

What Determines Cultural Expenditures in Local Chinese Governments in Liaoning?*

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Abstract

Liaoning Province in China has shown growing policy variety emerging from city governments formerly based in heavy industrial development as local government varies in its local policy choices. This study investigated the determinants of local cultural spending at the municipal level in Liaoning Province. Local cultural budgets have been studied internationally, particularly with regards to political influences on expenditures. These factors appear to work differently in China due to the single party and therefore this study looked to Chinese demographic variables, education, economic variables, spending capacity, and tourism. The study seeks to answer the question of the relationship between cultural spending and these factors by examining cultural expenditures from all 14 city governments in the province over a period of fifteen years from 2003-2017 that were analyzed using a random effects GLS regression model. Five of nine variables were significant. Among the demographic variables, the proportion of women and the number of youth were significant and negative and the number of senior citizens was positive and significant. Education, measured by the number of university students was positive and significant, as was per capita GDP. FDI, local government debt, and the tourism variables were not significant. A discussion and conclusions follow.

Key words: Cultural Administration, Cultural Budget, Local Budget, Chinese Administration, Liaoning Province

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I . Introduction

Chinese cities have developed rapidly in the past two decades. This continues the trend since economic reform. China experiences both the benefits and the problems of urban growth. Chinese cities have developed so quickly that fifteen of the world's mega cities are now in China (UN, 2019). Chinese urban trends increasingly represent and drive world trends.

Chinese cities constitute a large part of the Chinese economy. Almost 60% of the population live in cities. Chinese cities have been following a greater variety of local economic development policy (UN, 2019). Instead of heavy industrial development, Chinese cities pursue development through high technology, foreign investment, and cultural industry.

Culture and the related tourist industry have several advantages in terms of development. Culture is not associated with the pollution and disruption to the local way of life that comes with heavy industry. Culture requires smaller expenditures while having a very strong multiplier effect (Miller and Yudice, 2002:50). Culture may bring congestion when events and attractions gain popularity but is potentially less disruptive and more gradual than other methods. It may also provide direct tangible quality of life benefits to local residents (Clark, 2004; Anderson, 2010; Lee and Anderson, 2013).

The top 100 Chinese cities in terms of property values were analyzed from 2000-2010 and tourism and increases in fixed cultural investment were both related with multiple measures of urban development (Wang *et al*, 2013). Many Chinese cities use cultural spending for development so that culture has become a path to urban development in China (Wang, 2014). The old industrial province of Liaoning has increased the relative and absolute level of cultural investments. These investments have equalled or outpaced manufacturing in terms of economic activity in recent years (Wang, 2014: 95). The city of Dalian has been developing the culture economy instead of heavy industry (Wang, 2014: 101).

Culture and consumption are important to the world urban economy, including China (Clark, 2004: 1; Florida, 2002, 2017). Cultural consumption is largely private in capitalist countries. The state plays a welfare role (Yim, 2004). It provides oversight, guidance, and seed funds and also responds to market failure (Miller and Yudice, 2002).

The cultural market in China is very state-oriented. The local government not only provides funding for local cultural programming and facilities, but funds sports, the arts, and mass media much more than in non-Communist countries. Variance in levels and types of local government spending means that local governments exercise discretion over cultural spending. This raises the question of what predicts local cultural spending in China.

Cultural expenditures have not been widely studied in China. In order to fill that gap in the

literature, this study examines fifteen years of data from the 14 prefecture-level cities of Liaoning Province to help bring international discussions of culture spending into the Chinese context. The province of Liaoning was chosen because it was previously known for heavy industry, though different cities have become more specialized in recent years. Cultural investments have increased from being significantly below the national average to at or above the average in a single decade, particularly in Dalian (Wang, 2014: 95,101). Specifically, this research seeks to determine factors associated with local government cultural expenditure in Liaoning Province's prefecture-level cities.

II. Culture Budget Explanations

Recent attempts to explain cultural budgets at the local government level have done so in the context of representative democracies. They lean heavily on the dynamics of multi-party politics in explaining cultural budgets, including the political cycle, though this approach does not apply to the one-party state in China.

Political competition determines budget change in the political budget cycle. Incumbents can implement spending before, during, or after elections while challengers spend after they get elected to keep promises or win elections (Drazen and Eslava, 2010). Right-wing mayors finance culture to satisfy the preferences of high-income voters (Drazen and Eslava, 2010) while left-wing mayors in Portugal responded by increasing cultural investments more than right-wing mayors (Veiga and Veiga, 2007). Lee and Anderson (2015) found an association between liberal executives and increased cultural spending in Korea while Getzner (2002) found no impact of political ideology on cultural spending in Austria.

