Culture Indicators for Sustainable Development

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Abstract Culture and development are two challenging concepts. They are strongly related, in many and contradictory ways. Despite the fact that a huge literature of well-grounded criticisms of both terms continues to grow from one century at least, the post-modern societies use them and give them important strategic meanings. Culture is recognised as both a driver and an enabler of development. Some circles put forward culture as the ideal fourth pillar of sustainable development. Such recognition calls for appropriate measures and those, in turn, still represent an open issue. In 2019, UNESCO released *The Culture 2030 indicators*, a framework of thematic measures, in four domains (environment and resilience, prosperity and livelihoods, knowledge and skills and inclusion and participation) and 22 indicators. Its purpose is to assess and monitor culture's contribution to the implementation of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNESCO has approached such a complex endeavour with an innovative approach. This chapter focuses on both the conceptual and the practical application of the framework to institutions, organisations and enterprises of the cultural sector for planning and evaluation purposes. Its relevance as a compelling stimulus for new targeted statistical data production will also be considered.

Keywords Sustainable Development Goals · Cultural indicators · Cultural statistics · Sustainability of culture

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1 Culture and Sustainable Development: A Challenging Relationship

Culture and development are two complex, inter- or even trans-sectoral, multidimensional and polysemic notions. Their contents change over time and space. Diverse and conflictual views over their definition, place and role coexist at both the theoretical and the practical level at least since the 1950s (Kluchhohn and Kröber 1952; Bauman 1973; Barber and Badre 1998; Cicerchia 2016). However, it is since the 1980s that culture has manifestly acquired a distinctive political dimension; in particular, since then, with the emergence of a new strand of study called culture economics, its impacts on wealth, occupation and business have become apparent.

The relationship between culture and *sustainable development* is of course a more recent topic and indeed less investigated, from a wide range of different approaches. Despite the differences, the majority of these approaches tend to take for granted that any role played by culture in sustainable development is in se positive.

> The exploration of the relationship between culture and sustainable development, including of cultural values and the intrinsic value of culture, and of culture as a potential separate pillar of sustainable development, has been going on for several decades... In other words, culture, by contributing to the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual wellbeing of people, and by enabling everyone to exercise their human rights, including their cultural rights, also contributes to sustainable development. (UNESCO 2015)

In recent article, stemming from a COST[1] action targeted at investigating the relationship of culture and sustainability[2] the terms in such relationship are discussed in three different combinations (Soiini and Dessein 2016).

The authors first consider culture as if it played an independent role in sustainability, as a *fourth pillar*—the other three being environment, economy and society. Culture, in this light, is a pillar inasmuch it is a specific *capital,* hence the importance of its conservation, maintenance and preservation in the forms of arts, heritage, knowledge and cultural diversity for the next generations.

The second representation refers to culture having a mediating role in achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability. This representation postulates that material and immaterial culture is an essential resource for local and regional economic development. It also implies that cultural values, *weltanschauung,* models and patterns of behaviour need to be considered when aiming for environmental, economic or social sustainability.

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[1]The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) is a funding organisation for the creation of research networks, called COST Actions. These networks offer an open space for collaboration among scientists across Europe (and beyond) and thereby give impetus to research advancements and innovation. https://www.cost.eu/

[2]https://www.cost.eu/publications/culture-in-for-and-as-sustainable-development-conclusions-from-the-cost-action-is1007-investigating-cultural-sustainability/

The third representation considers culture as a necessary foundation for meeting the overall aims of sustainability. This representation, labelled *culture as sustainability*, encloses the other pillars of sustainability. The authors conclude that in this third combination, sustainability becomes embedded in culture and "leads to eco-cultural civilisation."

The UNESCO's document and the article by Soiini and Dessein have much in common. In particular, they share two tacit assumptions. The first is that culture is operationally treated as being *one,* only one: a single, compact and comprehensive system of material and immaterial resources that must be channelled towards the achievement of sustainability. The second assumption is that culture is intrinsically *good* and inasmuch a natural ally of sustainability. Both assumptions invite a supplement of reflection.

In the preamble to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), culture is defined as "...the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs." This definition is in line with the conclusions of the World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT, Mexico City, 1982), of the World Commission on Culture and Development (Our Creative Diversity, 1995) and the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998).[3]

This definition appears consonant with what Zygmunt Bauman (1973) labels *Culture as differential concept:* the term "is employed to account for the apparent differences between communities of people (temporally, ecologically, or socially discriminated). This usage locates the differential concept of culture among numerous 'residue concepts', contrived frequently in the social sciences to explain away the sediment of deviant idiosyncrasies unaccountable for by the otherwise universal and omnipotent regularities (where it shares the ascribed function with ideas, tradition, life experience etc.)." A second premise of the differential concept of culture is "that various, even mutually exclusive, socio-cultural forms may correspond to a single set of non-social (biological, natural-environmental, ecological) conditions". Peter Berger warns us, "one cannot throw a sop to the dragon of relativity and then go about one's intellectual business as usual".[4]

The idea of culture as a single, compact and univocal whole holds only if one speaks, figuratively, at the level of the entire human species and as opposed to *nature: nature vs. culture.* At all the other levels, theory and practice prescribe to acknowledge that culture is intrinsically plural and pluralistic, sometimes even particularistic or partisan. Theory and practice face a multiplicity of cultural and sub-cultural expressions of different human groups, communities, organisations, etc.

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[3]http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/the-key-ideas/ (Accessed March 11, 2020).

[4]Peter L. Berger 1969. A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co.

