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CULTURAL AND LEISURE EXPENDITURE IN CHILE: A QUANTILE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DISPARITIES USING HOUSEHOLD BUDGET SURVEY MICRODATA

Andrea Báez Montenegro, Magaly Moraga Cárdenas, Cristian Colther Marino

Báez Montenegro, A., Moraga Cárdenas, M., & Colther Marino, C. (2025). Cultural and leisure expenditure in Chile: A quantile regression analysis of socioeconomic and regional disparities using household budget survey microdata. *Cuadernos de Economía*, 44(96), 1331-1352.

This study analyses the socioeconomic determinants of household spending on cultural and leisure activities in Chile via microdata from the IX Family Budget Survey 2021-22. A quantile regression model is applied to capture how these

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determinants vary across different levels of spending. The results show that total income, higher education and residence in metropolitan areas positively influence cultural spending, with a greater impact on income in households with lower spending levels. However, in higher quantiles, a decreasing elasticity of spending relative to income is observed, whereas geographical location becomes more relevant in higher-income households. These findings provide valuable insights for the design of public policies that promote cultural participation and reduce regional disparities in access to culture.

Keywords: Cultural expenditure; leisure; quantile regression; household budget survey; Chile.

JEL: Z10, C01, C21.

Báez Montenegro, A., Moraga Cárdenas, M., & Colther Marino, C. (2025). Gasto cultural y de ocio en Chile: análisis de regresión cuantílica de las disparidades socioeconómicas y regionales utilizando microdatos de la Encuesta de Presupuestos Familiares. *Cuadernos de Economía*, 44(96), 1331-1352.

Este artículo analiza los determinantes socioeconómicos del gasto de los hogares en actividades culturales y de ocio en Chile a partir de microdatos de la IX Encuesta de Presupuestos Familiares 2021-2022. Se aplica un modelo de regresión cuantílica para captar cómo varían estos determinantes en función de los diferentes niveles de gasto. Los resultados muestran que los ingresos totales, la educación superior y la residencia en áreas metropolitanas influyen de manera positiva en el gasto cultural, con un mayor impacto en los ingresos de los hogares con niveles de gasto más bajos. Sin embargo, en los cuantiles más altos, se observa una elasticidad decreciente del gasto en relación con los ingresos, mientras que la ubicación geográfica cobra mayor relevancia en los hogares con ingresos más altos. Estos hallazgos proporcionan información valiosa para el diseño de políticas públicas que promuevan la participación cultural y reduzcan las disparidades regionales en el acceso a la cultura.

Palabras clave: Gasto cultural; ocio; regresión cuantílica; encuesta de presupuesto familiar; Chile.

JEL: Z10, C01, C21.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage and cultural activities constitute essential and integral components of individuals, societies and political communities. In the last two decades, increasing attention has been given to the possible beneficial effects of cultural expressions, both in their tangible and intangible forms (Cerisola & Panzera, 2022).

In addition, international organisations such as UNESCO have emphasised the need to promote equitable access to culture as an essential human right and as a key element to achieve sustainable development (UNESCO, 1991).

The importance of guaranteeing this equitable access to culture is further reinforced by positive impacts on education, economic development and mental health (Aguado et al., 2024). In the educational field, exposure to various cultural manifestations stimulates critical thinking, empathy and intercultural understanding (Dumitru, 2019).

On the other hand, studies have shown that access to cultural activities has positive effects on people's well-being and life satisfaction (Lee et al., 2021) and recent studies have explored its benefit to mental health (Fancourt & Baxter, 2020); additionally, cultural access unexpectedly ranks as the second most important determinant of psychological well-being, immediately after the absence or presence of diseases, and the performance of factors such as work, age, income, marital status, education, stage of life and other important factors (Grossi et al., 2012).

In economic terms, the cultural and creative industry is a significant source of employment and economic growth, generating opportunities in both developed and developing economies (Bilan et al., 2019; Campi et al., 2024). The literature has shown that cultural goods and services contribute to improving people's quality of life, reinforcing social cohesion and generating income and jobs (Heredia-Carroza et al., 2023). In addition, recent studies link cultural goods and services to the achievement of the sustainable development goals at the local level (Benito et al., 2025).

Despite the benefits of cultural consumption, some studies have shown that there are important differences in terms of a population's access to culture due to factors such as geographic location, socioeconomic status, education and language barriers (Quintero & Martos, 2015). These inequalities generate gaps in access to cultural resources and limit the positive impact of culture on certain groups, especially in communities far from cultural centres or capitals and among populations with lower incomes and people in vulnerable situations (Raspadori, 2011).

In Latin America, the dynamics of cultural consumption present particular characteristics, marked by considerable heterogeneity between countries and within the nations themselves. However, there is a growing interest in strengthening public policies aimed at democratising access to culture and promoting its role as an engine of economic development, which has led to an increase in the supply and diversity of cultural activities and leisure (Guzmán-Cárdenas, 2015; Quartesan et al., 2007).