The one-party Chinese state does not have a budget cycle based on partisan elections. Political budget cycles have been used to show that local administrators in China increase spending over time in office (Guo, 2009). The political budget cycle literature above does support local leadership responsiveness (Lee and Anderson, 2015). This is the case where there is any sensitivity to public opinion at all and is particularly true where local officials are elected and responsive to local agendas. Culture is something that touches everyone and culture expenditures are subject to local pressures and demands as culture is in constant change and is used to advertise and advance policy (Parenti, 2006). This is as true in China as elsewhere, even if it is not done through a multiparty system.

Development through culture strategies also drives cultural spending (Lee *et al*, 2014). The conservative mayors of Seoul pursued "New Developmentalism" and "Cultureconomics" to advance

explicit connections between culture and urban development (Lee and Anderson, 2013). The creative class of knowledge workers who drive development and thrive on cultural creativity is an international example associated with dynamic cities (Florida, 2002; 2017). Non-economic amenities such as cultural experiences attract residents and tourists for development (Clark, 2004). Scenes gather amenities into a cultural experience that promotes social and human capital for development (Anderson, 2010; Silver & Clark, 2016). Cultural spending may also contribute to urban branding, the process of marketing the city (Lee and Anderson, 2013).

Demographic factors represent another potential source of explanation for local cultural budgets (Wang, 2014). Cultural welfare policies have been used to address the needs of groups that are not well served by the market, or who have insufficient resources (Yim, 2003). There are a rising number of independent young women (both married and single) focused on consumption to the point of setting aside part of their pay in defiance of husbands and parents for personal consumption though they do not represent the typical case (Lee, 1998: 77,98). New areas for advancement for women have not ended old gender patterns (Florida, 2002: 79) so working women still have extra work to do at home. Women working a “second shift” of housework have less time to consume public culture (Wang, 2014). In addition, Chinese women may not be more consumer-oriented than Chinese men, unlike the pattern in other countries (Rocha *et al*, 2005). The extra burdens still placed on women in spite of legal equality suggest that more women do not equal more cultural spending.

The rising old population has more time and may place more demands on the local government to meet cultural needs. Older people tend to have more time and resources, leading them to be more discriminating consumers, though they may also have fewer resources after retirement (Rocha *et al*, 2005; Silver & Clark, 2016: 181-188). State pensions, traditional status, and the number of multi-generational families suggests that larger numbers of elder Chinese would relate to more cultural spending.

Youth are important in culture and cultural consumption (Florida, 2002: 143; Clark, 2004; Silver & Clark, 2016) as well as in urban development (Ding *et al*, 2014). However, youth under 18 still mostly depend on their families in China. In addition, youth may have most of their cultural needs met through the educational system (Wang, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that young people would not be positively related to culture expenditure.

On the other hand, university-age youth have cultural influence like under-18 youth but are also more independent and have time and money to demand cultural consumption. University students are educated and may demand more than what their school provides (Miller and Yudice, 2002). They also closely share the characteristics of the creative class that flourishes in greater tolerance and diversity (Florida, 2002; 2017). They have been shown to be a factor in Chinese

urban development (Wang *et al.*, 2013; Ding *et al.*, 2014; Wang, 2014: 73,93; Lee *et al.*, 2018: 199-200), including specifically in Liaoning Province (Wang, 2014: 93). Representing the creative class strategy of cultural development suggests university students are related to higher cultural spending.

The size of the economy is also important as a larger economy provides more resources for cultural spending (Roh and Lee, 2014). Cities with rising expenses often turn to expenditure cuts and no-growth budgets to address budget problems (Bahl *et al.*, 1978:37-38) though government debt may indicate increased spending. An expanded budget may be more likely to include things like culture that go beyond essential services and respond to citizens' tastes and demands (Lee and Anderson, 2015). Foreign investment is concentrated in more vibrant and active areas of the Chinese economy and may be attracted to innovative policies like cultural spending (Wang, 2014; Anderson *et al.*, 2015).

Finally, the large middle class in China has created a mass consumption market driving tourism (Wang, 2014: 91,93). Some studies have shown that this domestic tourism is more relevant to economic development than foreign tourism (Wang *et al.*, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2018: 199-200).