At core of the idea of cultural diversity lies the notion that human groups express themselves through different cultures, so different that in the most extreme forms of *cultural relativism*, even the boundaries between good and bad seem to blur, as their very definition is rooted in the cultural context. Moral codes, values, rules and the idea of legal vs. illegal are culture-laden, plus they change over time and space and cultural differences mark different historical periods and are geographically distributed. Cultural identities are built on perceived differences (*us* vs. *them*). History is full of examples of conflict, aggression, violence and war originated by cultural identity and differences strongly felt, to the point that one culture is perceived as better than or superior to another. Cultural domination, hegemony and cultural colonisation of the succumbing group and even cultural genocide are monsters generated when we fail to acknowledge and practice the existence of cultural diversity and the right of groups to their own culture. Ethnic group, religion, gender, age, class, place and affiliation are but some of the possible sources of cultural differences.

In short, when we speak of the need of mobilising *culture* for the quest of sustainability, as its fourth pillar, we are evoking a powerful, all compassing, and indispensable dimension. But we should be aware that *out there* we will find a number of different *cultures*. Contents, the rules and the structures of that dimension differ from a human community to another, as their languages differ, and even more. We have to keep in mind that each culture is not a compact block but that it is made of a myriad of components, ordered by cultural models, with varying relevance for fostering or hindering a sustainable development.

My second point is about the postulated natural alliance between sustainability and culture(s). Once we acknowledge that each one of the existing cultures correspond to a specific set of values, norms, rules, attitudes, habits, roles, statuses, symbols, technologies, settlements, etc., we should correspondingly acknowledge that some cultures or some of their contents are more oriented towards sustainability than others. Cultural models—mental representations shared by members of a culture—allow us to conduct our daily business while on "automatic pilot". From marriage to etiquette, from hygiene to health, well-being and comfort and our daily relationship with nature are defined by cultural models. Cultural models orient also the way we employ natural resources, produce goods and services, consume or use them, generate waste and dispose it after use. The needs we feel, the ways we satisfy them and the means we avail of are all culture-laden and culture-specific.

Although with exceptions, the dominant cultural model of well-being and comfort, which is basically a cultural expression of the affluent Western societies of the 1960s, remains built upon possession and conspicuous consumption (Veblen [1899] 1973) of energy and resource-intense, disposable rather than reusable, polluting and waste-generating material objects: from cars to food, from clothes to packaging and—of recent—to an unprecedented amount of digital devices. Indeed, one could hardly define those cultural models as conducive or simply consistent with the idea of sustainable development. The same can be said for those cultural models, still found nowadays in other cultural setting, which deny the rule of law or the idea that all human beings—women, for instance—are made equal and are entitled to the

same rights, etc. Truth is that, while indeed we need to summon the strength of key elements within each culture if we want that sustainable ways of life are adopted, take roots and last over time, it is also imperative that other adverse elements are changed, minimised or altogether abandoned. Indeed, we can draw from the frugal traditions of many peasant cultures around the globe an attitude to recycle food, clothes and materials and make them work in new forms in order to reduce waste and energy consumption. On the other hand, we need to get rid of intrinsically unsustainable traditional cultural models, like those, found in many cultures even today, which deprive women from power, freedom of choice or even property rights, or those, even more widespread, which associate high social status with the possession of luxury supercars and other conspicuous goods. Amarthya Sen invited reflection about the "complex epistemic issues involved in identifying the ways in which culture may or may not influence development, and the deeply ethical and political issue of social choice involved in accommodating diverse concerns" (Sen 2000). That complexity manifested itself frequently since the 1960s, when North-South programmes of development aid and cooperation started: "Often development agendas, which are repeatedly built upon the assumption of so-called 'objective' rationality and homogeneity of preferences, do not fully take into account the cultural differences that exist between donors and recipients when designing development strategies" (Minasyan 2014). Many authors in the debate of the 1970s and 1980s contributed to unmasking the ethnocentric character of what—especially in the areas of technologies, energy, production and distribution models—was transferred from the developed to the developing countries and presented as neutrally *modern* and *efficient*. Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth (1960) was the manifesto of a vision of development based on an imitation and reproduction of the economic history of the cultural West. Inglehart and Baker have investigated the controversial relationship of tradition and modernity in development processes "Well into the twentieth century, modernisation was widely viewed as a uniquely Western process that non-Western societies could follow only in so far as they abandoned their traditional cultures and assimilated technologically and morally" superior "Western ways." Indeed, the two authors stress the central claim of modernisation theory is that economic development is linked with coherent changes in culture and social and political life. However, they observe, "cultural change is not linear; with the coming of postindustrial society, it moves in a new direction. Different societies follow different trajectories even when they are subjected to the same forces of economic development, in part because situation-specific factors, such as cultural heritage, also shape how a particular society develops" (Inglehart and Baker 2000). To make a long story short, *tradition*, initially rejected as antimodern, has come to be recognised as an essential identity component of the different human communities and a key factor in their own individual path to development. The next step is the tacit romantic assumption that tradition, any tradition apparently, is always good, per se and in se.

In the last dozen years or so, a renewed international consensus has been manifested about the need to move from a GDP growth-centred model to a well-being-oriented sustainable model. Indeed, measuring development in terms of GDP

can be related to a typically Western cultural pattern, labelled, amongst other things, as *economic reductionism* (apart from the original statement about the conceptual carrying capacity of GDP by one of its very inventors, Simon Kuznet,[5] see also Zamagni 2000; Sen 2009). However, also, the definition of well-being is culture-laden. When, in 2012, the Italian National Scientific Commission on Measures of Wellbeing discussed the direction (positive or negative) to give to indicators concerning social trust and relationships, a discrepancy between a North-European cultural value model favouring reliance on universalistic networks (public services, citizenship rights and so on), on the one hand, and the South-European cultural value favouring reliance on particularistic connections (family and personal friends), on the other, became evident. For those who share the universalistic model, the more the people trust and rely on generalised, non-emotional and non-family-based networks (for instance, public social services addressing various needs), the higher their well-being. Those sharing the particularistic model, conversely, appreciate the contribution to well-being granted by strong family bonds and family-based supporting networks. Development goals in policies and programmes are equally the result of culture-driven values and political choices amongst conflicting alternatives.

