so as to examine the impact of the cultural policies in this city ([Espinosa and Toro, 2016](#)).

The results of the study nourish the existence of gaps of participation that are linked to a set of household variables (educational level, presence of minors and economic situation of their members) and to patterns of spatial segregation that show a disadvantage in those groups with a lower socioeconomic status and in those who live in the rural and insular part of the city. They also show the positive effect of the habitat and safety condition, and the adverse consequences of poverty (subjective and objective one) on cultural participation.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Following [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#), this work offers empirical evidence on the structural factors that determine the cultural participation in Colombia, understood as those that condition the social and economic assessment of that given participation.

The data used is that from the ECV, from the programmes *Cómo Vamos* from the five cities mentioned, that can be found in the site www.ciudatos.com. The period of analysis is that of the eight years between 2008 and 2015. It is a database of more than 40 thousand households that covers 45 per cent of Colombian population and half of the urban population that we have worked with. The ECV inquires on the participation during the last year of any of the household members, in one or many cultural activities. The results are presented for the added and by cities. The ECV allows capturing information on the attendance to cultural events, although not on the frequency of cultural consumption. Nevertheless, this seeming disadvantage is corrected by considering a wide time range during which the interannual frequency of participation is estimated.

We begin from a behaviour model in which people choose from a set of cultural public and private goods and services. It is from there that they choose the activity that maximizes their usefulness, adjusting the analysis to the existence of revealed preferences of the consumers regarding these goods and services; they are combined with time and resources so as to produce a particular cultural experience ([Figure no. 1](#)).

The discreet choice utility model is used to describe this behaviour ([McFadden, 1973](#)). According to this model, each person that is a member of the household chooses among

different options the one or the ones that gives them more satisfaction. We went for a binary model (*Probit* kind), that explains a variable that takes the value 1 when any of the members chooses an available option from the cultural briefcase, and zero in the other cases. In this case the errors capture the heterogeneity component in the household preferences (Equation no. 1). To capture the structural factors, a pseudo-panel is estimated, where they are controlled by new individual and household variables, and also by local and temporary effects.

The model takes the following shape:

$$P_{ij} = \Phi(x_{ij}^T \beta) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\alpha}^{x_{ij}^T \beta} e^{-\frac{z^2}{2}} dz \quad (1)$$

where: P is the likelihood of the event occurrence of participating on any cultural activity; X_{ij} is the vector of the explicative variables of the individual, of the households and the context where they live.

The added of participation in the cultural life that is analysed is formed by the following list of activities: i) Attendance to the cinema; ii) Attendance to the theatre; iii) Visiting museums, galleries and libraries; iv) Attendance to concerts; v) Visiting museums and historic sites; vi) Attendance to fairs and expositions; vii) Books reading (programmes of public reading); viii) Reading of newspapers, magazines and books (private activity); and xi) Attendance to festivities and folk parties.

The traditional explicative variables and those that are linked to structural factors are shown in the Table no. 1. The so-called traditional variables are those that have been frequently used in the theoretical and empirical literature on participation determinants. The fact that the structural factors condition the social and economic assessment of cultural participation, entails proposing a set of independent subjective and objective variables. This appreciation is equally nourished by the nature of the information database used in the work to evaluate the quality of life. According to Veenoven, the “objective” side of the quality of life refers to “explicit standards of a good life, evaluated by someone impartial and external”, while the “subjective” reflects the “self-appreciations based on implicit criteria”. This author concludes that both sides are essential, although they do not necessarily correspond (Veenhoven, 2000, p. 3).

Table no. 1 – Explicative variables (definition)

Variable	Definition	Type	Description	Factor/variable
Participation in cultural activities	In the city, cultural activities take place during the year. In which of the activities described on this card did you participate in the last year ?	Dummy (D)	1= Participates; 0= Doesn't participates	Dependent variable
Gender	Household head gender	D	1= Man; 0= Woman	
Age	Age range of those who participate in cultural activities	Ordered (O)	1= 18 to 25 years; 2= 26 to 35 years; 3= 36 to 45 years; 4= 46 to 55 years y 6= More than 55 years.	Traditional
Leisure	Are you currently ...?	O	1= Pensioner; 2= Work outside the home; 3= Work at home; 4= Study; 5= Work and study; and 6= Head of the house.	Traditional

