

SURVEY ON CULTURAL RIGHTS IN BARCELONA 2022

PARTICIPATION, NEEDS AND VALUES

When it comes to your right to participate in the city's cultural life, postcode matters (a lot). This is one of the main conclusions from the second edition of the Survey on cultural rights in Barcelona, promoted by the City Council. The survey analyses the diverse ways in which city residents experience culture and how the inequalities experienced by some people impact their ability to exercise their cultural rights. This survey makes Barcelona one of the few cities in the world to have an instrument for evaluating the diversity and inequalities in the cultural rights of its population.

Methodology and fieldwork

The fieldwork for the Survey on cultural rights in Barcelona was carried out in September 2022 and entailed conducting 1,600 interviews in three types of neighbourhoods in the city (high, middle and low-income). This methodology ensures that the results are representative of the city as a whole and of the different types of neighbourhoods. In this second edition of the survey, the questionnaire maintained the majority of the questions included in the first edition (2019) to make it easier to analyse how the cultural rights of city residents had evolved. It also included new questions based on the analysis of other local and international surveys and discussions with different groups of experts.

Main results

The importance of the neighbourhood

The results of the survey show that in some neighbourhoods, it is more difficult to exercise the right to culture, given the accumulation of factors that generate inequalities. So, while 58% of people who live in low-income neighbourhoods regularly

participate in cultural activities, this percentage rises to 75% in high-income neighbourhoods. The survey also lays bare the fact that the neighbourhood is a source of cultural life. The right to culture is experienced in many neighbourhoods through activities and spaces that are not always recognised as cultural. And this seems to be a growing trend in the post-pandemic context. So, in answer to the open question, ‘For you, which are the 3 most important spaces for the cultural life of a neighbourhood?’, 54% of respondents mention a park, square or beach. These ‘other’ spaces for cultural life are recognised in all types of neighbourhoods, and even more so among people who live in low-income neighbourhoods. Some 41% of respondents also mention civic centres and libraries among cultural spaces, and this percentage is similar across all neighbourhoods.

With regard to cultural needs, the survey found that everyone has needs, but some have more than others. While 53% of people that live in high-income neighbourhoods would like to dedicate more time to cultural “practice” (playing musical instruments, painting, writing, etc.), the percentage rises to 59% in low-income neighbourhoods.

The survey also shows that people give value to culture, regardless of the neighbourhood they live in. One of the questions in the survey asks participants to give a score from 0 to 10 for the importance of art and music classes in primary and secondary schools. The result was almost 9 points on average in high, middle and low-income neighbourhoods. Also, in all neighbourhoods, people want to be able to decide about their cultural life. 66% of people who live in low-income neighbourhoods have participated in or would like to participate in the organisation of cultural activity. This percentage rises to 73% in high-income neighbourhoods.

The family environment, another key factor

The family environment conditions people's cultural activity and their ability to exercise their cultural rights. One of the areas where inequalities linked to the family are most evident is in artistic training or education. While 33% of people from families with higher levels of cultural practice have some musical training, the percentage falls to 18% in families with lower levels of cultural practice.

The survey also shows that inequalities affect the cultural rights of children. In more affluent neighbourhoods and family environments, children can exercise their cultural rights more and more often. While in high-income neighbourhoods, some 77% of families habitually carry out 3 or more cultural activities with children, this percentage falls to 64% in low-income neighbourhoods.

Gender and origin: when the difference is inequality

The survey on cultural rights in Barcelona shows the importance of gender identity and (migratory) origin for people's cultural life. In this regard, the closure of cultural spaces affects everyone, but not equally. So, 17% of the women interviewed stated that they were greatly affected by the closure of civic centres, compared to 11% of men. With regard to the closure of libraries, the extent to which people were affected also varies and is different for people born in the European Union (13%) and non-EU nationals (21%). Also, in relation to libraries, while 22% of people who live in very low-income neighbourhoods said they were greatly affected by their closure, the percentage is much lower for people from very high-income neighbourhoods (7%).

We see a similar situation in relation to the closure of places of worship, which had a much greater impact on women, people born outside the EU and people who live in very low-income neighbourhoods.

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The team responsible for developing this survey is made up of Montserrat Tort and Assumpta Manils (Cultural Data Observatory, Barcelona Institute of Culture) and Nicolás Barbieri (professor at the Open University of Catalonia). Advice and technical support were also provided by Barcelona City Council's Municipal Data Office.