So much for the *anthropological* concept of culture: an ocean of meanings. There is however another one, increasingly relevant in the economic and political literature, way less complex in comparison to the first concept, if nonetheless statistically evasive: culture as a—special—sector of economic activity. A concept that entails a myriad of products and services, markets and subsidies, consumers and users, businesses and workers, skills, knowledge, technologies, copyrights, creativity, organisations, processes and infrastructures, resources and investments, monetary and non-monetary value, etc. A considerable amount of studies, starting from the mid-1960s[6] (Baumol and Bowen 1966; Peacock 1969; Robbins 1971), aim at assessing the contribution of that economic sector to development processes. Recently, they have included the notion that the cultural sector is in se a sustainable one, and that it can contribute to a more sustainable economy.

It is against that composite background that we can appreciate how brave the efforts to translate the complex relationship of culture(s) and sustainable development into indicators have been so far. The purpose of the present exercise is: (1) to explore and discuss the operational concepts of culture that have been used for building those indicators; (2) to reflect upon the suggested data sources and methods and their feasibility and (3) to derive from the Culture|2030 indicators ideas for future data collection at a national and local level. The first part of the paper analyses UNESCO's Culture 2030 Indicators and their construction. The second part reflects on the concept of culture, upon which the indicators have been developed. The final

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[5]"the welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measure of national income. If the GDP is up, why is America down? Distinctions must be kept in mind between quantity and quality of growth, between costs and returns, and between the short and long run. Goals for more growth should specify more growth of what and for what". (Kuznets, Report to the US Congress, 1934)

[6]The Journal of Cultural Economics was first published in 1977.

part discussed proposed data sources and their availability and feasibility for orienting future statistical activity in this field.

2   UNESCO's Culture|2030 Indicators

2.1   The Process

"Over the last decade, UNESCO's advocacy for a culture-based approach to development has resulted in several United Nations General Assembly Resolutions that acknowledge the role of culture as an enabler and a driver of sustainable development. This process culminated in the integration of culture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly" (UNESCO 2019). The 2030 Agenda is built upon 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related Targets. The 17 SDGs are grouped into "5 Ps" of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships, reflecting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability (people, planet and prosperity), as well as its two critical conditions (peace and partnerships).

UNESCO developed the Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda (Culture|2030 Indicators) as part of their effort "to establish a methodology for demonstrating culture's role and contribution to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals." This new framework for measuring and collecting data on culture is an instrument aimed at advocating for the role of culture in the SDGs, as well as integrating culture into development plans and policies at the national and local levels. The theoretical and methodological background of Culture|2030 Indicators includes the Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) of UIS, the Culture for Development Indicators Suite (CDIS), the Culture Conventions periodic reporting mechanisms and other monitoring mechanisms and methodologies in the specific context of the 2030 Agenda.

2.2   The Thematic Indicators at a Glance

Basically, Culture|2030 Indicators is a framework made of 22 indicators, grouped into four thematic dimensions, each corresponding to the three pillars of sustainable development: the economic, the social and the environmental. The fourth dimension relates to education, knowledge and skills in cultural fields.

In developing the Thematic indicators, UNESCO starts from the definition of culture adopted in the 2030 Agenda[7]: "a broad view of culture that encompasses the contribution of culture to sustainable development including through cultural

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[7]https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld.

heritage, the creative industries, local culture and products, creativity and innovation, local communities, local materials, and cultural diversity. At the same time, the experience of development projects and interventions has demonstrated the importance of local knowledge and community participation in order to achieve sustainable development—from health to education". From the start, culture here is a twofold notion: (1) as a sector of activity in itself and (2) as cultural diversity and local culture and products. In terms of the multiple meanings of culture, we have discussed in par.1: the first notion derives from the cultural economics strand and the second reflects the differential quality highlighted by Bauman.

2.3 Purpose and Guiding Principles

The role of culture can be addressed both as a *driver* that contributes directly to bringing about economic and social benefits and also as an *enabler* that contributes to the effectiveness of development interventions. Therefore,

"The UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture (Culture|2030 Indicators) is a framework of thematic indicators whose purpose is to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the national and local implementation of the Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The framework will assess both the role of culture as a sector of activity, as well as the transversal contribution of culture across different SDGs and policy areas. As a set of thematic indicators, it is intended to support and complement the global indicators agreed upon within the 2030 Agenda and foster linkages between different Goals and Targets" (UNESCO 2019, p. 17). Make culture visible, provide a thematic and transversal overview of the role of culture across the SDGs, strengthen advocacy for culture, provide evidence-based results to inform policies and actions, build a knowledge base for action and monitor progress of the contribution of culture to the 2030 Agenda represent the five key aims of the Thematic Indicators.

Their guiding principles include: rely as much as possible on existing data sources, use qualitative and quantitative data to assess the contribution of culture, integrate data from reporting on UNESCO Culture Conventions and programmes, develop instruments to measure culture at both national and urban levels, facilitate cooperation across institutions, propose a framework adaptable to different statistical capacities, provide an aspirational tool for all rather than normative assessment and reflect the Result-Based Management conceptual framework. With reference to the last principle, each thematic dimension combines these different types of indicators to measure inputs (e.g. development of cultural infrastructure), processes (e.g. governance mechanisms) or outputs (e.g. participation in cultural life), with a view to producing an overall understanding of culture's contribution.

2.4 Dimensions and Indicators

The Culture|2030 Indicators are structured into four transversal thematic dimensions: (1) Environment and Resilience, (2) Prosperity and Livelihoods, (3) Knowledge and Skills and (4) Inclusion and Participation. Each dimension combines several Sustainable Development (SD) Goals and Targets.[8] "The framework gives priority to the areas that are relevant to UNESCO's mandate in Culture and where relevant quantitative or qualitative data are already being collected or are likely to be identified" (p. 26). Table 1 summarises the relevance of each dimension to each SDG.