Variable	Definition	Type	Description	Factor/variable
Cultural capital	Educational level	O	1= None; 2= Primary education; 3= High school; 4= University studies (undergraduate); 5= Postgraduate (specialization, master's degree or doctorate).	Traditional
Subjective poverty	Do you consider yourself poor?	D	1= Yes; 0=No	Structural
Objective poverty	Did you stop eating any of the three meals in the last week?	D	1= Yes; 0=No	Structural
Presence of children/ Kind of education that children receive	Does this household have children under the age of six? Are there children in the home attending a private / public school?	D	1= Yes (attends private school); 0= No (attends public school)	Traditional Structural
Socioeconomic status	Socioeconomic stratification	O	Low level= strata 1 and 2; Medium= strata 3 and 4; High= 5 and 6	Traditional
Economic situation	Rate the household's economic situation (proxy of income)	O	1= It has gotten worse; 2= Follow the same; 3= It has improved.	Traditional
Satisfaction with parks	Rate the degree of satisfaction with neighbourhood and city parks	O	1= Dissatisfied, 2= Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 3= Satisfied	Structural
Security in the city	Rate the security degree in the city	O	1= Insecure; 2= Not safe or insecure; 3= Safe	Structural
Neighbourhood safety	Rate the degree of safety in the neighbourhood	O	1= Unsafe; 2= Neither safe nor unsafe; 3= Safe	Structural
Social capital	Belongs to a community-based organization (Community, Sports, Religious Action Board, etc.)	D	1= Yes; 0=No	Structural
Economic inequality	Economic inequality	Continuous (C)	0 to 1	Structural
Cultural policy	Cultural investment per capita with own resources	C	Constant pesos of 2012	Structural
Cultural governance	Budget executed for culture as a proportion of the budget approved by the municipal councils at the beginning of each fiscal period	C	<i>G > 1: the budget executed in culture at the end of the fiscal period is greater than the budget originally planned. G < 1: the opposite. G = 1: they are the same.</i>	Structural
Regional effects	City dummies	D	1= Yes (the reference city); 0= No (the rest of cities)	Structural
Temporary effects	Year dummies (2008-2015)	D	1= Yes (the reference year); 0= No (the rest of years)	Structural

Source: Own elaboration with base on the Surveys of the Quality of Life – Programmes *Cómo Vamos* from the five cities.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Evolution of the cultural participation

Cultural participation in the analysed cities has been growing in Colombia during the period of study. 57% of the people participated in at least one cultural activity in the last eight years between 2008 and 2015. This participation increases up to the 77% of the population when sport games and activities are included. The highest participation rate is focused in the cities of the Colombian Caribbean, Barranquilla and Cartagena, where two out of three inhabitants participate in cultural activities (Figure no. 2). Despite this, Cartagena is the only city where this participation in cultural life has been decreasing (Figure no. 3).

Figure no. 2 – Cultural participation in the 5 cities, 2008-2015 (average, %)

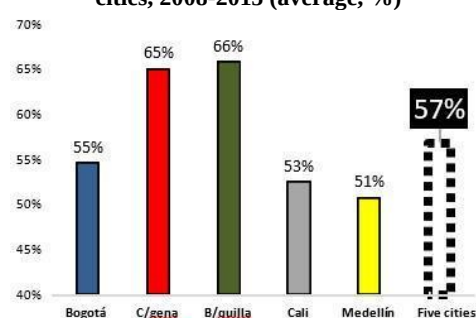
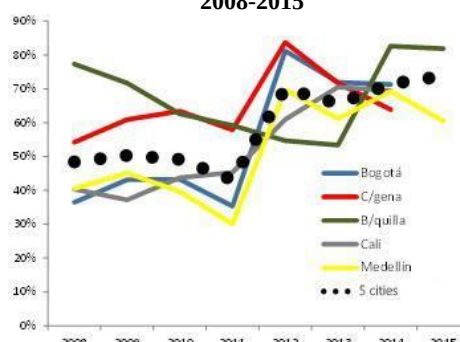


Figure no. 3 – Cultural participation by city, 2008-2015



Source: own elaboration based on programs *Cómo Vamos - Ciudadanos*

The profile of the people that participate shows that more than a half (53%) live in Bogotá and Medellín, and belong to households from the middle stratum (46.3%). In this group of participants the effect of subjective (17.7%) and objective poverty (11.1%) is low, when compared to the one that households that do not participate suffer from (25.7% and 14.4%, respectively). According to the age groups, 58% of the participants are between 18 and 45 years old; one in four people who attend cultural activities is older than 55 (Annex 1).