III. Liaoning Province

Liaoning Province is a coastal province near Korea in Northeastern China. The population was about 43,590,000 in 2018. The province borders North Korea along the Yalu River, Jilin Province to the Northeast, Inner Mongolia to the Northwest and Hebei Province to the Southwest. The Yellow Sea is located to the South. Liaoning has 14 prefecture-level cities. The provincial capital of Shenyang is the largest city with about 8.3 million people in 2017. Panjin is the smallest, with fewer than 1.5 million people. The other cities are Dalian, Anshan, Fushun, Benxi, Jinzhou, Yingkon, Fuxin, Liaoyang, Tieling, Chaoyang, and Huludao (See Figure 1).

Liaoning has long been a center of trade and foreign influence and was the site of many of the battles of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Dalian was occupied by the British from 1858-1881 and was later occupied by the Japanese until the end of the Second World War (Wang, 2014: 81). Dalian still maintains many foreign influences, including a famous Koreatown.

The province was important for early industrial development. It was the industrial heartland of the Fengtian Clique during the Warlord Period and was targeted for industrial development after the revolution (Anderson *et al.*, 2015). Liaoning is known as a center of technology and economic development. Dalian has diversified and becoming a leader in cultural technology and tourism (Wang, 2014: 101). Liaoning was less than a third urbanized in 1979 but this increased to almost

two-thirds by 2012 (Wang, 2014: 82). The cities are diverse in terms of size, economic structure, level of development, and level of cultural expenditure.

〈Figure 1〉 Liaoning Province



IV. Methodology

This study examined factors that may predict local culture budgets in Liaoning by analyzing fifteen years (2003-2017) of time series panel data for all 14 prefecture-level city governments. The STATA statistical analysis program was used to analyze the time series data using a random effects GLS regression model. The data were gathered from statistical yearbooks and other Chinese government sources.

The dependent variable was per capita cultural expenditure measured in Chinese yuan (1 yuan = US\$ 0.15). The variable was measured per capita in order to make a meaningful comparison between the cities of different sizes in Liaoning Province. The dependent variable ranged from a low of 2100 to a high of 205,077 with a mean of 28,206.72 (see Table 2). This variable represents the local culture budget from the various cities and is measured divided by population. The

content is broad as the state owns and operates many cultural institutions run privately in non-Communist countries. The budget thus includes expenditures on cultural facilities, cultural programming, cultural relics, but also sports, radio, television, films, press, publications, and other expenditures that have a cultural content.

〈Table 1〉 Variables

Dependent		Per capita cultural expenditure
Independent	Demographic:	Women
		Under 18
		Over 60
	Education:	University Students
	Economic:	Per capita GDP
		FDI
	Spending Capacity:	Local Government Debt
	Tourism:	Foreign Tourists
		Domestic Tourists

The independent variables were divided into demographic, education, economic, spending capacity, and tourism categories. The demographic variables included women, under-18 youth, and over-60 elders, drawing from the key theoretical variables from Wang (2014). Women were measured as a percentage of the population, ranging from 48.2% to 50.67% with a mean of 49.5%, which is lower than usual for industrial nations due to the effects of the previous one-child policy (Wang, 2014). It was expected that women would not have as much time to dedicate to cultural consumption. Youth and elders are measured in units of 10,000 and range from 16 to 111 and 13.4 to 178.9, respectively. The mean under-18 population was 44.8 and was 52.8 for elders over 60 (See Table 2). It was expected that youth would not be positively related to an increased culture budget, though elders would be.

University students serve as a proxy for the creative class (Florida, 2002; 2017). University students were measured in units of 10,000. The minimum was 0.1 and the maximum was 40.4 with a mean of 6.08 (See Table 2). It was expected the variable would have a positive association with cultural expenditure.

Economic variables included per capita GDP and FDI, while spending capacity was judged by local government debt. GDP and FDI are cited as critical by numerous studies (Wang *et al*, 2013; Wang, 2014; Lee *et al*, 2018) while others have pointed to the importance of government debt (Lee and Anderson, 2015). Per capita GDP was measured in yuan with a minimum of 3568, a maximum of 110,682, and a mean of 38,446. FDI was measured in ten-thousand US dollars with a

minimum of 16, a maximum of 1,400,453, and a mean of 95,348.43. Local government debt was measured in 10,000 yuan with a minimum of 41,907, a maximum of 3,307,792, and a mean of 681,059.3 (See Table 2). All variables were expected to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable.