In this context, Chile has experienced remarkable cultural and leisure development in recent decades, with an increase in the number of cultural events and the creation of new spaces for recreation and artistic dissemination. However, important regional differences persist in access to and consumption of cultural goods and services, reflecting the uneven socioeconomic development between the different macrozones of the country (Ministerio de las Culturas, 2017).

Analysing the patterns of consumption of cultural goods and services of families is essential for understanding cultural consumption habits and detecting possible inequalities in access to these goods among different sectors of society. This makes it possible to identify gaps that limit equitable access to culture. This information contributes to the better formulation of public policies that can promote development that encourages the equitable participation of all social groups in cultural activities (Quintero & Martos, 2015).

This research focuses on identifying the socioeconomic factors that determine the level of spending of Chilean households on cultural and leisure activities, how these determinants vary with the distribution of spending and whether these determinants are similar in different territories of the country. The main objective is to analyse the socioeconomic determinants of household spending on cultural and leisure activities in Chile by estimating a quantile regression model using the microdata of the IX Chilean Family Budget Survey (EPF) from 2021–22.

The main contribution of the research is related to two aspects. First, the identification of differential factors in cultural and leisure spending can contribute to the understanding of how sociodemographic variables differentially influence household spending on cultural goods and leisure activities. The second is related to providing information on the differences in consumption patterns observed in the capital of the country versus different macrozones in the country and differences or similarities in terms of their determinants.

Having this type of information can facilitate the design of public policies for cultural promotion with a territorial approach, based on empirical evidence on the identified determinants and with the aim of developing specific recommendations that encourage cultural consumption and help reduce disparities around the consumption of culture.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, we briefly review relevant aspects of the literature on cultural consumption as an emerging sector of the economy and its dynamics, and a brief summary that contextualises the selected case study.

Theoretical approaches to cultural consumption

The theoretical framework used by Katz-Gerro (2002) is structured around three main approaches to understanding the relationship between social class and

cultural consumption in post-industrial societies. The first is the *class reproduction approach*, rooted in the work of Bourdieu (2001) and Weber (1978). This perspective argues that cultural consumption —especially of highbrow culture— serves as a form of social distinction that reflects and reproduces class position. Based on the notion of cultural capital, it maintains that cultural preferences are socially structured and closely linked to education, habits and access to both economic and symbolic resources (Bourdieu, 2001).

The second is the *individualisation and new identities approach*, which contends that class-based distinctions have lost their centrality and that cultural consumption has become increasingly fragmented. According to this view, other social factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion or lifestyle now play a more prominent role (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Cultural identities are seen as more fluid and cultural practices are no longer exclusive markers of class.

The third approach focuses on *welfare state regimes and structural inequalities*. It examines how institutional configurations —particularly welfare systems— influence access to cultural goods. This perspective argues that the state can either reduce or reinforce cultural inequalities, depending on the nature of its cultural and social policies (Featherstone, 1990; 2007)

Culture and leisure as an emerging sector of the economy

The consumption of goods and services by families is the main source of resources for the economy from the perspective of aggregate demand, which is usually analysed from a microeconomic perspective but can be extended to the macroeconomic level by aggregation. Both of their consumption habits are relevant for analysis since they guide the present and future configuration of goods and services that will be produced in the economy (Foster, 2021; Kemp-Benedict, 2013).

Within the spending structure of families, consumption related to food and housing represents important percentages as a means of satisfying their basic maintenance and protection needs and, depending on the country and the provision of social protection coverage, spending on education, health and transportation is important (Baxter & Moosa, 1996).

However, an emerging item is family spending as relates to culture, which has gone from being an elitist and minority activity to becoming part of the habitual consumption of most families. Increasingly in demand, this spending is part of the income and activity flows of an economic system and can be considered a wealth generating activity (Herrero, 2011).

From a formal point of view, activities related to culture can be defined as cultural and creative industries whose main objective is the production or reproduction, promotion, dissemination and/or commercialisation of goods, services and content activities that are cultural, artistic or patrimonial (Stenou, 2002).

Culture is unique in several aspects: a) it is not related to satisfying basic needs or social protection, b) it cannot be stored physically since it is associated with an experience, c) it is considered a luxury or luxury consumption in societies (but, nonetheless, generalized access to it is considered desirable) and d) it is difficult to account for since national statistics do not consider it a sector on its own.

Owing to the particular characteristics of cultural goods and services, there was no further development in their economic study until the contribution of Baumol and Bowen (1968), who applied theories and tools of economic analysis to cultural goods and services.

Aguado-Quintero (2010) mentioned that these types of goods and services, by nature, have two important gaps to be considered when promoting them: the income gap generated by an increase in production costs that cannot be covered by prices, and the participation gap, where those who consume these types of goods and services correspond to a socioeconomic profile of higher income and education levels.

