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Attitudes Towards the Funding of Cultural Policy in Spain: An examination of the ideological and political factors

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Abstract

Since the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy in the late 1970s, cultural policy has gone from virtually zero to a policy priority, especially in the country's regional and local governments. Spain's will to achieve a great socio-political transformation and to converge with Western Europe have been two of the drivers behind this trend. However, since the 2000s, three factors have undermined these policies: austerity; regional tensions; the crisis of the model. Thus, cultural politics are threatened by a detachment from High Culture, as well as by cultural populism and the Far Right. This is why our paper analyses support for cultural spending as reflected in CIS (Spanish government agency of sociological research) surveys, which show overwhelming support for such expenditure. However, the factors explaining this support are diverse and are linked to generational, ideological and political factors.

Keywords: cultural policies, Spain, ideology, voting patterns.

Introduction

Cultural policy played one of the biggest roles in Spain's construction of the new democratic system from the end dictatorship in seventies (Rubio Arostegui 2008, Bouzada 2007a). This shift was linked to freedom of expression and the scrapping of censorship, turning cultural policy into a symbol of national modernisation and putting Spain on a par with neighbouring European countries, all of which were democracies (Rubio Arostegui and Rius-Ulldemolins 2020). With regard to cultural policy, Spain lagged twenty years behind its North European neighbours, whose initiatives in this field dated back to the 1950s (Urfalino 1996). However, Spain's tardy excursion into cultural policy was characterised by vagueness and fickleness stemming from endless ideological disputes and diametrically opposed views on what constitutes 'cultural value' (Menger 2017, Sapiro 2017). The main disputes covered: the stress on excellence; relativist criticism of the idea; defence of cultural participation (despite the poor results yielded by the 'cultural democratisation' line that gave birth to cultural policy); promotion of 'diversity' (Vestheim 2012, Bonet and Négrier 2018) — a controversial notion that sprang up in the late 1970s. The 'democratisation' strand continues today (albeit with variations) in the pro-commons paradigm and the populist advocacy of 'grassroots culture' (that is, a 'down-up' model) (Dubois 2016, Barbieri 2018).

New legitimations of an exogenous nature cropped up in the 1980s and in the 1990s (especially in the latter decade). They included promotion of 'The Creative City' and regional brands (Scott 2010, Williams and Currid-Halkett 2011), as well as the social impacts of culture (Subirats, Barbieri, and Partal 2010, Belfiore and Bennett 2008). Both strands have been long-discussed and judged (Belfiore and Bennett 2008, d'Ovidio and Cossu 2017) however such considerations must be excluded here for want of space.

In any case, one can say that cultural policy's legitimacy, value, and social impacts have been hotly debated and criticised (Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020, O'Brien 2015). Although

such policy tends to add ever more goals (some of which are partially conflicting ones), it has enjoyed considerable legitimacy in Europe. Thus although European governments made deep cuts in the worst years following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC), spending on culture continues to be part of The Welfare State (Rius-Ulldemolins, Pizzi, and Rubio Arostegui 2019, Dubois 2015). That said, some countries in Southern Europe showed less commitment to maintaining spending given that they were worse affected by the crisis. In general, Europe has shown political consensus in favour of cultural policy. This contrasts with the weakness of cultural policy in other democracies, especially in The United States where the Neo-Conservative Right and Far-Right are highly critical of Federal spending in this field even though most voters support it (DiMaggio and Bryson 2000, Jacobsmeier 2021). In Europe, cultural policy has generally commanded consensus among democratic parties during the post-war period. Even so, there is growing opposition to this policy among Right-Wing Populist movements — a trend mirroring that in The United States. This opposition in Europe has become fiercer and more explicit, stemming from Far-Right parties rejection of ‘elitism’ and their exaltation of ethno-national ‘nativism’ in countries such as France, The Netherlands, and Italy (Jansma 2019, Couperus and Pier 2019, Almeida 2017). In some European countries (especially in The East), a growing wave of Populism has affected institutions leading to an anti-Liberal shift in cultural policy (Bonet and Zamorano 2021). In Spain’s case, Right-Wing Populism is a recent phenomenon. The emergence of the Far-Right VOX party and the rightward drift of other parties such as *Ciudadanos* (Liberal Right) and *Partido Popular* (Conservative Right) — which compete in the same political space — have also put cultural policy under pressure (Àlvar et al. 2020, Barrio 2020). In Spain’s case, certain aspects of cultural policy — especially those affecting national symbols and the family model — have proven highly controversial, with the Right-Wing becoming ever more combative on such issues. We therefore need to ask to what extent these political and ideological factors affect the support for cultural policy in Spain. This is the issue discussed in this paper.

To this end, we shall analyse the socio-demographic and ideological-political factors (explained in detail in methodological section) shaping individual attitudes towards the public funding of culture in Spain. Specifically, we start from the hypothesis that political and ideological factors play a key role in fostering attitudes to raising/slashing spending on culture. First, we look at the context in which cultural policy in Spain has developed, and its late incorporation in a democratic Welfare State. Second, we examine the importance of regional considerations within Spain's model of 'Autonomous Communities' in which regional and local government have played an active part in both drawing up and executing such policy. As we shall see, this led to both initial support for cultural policy but also tensions and legitimacy issues. With regard to support for cultural policy, we shall examine a time series of surveys carried out by Spain's Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), which are discussed below. Here, we highlight the factors influencing survey results based on regression and multiple correlation analyses. The findings are used to draw conclusions on the initial hypothesis, and on which political and ideological factors best explain survey respondents' views on cultural spending.

Cultural Policy in Spain: European convergence and legitimization of cultural spending

One of cultural policy's features is its assimilation within broad trends of European democratisation and convergence in terms public cultural spending and development of cultural institutions and programmes (Rius-Ulldemolins, Pizzi, and Rubio Arostegui 2019). In this respect, Spain largely mirrors what happened in Portugal and Greece upon the restoration of democracy (all military dictatorships until the mid-1970s). Up until then, all three nations were looked down upon by Western Europe's Liberal elites as backward and uncivilised (in Spain, the writers who most strongly reflected such views were Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset). The consensus view was that Spain's path to modernisation should largely follow the example set by

Northern European nations (Sarasa and Moreno 1995). In this context, central and north Europe was seen as a positive model, enshrining progress and democracy — an idea that was held long before the founding of The European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Later, this desire to copy the European model was boosted by European institutionalisation processes, and the adoption of EU norms and policy-making style (Graziano and Vink 2008, Alcaud and Pire 2006). We can thus speak of a gradual ‘Europeanisation’ of Southern European countries (Featherstone and Kazamias 2001). This process was led by those nations with Social-Democratic governments, which turned cultural policy into a way of fostering social and national cohesion by showcasing the nation’s modernisation. One of the goals here was to wipe out the image of a nasty, backward dictatorship and replace it with something a bit more upbeat. (Zorba 2009, Garcia et al. 2016, Rubio Aróstegui 2003). To leave this evil recent past behind it, Spain drew up an active cultural policy on which a great deal was spent. Indeed, in terms of cultural spending between 2008-2016, Spain was the leader of the pack among Southern European nations in terms of the money spent per head on culture. Indeed, in terms of cultural spending as a percentage of GDP, it outstripped Northern European countries such as Germany, Belgium, and The Netherlands. (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – European countries’ cultural spending as a percentage of overall expenditure, and as a percentage of GDP (average for the period 2008-2016)*

Member States’ entry to European institutions modulated domestic discourses on cultural policy over time. Yet such policies were also shaped by each country’s own socio-historical conditions. In the cases of Greece, Portugal, and Spain, all three countries saw the fall of military dictatorships in the 1970s — a change that was accompanied by institutionalisation of public policy through Ministries of Culture. It came with a much stronger centralising trend, which was mirrored by the setting up of Ministries of Culture (Rubio Arostegui 2008). The

initial formulation and implementation of Spain's cultural policies was inspired by the French tradition of State promotion of High Culture. This Central European conception of cultural policy is a legacy of Enlightened Despotism and its direct management of leading cultural institutions. In Spain's case, this Statist, bureaucratic approach was evidenced by the creation of a Ministry of Culture charged with overseeing the leading cultural institutions in Madrid. Nevertheless, the model quickly evolved into a decentralised one, especially in the so-called autonomous regions covering Spain's historic constituent nations (Rubio Aróstegui 2003).