Educationally, 35% of those who participate have tertiary studies (university with at least one year of postgraduate studies). This same group of participants is very satisfied with the quality of life in their cities (70%) and the habitability of the environment where they live; they feel safer and more satisfied with the parks than those who do not participate (Annex 1).

On the other hand, the greatest cultural participation occurs in women, although since 2012 the men's participation has increased and equalized women's (Figure no. 4). The differences in cultural participation are not only related to the place of residence and sex, but also related to socioeconomic stratification.

In Colombia, stratification is associated with the socio-economic conditions of households (stratification), although it has been conceived as a tool for classifying residential properties, in order to allocate fees for differentiated public services, and as an instrument for targeting social programs (Perez and Salazar, 2008).

Studies in Cartagena, Barranquilla and Bogotá have shown the close relationship between stratification and spatial segregation of the population. In these cities, the inhabitants with the lowest socioeconomic status are concentrated in areas with the worst infrastructure endowments and opportunities (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2007; Cepeda, 2014; Espinosa *et al.*, 2017). In the present study, participation in the upper stratum exceeds the participation of the lower stratum by 13 percentage points (Figure no. 5). In Cali and Medellín, the largest gaps in cultural participation according to economic status are presented (Figure no. 6).

Figure no. 4 – Cultural participation by gender, 2008-2015 (avg.%)

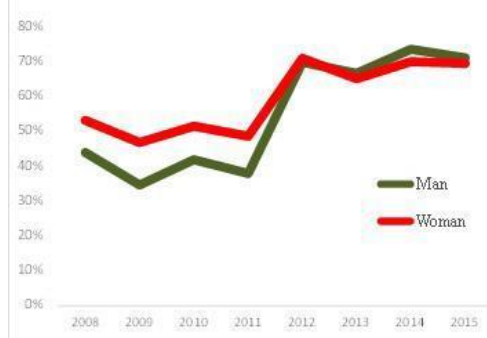
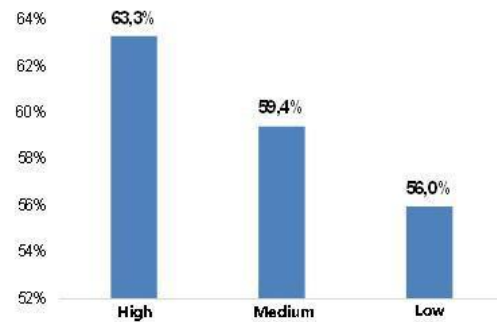


Figure no. 5 – Cultural participation by socioeconomic status *, 2008-2015 (avg.%)



*Low equals strata 1 and 2; medium: strata 3 and 4; high: strata 5 and 6.

Figure no. 6 – Participation gaps between high and low strata, 2008-2015

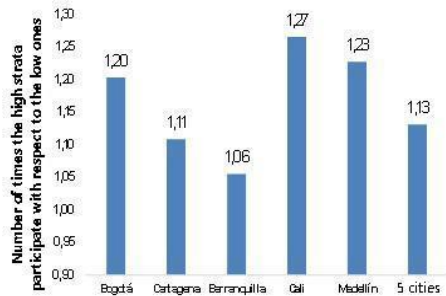
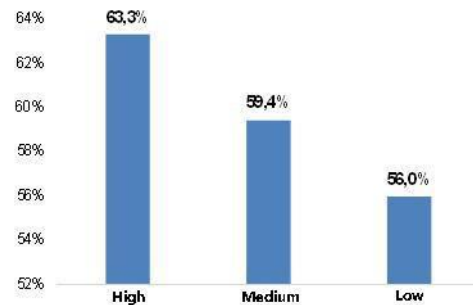


Figure no. 7 – Cultural participation by educational level, 2008-2015 (avg.%)



Source: own elaboration based on programmes *Cómo Vamos - Ciudades*

The current study also explores aspects that aim to know the relative weight of context in participation decisions. Public investment -which reflects the public offer of cultural goods and services- has grown in importance in the budgets of the cities analysed, with the exception of Cartagena (Figure no. 8).

The greatest amount of public cultural investment is made in Medellín and Cali, and there is shown a noticeable spike in Bogotá. However, there is a certain instability with some changes of a conjunctural nature such as that of Cartagena in 2011, result of the celebration of the Bicentennial of Independence that considerably increased official funding.

Other changes were structural, such as the one in Bogotá, where the creation of the Instituto Distrital de las Artes (Idartes) in 2011 permanently raised public investment in that sector. These changes are addressed in the empirical analysis, since they have the potential to stimulate cultural participation through policies on the offer side.

