Towards a UNESCO culture and development indicators suite

Working document

Dimension n° 6: Social dimensions of culture for development

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II. Description

The social dimensions of culture for development comprise indicators of participation in cultural activities; opportunities for, and resistance to, cultural engagements by users, consumers and participants. In addition they also include indicators clarifying the relationships between participation and satisfaction as well as on the relationships between participation, well-being and development.

III. Proposed definition

The social dimension of culture is defined as the cultural skills and values, inherited from the community’s previous generation and undergoing adaptation and extension by current member of the community that influence how people express themselves in relation to others and how they engage in social interaction. This definition focuses on the social outcomes of culture that are shared with other people and reflect the relations between them (e.g. the extent and quality of relationships with others), or how a community is respectful of others, cohesive and capable of empowering its citizens.

Among all the different ways of living together it is important to identify the social dimensions of culture that have a positive influence on individuals’ capabilities and on the criteria by which people make their choices. The social dimensions of culture, which have a positive effect on development, are based on universally accepted ethical standards. They have an important role in fostering the respect of other cultures and a system of beliefs and values which improve human capabilities. Cultural changes that foster these dimensions have an important role in human development and they should be appropriately measured.
and monitored. This paper identifies the main social dimensions of culture that contribute to the development of societies where freedom in all its dimensions is both “the primary end and the principal means of development” (Sen: 1999)\(^1\).

In assessing the effect of social dimensions of culture for development, it is important to seek indicators that are relevant in their own right – that is, they should affect people and society directly. For this reason a focus on outcome measurement (rather than measuring outputs or inputs) is important to ensure that indicators focus on things that matter directly to people. Indicators should be based on survey data because microdata give the possibility to disaggregate information according to structural variables to study specific socio-demographic groups.

IV. Proposed Indicators

FULLY DEVELOPED INDICATORS

6.1. Participation in cultural activities

Rationale
Wider participation has been embraced as a central concern of national cultural policy by different countries around the world. Cultural participation is associated with a more active lifestyle; those who are excluded from participating in cultural activities also have lower level of social cohesion (Morrone, De Mauro: 2008)\(^2\).

The 2009 UNESCO framework for cultural statistics (FCS) defines cultural participation as including:

- cultural practices that may involve consumption as well as activities that are undertaken within the community, reflecting quality of life, traditions and beliefs. It includes attendance at formal and for-fee events, such as going to a movie or to a concert, as well as informal cultural action, such as participating in community cultural activities and amateur artistic productions or everyday activities like reading a book.

Moreover, cultural participation covers both active and passive behaviour. It includes the person who is listening to a concert and the person who practices music. The purpose of cultural participation surveys should be to assess overall participation levels, even though it may be difficult to distinguish active from passive behaviour. For example, in some festivals, individuals may be performers at one point (active, creating and inspiring others) and be the audience at other times (passive or seeking inspiration). Cultural participation does not concern activities carried out for employment purposes; for example, cultural participation would include visitors to a museum but not the paid guide (UNESCO 2009).

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\(^2\) Morrone A., De Mauro T., (2008), Livelli di partecipazione alla vita della cultura in Italia, Fondazione Mondo Digitale, Roma.
Cultural practices can be defined according to three categories (Morrone: 2006)³:

1. **Home-based** (culture d’appartement) refers to the amount of time spent on watching TV, listening to the radio, watching and listening to recorded sound and images, reading and using computer and the Internet.
2. **Going out** (culture de sortie) includes visits to cultural venues such as cinema, theatre, concerts, museums, monuments and heritage sites.
3. **Identity building** (culture identitaire) covers amateur cultural practices, membership of cultural associations, popular culture, ethnic culture, community practices and youth culture.

**Data availability and definition**
- Data available from 2007 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) survey to construct the following indicator: ‘Percentage of people who attend cultural events at least once a year’
- Alternative data could be obtained from the World Values survey’s replies to the following questions:
  - V26: Active member, inactive member or not a member of an art, music or educational organization? (coded 2,1,0)
  - V221: With which of the following views do you agree? Ethnic diversity erodes a country’s unity (1): Ethnic diversity enriches life (10). Coded on a scale of 1 to 10 with each opinion at the extreme.
- Additional data could be obtained from the Eurobarometer survey on Europeans’ participation in cultural activities.
- The HETUS (The Harmonised European Time Use Surveys) database provides data on time spent engaged in cultural activities but it is only available for 15 European countries.