The Construction of a State of Autonomous Communities: Ministry of Culture, autonomous governments, and the legitimization of cultural policy

The 1980s and 90s saw a rapid roll-out of Spain's cultural policy, whose geographical scope was ambivalent in two respects. First, it maintained and strengthened the centralist bias of Ministry of Culture that earmarked and shared out funds, and that ran leading cultural institutions. This set Spain apart from nations taking Federal or federalising approaches in which the Central Government's role was either limited to co-ordination of where direct action or was wholly absent (Paquette 2019, Zamorano, M., Rius-Ulldemolins, J., Bonet, L. 2018). In contrast to the 'federal approach', great efforts were made early in the transition to democracy to legitimise and highlight the State's cultural role. Thus Ministries' roles in cultural life were placed in the media spotlight in an effort to offset a dearth of staff and funding¹. Second, the Ministry's institutional rigidity (DiMaggio 1987) led to adoption of the French cultural policy model (based upon strong State regulation of goods and services in this sector) — something that was apparent in Spain's iron control over book publishing and cinema. At the same time, the Ministry tended to apply lower VAT rates to the sector. Thus in 1992, Spain applied 3 to 4% VAT, unlike Scandinavia, France, The Netherlands, and Germany, which all applied higher rates. Cinema audience shares and State subsidies were used to protect the Spanish film industry and a policy was begun of fostering cinema screenings to counter the shrinking private offerings

found in cities. In particular, regional decentralisation led to a boost in investment in cultural infrastructure, albeit in an unplanned way and without undertaking impact studies. All in all, the policy was based on the belief that culture had a significant role to play in Spain; to modernize the country and open the Spanish society to the Europe as stated by 1978 Spanish Constitution and Autonomous Communities Statutes of Autonomy (Rius-Ulldemolins et al. 2016, Bouzada 2007b). Accordingly, the formulation of national cultural policy was based on the imitation of the central European cultural policy of the 1980s and 90s (Zamorano, Rius-Ulldemolins, and Bonet 2014, Bonet and Negrier 2010) and that both Spain's Socialist governments and the early Partido Popular [Conservative] governments shared. A sea change came in 2003 with the Socialist Party's unexpected election victory. The *Partido Popular* and much of the Right-Wing media then began a smear campaign targeting the film industry, which had played a leading role in opposing The Iraq War [2003] in which Spain had taken part. Later on, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008 led to austerity policies slashing social spending and jobs (Rodríguez Cabrero 2016). In some cases, Spain suffered institutional and political de-stabilisation that has lasted until the present (Verney and Bosco 2013). Cultural policies have been one of the casualties of this trend, thus putting an end to the convergence on cultural policy spending with Western Europe seen during the 1990s (Rubio Arostegui and Rius-Ulldemolins 2020, Rubio Arostegui, Rius-Ulldemollins, and Martinez 2014b). This worsening trend was especially marked during 2011 when the *Partido Popular* governed with an absolute majority (Rubio, Rius, and Martinez 2014). The de-legitimation of cultural policy was clearly visible in the film industry, which lost half its funding in the first round of cuts. Cultural spending as a whole was also severely pruned (Bonet i Agustí 2016).

Crisis and de-legitimation of cultural policy: austerity, regional tensions, and crisis of the policy model

Two vectors of the de-legitimation of cultural policy can be discerned from the 2000s on: (1) tension in cultural policy and the regional issue — stemming from cultural and national

diversity in a Spain that had been riven by conflict since the 19th Century (Bouzada 2008, Zamorano 2017); (2) tensions between the cultural sector and the Right-Wing, the emergence of a Populist Far-Right which attacked the Liberal intellectual elites, and that undermined cultural freedom both at home and abroad (Àlvar et al. 2020, Tepper 2011).

First, one should highlight the general consensus on cultural policies that made a State based on autonomous regional communities possible. This involved a multi-tiered political system in which local and regional government underwent considerable development (Rodríguez Morató and Rius Uldemollins 2012). Nevertheless, some analysts have criticised relations between these tiers as dysfunctional, conflictive, and inefficient (Rius-Uldemollins and Zamorano 2015). Those critics have highlighted the shortcomings of Spain's Ministry of Education and Culture (from here on, MEC) in managing cultural policy, leading to weak legitimacy (especially early on after the country's transition to democracy) and the lack of programme leadership under both Left-Wing and Right-Wing governments (Rubio Arostegui 2003, Rubio Arostegui 2005). In practice, the MEC has focused on boosting Madrid as Spain's 'Cultural Capital', thus strengthening recentralisation processes since the 2000s (Rius-Uldemollins, Rubio Arostegui, and Flor 2021).

One of the sources of tension in and legitimisation of cultural policies has been the different co-ordination approaches among public administrations. While the Ministry in Madrid sees itself as orchestrating this, The Basque Country and Catalonia see themselves as part of a Federal system operating bottom-up, decentralised policies. These fundamentally different concepts regarding the respective roles of the two tiers of government have led to endless controversies in the national and regional press (Zamorano, M., Rius-Uldemollins, J., Bonet, L. 2018, Villarroya 2012). During the 1990s, decentralisation and a shift towards regional cultural policies were seen a success, spawning as they did a host of proposals covering diverse cultural projects that were a great leap forward in regional development terms (Zallo 2011, Prytherch and Boira Maiques 2015). However, the GFC in 2008 and the wave of anger over cuts in basic services and over lavish spending on The Arts led to de-legitimisation of cultural policy. As a

result, many demanded a review of policy priorities, and a new pro-commons culture to replace an unhealthy obsession with mega-events and infrastructure (Barbieri 2018, Rius-Ulldemolins and Gisbert 2019). In any case, the support for cultural policy in those regions with their own unique identity was broadened by the scope for fostering those special features (Villarroya 2012, Zallo 2011). Thus support for said policy was especially marked among the nationalist political forces in The Basque Country, Catalonia, and other regions, each of which have their own unique cultural identity.

Nevertheless, one of the main attacks on cultural spending stems from the Spanish Right-Wing's, not from scathing analyses of poor public management of The Performing Arts, or of large hidebound State institutions (Rubio Arostegui 2017, Rubio Arostegui, Rius-Ulldemollins, and Martinez 2014a, Rius-Ulldemolins and Rubio 2013). The attack to cultural policy from Right-Wing was unleashed on the film industry in the early 2000s. At the Goya Awards ceremony in February 2003, several prize-winners protested at the looming Iraq War. At the time there were massive demonstrations whose slogan was *No a la Guerra* [No to The War], opposing the policy of the then *Partido Popular* government, which supported an invasion. Although the statements made at the awards ceremony were made by individuals, the *Partido Popular* took it as a collective attack. Shortly after, the pro-government media went on the offensive, criticising the subsidies spent on the film industry — an issue that was deliberately politicised to mask the government's wildly unpopular policy on Iraq (Zurro 2018).