Figure no. 8 – Participation of cultural investment in public budgets (% of total investment)

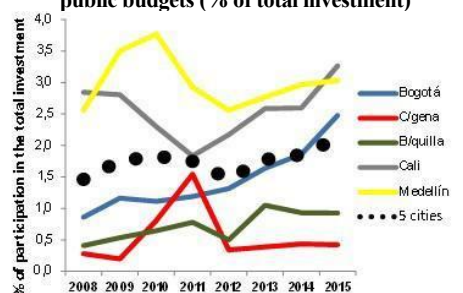
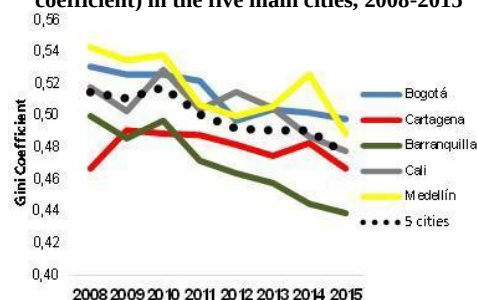


Figure no. 9 – Economic inequality (Gini coefficient) in the five main cities, 2008-2015



Source: own elaboration based on *Ejecuciones Presupuestales-Contaduría Nacional de la Nación y DANE-Misión de Empalme de Series de Empleo y Pobreza (Mesep)*, Population Projections

Finally, the significant reduction in economic inequality is observed in the five main cities (Figure no. 9). This paper explores the hypothesis according to which the greater inequality reduces the opportunity structure to participate culturally, specially in those activities for which there is a need to pay (cinema, concerts, visits to historical sites, among others). In fact, the two cities with the greatest cultural participation (Cartagena and Barranquilla) have the lowest levels of economic inequality. Therefore, when considering inequality, the relative weight of socioeconomic status as a barrier to cultural participation could be better determined.

4.2 Empirical analysis: results

The results shown below are obtained by estimating seven models (Table no. 2). Starting from a basic model, we proceed to control the following by introducing the groups of explanatory variables, be they individual, household or context. The variables that make up the basic model are: sex, age and socioeconomic status. These were chosen according to the literature review, being variables that alongside with cultural capital, are traditionally used in studies of cultural participation in Colombia and in many countries (Falk and Katz-Gerro, 2016). As the ECV does not continuously ask for the educational level, this variable is estimated in another regression, corresponding to the year 2014 (Annex 3). The lack of availability of some variables makes it necessary to estimate two 7 models, one with the variable children in the household that attend public or private schools, and the other without this variable.

The results of model 1 (basic) allow us to conclude that traditional structural factors satisfactorily explain cultural participation in the set of analysed activities (Table no. 2). The signs of the majority of the coefficients (marginal effects) of the explanatory variables coincide with what was expected, and, in the same way that the degree of statistical validity, they support the conclusions derived from the proposed analysis.

Table no. 2 – Results of the probabilistic model

Table variables (added)	Model 1 (Basic)	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7 (Expanded)	Model 7 (Expanded + type of education)
People variables								
Gender (Man=1; Woman=0)	0,027***	-0,012**	0,009**	0,009**	0,014**	0,011**	0,002	0,008
Age								
18 to 25	0,308***	0,0685***	0,097***	0,120***	0,152***	0,125***	0,105***	0,137***
26 to 35	0,227***	0,052***	0,070***	0,088***	0,111***	0,093***	0,080***	0,088***
36 to 45	0,111***	0,016**	0,030***	0,044***	0,064***	0,051***	0,042***	0,057***
46 to 55	0,111***	0,023**	0,036***	0,043***	0,053***	0,046***	0,040***	0,045***
More than 55	Reference	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG
Time availability								
Retirees		RG					RG	RG
Work outside the home		0,054***					0,043***	0,045***
Work at home		0,020**					0,019*	0,018
Study		0,068***					0,077***	0,059***
Work and study		0,246***					0,192***	0,227***
Head of the house		-0,015**					0,001	0,01
Household variables								
Subjective poverty			-0,063***				-0,048***	-0,035***
Objective poverty (Do not consume any of three meals per week)			0,003				-0,038***	-0,017
Children in private school								0,051***
Socioeconomic level (stratification)								
High	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG
Medium	-0,166***	-0,053***	-0,051***	-0,055***	-0,069***	-0,057***	-0,058***	-0,029**
Low	-0,373***	-0,121***	-0,118***	-0,122***	-0,155***	-0,131***	-0,142***	-0,097***
Better economic situation								
It has worsened			RG				RG	RG
Still the same			0,031***				0,010	0,026**
It has improved			0,058***				0,021***	0,043***
Environment variables								
Satisfaction with parks								
Disatisfied with parks				RG			RG	RG
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied				0,006			-0,002	-0,001
Satisfied with parks				-0,035***			-0,014**	-0,017*
Perception of insecurity in the city				-0,044***			-0,000	-0,000
Perception of safety in the neighbourhood				0,028***			-0,002	-0,000