Cultural goods, as objects of demand, are inputs used to produce a cultural experience that, similar to services, are immaterial and result deciphering and interpreting visual, auditory or symbolic stimuli through images, sounds and signs claimants (Aguado-Quintero, 2010). However, despite their immaterial and experiential nature, cultural goods require productive factors such as work and inputs (goods) to create them, with an impact on economic activity (Herrero, 2011).

In addition, goods and services associated with leisure and culture are characterised by having added value, which is generally greater than that of other types of goods and services, possibly because of the type of cultural experience that they facilitate, the singularity of their (unique, unrepeatable, non-transferable or interchangeable) characteristics or the subjective characteristics of their use or enjoyment, which allows them to be economically valuable. Furthermore, the more unique the goods and services, the more economic value they will have. On the other hand, there is a rich variety of goods and services that can be considered part of this sector and that the reader can find in detail in several specialised texts (Heilbrun & Gray, 2001; Towse, 2019). Nonetheless, there is initial difficulty in characterising the consumption associated with culture as it relates to leisure and, in general, there are limited and scarce statistics about this type of good and service and about the workings of its supply and demand.

Despite these findings, there is a consensus on the benefits of the consumption of culture in society, its potential contribution to human development and the well-being that it generates (Baumol, 2011). As such, there exists at the international level a setting that promotes cultural development through public policies that subsidise activities and aim to make culture and leisure consumption accessible to the population (Heilbrun & Gray, 2001). Additionally, the protection of unique

cultural elements and copyright and creativity is essential to facilitate the existence of a culture and leisure market that can be developed in economic terms.

In economic terms and from a demand perspective, it may be useful to analyse the cultural sector in terms of the type and structure of family consumption and associated economic resources. From a supply perspective, it may be interesting to analyse the diversity of the cultural offerings of goods and services, the sensitivity of their demand with respect to price (elasticity) or the sophistication of the goods and services put out by the sector in terms of added value and economic performance. Among these elements, in this article we are concerned with analysing consumption from the perspective of demand.

The literature indicates that the consumption of culture by individuals/families depends on multiple factors, including income, educational level, family configuration, age, environmental factors such as population size and density and the available cultural offering, among others (Amestoy, 2009; Ateca-Amestoy et al., 2020; Herrero-Prieto & Gómez-Vega, 2017; Warde, 2014; Zhang, 2017).

Determinants of spending on culture in Chile

In terms of culture, the country has seen an increase in the supply of cultural events such as music festivals, art exhibitions, plays and dance performances. In addition, new cultural spaces have been opened such as theatres, art galleries and cultural centres, which offer a variety of activities for the public. In terms of leisure, options have been increasing, especially in urban areas. Parks, shopping centres, restaurants, cafes and bars have been developed that offer various entertainment and recreation options.

In addition, internal and external tourism has contributed to the development of leisure activities, such as ecotourism, adventure tourism and outdoor activities. Various studies have shown that there are important differences in the degree of socioeconomic development at the regional (subnational) level, particularly with respect to spending on culture and leisure.

In Chile's case, and according to data from the only available study (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2016), the culture sector had sales to the tune of CLP 7,818.8 million pesos (USD\$ 13,031.4 million), which represented 1.5% of the sales of all companies nationwide, equivalent to 2.1% of GDP in 2013 and 529,441 jobs, which would amount to 7.3% of total employment, and a negative trade balance with exports of CLP74,923 million dollars, equivalent to 0.3% of exports at the national level in 2014 and 72.831 million dollars of imports, which represents 4.6% of total product imports at the national level in 2014. Public spending on culture was CLP123,353 million pesos in 2014, which represents 0.4% of total public spending, and is equivalent to 0.08% of the national GDP in 2014. Estimates of regional

financing for culture reached CLP102,028 million pesos, which would have contributed to 1.2% of the government's total budget during 2015.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study adopts a methodological approach inspired by the analysis developed by Katz-Gerro (2002), who examined cultural consumption using national micro-data and a set of sociodemographic and territorial variables to explain differentiated access patterns. Although the econometric technique used here—quantile regression—differs from the linear models employed in Katz-Gerro's work, the analytical rationale remains the same: to understand how factors such as income, education, gender, age and geographic location influence household cultural behaviour. In particular, this study builds upon the comparative and multidimensional logic of Katz-Gerro's framework, adapting it to the Chilean context through data from the 2021–22 Household Budget Survey (*Encuesta de Presupuestos Familiares 2021-22*, <https://www.ine.cl/estadisticas/ingresos-y-gastos/epf>) with the aim of identifying and informing on structural inequalities.

The Household Budget Study is applied to households and contains information on the expenses of families toward the consumption of goods and services and family income and socioeconomic characteristics in four macroregions: the metropolitan region, north macrozone, central macrozone and south macrozone.

