

HOW DO CITIES PROMOTE CULTURE? AN INQUIRY ON THE ITALIAN MUNICIPAL EXPENSES FOR CULTURE FROM 2001 TO 2019

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This paper examines the public spending for culture for all the Italian municipalities (N=8,207) from 2001 to 2019, trying to understand common dynamics and specific features. Main results: the average total expense was about 2 billion euros per year, showing a decreasing trend from 2009; almost all municipalities spend for culture every year; the biggest cities tend to have higher per capita and total expenses; half the Italian municipalities has no capital expenses for culture for half the time; big spenders are not always big investors and often big cities allot a large budget for operational and management costs; the spatial distribution of local expenditure for culture shows a “southern question”. We finally identified four clusters of municipalities, according to their cultural expense patterns. This paper is the starting point of a more ambitious and wider research project. The second step is the analysis of the determinants of the municipal cultural spending and the last step is the analysis of the impact of the municipal cultural spending on the quality of urban life, going behind the traditional impact studies (economic or social). Both the other two analyses are now in progress.