This proved to be just the first round in critical discourse towards cultural policy that reached its height when several film-makers and actors lent their support campaign to elect Zapatero, the Socialist candidate for re-election in 2008. The campaign consisted of a video clip, a manifesto, and various public events in which leading figures in the cultural world (especially from the film industry) took part (Nicolás Meseguer 2019). This led to an ever more vitriolic campaign by the Right-Wing media against public funding of culture, politicising the subject and threatening cuts in government funding if the *Partido Popular* won the General Election². As things turned out, it was the Socialist Party that won the election and the *Partido*

Popular was forced to bide its time until 2011 before being in a position to carry out the threat. When the PP won in 2011, the audiovisual sector was one of the hardest hit by government cuts. Expenditure on the film industry was slashed to just €48.1 million in 2013 (in 2008, it stood at €90.1 million) (Bonet i Agustí 2016). Both the film industry and consumption in general were hit by the punishing rise in the lower VAT band from 8% to 21% in 2012. Here, *El Mundo* newspaper's vendetta against the film industry and Left-Wing directors and actors wrought havoc on the sector (Ganzábal, y López-Medel, 2008). This political offensive from Right Wing positions has severely dented the legitimacy of cultural policies in citizens' eyes, especially for those who identify themselves as Right-Wing, as we shall see in our analysis of attitudes toward cultural spending.

Data-use methodology

Research on attitudes to public funding of The Arts has sparked growing interest in The United States. Starting from partial studies, DiMaggio and others carried out the first research into general attitudes in this field (DiMaggio and Bryson 2000, DiMaggio and Pettit 1999). These studies used regression techniques to analyse variables that are usually linked to strong participation in The Arts (to wit, level of education and income) but that are also consistent with a conservative view of The State's role in The Arts — especially at the Federal level. In this respect, the studies tried to pin down the nature of the social and political opposition to spending on The Arts at a critical juncture in the Federal Government's cultural policy (Brooks 2001). Such studies in The United States came as a response to renewed efforts by the Conservative Right to cut spending on culture during Donald Trump's presidency. They take a longitudinal perspective of the main factors explaining support or opposition to spending on culture (Jacobsmeier 2021). Yet the studies focus wholly on The United States and have not been applied in Europe. In part, this is explained by the fact that America has a long tradition of

surveys such as the General Social Survey (NORC 2016) — something that facilitates longitudinal studies and thus comparison and evaluation of diverse analytical approaches (Novak-Leonard and Skaggs 2021). Sadly, comparable European surveys on support for Arts funding are lacking. However, there are surveys on tax and public spending in Spain, which allows analysis on the same lines as that found in The United States. Such is the case of the *Barómetros de Opinión Pública y Gasto Fiscal* [Public Opinion and Fiscal Spending Surveys] carried out from the 1990s to the present. While these surveys carried out in Spain on public spending date go back fifteen years (Arriba, Calzada, and del Pino 2006), there are no more recent, specific surveys on cultural spending in particular.

Therefore, for the analysis of the support of cultural spending in Spain, we have relied on the survey carried out by the Center for Sociological Research, CIS (2020, 2015, 2005, 1995), a public opinion research institute dependent on the Ministry of President of the Government of Spain. We have analyzed the time series that starts in the 1990s and is currently carried out, from which we have selected the years 1995, 2005, 2015 and 2020, thus presenting an evolution over 25 years. At the same time, we have selected the year 2020 (Research Number 3290) a representative survey with quotas of sex, age and type of population of 2,926 interviews conducted in July 2020 (CIS 2020). This survey has been used to carry out a more in-depth analysis in a simple regression analysis and a multiple correspondence analysis.

The dependent variable to be explained is *Assessment of cultural spending* (P8_7) which forms part of a battery of questions to elicit respondents' views on public spending fields ranging from education to defence. The question on the scale of public spending, as with all the others asked, gives respondents three options to choose from: (1) Too much; (2) Just right³; (3) Too little. Most respondents plumped for either the second or third options, with few answering "Too much" — something that renders analysis of this category unrepresentative. Accordingly, those opposing greater spending were grouped for the purposes of logistical regression (summing Category 1: 'Too much', and Category 2: 'Just right'). This also let us carry out a binary logistic regression of the dependent variable: (1) 'Too much' and 'Just right' or (2) 'Too

little'. We took the following into account to statistically adjust the variable: (1) The respondent's gender; (2) Age (re-coded); (3) Education level (re-coded); (4) Household income (re-coded); (5) Ideology scale (re-coded); (6) Religion (re-coded). Last, with regard to the analysis of multiple correlations, we used the same variables employed in the regression analysis but this time without recoding them in order to make their structuring power more apparent. In this case, an additional variable of a more ideological nature — Vote — was used to gauge which party respondents would choose in a hypothetical General Election.

Second, after examining the multiple correlations, we analysed the following variables: 1) Age, re-coded; (2) Household Income, re-coded; (3) Educational Level, re-coded; (4) Religious Practice, re-coded; (5) Ideology Scale, re-coded; (6) Vote, re-coded; (7) Attitude to spending on Law and Order; (8) Attitude to spending on culture. These variables have been used in other researches on attitudes towards cultural spending in other countries and have been revealed as noteworthy to understand its variations (Jacobsmeier 2021, Novak-Leonard and Skaggs 2021, Stubbs and Mullaney-Loss 2020).

Analysis of the results on attitude to cultural spending in Spain

First, an analysis was made of the longitudinal results based on the sample of years (falling at regular intervals: 1995, 2005, 2015, and except 2020). The results of the last 25 years of CIS surveys show that support for spending on culture is very broad-based. In general, over 70% of respondents favoured cultural spending. In CIS surveys since 1995, one can say an overwhelming majority (over 70%) of respondents have favoured public spending on culture. Furthermore, although the most chosen category in the 1995 survey was 'Just right', in all later years the most chosen response was 'Too little'. The latter category has gleaned growing support over the years, becoming the majority's choice, accounting for over 50% of respondents since 2000. One should highlight the fact that support for raising spending on culture rose in the aftermath of the GFC when public spending was being slashed. Meanwhile, respondents

opining that ‘Too much’ is spent on culture have made up under 7% ever since 1995. That said, one should note that this segment of respondents grew slightly in 2005, perhaps reflecting growing disenchantment with ‘the system’ during the crisis. Nevertheless, one should stress that support in Spain for such spending is far higher than it is in The United States, where those believing that less should be spent on culture make up almost a third of survey respondents (NORC 2016)⁴.

Figure 2 – Attitude towards public funding of culture in Spain (1995-2020)

In any case, this paper starts from the hypothesis that national support for cultural policy has special features that stem from a redefinition of collective identity (through Spain’s modernisation, plurality, and convergence with Europe). This helps explain why cultural policy in Spain is so sensitive to ideological and cultural factors.

In addition, most of the population considers social spending — especially that on culture — to be insufficient, as one can see from Figure 3. Therefore, ideological and political factors influence respondents’ views on cultural spending, as we shall see in this paper.