The geographic estimation areas for the IX EPF correspond to the total national, metropolitan and north, central and south macrozones. Of the total number of dwellings encompassed by the survey, 14,961 were interviewed, including 15,134 households. These households represent 4,420,864 households in the urban areas of the country.

This survey uses a Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (CCIF), which follows the international standards indicated by the European Union Statistical Office in its manual, "Household Budget Surveys in the EU" (Eurostat, 2023), to classify and thus standardise the goods and services captured by the survey. In this case, the goods and services consumed by families are classified into 12 categories: food and non-alcoholic beverages; alcoholic beverages; tobacco and narcotics; clothing and footwear; accommodation; water, electricity, gas and other fuels; furniture; articles for the home and for the maintenance of the home; health; transportation; communications; sports, recreation and culture; education; restaurants and hotels; and miscellaneous goods and services.

For this study, households that consumed Class 9 goods and services and sub-classes 5 to 8 (culture and leisure), were selected; the total database included 8,332 households. The variables considered are presented in Table 1, with a brief explanation of each of them.

Table 1.
Characterisation of the sample (n = 8,332)

Demographic Items	Frequency	%	Demographic Items	Frequency	%
<i>Sex</i>			<i>Income (CLP \$)</i>		
Man	4,528	54.4	Less than 500 thousand	2,213	26.56
Woman	3,801	45.6	Between 500 thousand and 1 million	2,745	32.95
<i>Age (years)</i>			Between 1 - 1.5 million	1,257	15.09
18-29	702	8.4	Between 1.5 - 2.5 million	1,102	13.23
30-39	2,002	24.0	Between 2.5 - 4 million	588	7.06
40-49	2,019	24.2	More than 4 million	427	5.12
50-59	1,577	18.9	<i>Spending on culture</i>		
60-69	1,159	13.9	Less than 10 thousand	4,292	51.51
70-79	656	7.9	Between 10 - 20 thousand	1,347	16.17
Older than 79	217	2.6	Between 20 - 30 thousand	748	8.98
<i>Higher education</i>			Between 30 - 100 thousand	1,397	16.77
Has	5,239	62.87	Between 100 - 500 thousand	512	6.14
Does not have	3,093	37.13	More than 500 thousand	36	0.43
			<i>No. of people in the household</i>		
<i>Macrozone</i>			1	902	10.83
North	1,422	17.07	2	1,998	23.98
Metropolitan	3,441	41.3	3	2,118	25.42
Central	2,199	26.39	4	1,956	23.48
South	1,270	15.24	More than 4	1,358	16.30

Source: Own elaboration.

Model

The model considered in the study correlates the level of expenditure in Chilean pesos and the natural logarithm of expenditure, which are considered influential factors of cultural consumption by the literature (Featherstone, 2007; Katz-Gerro, 2002; van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013; Warde, 2014):

$$\ln(C_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_0 \ln(I_i) + \sum_i \beta_i X_i + \sum_j \beta_j Z_j + \varepsilon_i, i = 1, \dots, n, j = 0.1$$

(1)

where C_i is the expenditure on culture and leisure by household; I_i is the total income of family i , which includes the income and income of all family members; X_i is a control vector with socioeconomic characteristics (no. people and children where 1 denotes having children and 0 not having them), educational level (1 has higher education, 0 does not), sex of the main breadwinner of the family (1 for man and 0 for woman); and Z_j is a vector of control related to geographic context characteristics (1 when hailing from the metropolitan region and 0 from outside it).

Equation (1) was estimated through ordinary least squares (OLS) and by regression in quantiles to the extent that, owing to the distribution characteristics of some variables considered in the study, they are asymmetric tail weights (income and expenditure on culture) and therefore may bias the results of the coefficients. Quantile regression (QR) will also be used.

The use of a quantile regression instead of an OLS model is justified, mainly because it allows us to analyse how socioeconomic determinants influence the distribution of spending on cultural and leisure activities differently. While OLS estimates only the average effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, quantile regression offers a more complete view by estimating the effects at different points of the distribution (such as the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles; Koenker, 2017).

This is crucial in the context of cultural spending since variables such as income, household size, and education can have different impacts on households with low and high spending levels, which OLS does not capture. In addition, quantile regression is more robust against the presence of outliers or heterogeneity in the variance of the errors, which improves the precision of the estimates when the data distribution is not symmetric or skewed (Colther et al., 2024). In this case, spending on culture may have a distribution skewed to the right, with a concentration of households that spend little, and a minority that spend a great deal.

Quantile regression allows us to model these disparities, identifying how socioeconomic determinants affect the extremes of the distribution more intensely, providing a better understanding of cultural consumption patterns than an OLS model cannot provide. The flexibility offered by quantile regression is quite useful for analysing large microeconomic databases from surveys that may contain problems of heteroscedasticity, structural changes or atypical data (Koenker, 2017). On the other hand, quantile regression does not require a parametric distribution assumption for the error distribution, which is useful in cases where the independence assumption is not met (Sánchez et al., 2021).