2.4.1 Dimension 1: Environment and Resilience

This dimension provides a framework for assessing role and contribution of culture to sustainable human settlements with a focus on cultural and natural heritage and urban environment (the 'Planet' pillar of the SDGs). It addresses tangible and intangible heritage, and natural heritage, as a lever for sustainable development and as an end in itself. The SDGs related to this dimension are no. 2—*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*, no.6—*Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*, no.9—*Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation*, no.11—*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, no.12—*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*, no.13—*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*, no.14—*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*, no.15—*Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss* and no.16—*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*.

Safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage is a specific target in itself (Target 11.4). Other ways culture contributes to environment and resilience are listed below.

- The integration of intangible cultural heritage and traditional knowledge into policies and strategies encourages sustainable development (sustainable food production, resilient agriculture and conservation of natural resources) (Target 2.4 *Sustainable foodways and agriculture*).

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[8]For a complete list of the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, see: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf. [accessed April 23, 2020].

Table 1 UNESCO's Culture 2030 Dimensions and related SDGs

	Dimensions			
SDGs	1 Environment and resilience	2 Prosperity and livelihood	3 Knowledge and skills	4 Inclusion and participation
1—End poverty in all its forms everywhere				
2—End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	X			
3—Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages				
4—Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all			X	
5—Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Transversal			
6—Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	X			
7—Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all				
8—Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all		X	X	
9—Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation	X		X	X
10—Reduce inequality within and amongst countries		X		X
11—Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	X	X		X
12—Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	X		X	
13—Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	X		X	
14—Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	X			
15—Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	X			

Table 1 (continued)

SDGs	Dimensions			
	1 Environment and resilience	2 Prosperity and livelihood	3 Knowledge and skills	4 Inclusion and participation
16—Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	X			X
17—Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development				

- The conservation of natural heritage directly contributes to environmental sustainability. Intangible Cultural Heritage and traditional knowledge are also significant components of ecosystem management by local communities and in safeguarding plans and mechanisms for natural heritage conservation (Target 6.6 *Water-related ecosystems*, Target 14.5 *Marine area conservation*, Target 15.1 *Sustainable terrestrial ecosystems* and Target 13.1 *Climate and disaster resilience*).
- Natural, historically derived and local building practices, and intangible cultural heritage can help mitigating the risks of climate-related disaster, support resilience and enhance the adaptation capacities of communities (Target 13.1 *Climate and disaster resilience*).
- Cultural tourism and eco-tourism are central to sustainable tourism and play a primary role in protecting the environment. Policies and measures on sustainable tourism can be integrated into national, subnational and local development plans, mechanisms and strategies (Target 12.b *Sustainable tourism management*).
- In order to improve sustainable management of heritage, cultural policies and strategies must reduce illicit trafficking and encourage the recovery of stolen assets (Target 16.4 *Recovery of stolen assets*).
- Cultural facilities form part of quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure for cities. Historic buildings, spaces and urban areas as well as careful and compatible new designs rooted in local materials and contexts enhance the urban space and reinforce cultural identity. Cultural facilities integrated into territorial planning enhance the diversity of public space and citizen well-being (Goal 11, several Targets). Similarly, public green spaces available to cultural activities stimulate social cohesion and function as meeting points, thus contributing to a quality environment (Target 11.7 *Inclusive public spaces*).

2.4.1.1 The Indicators of Dimension 1

Indicators of Dimension 1 assess the dimension of spending on heritage protection and conservation, the distribution of cultural indoor and outdoor facilities and the environmental quality of the management of heritage. While theoretically appropriate for representing heritage "as an end in itself", the three indicators on spending and endowment are in practice scarcely applicable to intangible heritage and quite difficult to be covered by good quality comparable data (cultural expenditure data are often aggregated with other budget items). The measurement of how heritage is a lever for sustainable development appears weaker, as it relies only on two indicators about the environmentally correct management of heritage sites, where the *development* component seems scarcely covered.

Indicator 1: Expenditure on Heritage

> Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed, World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector, sponsorship).

This indicator illustrates how financial action by public authorities, at the local, national and international levels, alone or in partnership with civil society organisations (CSO) and the private sector, to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage has a direct impact on safeguarding heritage and in making cities and human settlements more sustainable.

Sources

- UNESCO data: UIS
- National and local sources: National Statistical Institutes, Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Method
Disaggregation:

- By type of heritage: cultural, natural and mixed World Heritage properties
- Public expenditure by level of government (national, regional and local/municipal)
- Type of public expenditure (capital expenditure and operating expenditure)
- Private funding: donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship.

The Authors stress that it might be difficult to calculate, amongst other things, because countries' national accounting frameworks may not clearly separate cultural, natural and other activities; financial transactions may be channelled away for different uses and may be double counted at different levels of public administration. Also, the indicator does not measure non-monetary factors such as national regulations or national/local policies (e.g. fiscal incentives, tax benefits for donations or sponsorships).

Indicator 2: Sustainable Management of Heritage

Checklist[9] for the sustainable management framework to safeguard and manage cultural and natural heritage, practices, knowledge, and movable historical artefacts.

This indicator offers a general picture of the strengths and shortcomings of public action to protect and promote heritage sustainability through the analysis of three components:

- national and international registers and inventories;
- action to protect, safeguard and manage heritage involving all stakeholders and fostering sustainability;
- the level of support mobilised to safeguard and revitalise heritage.

Data Sources

- UNESCO data: periodic reports of the 1972, 1970 and 2003 Conventions as well as the survey data from the 2011 and 2015 Recommendations
- National and local sources: administrative data, specific national surveys and information systems for culture when available

Method
Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).

Indicator 3: Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Checklist for the climate adaptation framework, particularly including traditional practices for resilience.

This indicator aims to assess measures to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhance resilience through sustainable safeguarding and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage.
Data Sources

- UNESCO data: periodic reports of the 1972 and 2003 Conventions.
- National and local sources: administrative data, specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Method
Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).
The indicator includes "Evidence of policies/measures to take into account traditional and local community knowledge in assessing the possible impact of climate adaptation on heritage elements and practices"; "Evidence of integrating cultural factors, including knowledge, traditions and practices of all people and communities, into local strategies on environmental sustainability"; "Evidence of integrating cultural factors, including knowledge, traditions and practices into agricultural strategies" amongst the items in the list.

