CultureCase

Understanding arts engagement in Chinese cities

This research was conducted by **Pascal Courty** and **Fenghua Zhang** at the **University of Victoria, Canada** and **Wuhan University, China**

Summary

This paper analysed survey data to paint a picture of arts engagement in 13 different cities across China. The data was broken down by the demographic characteristics of the individuals in the survey, as well as the sorts of activities that people did, and from this the research was able to characterise each of the different cities.

The ‘elitism hypothesis’ broadly explains patterns of cultural engagement in China

The research found that education and income have ‘a significant positive impact’ on the likelihood of engaging in culture. However, this isn’t true for books and TV or the consumption of online culture (where income is irrelevant) or engagement in popular culture (where education levels are irrelevant). Included in the survey were questions about wide variety of cultural activity, including attendance at art galleries and libraries, and participation in karaoke or reading e-books.

In general there are two types of cultural offers for people in China

One half of the offer is state-funded and state-run TV, radio, public libraries, state-owned museums, art galleries and cultural centers. The other half includes private and commercial publishing, some performing arts, music, film, video and photography, broadcasting, visual arts and crafts, advertising, design and fashion, interactive media and online content and games.

There are many regional variations in the patterns of cultural engagement

The paper looked at the different level of cultural engagement in different cities, especially according to how developed those cities were. It found that in general there is lower levels of cultural engagement in what the authors call ‘middle-income’ cities (i.e. nether the least nor the most developed).

Keywords

China **survey** **cities** **engagement**

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