**Issues, limitations and prospects**
- Due to the dramatic lack of international harmonized data on cultural participation, it is almost impossible to provide reliable indicators on people engaged in creative activities either for professional reasons or as a secondary job or the large number of people who engage in creative activities as amateur in their free time
- The activities taken into account by these surveys are heavily influenced by the western understanding of cultural participation. The examples provided by the ISSP question for instance refer to concerts, live theatre and exhibitions which might lead to biased replies. An overarching indicator should take into account activities that are culture specific such as attendance to rituals, festival or ceremonies (Morrone: 2006). Therefore, for this domain it would be more useful to have a synthetic indicator of the activities carried out by the interviewees. Starting from ISSP microdata, this indicator will be built as a1 + a2 + ... + an where An are the activities considered
- The indicator should take better account of frequency of participation. A simple measure of adjusted participation rate (P_adj) would be:
  \[
  P_{adj} = \text{Participation rate} \times F(1...5)
  \]
Where frequency F is one of five numbers depending on the average or median frequency of participation: for example between 0 (‘never’) and an upper limit, say 100 (‘daily’).
A saturation point, MaxP_adj, would be where 100 percent of the country’s population is participating at the highest frequency

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6.2. Distrust or dislike of other cultures

Rationale
As stated in our *Creative diversity*, a basic principle should be to foster values and norms which imply openness to and the respect for all cultures. Social peace is necessary for human development and a set of indicators should be able to assess if a culture is able to consider differences between people not as something alien and unacceptable or hateful, but as experiments in ways of living together that contain valuable lessons and information for all, helping to build social cohesion.

Inglehart and al (2008)\(^4\) show that tolerant or respectful people tend to accept all diverse groups as neighbours while intolerant people would like to have only people similar to them as neighbours.

Definition
The degree of cultural mistrust, or lack of potential interconnectedness between cultures (low degree of cultural bridges between social groups)

Data
The indicator should be based on one or more of the three factors from the WVS that relate most closely to the UNESCO definition of culture (which is strongly anthropological). This will distinguish it as a cultural indicator, rather than a generic indicator of tolerance or openness. In general it is preferable to avoid composite indexes but in this case, since the different indicators correlate strongly, it is possible to think about an index based on the following three factors:

- Share of people who would not like to have the following cultural groups as neighbours:
  - a. Immigrants/foreign workers
  - b. People of different religion
  - c. People who speak a different language

This DoC index could be a simple sum of the three factors’ shares divided by its maximum:

\[
DoC = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^3 f_i}{Max_{DoC}}.
\]

In this way DoC will vary between 0 and 1 where 0 will mean total absence of distrust of other cultures and 1 will mean maximum distrust. A zero value for this indicator would be the ideal; it would demonstrate total respect for otherness. This means that the statistic itself can be viewed as an indicator.

- Other data related to this openness to diversity could include strong agreement to the following statement from ISSP 2003 questionnaire on ‘national identity’: Immigrants improve society by bringing in new ideas and cultures with the following possible answers: agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree; disagree; disagree strongly and can’t choose


- Working document prepared by the UNESCO Secretariat based on expert contributions -
6.3. Interpersonal Trust

Rationale
Interpersonal trust has been used in many studies as a proxy for social capital. It is widely recognized that societies are better off when their members co-operate rather than when they do not. Social science research suggests that networks, norms and trust, which together form what is referred to as social capital, are essential prerequisites for co-operation. Researchers have associated trust to societal well-being in general and in particular to economic development (Fukuyama, 1995, 2000)\(^5\), more effective political institutions (Putnam: 1995)\(^6\) and low crime rates (Hagan, Merkens and Boehnke: 1995)\(^7\). A low level of trust is a strong indicator of a society with cultural values and norms that stifle co-operation and, by consequence make it difficult to improve individuals’ capabilities.

The canonical question developed by Rosenberg in 1956 “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?”\(^8\) is cultural because it relates to moralistic trust’ and is the sort of cultural behaviour people learn through religion or school. This question asks responses on what people should think rather than what they actually think. This moralistic trust is an indirect measure of our cultural values and the cultural attitudes of societies toward cooperation.

Definition
Percentage of people that reply ‘most people can be trusted’ to the Rosenberg question.

Data availability
The Rosenberg question has been asked in many surveys and the WVS uses this question since 1981 to measure interpersonal trust with the following answers: a) Most people can be trusted; b) Can’t be too careful; c) Don’t know.

