

Break out of your daily routine! Take in the arts...

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Social Effects of Culture: Detailed Statistical Models, the 23rd report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series from Hill Strategies Research, provides strong evidence of the social effects of culture through detailed statistical models of six social indicators:

- Feeling trapped in a daily routine;
- Volunteering;
- Donating;
- Doing a favour for a neighbour;
- Sense of belonging to one's province; and
- Sense of belonging to Canada.

This report builds on a previous report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series, which provided some exploratory findings regarding the social effects of culture. Taking the previous report as a starting point, the statistical models in this report examine whether cultural activities have an impact on social indicators *above and beyond demographic information*.

The current report shows that, in many cases, even adjusting for the effects of key demographic variables, Canadians who participate in cultural activities are more likely to be socially active than Canadians who do not take part in cultural activities.

Among the cultural activities, visits to public art galleries or historic sites each have a positive impact on five of the six social behaviours, while visits to conservation areas or parks and theatre attendance each have a positive impact on four social behaviours. Book reading, newspaper reading and attendance at a performance of cultural/heritage music, theatre or dance (e.g. Aboriginal Peoples, Chinese, Ukrainian) each have a positive impact on three of the social indicators. (All of these statistics relate to the models that held all other factors constant.)

Break out of your daily routine! And other key findings...

A potential slogan arising from the research is: *Break out of your daily routine! Visit a public art gallery, take in a performance or read a book*. Some of the findings that provide strong evidence of a relationship between cultural activities and positive social engagement are:

- **Trapped in a daily routine:** For nine of the 11 cultural activities examined in this report, the percentage of cultural participants feeling trapped in a daily routine is lower than for non-participants. Four cultural activities are significant factors in lowering the probability of feeling trapped in a daily routine, even after adjusting for the impacts of other demographic and cultural factors in the model. The four cultural activities are *classical music attendance, art gallery visits, theatre attendance* and *book reading*.
- **Volunteer rates:** For all 11 cultural activities, the volunteer rate among participants is higher than for non-participants. Ten of the 11 cultural activities are statistically significant predictors of volunteering, even taking key demographic factors into account. The cultural activities with the strongest impacts on volunteering are *historic site visits, classical music attendance, theatre attendance* and *festival attendance*.
- **Donation rates:** For all 11 cultural activities, the donation rate is higher for cultural participants than non-participants. A statistical model indicates that six cultural activities are significant positive factors in donating, even after adjusting for the impacts of other demographic and cultural factors in the model. The cultural activities with the strongest impacts on donating are *historic site visits, newspaper reading, visits to conservation areas or parks* and *book reading*.
- **Favour for a neighbour:** For all 11 cultural activities, the percentage of cultural participants doing a favour for a neighbour in the past month is higher than for non-participants. Six cultural activities are significant positive factors in predicting doing a favour for a neighbour, even after adjusting for the impacts of other demographic and cultural factors in the model. The cultural activities with the strongest impacts on doing a favour for a neighbour are *newspaper reading, visits to conservation areas or parks, attending performances of cultural/heritage music, theatre or dance, as well as art gallery visits*.
- **Sense of belonging to one's province:** For five of the 11 cultural activities, the percentage of cultural participants with a strong sense of belonging to one's province is higher than for non-participants. A statistical model indicates that *art gallery* and *historic site* visits are significant positive factors on sense of belonging to their province, even after adjusting for the impacts of other demographic and cultural factors in the model.
- **Sense of belonging to Canada:** For eight of the 11 cultural activities, the percentage of cultural participants with a strong sense of belonging to Canada is higher than for non-participants. A statistical model indicates that four cultural activities are significant positive factors on one's sense of belonging to Canada, even after adjusting for the impacts of other demographic and cultural factors in the model. The four cultural activities are *art gallery* visits, *theatre* attendance, visits to *conservation areas or parks* and *historic site visits*.

Methodological notes

The data is drawn from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey of 2005, an in-depth telephone survey of about 20,000 Canadians 15 years of age or older. Because of a split in the survey design, only half of the respondents were asked questions about their cultural activities in 2005. A total of 9,851 respondents answered the cultural questions. The other half of the respondents were asked questions about social networking and trust, including some questions that, in theory, would be helpful in examining the social effects of culture. However, because of the survey split, these questions could not be cross-tabulated with the questions about cultural activities.

The report defines a cultural participant as anyone who participated at least once in the relevant cultural activity in 2005. This is a low threshold of cultural participation. In particular, many cultural activities do not have explicit social goals. As such, their social impacts may be less than for those artistic activities that have an explicit social goal.

Unlike the previous report, the current report does not limit the analysis to four cultural activities. Rather, 11 cultural activities from the survey dataset were entered into the statistical models, including attendance at various types of performances (theatre, pop music, classical music, cultural/heritage performances), festivals, movies, public art galleries, historic sites, conservation areas or nature parks as well as reading newspapers or books.

For more information

The full report, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ontario Arts Council, is available free of charge on the Hill Strategies Research website (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>) and the websites of the funding organizations.