Source: own elaboration based on the ECV-2008-2015. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A basic profile of the Colombian cultural consumer indicates that they are young men of medium and high stratum. According to estimates, participation is an inverse function of age. In fact, in the basic model, the sample's youngest (18 and 25 years) increases the probability of participating in 30 percentage points compared to the reference group, those over 55 years. On the other hand, socioeconomic status has, alongside with age, the greatest effect on participation. A person who integrates a low strata household reduces up to 37 points if compared to a member of households with better economic condition.

The basic model is broadened by introducing, firstly, the availability of time, one of the most analysed restrictions on participation by the economy of culture. The results show a bias against the participation of retirees and those responsible for the house. This group reduces its likelihood of participating in cultural activities in front of those who work (outside or in the household), and especially those who study and work at the same time.

Apparently, the study-work combination allows to connect availability of resources, especially income, with opportunities to participate in activities where there would be availability to pay. This same result is maintained when an extended version of the model is estimated (model 7). A result derived from the inclusion of these variables is the change of sign in the sex variable, which becomes negative. In other words, the availability of time seems to affect men more than women, who increase their probability of participating compared to the former.

In model 3, household variables such as objective poverty (lack of food) and subjective (self-perception) are added, and another traditional one in the empirical analysis of participation, such as income, which is collected through the perception of the economic situation. The results are consistent with what is expected, that is, poverty (particularly the subjective) and the response to the bad economic situation reduce the probability of participating in any of the nine activities analysed in the study. According to the study, the inhabitants of the five cities usually relate the self-perception of poverty to factors linked to the quality of work (informality) and access to public goods such as health and education.

In model 4, it is proposed to control for variables from the closest context of households, for which habitat and security variables are used. The habitat is introduced through the degree of satisfaction that parks produce to the community that, given the scarce infrastructure, could be used as cultural spaces. For its part, security is proven through the perception of security in the neighbourhood and in the city. Judging by the sign and statistical validity, the results do not show that the parks are being used as cultural spaces in the main Colombian cities. This implies that cultural participation would occur more in private spaces such as the household, or in activities that demand their own infrastructure, such as cinema, theatre and concert attendance. The estimate does show the expected results in security: if the neighbourhood is safe, the probability of participating increases, but if the city is not, this participation is reduced. According to [Espinosa and Toro \(2016\)](#), insecurity in the city increases its effect the more spatially segregated the population is, who must travel long distances to attend activities such as movies.

The macroeconomic variables that theoretically have a strong incidence in participation, are added to the basic scheme in model 5. The hypothesis at this point is that utility maximization decisions, expressed through the construction of an individual cultural experience, do not occur in a vacuum. On the contrary, maximization is conditioned by a context where distribution patterns and temporal and regional events interact.

First, economic inequality, measured through the Gini coefficient, reduces the probability of participating in the set of Colombian cities. By including this variable, the explanatory degree of the model considerably increases, and the participation gaps are accentuated due to socioeconomic status. Secondly, the regional effects show Cartagena as the city where the probability of participating is greater than compared to Bogotá (taken as a reference group) and the rest of the cities.

On the other hand, when introducing the temporary effects, it is observed that cultural participation has been increasing in Colombia since 2013. Temporary shocks are captured by a year dummy variable, with 2008 being the reference year. At this date the global financial crisis broke out, which was shown by a very strong deceleration of the economy in Colombia. As it has been shown for countries such as Spain, this crisis did not change the determinants of cultural consumption, but it did affect household consumption capacity, reducing the intensity of spending on cultural goods and services (Ríos, 2017).

Model 6 is expanded by the inclusion of cultural policy and institutional variables, which are measured by public cultural investment per capita in these cities and a variable of cultural governance. Governance is understood as the quality and orientation of State intervention towards the cultural sector; In this study, it is evaluated through a coefficient between the budget approved by the municipal councils and the budget sent by the governments for approval. The coefficient determines the degree of substitution of the expenses in culture by that of other sectors, when the municipality faces budgetary allocation discussions that occur at the beginning of each year between the governments and the municipal councils. Substitution of expenses on culture for other areas such as security, education and health, has been traditional in Colombia.