If we assume that we have a sample of observations of a variable Y with a distribution $F(\cdot)$, Y_t ; $t = 1, 2, \dots, N$, we will have the quantile θ of the sample, with $0 <$

$\theta < 1$, such that value b leaves a proportion θ of observations below and a proportion $(1 - \theta)$ above. For example, in the case of the median $\theta = 0.5$, 50% of the data will be below $b = Me$, and 50% of the data will be above. If we use the first quartile ($\theta = 0.25$), 25% of the values of Y would be below $b = Q1$ and 75% above, and similarly and inversely with the third quartile. The quartiles divide the sample into four parts, but we can divide the sample into 10 parts with the following deciles: $\theta = 0.1, 0.2; \dots; 0.9$ or any other ratio.

These divisions are what we call quantiles. An alternative way of expressing the definition of quantiles, which is also a first approximation to the quantile regression estimation method, is represented by the following:

$$[\sum_{Y_i \geq b} \theta |y_i - b| + \sum_{Y_i \leq b} (1 - \theta) |y_i - b|]$$

where θ is the quantile (0.10 for the first decile, 0.25 for the first quartile, 0.50 for the median, etc.) and the observed values of the sample for the variable determine the value b that minimises the corresponding expression. It can easily be shown that b is the value that leaves a proportion θ of the sample observations below and a proportion $(1-\theta)$ above. Therefore, θ represents a value between 0 and 1, corresponding to the quantile that you want to estimate.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics related to spending on culture and the level of income disaggregated by macrozones.

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics according to macrozone for quantitative variables

Statisticians	Macrozone	Income (CL \$)	Spending on culture
Mean	North	1,161,020	30,354
	Metropolitan	1,585,267	35,645
	Centre	1,046,411	26,588
	South	1,157,193	23,882
Std. mean error	North	32,675	2,574
	Metropolitan	35,020	1,285
	Centre	23,494	1,698
	South	32.342	2,217

(Continued)

Statisticians	Macrozone	Income (CL \$)	Spending on culture
CV (%)	North	106.1	319.7
	Metropolitan	129.6	211.5
	Centre	105.3	299.4
	South	99.6	3330.9
Median	North	782,500	8,830
	Metropolitan	904,698	11,689
	Centre	693,500	8,653
	South	800,000	7,137
n	North	1422	1422
	Metropolitan	3441	3441
	Centre	2199	2199
	South	1270	1270

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of data from EPF (2022).

From the above table, important differences can be observed between the macrozones in terms of income, number of people per household and expenditure on culture. In terms of income, the metropolitan region has the highest average income of \$1,430,611 pesos (US \$1,635 dollars), which reflects its role as the economic centre of the country. The Central macrozone, on the other hand, has the lowest average income of \$966,678 pesos (US \$1,105 dollars). This inequality is also observed in spending on culture, with the metropolitan area showing the highest average spending of \$88,131 pesos (US \$101 dollars) and the south macrozone the lowest of \$63,410 pesos (US \$73 dollars) in 2022.

The coefficient of variation (CV) indicates high dispersion, especially in the income of the metropolitan region (133.8%) and in the expenditure on culture in all regions (over 150%), which suggests strong internal inequality. Furthermore, the difference between the mean and the median in income and expenditure on culture suggests an asymmetric distribution, with a few high-income households raising the averages.

At the demographic level, the number of people per household is quite homogeneous, with an average of close to three in all regions. These antecedents provide evidence of disparities in terms of both income and cultural consumption among macrozones, with a marked concentration of resources in the metropolitan region.

Table 3 presents the estimates of the cultural consumption model (Eq. 1) through a regression in quantiles, considering the quantiles 0.1, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, and 0.9.

The results of the estimations in the case of the OLS estimation show that the coefficient of the logarithm of total income is positive and significant (0.44150), which indicates that an increase of 1% in income is associated with an increase of

0.44% in the dependent variable. Other variables, such as the number of people in the household (No. people), children and higher education level (Eduhig), also have positive and significant effects, especially higher education, which has high impact (0.58263).

Table 3.