Tourism is measured through two variables due to the theoretical distinction between domestic tourism representing the rising middle class and foreign tourism (Wang *et al.*, 2013; Wang, 2014; Lee *et al.*, 2018). The variables are measured in units of 10,000. Foreign tourists range from a low of 0.09 to a high of 128.4 with a mean of 19.74 while domestic tourism, on a larger scale, ranges from 74 to 8410 with a mean of 1980.71 (See Table 2). It was expected that domestic tourism would have a positive relationship and foreign tourism would have a weak or no relationship with cultural expenditure.

〈Table 2〉 Summary Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Per Capita Cultural Spending	210	28206.72	34069.50	2100	205077
Women	210	49.50471	0.5181095	48.2	50.67
Under 18	210	44.8419	22.03849	16	111
Over 60	210	52.8119	31.98672	13.4	178.9
University Students	210	6.075333	9.924658	0.1	40.4
Per Capita GDP	210	38446.09	24000.67	3568	110682
FDI	210	95348.43	215201.1	16	1400453
Local Government Debt	210	681059.3	513386.6	41907	3307792
Foreign Tourists	210	19.73995	27.61414	0.09	128.4
Domestic Tourists	210	1980.714	1710.049	74	8410

V. Analysis

The period of the study is from 2003–2017. A Hausman test was conducted and a random effects GLS model was selected as most appropriate on the basis of the results. Table 3 shows the results of the regression. The regression was within acceptable parameters. The overall R squared for the regression was 0.8571, so it can be inferred that the variables explain a major portion of the variance. Five of the nine independent variables and the constant were statistically significant at the 0.01 or 0.001 level. The variables for FDI, local government debt, and foreign and domestic tourists were not statistically significant (See Table 3).

The demographic variables—women, youth under 18, and elders over 60—were all significant.

The variable covering the female percentage of the population was significant and negative, lending support to the suggestion that women are busy working both at work and at home (Florida, 2002; Wang 2014). Likewise, the under-18 youth variable was negative and significant, suggesting that young people have their cultural demands met at school or within their family (Wang, 2014). The over-60 elder variable was positive and significant, supporting the idea that senior citizens demand more cultural spending from their local government. They have more free time but are less the focus of consumer culture (Rocha *et al*, 2005; Silver & Clark, 2016: 181-188).

〈Table 3〉 Regression Estimate with Per Capita Cultural Expenditure as Dependent Variable

Random-effects GLS regression			Number of observations = 210			
Group variable: City			Number of groups = 14			
R-sq: within = 0.7403			Obs per group: min = 15			
between = 0.9553			avg = 15			
overall = 0.8571			max = 15			
Corr (u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)			Wald chi2 (9) = 893.31			
			Prob > chi2 = 0.0000			
Per Capita Cultural Expenditure	Coefficient	Std. Err.	z	P > z	95% Confidence Interval	
Women	-11654.71	3769.28	-3.09	0.002**	-19042.36	-4267.056
Under 18	-627.1273	136.4774	-4.60	0.000***	-894.6181	-359.6366
Over 60	792.1399	156.5934	5.06	0.000***	485.2224	1099.057
University Students	1382.388	411.7207	3.36	0.001***	575.43	2189.346
Per capita GDP	0.3296854	0.0912053	3.61	0.000***	0.1509262	.5084446
FDI	0.0095013	0.0074783	1.27	0.204	-0.0051558	0.0241584
Local Government Debt	0.0030749	0.0034838	0.88	0.377	-0.0037533	0.009903
Foreign Tourists	62.05197	77.94026	0.80	0.426	-90.70815	214.8121
Domestic Tourists	-1.286393	1.657005	-0.78	0.438	-4.534062	1.961276
Constant	568706.3	188119.2	3.02	0.003**	199999.4	937413.2
sigma_u 2573.1304						
sigma_e 9588.2506						
rho 0.06718039 (fraction of variance due to u_i)						

* = significant at the 0.05 level, ** = significant at the 0.01 level. *** = significant at the 0.001 level

〈Table 4〉 Significant Results

Variable		Coefficient	Significance
Demographic:	Women	-11654.71	0.002**
	Under 18	-627.1273	0.000***
	Over 60	792.1399	0.000***
Education:	University Students	1382.388	0.001***
Economic:	Per capita GDP	0.3296854	0.000***

* = significant at the 0.05 level, ** = significant at the 0.01 level.