The results of the estimation show that an increase in one percentage point of spending on culture compared to other items increases in a similar proportion the probability of participating in cultural activities. However, the weight of governance is substantially greater as a variable that stimulates such participation. In other words, when the implementation of resources oriented towards culture increases with respect to what is planned in the budget, the probability of cultural participation increases in the cities analysed.

Finally, model 7 adds the variables considered independently in the previous regressions. In general, the results of the model are maintained in terms of the explanatory capacity of the variables of individuals, households and context, with the exception of sex and some ones from the context such as inequality and security. However, the weight acquired by other variables increases. This is the case of the so-called regional effects and the quality of public policies, particularly cultural governance.

For the latter extended model, a variable that assesses the effect of the presence of children in the household and the type of education they receive is included. In the aforementioned literature on Colombian cultural participation, the existence of young children restricts the participation of other members of the household in cultural activities. Our working hypothesis is that the mere presence of children does not impose definitive limits on participation. By taking children as an obstacle, the school is omitted as a space where cultural participation is encouraged and takes place. In the estimate, it is found that children who attend public schools reduce the opportunities to participate by five percentage points compared to children who are in private schools. This finding offers a clue to promote an intergenerational change in cultural participation in the main Colombian cities.

Regarding the estimation of the models by cities, a large part of the results found previously are validated ([Annex 2](#)). First, subjective poverty reduces the probability of participating in the set of cities, mainly in Bogotá and Medellín. Au contraire, objective poverty has the same effect in the five cities, especially in Cartagena. In this last city, an increase of one percentage point of the population below the poverty line reduces the probability of participating in any of the nine cultural activities studied by five percentage points.

Another aspect that stands out in this second estimate is the role of socioeconomic status as a factor that explains the gaps in cultural participation. These gaps are more accentuated in Cali, where a person from the low stratum reduces his participation by 15 percentage points compared to who belongs to the highest part of the stratification. These inequalities are observable as well in Bogotá and Barranquilla, where the marginal effect has a value of 8.6 and 8.5 percentage points, respectively.

Finally, the estimation of the model with cultural capital and social capital variables shows the expected effects of both educational level and community participation on the decision to participate in cultural life ([Annex 3](#)). In the first instance, a person with tertiary education increases by 21 percentage points the probability of participating in cultural activities in front of those who are illiterate or have not completed the basic level of instruction. The participation gap is almost the double between this group and those who complete secondary education.

In the second measure, community participation plays a key role promoting cultural life in the main five Colombian cities. If any member of the household participates in any type of organization (cultural, sports, environmental, religious, among others), it increases the probability of attending to any cultural activity by 16 percentage points compared to those who do not. In Cartagena, community participation promotes theatre attendance and attendance to festivals and popular festivals, as some studies have raised ([Espinosa and Toro, 2016](#)).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this article, the evolution of cultural participation in Colombia between 2008 and 2015 has been analysed, and the factors associated to the decision of participating in cultural activities of the inhabitants of the five main cities have been empirically proved. This article makes a contribution to the literature on economics of culture in Colombia by adding a set of structural and regional macroeconomic factors to the traditional approach of this kind of literature: factors that were missing before. By focusing in the structural factors, we have been able to identify the areas of involvement of cultural participation and the role that cultural policies have in the main Colombian cities.

With this work, we have overcome in the methodology field a good part of the restrictions in the traditional base of information, the survey for cultural consumption that the DANE carries out. This survey has not enough regional representativeness, and is available for only some of the years taken into account in this study: as a consequence, part of the ability of formulating in the field of public local policies is lost. With the empirical strategy, it is able to widen the understanding of the effect of the local context and supplies for the making of decisions are provided. In fact, by including this group of context

variables in the estimation, the goodness of adjustment of the models is notoriously improved.

A first conclusion from the empirical exercise is that more opportunities of participation in the cultural life of the main Colombian cities have been opened, especially since 2012. The negative effects of structural factors such as poverty (objective and subjective one), economic and educative inequalities, socioeconomic status, insecurity and the low endowment of public goods (habitat), have been offset by the social capital (community participation), the cultural capital (education) and policies (weak incidence) and cultural governance (bigger effect).

In the study, the traditional variables from individuals and households used satisfactorily explain the decisions of participating in cultural life. The basic profile of a participant on cultural activities in the main Colombian cities is that of a young individual (18-35 years old), that works and/or studies, with a high level of cultural capital, and that belongs to a medium and high socioeconomic strata.