Estimates of the culture and leisure consumption model in Chile

Variables	OLS	P10	P25	P50	P75	P90
Intercept	2.70538 ** (0.27719)	-1.46516* (.62614)	0.78851. (.41324)	2.37385 ** (.31248)	3.93562 ** (.32821)	6.05508 ** (0.86644)
Log (income)	0.39482 ** (0.02115)	0.52599 ** (0.04679)	0.45210 ** (0.03120)	0.43091 ** (0.02383)	0.39100 ** (0.02495)	0.30441 ** (0.04481)
No. people	0.13112 ** (0.01476)	0.14604** (0.03312)	0.13667 ** (0.02104)	0.12549 ** (0.01354)	0.13006 ** (0.01664)	0.08565 ** (0.02760)
Children	0.29703** (0.04747)	0.63545 * (0.09895)	0.46405 ** (0.07478)	0.26543 ** (0.05253)	0.10400 (0.05426)	0.08987 (0.08832)
Eduhig	0.77323** (0.04747)	0.78436 ** (0.08998)	0.78719 ** (0.06127)	0.72504 ** (0.04652)	0.71310 ** (0.04078)	0.76749 ** (0.07005)
Sex	0.017357 (0.00926)	0.018099 (0.02744)	0.02877 ** (0.05364)	0.01209 ** (0.04004)	0.01149 (0.0443)	0.02140 (0.22573)
Zmetro	0.14218 ** (0.03619)	0.01658 (0.08548)	0.21093** (0.05375)	0.13609 ** (0.04008)	0.20683 ** (0.04029)	0.23649 ** (0.05492)
Pseudo R 2	0.1584	0.083988	0.084535	0.091761	0.0955939	0.093653
Syx	1.608 df=8325					

Note. p value < 0.10; * p value < 0.05; ** p value < 0.01

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of data from EPF 2022.

On the other hand, being a woman (Sex) has a negative and significant effect (-0.2620), suggesting the existence of a gender gap in the behaviour of the dependent variable. In addition, living in the metropolitan region (Zmetro) has a positive impact (0.10150), which indicates that households in Santiago (the country's capital) experience better dependent variable results.

However, these results should be evaluated with caution, given the evidence of high dispersion in the income and expenditures of families at the macrozone level, which limits a consistent estimation of the regression coefficients. To overcome this problem, it has been estimated through a regression in quantiles.

Regarding the results of the regression in quantiles, how the impact of the variables varies along the distribution of the dependent variable was observed. In this case, the coefficient of log (total income) is higher in the low quantiles (P10: 0.68613) and progressively decreases to P90 (0.29597), which implies that income

has a greater impact on households with low dependent variable values. This effect is attenuated in households with higher values. The number of people in the household has a relatively constant effect on all quantiles, indicating that its influence is homogeneous throughout the distribution.

However, the effect of having children is greater in the lower quantiles (P10: 0.25571) and fades in the upper quantiles, P90 (0.02501). This suggests that, in households with low values of the dependent variable, children have a positive effect, but in households with higher values, the effect is neutral or even negative. With respect to higher education, its impact is positive and significant in all quantiles, although it decreases slightly toward the higher quantiles, indicating that its effect is more pronounced in households in the lower part of the distribution.

Finally, the effect of living in a metropolitan area is stronger in the upper quantiles (P90: 0.15799), which suggests that the benefit of living in urban areas is more relevant for households with better results in the dependent variable.

On the other hand, the analysis of the regression results presents important differences between the estimation by OLS and the regression in quantiles, revealing heterogeneity in the effects of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable, whereas the regression OLS provides an average analysis of the effects of the explanatory variables.

The regression in quantiles reveals greater complexity, showing how the effects of these variables change at different points in the distribution of the dependent variable. This allows us to capture the heterogeneity in the relationships between the variables, highlighting the importance of factors such as income, household size and education in different segments of the population.

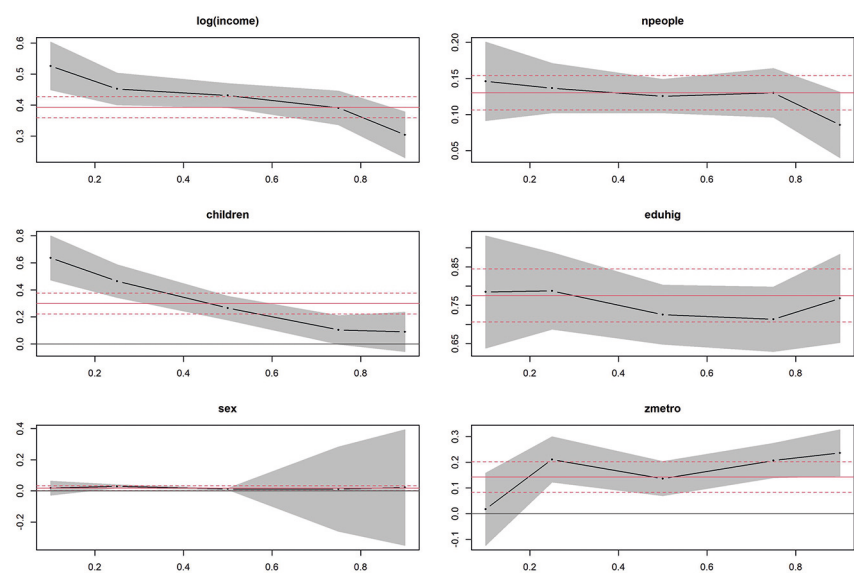
Figure 1 illustrates the quantile regression coefficients for the dependent variable (cultural consumption) as a function of the independent variables: intercept, $\log(\text{income})$ (logarithm of total income), $n\text{people}$ (number of people in the household), children , eduhig (higher education attainment), sex (gender), and zmetro (residence in a metropolitan area). The shaded regions represent the confidence intervals, and the horizontal zero line indicates the threshold for statistical significance.