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[9]The complete checklist is in UNESCO (2019, pp. 38–46).

Indicator 4: Cultural Facilities

The distribution of cultural facilities through spatial mapping.

The indicator aims to assess the diversity of cultural facilities (libraries, museums, galleries, performance venues, cinemas, *traditional cultural spaces*,[10] creative hubs, educational institutions and cultural internet sites) and their territorial distribution. It enables the identification of cultural areas in relation to the population, transport, administration and economic centres. This indicator aims to assess how cultural facilities are integrated in the urban landscape and provide an enabling environment for communities to attend cultural events, practice and participate and for culture professionals and businesses to thrive. It also enables the spatial assessment of areas better served or in greater need of cultural facilities.

Data Sources

- UNESCO data: UIS
- National and local sources: administrative data

Method

Spatial Analysis focuses on diversity, capacity, physical area and network analysis. Indicators also include measures of the number of facilities, their economic output, the public finance if applicable and the number of visitors or users.

Analysis of the gender dimension is also recommended.

Indicator 5: Open Space for Culture

Number and size of open spaces used for cultural purposes by type of use.

The indicator aims to assess the extent of public open spaces, the nature of the spaces and the degree of public use (including traditional markets[11]).

Data Sources

- UNESCO data: UN-Habitat—Public open space strategies SDG 11.7.1
- National/Local sources: administrative data

Method

Amongst the potential metrics that can be used here, the Thematic Indicators list:

- The area (m^2, ha) of 'cultural open space' as a percentage of all public open space
- Number of 'cultural open spaces' as a percentage of all open spaces

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[10]Traditional cultural spaces are defined areas used as traditional village meeting/socialising spaces, e.g. 'kiva'—a semi-underground walled area with built hearths and furnishings (Hopi), 'maneva' roofed open-sided platform used for socialising sleeping eating and village meetings (Kiribati), 'marae' open-enclosed area associated with ancestors used for meetings prayers, etc. (New Zealand).

[11]The definition of Traditional market adopted in the UNESCO text is 'a market which is built and managed by government, private, cooperative or local people's self-support with business places such as stores, kiosks, stalls and tents, or some other similar names, which is owned/ managed by small-medium traders, with small scale business and small capital, of which its buying and selling process is done through bargaining' (UN Habitat).

- Percentage distribution of cultural events in open space by domain as defined by the Framework of culture statistics.[12]

  The gender dimension of this indicator should also be taken into account.

2.4.2 Dimension 2: Prosperity and Livelihood

This dimension proposes an assessment framework for the contribution of culture in driving and enabling more inclusive and sustainable economies, in line with the 'Prosperity' pillar of the SDGs, by generating income, employment and revenue, through cultural goods, services and enterprises. The SDGs addressed here are no.8—*Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*, no. 10—*Reduce inequality within and amongst countries* and no.11—*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*.

The contribution of Culture to prosperity and livelihoods is declined in terms of direct impact of the sector on GDP and job and business creation (e.g. heritage conservation, heritage tourism and in the creative sector—Target 8.3 *Jobs, entrepreneurship and innovation*). Heritage tourism can support job creation and promote local culture and products, contributing to sustainable development (Target 8.9 *Policies for sustainable tourism*). Public policies can encourage economic activities and employment opportunities through increased investment in cultural and natural heritage and infrastructure (Target 11.4 *Cultural and natural heritage*). The governance of culture creates the enabling conditions that allow cultural activities and forms to thrive. Policies and regulations may also favour more equitable international trade (Target 10.a *Differential treatment on trade* and Target 8.a *Increase Aid for Trade*).

2.4.2.1 The Indicators of Dimension 2

The indicators of Dimension 2 are drawn from the classical culture economics. They are theoretically irreproachable, but they nonetheless have two important limits. One is that four of them are based on monetary transactions, which, especially in the digital era, are increasingly less adequate to grasp in full the economic dynamic of the sector. The other is that the statistical information on the field described by Dimension 2, even in those countries with advanced statistical systems, still resents from uncertain definitions (e.g. what is a cultural enterprise or a cultural occupation)

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[12]Central cultural domains are defined as common sets of culturally productive industries, activities and practices directly associated with the creation, production, distribution and enjoyment of central cultural content. They are Cultural and Natural Heritage, Performance and Celebration, Visual Arts and Crafts, Books and Press, Audio-visual and Interactive Media, Design and Creative Services and Intangible Cultural Heritage (transversal domain).

and insufficient granularity and detail to describe, for instance, households' cultural expenditure as separated from other leisure time expenditure.

Indicator 6: Culture in GDP

Percentage of Gross Domestic Product attributable to private and formal cultural production.

The indicator aims to assess the overall contribution of the culture sector to the economy in a given territory. One limitation of this indicator is that it is not able to take into account all cultural activities including those that are informal and unpaid. It aligns with the international classification of the Framework for Cultural Statistics.

Data sources

- National and local sources: National Accounts, Business surveys and censuses, Service and commercial surveys, Government records, Cultural special surveys, artist registers, etc., Private sector sources (e.g. special surveys done by trade unions or chambers of commerce).

Method

To obtain the ratio of cultural GDP, add the values obtained using the ISIC statistic codes included in the UIS Framework for Cultural Statistics (UNESCO-UIS 2009, pp. 52–64) and then compare this sum with the gross domestic product (GDP) of the local economy.

Indicator 7: Cultural Employment

Number of people employed in the cultural and creative sectors and cultural occupations as a percentage of overall employment for the latest year.

The indicator aims to assess the role of culture as an employer at the national and local level.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: UIS
- National and local sources: National Accounts, Population Census, Labour Force surveys (LFS), Administrative records (e.g. social security registers) and Professional associations.