The Gallup World Poll used the Rosenberg question only in a 2005 Gallup Panel study\(^9\), but it doesn’t collect this question in its standard annual survey.

Issues and limitations
- Although culture can clearly be one aspect of trust, there are too many other aspects of trust for this to be used as a cultural indicator. A stronger case or rationale should be provided, highlighting that culture is the most important factor in influencing levels of trust (a cultural question would ask how much do you trust people of other cultures?)
- The diversity of cultural values within nation-states makes it difficult to have one global indicator on the subject. This indicator runs the risk of stereotyping cultures between those that can contribute positively to development and those that stifle it
- From an indigenous perspective, it might be useful to be able to gauge a population’s capacity for forgiveness as well.

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9 http://www.gallup.com/poll/18802/Gallup-Panel-People-Cant-Trusted.aspx
6.4. Freedom of self-determination

Rationale
Right of self-determination is especially relevant to evaluate the social dimensions of culture for development. According to the self-determination theory (SDT) of Ryan and Deci (2000), autonomy is a psychological need, meaning that without nurturing it in an appropriate way, human development and functioning will be thwarted. The evaluation of the perceived level of autonomy is closely connected at a conceptual level with Sen’s work because it focuses on capabilities that the person values. Autonomy is a relatively universal phenomenon which is closely related to subjective well-being and brings benefits to various aspects of people’s lives across different societies and cultures (Chirkov: 2001).

Since our interest is to measure to which extend societies are able to foster freedom in all its dimensions, it is important to identify the realities where people feel that their freedom of self-determination is limited or non-existent.

Data sources and definition
- The percentage of people that think they have no control at all on their lives, using results from the World Value Survey’s complex statement: “Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, while other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them” with respondents evaluating their own level of perceived freedom of self-determination using a scale where 1 means “none at all” and 10 means “a great deal”.
- Gallup World Poll has a question on freedom of self-determination asking “In this country are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?” with yes/no as possible answers.

Issues and limitations
- There seem to be too many non-cultural aspects to self-determination for this measure to work as a cultural indicator. The survey questions that would inform this indicator should be specifically about people’s freedom to choose to practice their culture.

6.5. Computer use

Rationale
Differences in access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as computers and the Internet, create a “digital divide” between those who can benefit from opportunities provided by ICTs and those who cannot. Most OECD countries have specific policies to foster the use on ICTs and the rationale for most of these policies is that there are large social benefits from diffusing ICTs more widely through the economy and society due to large spill over and positive externalities associated with diffusion, greater use and improvements to the skill base. Furthermore, due to the large network effects associated with ICTs, there are positive efficiency and multiplier effects associated with diffusing ICTs more widely and raising ICT skills throughout the economy (OECD: 2000).

Skill in computer use not only transform economic possibilities but also the lives of those who are influenced by such technological change. Moreover there is evidence that shows

11 Chirkov V. I., (2001), Culture, personal autonomy and individualism: their relationships and implications for personal growth and well-being, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada.
how the use of new technologies can lead to greater public participation, providing the public with new tools to make their voices heard (European Commission: 2009\(^{13}\)). For all these reasons, the use of personal computer and/or the internet can foster people’s capabilities and it has been included in the list of cultural participation indicators defined by the Leadership Group on Culture (European Commission: 2004\(^{14}\)) and it is of paramount importance in the evaluation of the social dimensions of culture for development.

**Definition**
Percentage of people who have never used a personal computer

**Data source**
For the purpose of this project it will be useful to use as key indicator, the percentage of people who do not use personal computer, in order to have a basic evaluation of the digital divide of a country. The proposal is to use question on computer use asked in the WVS. Of course there are other possible sources of data. The European Union has a module on the use of ICTs among individuals that annually collects detailed information on this subject but it is of relative importance for the purpose of this report because it only covers European member states. There are also basic macrodata available worldwide on the use of the Internet ([http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm](http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm)) but the WVS’s microdata gives the possibility to analyse the determinants and patterns of use.

**Issues and limitations**
- This indicator is not cultural enough. A cultural indicator would measure computer use for cultural purposes. The results of the Barometer survey indicate for instance that most Europeans use their computer to ‘Exchange e-mails with their family, friends or colleagues’ (57.8%). That said, such indicator would be difficult to construct without being influenced by exogenous factors such as economic possibility and technological infrastructure. It would therefore be very difficult to interpret

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