From the study, it can be deduced the need to count on public policies that assure the closure of gaps and that improve the opportunities of enjoying the cultural life in the Colombian urban centres. According to the results, one of these policies could be carried out in the education field: in particular, by broadening the cultural participation of children and young people in public schools, with the possibility of trundling on the reduction of inequalities. Another one is the improvement of cultural infrastructure so as to ameliorate the access to households, beyond the availability of public spaces such as parks where no cultural life is going on.

In the same sense, a challenge for public policies is for them to be carried out under an intersectional focus. In Colombia, cultural policies have traditionally been broken up, and their importance has not overcome their own sector. An example of the kind of policies that can be mined from the study is those that link the cultural field with the educational one. Widening the access to artistic education in public schools to a primary and secondary level is one of the biggest challenges to reduce inequalities in the access to cultural activities like cinema and theatre.

If, as it was raised, poverty and inequality are important explicative factors to cultural participation, in the main Colombian cities the cultural policies must move along in the same direction as the economic and social policies. The effect that objective poverty and economic inequality have on the decision or participating, show the complexity of this challenge of harmonizing the economic, social and cultural policies.

Despite this, local governments can equally promote cultural participation in the most lagging social groups and in the most vulnerable territories, creating conditions such as the impact of social capital is reinforced through community organisations. This could in no way be possible without the previous increase of the cultural investment and, especially, of the quality and efficiency of the government actions in the cultural field.

Finally, this study does not lack challenges or abridgments. In a first measure, the bottom up strategy adopted in this analysis on cultural participation could be improved by widening the range of Colombian cities included. In a second one, so as to capture in a better way the nature of these decisions, the Survey on the Quality of Life will need to include the frequency of participation in cultural activities of the urban inhabitants of Colombia.

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ANNEX 1**Profile of the participants and non-participants in cultural life (five main Colombian cities)**

	Participants (N=15,613)	Non Participants (N=31,760)	Proof of means difference
Gender (man as reference)	0,502	0,490	**
Age			
18 to 25	0,218	0,170	***
26 to 35	0,192	0,173	***
36 to 45	0,169	0,182	***
46 to 55	0,174	0,180	*
More than 55	0,244	0,292	***
Educational level			
Any	0,048	0,131	***
Primary	0,181	0,245	***
High school	0,417	0,403	*
University	0,319	0,199	***
Postgraduate	0,033	0,020	***
Leisure			
Work outside the home	0,321	0,363	***
Work at home	0,906	0,876	***
Study	0,074	0,105	***
Study and work	0,010	0,031	***
Head of the house	0,253	0,202	***
Retired	0,098	0,089	***
Subjective poverty	0,177	0,257	***
Objective poverty (Do not consume any of three meals)	0,111	0,144	***
Children in private school	0,417	0,420	***
Socioeconomic level (stratification)			
High	0,169	0,117	***
Medium	0,463	0,424	***
Low	0,367	0,458	***
Better economic situation			
It has worsened	0,151	0,195	***
Still the same	0,483	0,494	**
It has improved	0,365	0,309	***
Satisfaction with parks			
Dissatisfied with parks	0,318	0,370	***
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0,240	0,251	***
Satisfied with parks	0,441	0,378	***
Perception of insecurity in the city	1,99	2,06	***
Perception of safety in the neighbourhood	2,32	2,25	***
City of residence			
Bogotá	0,247	0,213	***
Medellín	0,277	0,244	***
Cali	0,192	0,170	***
Barranquilla	0,099	0,240	***
Cartagena	0,183	0,131	***

Level of significance of the test: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Source: own elaboration based on ECV-Programmes Cómo Vamos-Ciudadanos.