The intercept shows significant variation across quantiles, reflecting baseline differences in cultural consumption along its distribution. For $\log(\text{income})$ the coefficient decreases across quantiles, suggesting that income has a diminishing marginal effect on cultural consumption as one moves higher in the distribution. This implies that while income strongly influences cultural consumption among individuals or households with lower levels of consumption, its impact lessens for those already engaging heavily in cultural activities. This relationship is statistically significant in the lower and middle quantiles, as the confidence intervals do not cross the zero threshold, but it becomes less significant at the upper quantiles.

The number of people in the household ($n\text{people}$) exhibits a negative relationship with cultural consumption across most quantiles. This effect becomes more pronounced in the higher quantiles, indicating that larger households may face

constraints—such as financial or logistical barriers—that limit their ability to engage in cultural activities, particularly among those with higher baseline levels of consumption. Similarly, the number of children haws a decreasing trend in its effect, with a stronger negative relationship at the lower quantiles. This suggests that households with more children face greater constraints on cultural consumption, with the effect being more pronounced for those with lower levels of participation.

Figure 1.
Quantile regression of scores



Source: Own elaboration.

Higher education attainment (*edusup*) consistently demonstrates a positive and significant effect on cultural consumption across most quantiles, particularly in the middle and upper quantiles. This highlights the pivotal role of education in fostering cultural engagement, as individuals with higher education are more likely to prioritise and access cultural activities. On the other hand, gender (*sex*) does not show significant variation across quantiles, as the confidence intervals largely overlap with the zero line, indicating no substantial differences between men and women in their relationship with cultural consumption.

Residence in a metropolitan area (*zmetro*) exhibits notable variation across quantiles, with significant effects at specific points in the distribution. This suggests that living in a metropolitan area facilitates access to cultural opportunities, though the magnitude of this effect varies depending on the level of cultural consumption. For example, metropolitan residence might have a stronger impact on households

with moderate or high levels of engagement, likely due to the greater availability and diversity of cultural activities in urban centres.

In summary, the quantile regression results highlight the non-uniform effects of the independent variables on cultural consumption across its distribution. Variables such as income, household size and education exhibit varying relationships depending on the quantile, emphasising the importance of considering distributional effects beyond average estimates. The findings reveal significant heterogeneity in the determinants of cultural consumption and underscore the need for tailored policy interventions. For instance, improving access to cultural activities for low-income households or for those with children could increase participation in the lower quantiles, while fostering educational attainment and expanding urban cultural infrastructure could yield broader benefits across the middle and upper quantiles of cultural consumption.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results obtained through ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and quantile regression provides a nuanced understanding of how socioeconomic factors influence cultural spending in Chilean households. While the OLS results indicate a positive and significant average impact of total income on cultural spending, the quantile regression reveals a decreasing elasticity of income, particularly in households with higher levels of expenditure (P90). This implies that for households with high cultural spending, income plays a relatively small role compared to households with lower spending levels. This trend aligns with the theory of consumption, which posits that as income increases, the proportion allocated to nonessential goods, such as cultural activities, decreases.

Regarding the number of people in the household, the findings from both OLS and quantile regression show a positive relationship across the distribution of cultural spending. However, this effect diminishes slightly in the higher quantiles, suggesting that household size is less relevant in cultural spending decisions among more affluent households. This could indicate that households with greater economic capacity face fewer financial constraints and are therefore less affected by household size.

The impact of the number of children is more pronounced in the lower quantiles (P10 and P25), reflecting the significance of childcare-related costs in households with limited cultural spending. For households with higher spending capacity, this effect disappears, suggesting that cultural consumption decisions in these households are less influenced by the presence of children.

Higher education emerges as a consistently strong determinant of cultural spending, with a positive and significant effect across all quantiles. This finding supports the hypothesis that individuals with higher education levels are more likely to consume cultural goods, likely due to a greater appreciation and awareness of cultural

activities. The uniformity of this effect across the distribution underscores the pivotal role of education in fostering cultural engagement.

The gender variable (sex) does not show a significant effect in most quantiles, except for P75, where a slight influence is observed. This suggests that gender differences in cultural spending are minimal, except among households with higher spending levels, potentially due to differences in consumption preferences between men and women.

Residence in a metropolitan area has an increasingly positive effect as one moves up the distribution of cultural spending. The effect is more pronounced among households with higher cultural spending, highlighting greater access to and opportunities for cultural engagement in urban areas. This finding reinforces the idea that metropolitan households, due to proximity to cultural offerings, are more likely to engage in cultural consumption, particularly those with greater economic resources.