*** = significant at the 0.001 level

The university student variable was significant and positive, supporting the idea that increasing education increases demand for culture (Miller and Yudice, 2002; Yim, 2003) and offers some support for the creative class argument (Florida, 2002; 2017). Per capita GDP was also positive and significant, suggesting that more wealth increases demand for cultural expenditures (Drazen and Eslava, 2010; Lee and Anderson, 2015). Foreign direct investment, the size of local government debt, and foreign and domestic tourists were not significant.

Therefore, the analysis supports demographic factors (positive for senior citizens and negative for youth and women), education, and some economic factors, with no support for spending capacity or tourism in explaining local cultural spending (See Table 4).

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides some insight into the question of what factors determine local government spending on culture in Liaoning Province. This preliminary attempt used a statistical analysis of all prefecture-level cities in Liaoning over fifteen years. More such analysis needs to be done in more provinces and for longer time periods.

Women and youth receive less attention than senior citizens from local government. Women and youth have less time to participate in local cultural programming and less time to demand specific services from local government. Youth may also receive sufficient cultural services through their regular education or may have to receive cultural resources demanded by their seniors.

University students were associated with higher cultural expenditures. University students may be attracting the cultural resources demanded by Florida's creative class though they only represented a proxy for the creative class. The high concentration of creative activities at universities and the creative amenities and scenes may form the social capital and human capital

that attracts investment (Clark, 2004; Anderson, 2010) and develops the creative class.

Economic resources are meaningful in predicting cultural spending. More economic resources predict that local government is going to increase urban cultural expenditure, which is supported by the rising cultural investment across Liaoning (Wang, 2014: 95).

Cultural spending was not associated with FDI. There was no relationship found between debt and cultural spending. More spending on culture is not dependent on debt load, but is rather related to GDP. Even though urban debt is increasing, there is no indication that cities are going into debt to pay for cultural expenditures.

This study had no significant results for tourism. It may be that government cultural spending is targeted towards residents rather than attracting tourists.

The broad interest in culture for amenity and branding and innovation (Anderson, 2010; Lee and Anderson, 2013) may also explain cultural budgets. More detailed work may form closer connections between different aspects of the equation. Case studies may paint a much more detailed picture. This study supports the application of the international comparative budget literature to China with modifications for the unique Chinese case.

Chinese local government has been producing new ways to spend on culture. In addition to events and cultural institutions for attracting tourists, there are regular cultural programs to address the needs of local residents. It is hoped that this research will encourage more research as well as inspire more creative efforts to advance Chinese municipal cultural policy.

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국문요약

중국 지방정부의 문화예산 결정요인에 관한연구: 랴오닝성을 중심으로

왕보
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이종열

중국 랴오닝성은 지방정부의 정책선택이 다양해지면서 과거에는 중공업개발에 기반을 두었던 시정부로부터 정책적 다양성이 증대되고 있음을 보여 왔다. 본 연구는 랴오닝 성 시 수준에서 지방 문화 지출의 결정요인을 조사했다. 지방 문화 예산은 특히 지출에 대한 정치적 영향과 관련하여 국제적으로 연구되어 왔다. 이러한 요소들은 단일 정당 시스템을 채택하고 있는 중국에서는 다르게 작용하고 있는 것으로 보이며, 본 연구에서는 중국의 인구통계학적 변수, 교육 변수, 경제 변수, 지출 역량, 관광산업에 대해 살펴보았다. 본 연구는 랴오닝 성 내의 모든 14개의 시 정부 데이터를 가지고 무작위 효과 GLS 회귀 모델을 사용하여 정부문화지출변수와 독립변수들의 관계를 분석하였다. 분석 결과, 9개의 변수 중 5개 변수가 유의미한 것으로 나타났다. 인구통계학적 변수 가운데 여성의 비율과 젊은이의 수는 유의미한 종속변수와 부의 관계를 보였으며, 노인 인구수는 유의미한 정의 관계를 보였다. 대학생 수로 측정한 교육변수는 1인당 국내총생산(GDP)과 마찬가지로 유의미한 정의 관계를 보였다. FDI, 지방정부 부채, 관광변수 등은 유의미하지 않은 것으로 나타났다.

주제어: 문화행정, 문화예산, 지방예산, 중국행정, 랴오닝성