Figure 3 – Survey respondents’ views on various kinds of public spending in Spain (2020)

We thus consider that support for cultural spending should be correlated with ideological factors, a correlation that one can find at the descriptive level with the distribution of respondents’ self-identification on a scale that runs from 1 (Left-Wing) to 10 (Right-Wing), as can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Attitude towards the funding of culture, and the ideology self-identification scale (2019)*

Figure 4 shows that while support for cultural policy largely cuts across ideological boundaries (generally over 45% of respondents supported such policy on all scores), one can see greater support for the “Too Little” category among those respondents who identify more with Left-Wing views. Meanwhile, culture gleans less support from those identifying with more Centre or Right-Wing positions. One should also highlight the fact that among those saying that too much is spent on culture, many respondents (almost 20% of all those surveyed) place themselves on the Right or the Far-Right, reflecting a trend in Europe and The United States (where Populist or Far-Right citizens are those who most reject State intervention in culture (Almeida 2017, Tepper 2011)). Figure 4 shows that among Left-Wing parties and regional Right-Wing parties (except PNV), over half of their voters or sympathisers support boosting funding of cultural policy. This contrasts with Right-Wing national parties in which support for such policies is under 50%. Here one should note that in parties such as PP, *Ciudadanos*, and especially VOX, between 10% and 23% of their supporters say that too much is spent on culture.

Figure 5 – Attitude towards the funding of culture, and voting or support for a given party (2019)*

* Political parties with 5 or more Congressmen during the 14th legislature.

This link between ideology and attitude to cultural policy is not only found in the descriptive, bi-variable statistics but is also revealed with the help of multi-variable statistics, applying simple or binary factor analysis. To this end, we have introduced the variables highlighted in the methodology section and in Nagelkerke’ R-squared Model (which yields a value of 0.086, explaining 63.8% of the cases).

Table 1– Binary logistic regression of the dependent variable on cultural spending (the benchmark category being the ‘Too little’ one)

First, the demographic variables show a significant correlation but its explanatory power is low. Thus age shows a significant correlation, in which those aged over 50 favour cultural spending more than those under 50, and where women favour such expenditure more than men⁵. Second, education level does not reveal a significant correlation once this variable has been re-coded in low, middling, and high levels. Likewise, household income does not provide a significant explanation of the dependent variable. Nevertheless, these are not the most explicative demographic or socio-economic variables to emerge from the analysis of the binary logistic regression.

Ideology or political views are the factors that carry the greatest weight in attitude towards spending on culture. Self-identification as an atheist is positively correlated with the belief that too little is spent on culture. By contrast, self-identification as a Catholic (whether practicing or not), or as a member of other religions correlates negatively to the notion that more should be spent on culture. Third, respondents’ self-placement on the ideology scale is revealed as the most important factor shaping attitude to cultural spending. Here, a score of between 1 and 3 on the scale (i.e. on the Left of the political spectrum) strongly correlates (with an Odds Ratio of 2.86) with the belief that too little is spent on culture. This attitude also applies to the Centre but is less marked.

Figure 6 shows the variables chosen for the Multiple Correlation Analysis. The first two graphs show income and education level (re-coded), in which one can see a rising Right to Left trend reflecting respondents’ social stratification. Nevertheless, if we look at the Vote and Ideology variable, one can Left and Right divide, and an up-down divide, which inversely correlates with the ideological space occupied by regional Left-Wingers in the lower left-hand

corner. By contrast, national Right-Wingers lie in the upper right-hand corner. Accordingly, we can see that the position on the graph is not only influenced by the Left-Right divide but also by the Regional-National rift. In addition, if we look at the distribution of the Law and Order variable, one can see a horizontal line (which corresponds to a similar but inverse logic to the Education variable). However, in the case of cultural spending, the distribution is more vertical and runs parallel to the Left Wing regionalist *versus* Right-Wing centralist rift.

Figure 6 – Plots of variable categories selected from the Multiple Correlation Analysis in relation to cultural spending in Spain (2020)

All of these variables can be seen at the same time on the graph showing the plot points. From the graph, the respondents most favouring cultural policy are shown in the lower left quadrant. These: have middling incomes and higher education; are young; atheist; self-identify with the Left. They vote for *Unidas Podemos* or Left-Wing regional nationalist parties (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, *Euskal Herria Bildu*) or support their positions. At the other extreme in the top left-hand corner are those who most oppose cultural spending. These respondents: are middle-aged; are non-practicing Catholics; self-identify with the Right; vote for the Spanish Right-Wing. Finally, there is a middle ground in the lower centre. These people: consider cultural spending to be about right; are reasonably solvent or are older and are less educated; are practicing Catholics; vote for PNV or PSOE (although in this case, this category is close to the one supporting greater cultural spending); have no strong political sympathies.

Figure 7 – Points from the multiple correlation analysis in relation to cultural spending in Spain (2020)

Conclusions

Despite being a relatively small part of public spending (much less is spent on culture than on mainstream social needs), cultural policy has become in democratic Western Europe one of the focuses of political debate ever since the 1970s. In most of Europe, including Spain, cultural spending enjoys constant State support, which is based on the post-war consensus that High Culture should be brought within the reach of ordinary citizens. From the 1970s onward, the idea was to foster citizens' cultural participation and integration as part of a more democratic notion of The Welfare State (Urfalino 1996, Vestheim 2012). It was blithely assumed that this concept commanded broad social support. However in Europe, unlike in The United States, there are few studies on public support for cultural spending and the ones there are of a local nature or one-off endeavours. This paper thus helps boost knowledge on the legitimacy (or otherwise) of such policy — a subject that is currently hotly debated — and the factors explaining it.

Our longitudinal analysis of the data revealed majority support for cultural policy ever since the 1990s, even during the depths of the GFC when public services were pared to the bone. Even so, we discovered two vectors for the de-legitimisation of cultural policy. The first vector stemmed from two conflicting concepts of The State, one based on centralisation and State-nationalism, the other based on a decentralised, pluri-cultural and pluri-national vision. The clash between them led to ever bitterer disputes. The second vector was the growing battle between the cultural sector in general (and the film industry in particular) on the one hand, and on a PP government drifting ever further Right in the 2000s. This battle culminated in the Right-Wing media's unrelenting campaign to rein in cultural spending, followed later by a savage round of spending cuts.

For all these reasons, while there were significant correlations between greater support for culture spending and the gender and age variables (women, and women over 50), no significant correlations were found with the income and educational level variables. By contrast, correlation with variables covering ideological factors — vote and support for a political party, ideological and religious self-identification — were significant. Thus Left-Wingers, regionalist

Left-Wing nationalists, and atheists lie at one pole, all favouring a broadening of cultural policy. At the other pole are those hostile to cultural policy: Right-Wingers, Spanish nationalists, and both practicing and non-practicing Catholics. An intermediate position is occupied by the nationalist or regionalist Centre and Centre-Right. The Left-Right axis largely traces the Atheist-Catholic axis, together with a partially distinct Regional national minorities-Spanish nationalism axis. In the last case, this space is marked by the rise of the Far-Right VOX party and the *Partido Popular*'s shift towards more culture-hostile positions. Citizens' attitudes have therefore been shaped by a restructuring of Spain's political space and by growing Right-Wing populism — a trend strengthened by the Right-Wing media, which go out of their way to paint artists of all kinds as over-subsidised Left-Wing ideologues. It is still too early to know whether this discourse will dent the present majority support for cultural policy. However, the growth of the Far-Right, fostered by political polarisation on COVID-19 pandemics and its cultural effects (Bernacer et al. 2021)⁶, and its entry into institutions and some Spanish regional governments makes one wonder whether cultural policy is on the brink of a radical change. Here, one cannot rule out an illiberal, national-nativist turn in which Spain follows the trail blazed by some Eastern European countries.