Method

Cultural employment includes: A. People with a cultural occupation and who work in cultural businesses (e.g. an actor in a theatre); B. People with a cultural occupation but who work in a business not engaged in cultural activity (e.g. a designer in the motor industry) and C. People who work in cultural businesses but who do not have a cultural occupation (e.g. an accountant working in a theatre). The indicator is calculated as the sum of all these three groups as a percentage of all employed persons. Disaggregation by gender or by ethnic group is suggested.

Indicator 8: Cultural Businesses

Trends in cultural businesses as a percentage of all businesses.

The indicator aims to assess are the enabling conditions offered to cultural businesses (especially small and micro-enterprises).

Data sources

• National and local sources: Business surveys and Registers of businesses (such as the Chamber of Commerce and sectoral bodies).

Method

Level of change as measured by annual percentage points difference in cultural businesses as a percentage of all businesses for the given area. Gender differences in the ownership of businesses are also suggested for investigation.

Indicator 9: Household Expenditure

Percentage of total household expenditure devoted to cultural activities, goods and services.

This indicator aims to assess how households of a given territory value cultural goods and services through market transactions and to obtain insight into the size and the potential of the local market for cultural activities, goods and services.

Data sources

• National and local sources: Industry surveys and censuses, Service surveys, Small establishment surveys and household expenditure surveys.

Method

CHFC is the household final consumption expenditure on cultural activities, goods and services set against total household final consumption expenditure; HCSCOICOP codes is the total amount of household expenditure in the selected COICOP codes; HFC is the total household final consumption expenditure. The authors underline that many transactions involving cultural goods and services are non-market and therefore escape this proposed measure.

Indicator 10: Trade in Cultural Goods and Services

Exports of cultural goods and services as a percentage of all exports.

This indicator aims to assess the degree to which products as expressions of culture are exported reflecting the economic demand, the international profile of the country/city's cultural products and services and the regulatory environment to enable this.

Data sources

• UNESCO data: UIS
• National and local sources: National Customs and Revenue reports preferred, otherwise the international COMTRADE database (comtrade.un.org).

Method

(a) The value of physical cultural exports using the codes (Harmonised System where possible) as listed in FCS as a percentage of the value of all exports of physical goods.

(b) The value of exports of cultural services using the codes as listed in FCS as a percentage of the value of all service exports.

Indicator 11: Public Finance for Culture

Proportion of public expenditure devoted to cultural and creative activities and the annual public budget and expenditure for the cultural and creative sectors.

This indicator aims to monitor the amount of actual public spending on cultural and creative activities.

Data sources

- National and local sources: Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Method

For public expenditure for culture, the following disaggregation would be required:

- Public expenditure by administrative unit
- Type of public expenditure (capital investment and operating expenditure)
- Public expenditure per inhabitant
- By sector of intervention
- Public expenditure by source.

Indicator 12: Governance of Culture

Checklist of the governance framework to support culture and creativity.

This checklist aims at:

- representing an overall picture of the government policies and regulatory frameworks in place to support activities in the culture sector, as well as the decision-making processes in cultural domains;
- assessing the regulation of the Culture sector and promoting better working and trade conditions for better livelihoods;
- assessing the degree of development of the governance framework at national/local level for culture in general and by cultural domains specifically.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: Periodic reports of the 1954, 1970, 1972, 2003 and 2005 Conventions.
- National and local sources: Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for governance culture when available.

Method

Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).

2.4.3   Dimension 3: Knowledge and Skills

This dimension "highlights the contribution of culture in building knowledge and skills and focuses on the contribution of culture to the transmission of local cultural values, knowledge and skills and fostering empowerment through education and training processes and policies. It emphasises the role of cultural diversity in education and vocational training". The Dimension refers to the SDGs no. 4—*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*, 8—*Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*, 9—*Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation*, 12—*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns* and no.13—*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*.

2.4.3.1   The Indicators of Dimension 3

The four indicators of this dimension confirm the unresolved definition of culture at the root of the—however commendable—exercise, as they swing from cultural diversity to the arts and back to the intangible heritage and back again to tangible heritage. This is probably the dimension where the effort to grasp and quantify the multidimensional content of the notion of culture shows its most significant limits and tries overcoming them by adding layer-to-layer.

Indicator 13: Education for Sustainable Development
The indicator is still being developed. Once defined, it aims to assess the extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on cultural diversity, are mainstreamed at all levels.
   Data sources

- UNESCO data: UIS
- National and local sources: Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Indicator 14: Cultural Knowledge

Checklist on cultural education and capacity building

   This indicator aims to assess the contribution of cultural knowledge to sustainable development practices.
   Data sources

- UNESCO data: Periodic reports of the 1972, 2003 and 2005 Conventions, International Bureau of Education.

   Method
   Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).

Indicator 15: Multilingual Education

Percentage of instructional hours dedicated to multilingualism in relation to the total number of instructional hours dedicated to languages in: (a) primary (ISCED 1) (b) lower secondary school (ISCED 2)

The indicator aims to assess the extent to which multilingualism is promoted in primary and secondary education as an approximation of the levels of promotion of intercultural dialogue, safeguarding and understanding of cultural diversity within the education system.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: Education Sector of UNESCO, IBE
- National and local sources: Official school curriculum obtained from the Ministry of Education

Method

$$\text{Indicator} = \text{ILR} + \text{II} + (1 - 1/\text{B}) \times \text{ION}$$

ION is the annual percentage of instructional hours dedicated to official or national languages during a particular level of schooling (ISCED 1 or ISCED 2), in relation to the total number of hours dedicated to teaching languages; ILR is the annual percentage of instructional hours dedicated to local or regional languages during a particular level of schooling, in relation to the total number of hours dedicated to teaching languages; II is the annual percentage of instructional hours dedicated to international languages during the same level of schooling, in relation to the total number of hours dedicated to teaching languages; B is the number of official or national languages taught.