ANNEX 2

Results of the *Probit* model per cities

Variable	Five cities	Bogotá	Medellín	Cali	Barranquilla	Cartagena
Subjective poverty	-0,038***	-0,046**	-0,082***	-0,007	-0,015	-0,033
Objective poverty (hunger)	-0,025**	-0,005	-0,038	0,015	-0,005	-0,050*
Children going to private school	0,035***	0,024	0,070***	0,024	0,035***	0,032
Socioeconomic level						
High	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Medium	-0,025**	-0,023	0,022	-0,072**	-0,043***	-0,049
Low	-0,076***	-0,085***	-0,021	-0,153***	-0,086***	-0,062*
Better economic situation						
It has worsened	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Still the same	0,030***	0,010	0,015	0,063**	0,017	0,046
It has improved	0,049***	0,052**	0,056**	0,103***	0,017	0,038
Satisfaction with parks						
Dissatisfied with parks	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	-0,013	-0,023	0,024	0,001	-0,013	-0,044*
Satisfied with parks	-0,017**	-0,016	0,020	-0,032	-0,017	-0,056**
Safety in the city	-0,017***	-0,021*	-0,033***	-0,021	-0,001	-0,005
Safety in the neighbourhood	0,004	0,017*	-0,009	0,012	-0,011*	0,016
Regional effects						
Bogotá	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Barranquilla	-0,271***					
Cali	0,046***					
Medellín	-0,056***					
Cartagena	0,057***					
Year	0,091***	0,131***	0,075***	0,115***	0,043***	0,097***
Well classified observations (%)	72,96%	75,67%	64,94%	71,10%	85,83%	68,36%
Observations	18.328	4.419	4.119	2.841	4.092	2.857

Level of significance of the test: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: own elaboration based on ECV-Programmes *Cómo Vamos-Ciudadanos*.

ANNEX 3

Results of the *Probit* model with education and community participation variables, 2014

Variable	All activities	Cinema	Theatre	Private Reading (newspapers, magazines, books)
Subjective poverty	-0,0065	-0,0204	-0,0093	0,0172
Objective poverty (hunger)	-0,0058	-0,0192	-0,0288***	-0,0074
Presence of children in the home	0,0139	-0,0018	-0,0103	-0,0116
Community participation	0,1305***	0,0065	0,0379***	-0,0187**
Socioeconomic level (stratification)				
High	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Medium	-0,0312	-0,0397**	-0,0111	0,0226
Low	-	-0,0940***	-0,0416***	0,0686***
	0,0809***			
Educational level				
None / incomplete primary	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Primary	0,0685**	0,0500	0,0101	-0,0213

Variable	All activities	Cinema	Theatre	Private Reading (newspapers, magazines, books)
High school	0.1219***	0.1346***	0.0331	-0.0339**
Technical or technological / University	0.2188***	0.2260***	0.0835**	-0.0593***
Specialization / Master's degree / Doctorate	0.1979***	0.2133***	0.1621**	-0.0667***
Better economic situation				
It has worsened	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Still the same	0.0232	0.0319	0.0154	0.0119
It has improved	0.0441*	0.0260	0.0320**	-0.0115
Years of residence	-0.001**	-0.0024***	-0.0002	0.0008***
Satisfaction with the city				
Dissatisfied	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0.0412	-0.0020	0.0319	0.0100
Satisfied	0.0194	-0.0109	0.0355***	-0.0014
Satisfaction with the public space				
Dissatisfied	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0.0301	0.0293*	-0.0031	0.0001
Satisfied	0.0424**	0.0510***	-0.0019	-0.0127
Satisfaction with parks				
Dissatisfied	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0.0239	-0.0176	0.0289**	-0.0072
Satisfied	0.0001	-0.0328**	0.0203**	0.0048
Safety in the city	-0.0077	-0.0246*	0.0092	0.0070
Safety in the neighbourhood	-0.0229	-0.0159	-0.0053	-0.0416***
Well classified observations (%)	73.04%	83.45%	92.19%	90.48%
Observations	3.613	3.613	3.613	3.613

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: own elaboration based on ECV-Programmes Cómo Vamos-Ciudadatos.

Notes

¹ The studies are: [Aguado et al. \(2018\)](#) for reading newspapers; [Andrade \(2016\)](#) on attendance to museums; [Bermudez et al. \(2016\)](#) on the consumption of recorded music; [Palma et al. \(2014\)](#) for book reading and library attendance, and [Aguado \(2011\)](#) for the performing arts. It also highlights the work of [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#) on the structural factors that determine cultural participation.

² Cómo Vamos programmes are a civil society initiative that promotes the evaluation of quality of life, as a result of the execution of municipal development plans. The focus of these programmes is to assess the level of life quality from citizens, in order to promote the accountability of governments and the organization of civil society. The programmes meet in a network that today organizes 12 Colombian cities.

³ The ECC was carried out for the first time in 2008, and then continuously since 2012. This discontinuity affects the possibility of empirically analysing the structural factors of cultural participation as shown by the analysis of [Aguado and Palma \(2015\)](#).

⁴ From the political-administrative point of view, Colombia has six regions: Caribbean, Andean, Pacific, Central-East, Orinoquia and Amazonia.

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