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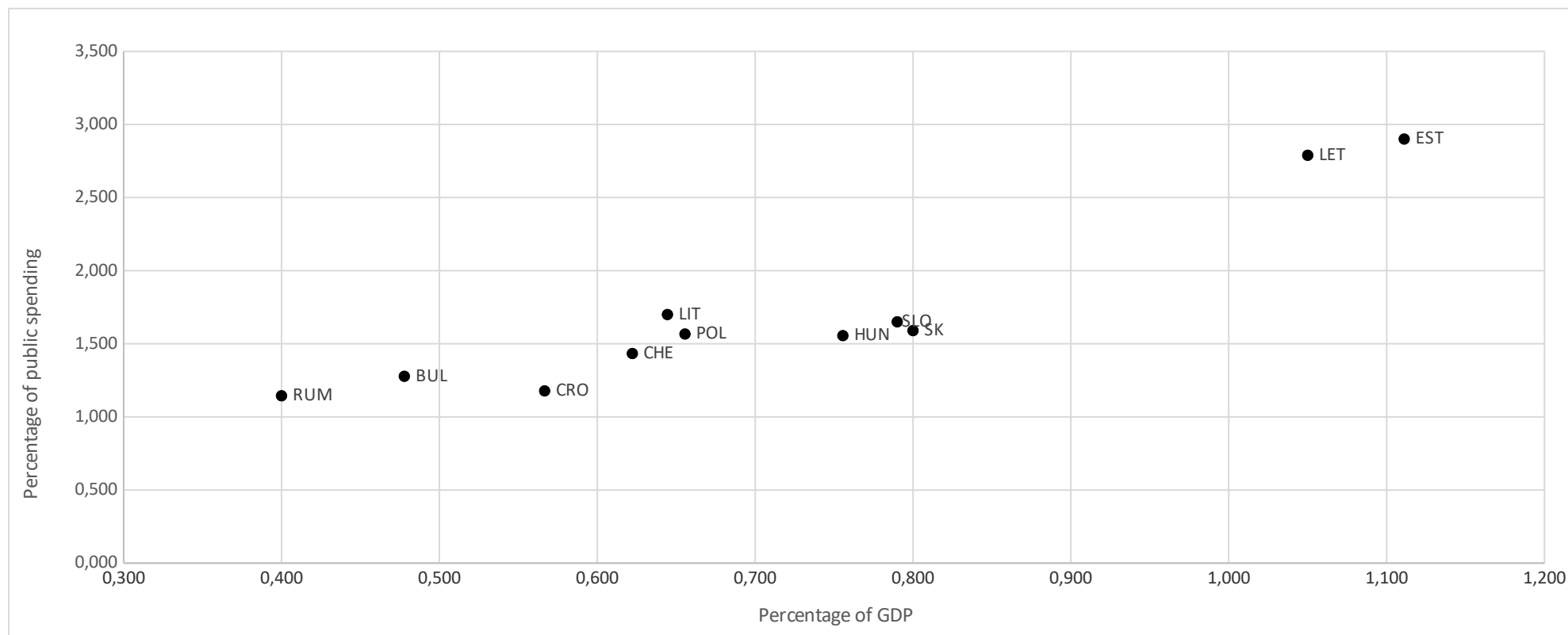
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- ¹ In this respect, the early days of Spain's restored democracy saw a spate of appointments of leading lights in the political or artistic arena, imitating the French model in this regard (for example, the appointment of Malraux in the 1960s, and J. Lang in the 1980s and early 1990s. In Spain, one can highlight cases such as those of Jorge Semprún, Javier Solana, and Mariano Rajoy. These cases reveal how The Ministry of Culture was an important stepping-stone in political and media projection in Spain.
- ² An example here is the *Libertad Digital* platform, which was funded from the *Partido Popular*'s slush funds. The platform became a media battering-ram in an unrelenting attack on the Socialist government. In 2009, *Libertad Digital* attacked the film industry with an article titled "*Un Gobierno de cine... subvencionado*" [a Swiftian play on words begun with an apparent compliment — *Un Gobierno de cine* (*de cine* = marvelous, thus 'A marvelous Government') before twisting the knife (*subvencionado* = subsidised), thus literally, "A subsidised-cinema Government"]. The article stated "Artists, like other citizens, must be free to produce and offer their work without becoming pressure groups or using 'culture' as a pretext for emptying the public purse and living it up at the taxpayers' expense" (*Libertad Digital* 2009). The paper thus took a Right-Wing Populist posture, attacking the Liberal elite as being quick to take advantage of common folk (Moran and Littler 2020). *El Mundo* is another newspaper, this time linked with Spanish Right-Wing nationalism. *El Mundo* has systematically linked policies fostering the film industry with Left-Wing actors and directors (Ganzábal and López-Medel 2008). In doing so, it created an atmosphere propitious to cutting subsidies in the audiovisual sector.
- ³ In the 1995, 2005, 2015 opinion surveys, this category was labelled 'Just right', which was later changed 'Necessary spending'. The tiny linguistic nuances between the two can be disregarded for the purposes of this paper and we have therefore treated them being one and the same.
- ⁴ The 2016 General Social Survey (GSS) is a representative survey of 2,867 cases throughout the US, first collected in 1972, that aims to capture and allow the analysis of trends in public opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. Regarding the Government spending on the arts the answers are the following: Spend much more only 3%, Spending more 19%, Spend the same is the most populated group with 48%, and those opposed to rise of cultural expenses of the State are 30% (the addition of Spend less 24, plus Spend much less 6%).
- ⁵ One of the most significant aspects of the data obtained in this study bears on the fact that women favour cultural spending more than men — something that is consistent with a trend towards the 'feminisation' of cultural consumption (Ariño Villarroya and Llopis 2017).
- ⁶ If we add to this the impact of COVID-19 on cultural activity, it has been important in cultural activity and its funding has decreased (Santamarina-Campos et al. 2021), we find ourselves with a paradoxical situation in which cultural policy It may be more necessary than in other stages, but nevertheless the pressure from this political sector or a future far-right government will reduce aid to culture.