Indicator 16: Cultural and Artistic Education

Percentage of instructional hours dedicated to cultural education in the first two years of secondary school (ISCED 2), in relation to the total number of instructional hours.

The indicator aims to assess the degree to which cultural studies are included in the secondary school curriculum, as an approximation of the levels of encouragement in the education system of creativity, the promotion of the appreciation of cultural expressions and "the desire for culture" amongst young people.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: Education Sector of UNESCO, IBE.
- National and local sources: National Official school curriculum obtained from the Ministry of Education.

Method

Obtain the number of hours by subject from curriculum-based sources and calculate the percentage of hours devoted to culture.

Indicator 17: Cultural Training

"Number of students enrolled in post-secondary and tertiary education in the field of culture during the reference year as a percentage of all students enrolled in these levels of education" and "Number of students graduating from post-secondary and tertiary education in the field of culture during the reference year as a percentage of all students graduating in these levels of education".

This indicator aims to assess the extent of participation in culture and creative studies at the post-secondary level.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: Education Sector of UNESCO, IBE.
- National and local sources: Ministries of Technical and Higher Education, Ministry of Culture.

Method

- % of all students in post-secondary education who are enrolled in programmes with culture and creative industry Fields of Study
- % of all students enrolled in tertiary education who are enrolled in programmes with culture and creative industry Fields of Study
- % of all students graduating in post-secondary education programmes with culture and creative industry Fields of Study
- % of all students graduating in tertiary education programmes with culture and creative industry Fields of Study.

2.4.4   Dimension 4: Inclusion and Participation

The last dimension aims at assessing the contribution of culture in building social cohesion and fostering inclusion and participation. It focuses on access to culture, the right of all people to participate in cultural life and their freedom in cultural expression, including artistic and creative freedom. The SDGs involved are no. 9—*Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation*, 10—*Reduce inequality within and amongst countries*, no.11—*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* and 16—*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*.

2.4.4.1   The Indicators of Dimension 4

The five indicators address relevant aspects of inclusion and participation: intercultural tolerance, artistic freedom, physical access to cultural facilities, cultural participation and participatory processes. The Achilles' heel of this set is represented

by both the chosen variables of such abstract and complex phenomena and their proposed sources. In particular, the mere availability of infrastructures per capita does not represent access, as barriers may be architectural, economic and cognitive. The indicator about participatory processes is hardly an indicator in the proper sense. About sources, national surveys on specific phenomena, often mentioned for this dimension, do not exist in many countries.

Indicator 18: Culture for Social Cohesion

This indicator is an aggregate of three indicators:

- Intercultural tolerance: Percentage of people who do not object to having a neighbour from another culture.
- Interpersonal trust: Percentage of people reporting that other people can be trusted.
- Perception of gender equality: Degree of positive assessment of gender equality (subjective output).

This composed indicator aims to assess the degree of inter-cultural understanding, to measure the degree of personal acceptance of people from other cultures and to measure the gaps between women and men with respect to their opportunities and rights to take part in the cultural, social, economic and political life of their country.

Data sources

- National and local sources: Administrative data, Specific national surveys (including the Rosenberg question) and Information systems for culture when available.
- World Values Survey (WVS); Latino Barometer: Interpersonal Trust (A60112); Asian Barometer: Most people can be trusted (Q024); Afro Barometer: Most people can be trusted or trust others.

Method
The calculation varies according to the different data sources.

Indicator 19: Artistic Freedom

Checklist on the level of support for artistic freedom and to identify the status of the artist.

This indicator aims to assess the level of a sustainable environment for artists and creators.

Data sources

- UNESCO data: 2005 Convention periodic reports.
- National and local sources: Ministry of Culture, Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Method
Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).

Indicator 20: Access to Culture

Availability of cultural infrastructure in relation to the distribution of the population.

This indicator aims to assess the degree to which different people have access to cultural facilities. This measure complements indicator 4 'Cultural facilities' as it aims to assess the number of cultural facilities in a city or country in relation to the size of the population. Where data are available, it may be disaggregated by types of cultural infrastructure.

Data sources

- National and local contributions: Administrative data and Information systems for culture when available.

Method

This indicator aims to assess the availability of cultural facilities in relation to the population that might be expected to use them. For each administrative district or province, take the number of each type of facility (e.g. museum) and the total resident population. Calculate the standard deviation of each facility across the country/city as an indicator as to the extent to which each facility is evenly distributed across the territory.

Indicator 21: Cultural Participation

The composite measure combines three indicators:

1. Cultural site visits: Trends in the number of visits to selected cultural sites or performances.
2. Cultural attendance: Percentage of the population who have participated at least once in a going-out cultural activity in the last 12 months.
3. Individual cultural activities: Percentage of households reporting practicing cultural activities at home in the last 12 months (including: Using the internet for cultural purposes).

The main purposes of the measure are:

- To assess the overall number of visits to cultural sites or facilities and, through time series, whether interest to particular types of facility is increasing or declining.
- To assess the proportion of the population who attend a cultural event or facility and, through time series, whether the proportion of the population attending cultural events outside the home is increasing or decreasing.
- To assess the extent to which people engage in cultural activities or skills at home and to monitor the role of cultural activities online.

Data sources

- National and local sources: Administrative data, specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available. Data from Internet service providers.
- Regional surveys such as Eurobarometer and Latinobarometer.

Indicator 22: Participatory Processes

The extent of participation of all stakeholders including local communities in the processes for developing and implementing cultural policies, programmes, and initiatives that concern them.

The indicator aims to assess the opportunities open to civil society and to cultural sector professionals and minorities to participate in the formulation and implementation of cultural activities, policies, measures and programmes that concern them.

Data sources

- Periodic reports of the 1972, 2003 and 2005 Conventions.
- National and local sources: Administrative data, Specific national surveys and Information systems for culture when available.

Method
Checklist (numerical and Yes/No).