The estimation results show that income level, higher education and residing in the metropolitan region significantly influence household spending on culture and leisure, although their impact varies across the distribution of spending. In particular, income shows greater elasticity in households with lower cultural spending, while its effect diminishes in higher-spending households, suggesting relative saturation. Higher education has a positive and significant effect across all quantiles, indicating that it acts as a structural determinant of access to cultural goods and services beyond income level.

These findings are consistent with those of Katz-Gerro (2002) who, in a cross-national study of five countries, identified education as the most important explanatory factor for highbrow cultural consumption, surpassing even income. She also found that the influence of income on cultural consumption is not uniform across countries; in contexts such as Israel and the U.S., higher levels of cultural engagement are concentrated at the top of the social structure, whereas in Italy and West Germany, the distribution is broader. This diversity of patterns complements the evidence from Chile, where income is indeed relevant but exhibits decreasing elasticity, suggesting a potential saturation effect among higher-income households.

Regarding territorial variables, the fact that metropolitan households show higher cultural spending confirms the persistence of regional disparities, reinforcing the need for public policies with a territorial approach. Katz-Gerro also highlights the role of national and institutional contexts in shaping cultural consumption patterns, including welfare state configurations and the availability of cultural infrastructure, which aligns closely with the Chilean case, where cultural spending is concentrated in the capital and is lower in peripheral regions.

The use of quantile regression provides a more detailed view of the determinants of cultural consumption, revealing how income, household composition and education influence different levels of spending. This approach highlights the heterogeneity in

cultural consumption across households, emphasising that one-size-fits-all policies may not be effective. Instead, targeted interventions should be designed to address the needs of households at different levels of cultural spending. For example, households with lower cultural spending, which exhibit greater income sensitivity, could benefit from direct subsidies or free access to cultural events. Similarly, extending cultural offerings to regions outside the metropolitan area could reduce geographic disparities and promote broader participation in cultural life.

In the context of unequal cultural access among territories, the welfare state gains relevance; the state's role in society and its cultural policy manifest in various ways, such as subsidies for artists, public employment programs and investment in cultural infrastructure. The role of the state encompasses the regulation of cultural activities, the provision of services and the subsidisation of cultural products. However, cultural sectors' increasing privatisation and pluralism mean that cultural development is now collaboratively determined by government, corporate actors and civil society. This has intensified debates about the balance between artistic autonomy and the role of state intervention in promoting equity and access to culture, especially through decentralisation initiatives and social stratification (Barrios & Muttis, 2025; Katz-Gerro, 2002).

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyses the cultural spending of Chilean households using data from the 2021–2022 Household Budget Survey, disaggregating results by macrozone and employing both OLS and quantile regression approaches. The findings reveal that total income, household size and educational level are key determinants of cultural spending, with variations in their impact across the distribution of spending. Income shows a diminishing influence in households with higher spending levels, while higher education consistently has a positive effect across all quantiles. Metropolitan residence significantly increases cultural spending, particularly in households with greater economic capacity.

These results underscore the importance of adopting segmented policy approaches to promote cultural consumption, tailored to the needs of households at different levels of cultural spending. For lower-spending households, direct subsidies or free access to cultural events could reduce economic barriers and foster participation. Addressing geographic disparities through cultural extension programs in macrozones outside the metropolitan area could also enhance access to cultural opportunities. For larger families, discounts for cultural and recreational activities could alleviate financial constraints and encourage greater engagement. Strengthening cultural education through accessible programs, especially for underserved populations, is another promising strategy to stimulate cultural participation.

While this study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations. The analysis is based on data from a specific time period and changes in economic or

cultural contexts could alter the findings. Additionally, the quality and diversity of the cultural offerings were not directly evaluated, which could significantly influence spending patterns. Digital access to cultural goods, an increasingly important aspect of cultural consumption, was not either considered, potentially underestimating its impact.

Future research should address these limitations by exploring the role of cultural quality and diversity and by analysing both in-person and digital offerings. Investigating individual preferences and cultural habits through qualitative methods could also provide deeper insights into cultural consumption patterns. Evaluating the effectiveness of existing cultural policies, such as subsidies and extension programs, would help refine strategies to reduce disparities and promote equitable access to cultural goods and services. These efforts would contribute to fostering a more inclusive and dynamic cultural life in Chile.

There are aspects of territorial inequalities that are linked to class structures and other social linchpins, so it may be relevant to incorporate variables such as ethnic origin, cultural identity or religiosity, which can help explain territorial differences in cultural consumption in Chile.

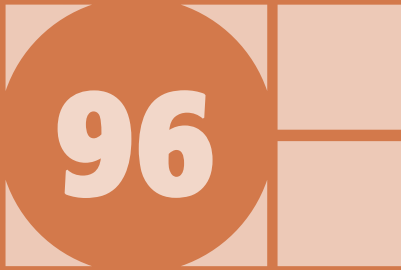
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