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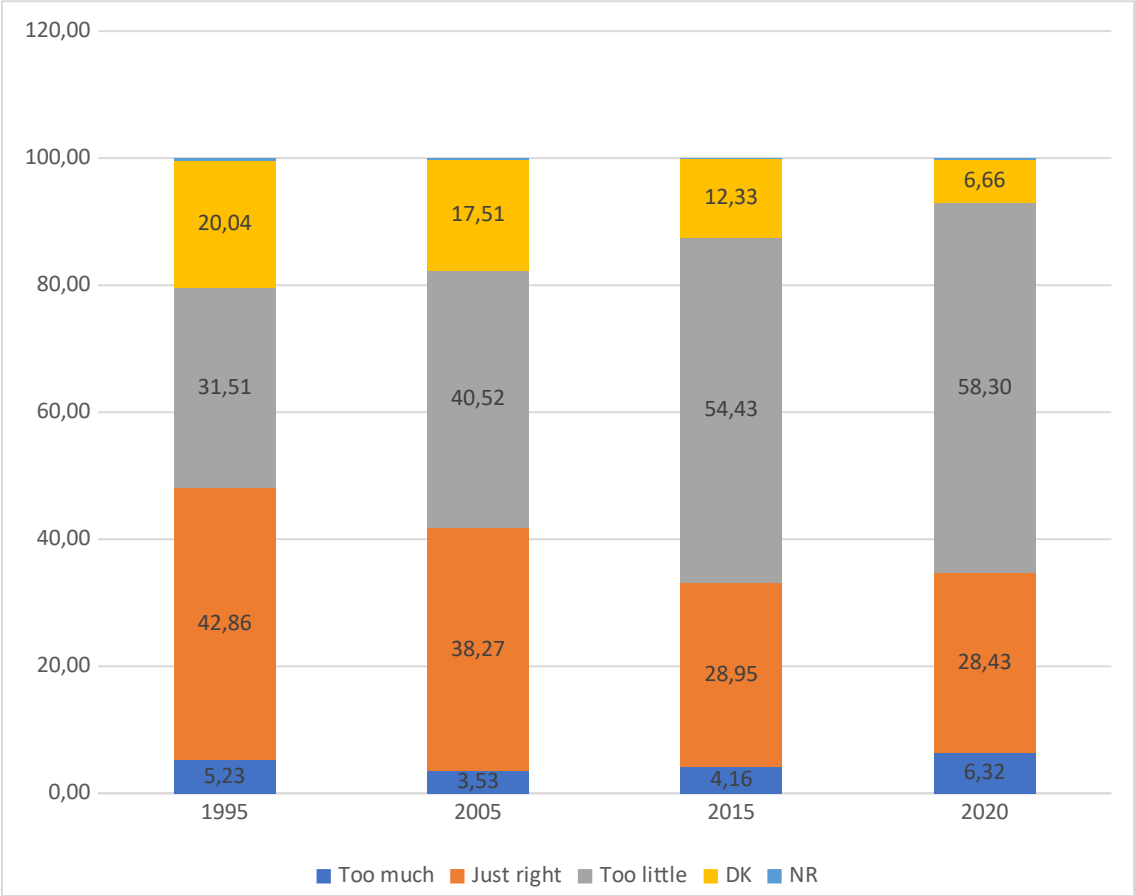
Figure 1 – European countries' cultural spending as a percentage of overall expenditure, and as a percentage of GDP (average for the period 2008-2016)*



* Country Codes: Belgium (BEL), Bulgaria (BUL), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DEN), Germany (GER), Estonia (EST), Ireland (IRL), Greece (GRE), Spain (SPA), France (FR), Croatia (CRO), Italy (ITA), Latvia (LAT), Lithuania (LIT), Hungary (HUN), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AUS), Poland (POL), Portugal (POR), Romania (RUM), Slovenia (SLO), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FIN), Sweden (SWE), United Kingdom (UK), Norway (NO), Switzerland (SWI).

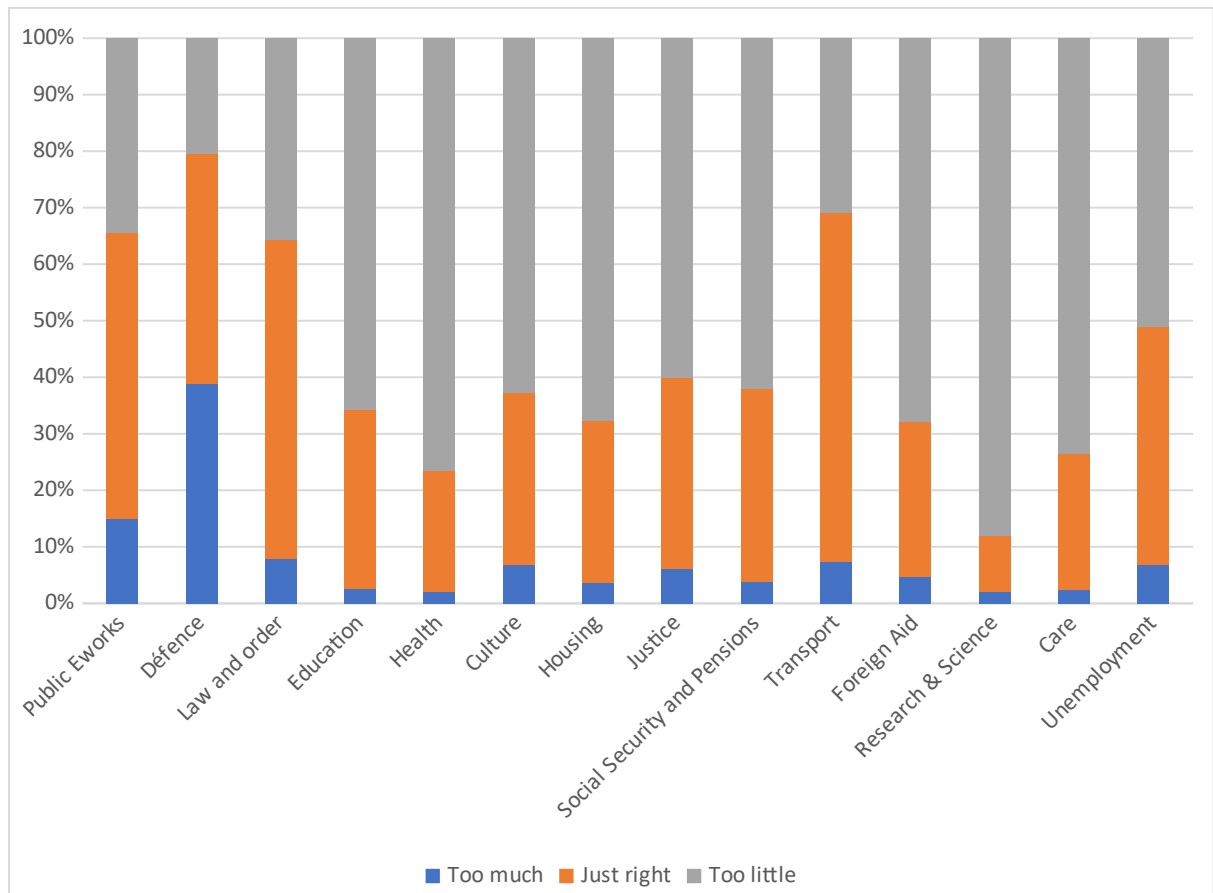
Source: Authors, based on Eurostat data (2018).

Figure 2 – Attitude towards public funding of culture in Spain (1995-2020)