3 Discussion

3.1 *The Concept of Culture*

Definitions and purposes of the 22 indicators show that the concepts of culture that they convey are different and vary from a Dimension to another. Basically, there are three concepts involved: culture as a sector of economic activity (in 18 of them), culture in the anthropological sense, as tradition (in three of them, combined with other concepts) and culture in the anthropological sense, as cultural diversity (in four indicators, plus one, combined with other concepts). Table 2 shows how the different concepts are distributed in the four dimensions and their indicators.

3.1.1 Environment and Resilience

All the five indicators in this Dimension are built on the concept of culture as a sector of economic activity, addressing Cultural heritage and cultural venues. Three of them also include references to *tradition,* as a source of practices for sustainable management and climate adaptation for (tangible) heritage. But how is *tradition* operationally defined? How old a practice must be, for being listed as traditional? Is being traditional automatically equal to be sustainable? Evidence shows that this is not so. Examples are the variety of disruptive, albeit traditional, fishing techniques, including trawling, by-catch and even explosives or the disposal of solid waste into large open-air dumps, traditional mineral and stone extraction techniques, like open-air quarries, etc.

3.1.2 Prosperity and Livelihood

The totality of the Indicators in this Dimension refer exclusively to culture as a sector of economic activity, seen as source of occupation and income and therefore worth receiving adequate public support and investment and governance. The

Table 2 Concepts of culture adopted in the dimensions and indicators

Dimensions and indicators	Concepts of culture		
	Sector of economic activity	Anthropological sense, tradition	Cultural diversity
Environment and resilience			
1. Expenditure on heritage	X		
2. Sustainable management of heritage	X	X	
3. Climate adaptation and resilience		X	
4. Cultural facilities	X		
5. Open space for culture	X	X	X
Prosperity and livelihood			
6. Culture in GDP	X		
7. Cultural employment	X		
8. Cultural businesses	X		
9. Household expenditure	X		
10. Trade in cultural goods and services	X		
11. Public finance for culture	X		
12. Governance of culture	X		
Knowledge and skills			
13. Education for sustainable development			X
14. Cultural knowledge			X
15. Multilingual education			X
16. Cultural and artistic education	X		
17. Cultural training	X		
Inclusion and participation			
18. Culture for social cohesion			X
19. Artistic freedom	X		
20. Access to culture	X		
21. Cultural participation	X		
22. Participatory process	X		

anthropological concept and the notion of cultural diversity are not included in the proposed measurements.

3.1.3   Knowledge and Skills

The majority of indicators in the third Dimension, including one still in process of being finalised, convey the value of *cultural diversity*, which the educational system is called upon to protect and nurture from a generation to another. The other two

indicators address artistic and creative education, a key function in the cultural sector framework.

3.1.4 Inclusion and Participation

In this Dimension, the proportion of indicators addressing the consumption and practice of cultural goods and services prevails over those designed for measuring cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is mostly measured as inclusion in decision-making processes of a variety of stakeholders, including cultural minorities, while participation is identified with cultural consumption and practice of the conventional kind (visiting museums, attending cultural events, etc.).

3.2 *Data and Sources Criticalities*

The Thematic Indicators are conceived as a toolkit for global application, to a scale ranging from the city level to the national level. They therefore should be viable for countries with different statistical capacity. At a first glance, the framework appears to be data driven. That is, indicators are preferably built on existing datasets. However, very few countries, in the so-called developed world, are able, today, to feed with data all the proposed indicators. In this sense, Culture|2030 Indicators represent a target for the development of an integrated system of culture-for-sustainable-development statistics. To reach that target requires huge investments. Moreover, it requires progressive and repeated refinement of the definitions, because the UNESCO indicators, while an extraordinary step forward, still contain blurred areas and vagueness. In some respects, like, for instance, the measures of cultural participation, the semantic load of the indicators is too big, and the proposed proxies are still not fully convincing.

3.3 *Conclusions*

In this exercise, I have tried to explore and discuss the operational concepts of culture that have been used for building the UNESCO Culture 2030 indicators, to reflect upon the suggested data sources and methods and their feasibility and to derive from them ideas for future data collection at a national and local level.

For over 40 years, UNESCO has guaranteed a tremendous effort for the production of a solid system of culture statistics. Culture is a tricky subject, and its very definition can be hardly pinned down to a single concept. From the first, innovative Framework (1986), to the sophisticated Culture for Development Indicator Suite in

the 2010s,[13] the path followed is clear and consistent and aims to take into statistical account not only the economic dimension of culture but also cultural human rights and the depths of the anthropological meanings of culture. If in theory the UNESCO's set of indicators should reflect this complexity, in practice, at least so far, the majority of the proposed measures concern the cultural sector of economic activity. Culture in the anthropological sense inspires just three indicators, two of which express a rather rosy vision of tradition, a bit too simplistically identified with "all things good".

Apart from their inevitable limits, largely due to data constraints, the Thematic Indicators discussed here add something new and important to the cultural studies: they are inspired by and tailored to the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is a game-changer as compared to the past.

Of course, there are open issues, and the future culture statistical activity will be called to deal with them. Data sources are an issue. Standards and norms are also an issue, since the Framework does not propose optimal values or benchmarks. Mere incremental or decremental trends are not enough, if indeed this toolkit must monitor the progressive contribution of culture to development. But, at a different level, together with a general improvement of the statistics, the project will succeed only if some political sore spots will be politically tackled and solved. Culture is never mentioned openly in the 2030 Agenda. The UN hesitates to rule about which is the proper course of cultural policies to support sustainable development. Hence, establishing targets and reference values is probably still too delicate and embarrassing a task to be completed at this stage.

A final remark about the use of *contribution* instead of *impact* to describe the role of culture in the attainment of the SDGs is in order. It is a practical decision, one that shifts the focus from the universe of meaning of *impact*, which can be direct or indirect, but also planned and unexpected as well, to the universe of meaning of a deliberate, planned and carefully constructed *contribution,* which deserves appreciation.

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