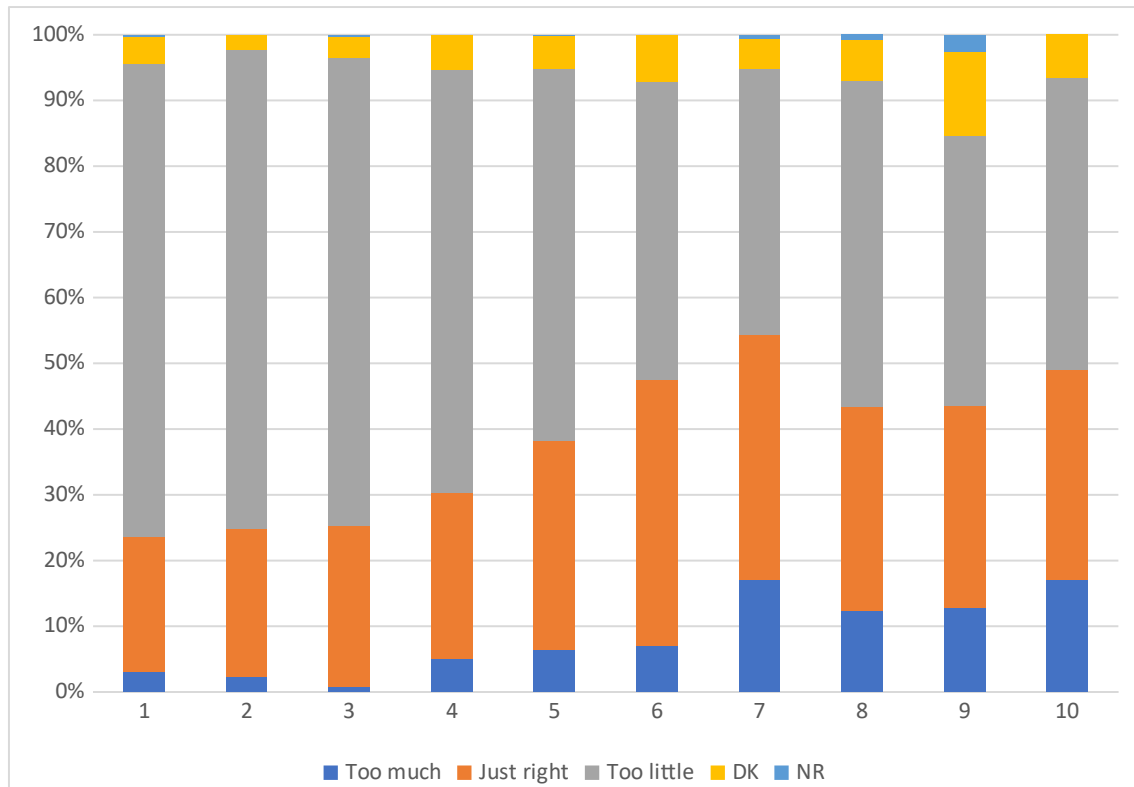
Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) surveys (2020, 2015, 2005, 1995). Legend: DK (Don't Know), NR (No response)

Figure 3 – Survey respondents' views on various kinds of public spending in Spain (2020)



Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).

Figure 4 – Attitude towards the funding of culture, and the ideology self-identification scale (2019)*

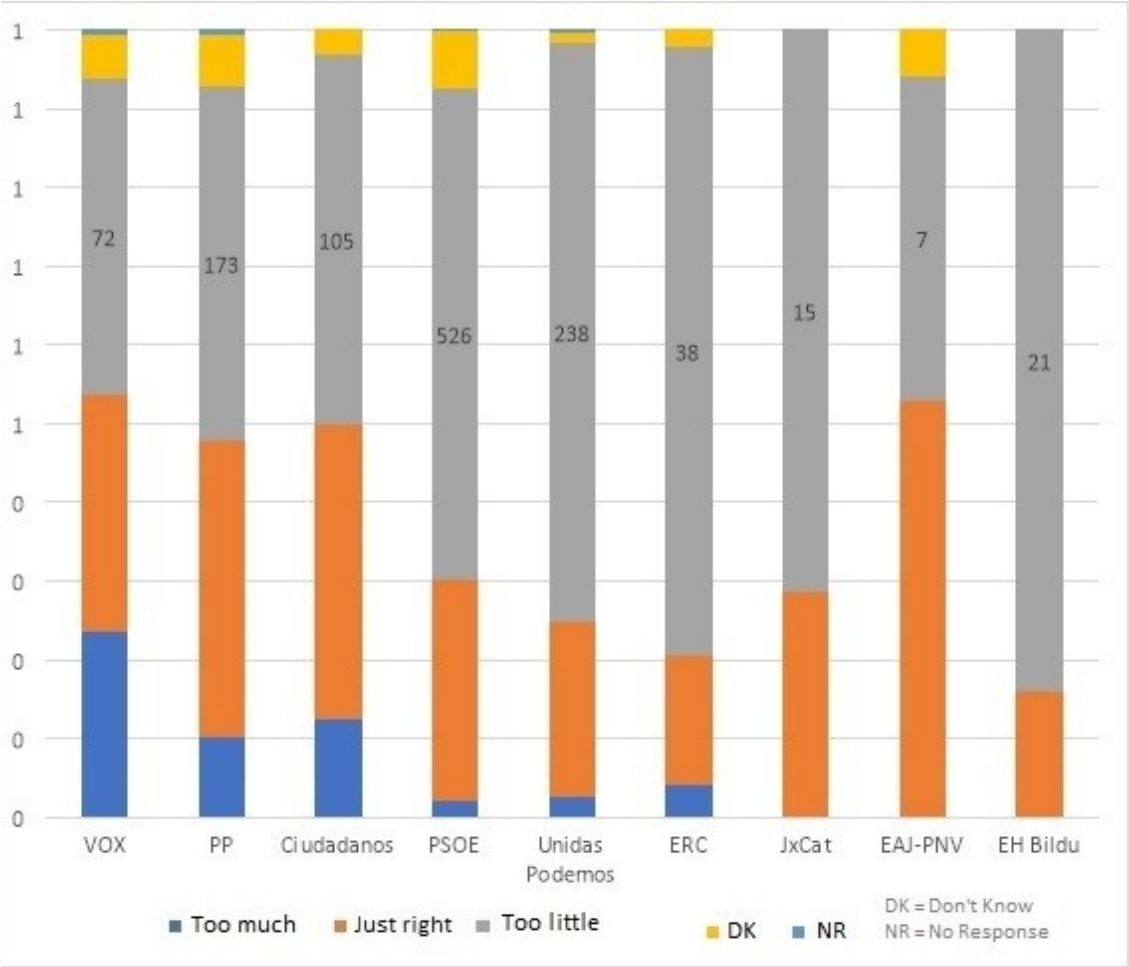


Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).

* The ideology self-identification scale in which 1 is the most Left-Wing value and 10 is the most Right-Wing value.

Legend: VOX (Far right), PP (Popular Party, conservative right), Ciudadanos (liberal right), PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party, social democrat), Unidas Podemos (populist and post-communist left), ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia, Catalan nationalist left), JxCat (United for Catalonia, Catalan nationalist right), EAJ-PNV (Basque Nationalist Party, Basque nationalist right), EH Bildu (Euskal Herria Bildu, Basque nationalist left).

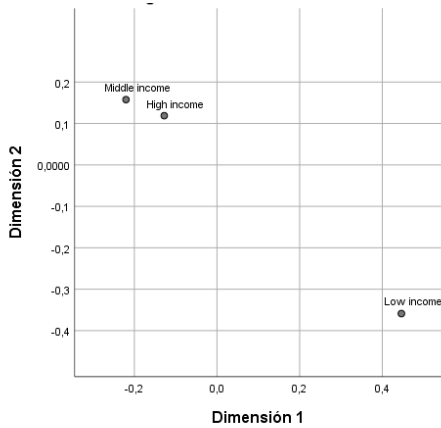
Figure 5 – Attitude towards the funding of culture, and voting or support for a given party (2019)*



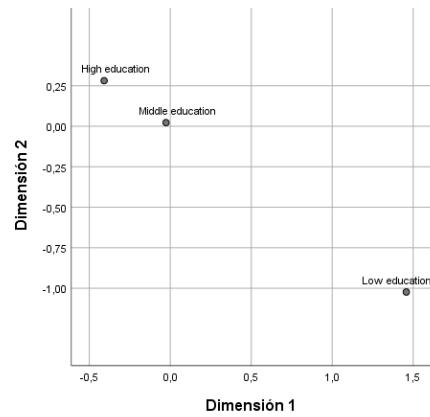
Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).

Figure 6 – Plots of variable categories selected from the Multiple Correlation Analysis in relation to cultural spending in Spain (2020)

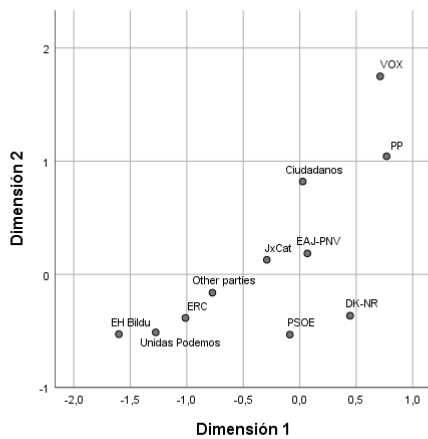
Category points: Re-coded household income



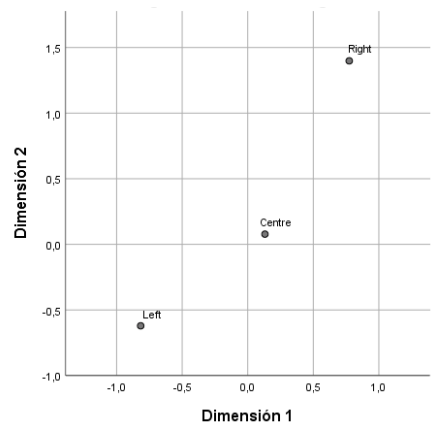
Category points: Re-coded education



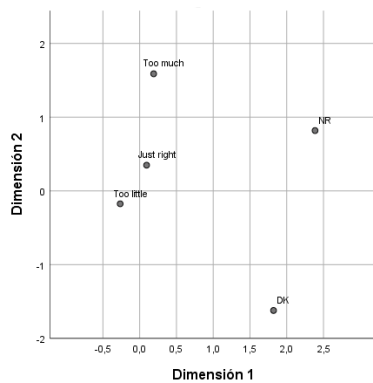
Category points: vote



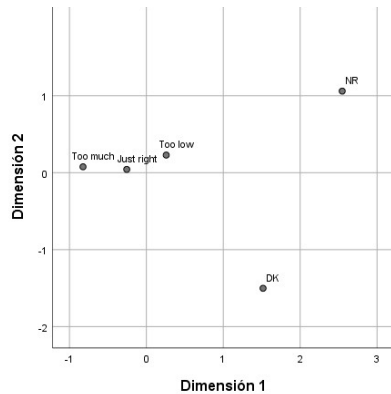
Category points: Re-coded Ideology



Category points: spending on culture

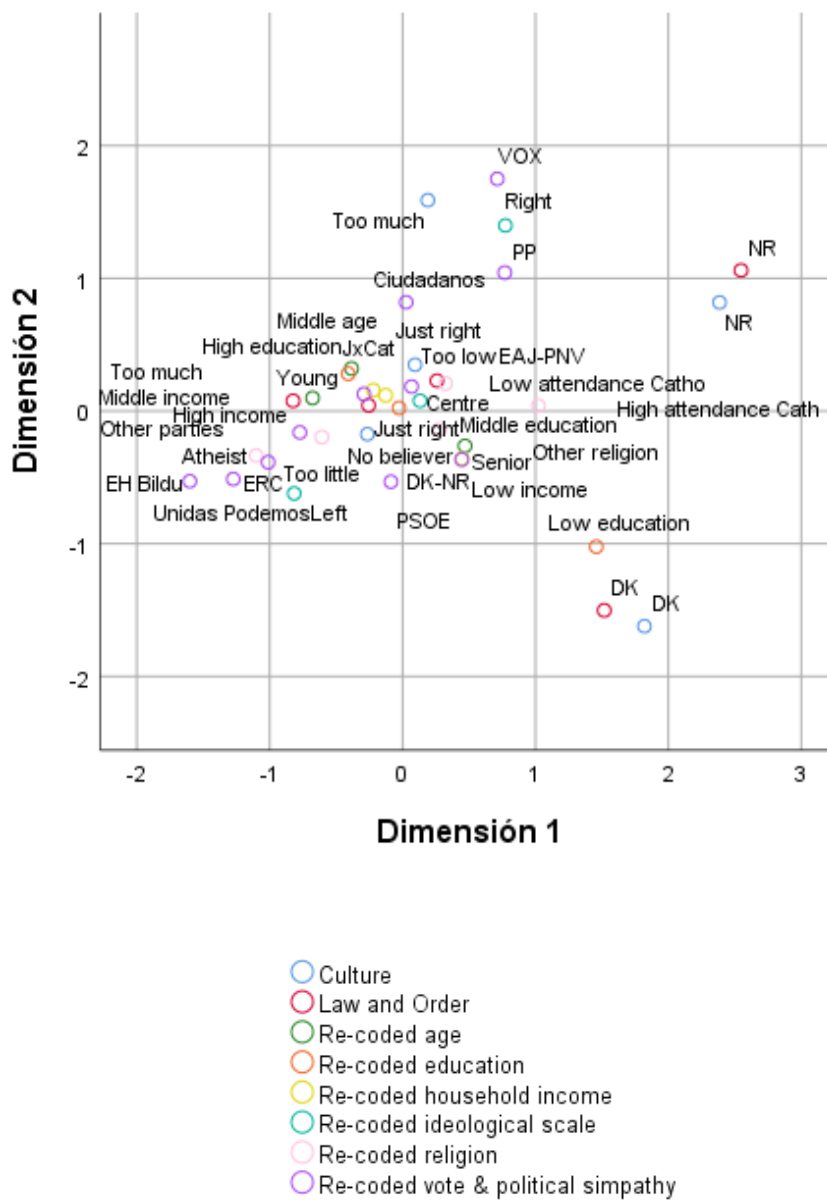


Category points: spending on law and order



Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).

Figure 7 – Points from the multiple correlation analysis in relation to cultural spending in Spain (2020)



Source: Authors, based on *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).

Table 1– Binary logistic regression of the dependent variable on cultural spending (the benchmark category being the ‘Too little’ one)

Variables in the equation

	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender of the respondent (1) Male	-.322	.001	.725
Re-coded age – Senior		.002	
Re-coded age (1) – Youth	-.382	.014	.682
Re-coded age (2) – Middle-aged	-.363	.001	.696
Re-coded education – High		.894	
Re-coded education (1) Middling	.089	.653	1.093
Re-coded education (2) Low	.003	.974	1.003
Re-coded household income - High		.888	
Re-coded household income (1) – Low	-.006	.966	.994
Re-coded household income (2) - Middling	.047	.678	1.048
Re-coded religion - Atheist		.001	
Re-coded religion (1) Catholic/practicing	-.676	.000	.509
Re-coded religion (2) – Catholic/non-practicing	-.473	.002	.623
Re-coded religion (3) – Other religion	-.627	.080	.534
Re-coded religion (4) – Non- believer	-.117	.461	.890
Re-coded ideology scale – Right		.000	
Re-coded ideology scale (1) - Left	1.052	.000	2.864
Re-coded ideology scale (2) - Centre	.500	.000	1,650

- a. Variables specified in Step 1: Gender of the person surveyed; Re-coded age; Re-coded education; Re-coded household income;
Re-coded religion; Re-coded ideology scale.

Source: Authors, based *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS) survey (2020).