SHORT ARTICLES

MEASURING CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT: UNLOCKING THE UNESCO INDICATORS' POTENTIAL

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Abstract

In recent years, the multifarious possible connections between culture and development have become a hot issue in the global debate. One of the most important actors in this debate is the United Nations (UN) agency responsible for culture, i.e. the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The present paper focuses on the role that UNESCO plays, and might play, in understanding and strengthening the relationship between culture and development, especially by means of its Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS).

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1. Introduction.

In recent years, the multifarious possible connections between culture and development have become a hot issue in the global debate. One of the most important actors in this debate is the United Nations (UN) agency responsible for culture, i.e. the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).[1] The present paper focuses on the role that UNESCO plays, and might play, in understanding and strengthening the relationship between culture and development, especially by means of its Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS).

After a brief review of the legal instruments used by UNESCO to pursue its objectives, special attention will be devoted

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[1] According to Article I (Purposes and functions) of the UNESCO Constitution (adopted on November 16, 1945 and available at http://en.unesco.org/), '[t]he purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture'. Similarly, Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations (available at <un.org/en/charter-united-nations>) defines UNESCO as the agency which contributes to the UN mission to promote peace and security worldwide by fostering collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication, on the assumption that respect for and tolerance of cultural diversity is fundamental for guaranteeing the maintenance of peace among different cultures and societies. Today, UNESCO has 195 Members and 10 Associate Members. Its headquarter is in Paris, France.

As Article I (Purposes and functions) of the 1945 UNESCO Constitution (cited above) makes clear, the preservation and management of culture has been at the core of UNESCO's work since its very foundation. In pursuing its mission, UNESCO adopts the broadest possible view on what culture is. As enshrined in the Preamble of the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (available at <unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>), UNESCO conceives culture 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'. On this definition of culture, and on its limits, cp. M. Bussani, *The (Legal) Culture of Cultural Property*, in J.A. Sánchez Cordero (ed), *La Convención de la UNESCO de 1970. Sus nuevos desafíos/The 1970 UNESCO Convention. New Challenges/La convention de l'UNESCO de 1970. Les nouveaux défis*, 401 (2013); I. Kozymka, *The Diplomacy of Culture: The Role of UNESCO in Sustaining Cultural Diversity,* 10 (2014); B.C. Sax, *Introduction: Truth and Meaning in Cultural History*, in P. Schine Gold and B.C. Sax (eds), *Cultural Visions: Essays in the History of Culture*, 3, 4-5 (2000). On the dependency of the concept of culture on the category of cultural phenomena on which one focuses as well as on the temporal, geographical and social context in which one makes the inquiry: M. Bussani, *The (Legal) Culture of Cultural Property*, cit. at 1, 402.

first to the set of hard and soft law devices that UNESCO commonly resorts to in this field (paragraph 2). Then I will survey the new quasi-legal tools that UNESCO has developed for guiding countries in the collection of cultural statistics and in the production of cultural indicators (paragraph 3). Sketching out what these tools are will enable me to analyse, more in depth, the most advanced initiative of UNESCO on cultural indicators; the UNESCO's CDIS (paragraph 4). As we will see, the aim of the CDIS is to highlight how culture contributes to development at a national level, and to measure the extent to which culture fosters economic growth and helps individuals and communities expand their life choices and adapt to change. The scrutiny of how the CDIS are built and implemented (paragraph 5) will allow me to draw some conclusions about their strength and weaknesses, and to investigate their potential as quasi-legal instrument for the promotion of culture and development (paragraph 6).

2. UNESCO's Hard and Soft Law Instruments.

To understand the potential of UNESCO's cultural indicators, it is necessary to briefly review the legal instruments that are at UNESCO' disposal for achieving its mission.

According to Article I of UNESCO's Constitution,[2] the primary tool for UNESCO's activity is the development of international agreements. The second part of the Article makes clear that to realize its purposes the organisation will 'collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image'.[3] Article IV, Paragraph B.4 of the Constitution, specifies the two instruments – conventions[4] and

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[2] See supra n 1.

[3] UNESCO Constitution, Article I, 2 (a).

[4] Conventions are not defined by the Constitution, but have the usual meaning specified by Article 2 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties of 1969: 'an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation'. On sources of international law see among others H. Thirlway, *The Sources of International Law* (2014).

recommendations[5] – that the General Conference[6] of the organisation can adopt and submit for approval to Member States. In addition to these tools, UNESCO's practice has developed a further means not mentioned in the Constitution, that is, international declarations.[7]

While conventions, once approved by Member States, become binding upon their signatories (but only upon them), recommendations and declarations notoriously belong to the category of international soft law, since UNESCO has no coercive power over the behaviour of Member States.[8] Yet, given UNESCO's competence and authority in the field, Member States

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[5] Within the UNESCO system, recommendations are instruments in which 'the General Conference formulates principles and norms for the international regulation of any particular question and invites Member States to take whatever legislative or other steps may be required in conformity with the constitutional practice of each State and the nature of the question under consideration to apply the principles and norms aforesaid within their respective territories' (Article 1 (b) of UNESCO's Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, para 4, of the Constitution). Both conventions and recommendations are drafted according to the *Rules of Procedure concerning Recommendations to Member States and International Conventions*, available at <unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21681&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html>.

[6] UNESCO's General Conference is formed by one representative for each UNESCO's Member State, irrespective of the size of the latter, or of the extent to which it contributes to the budget. The General Conference meets every two years, and Member States and Associate Members can take part in it, together with observers for non-Member States, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). See http://en.unesco.org/about-us/unescos-governing-bodies. Article IV, Paragraph B.4 of the UNESCO's Constitution clarifies that '[t]he General Conference shall, in adopting proposals for submission to the Member States, distinguish between recommendations and international conventions submitted for their approval'. The General Conference decides from time to time whether to adopt a convention or a recommendation. UNESCO, *General introduction to the standard-setting instruments of UNESCO*, available at <portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=23772&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html#name=1>.

[7] Declarations 'set forth universal principles to which the community of States wished to attribute the greatest possible authority': UNESCO, *General introduction to the standard-setting instruments of UNESCO* (n. 13).

[8] I. Kozymka, *The Diplomacy of Culture: The Role of UNESCO in Sustaining Cultural Diversity*, cit. at 1, 18.

usually hold recommendations and declarations in high regard,[9] with the result that what starts as a soft law instrument often hardens with time, sometimes transforming it into a convention.

A good illustration of the continuum between UNESCO's soft and hard law power comes from the field of cultural diversity. In 2001 the approval by UNESCO of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was a major step towards the recognition of cultural diversity as a key factor of sustainable development,[10] whereby by 'development' UNESCO means 'the process of enlarging people's choices [that] enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value'.[11] As such, the Declaration became a condition precedent for the adoption of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.[12] The text is the first international treaty defending cultural activities, goods and services in both their economic and social dimensions, that is, both as a means to provide jobs and

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[9] K. Matsuura, *Foreword,* in A.A. Yusuf (ed), *Standard-setting in UNESCO. Normative Action in Education, Science and Culture*, I, 12 (2007).

[10] The full text is available at <http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html>. One year before, and along the same lines, the UN General Assembly passed two soft law instruments – Resolutions 65/1 and 65/166 – stressing the crucial role of culture for the development process.

[11] World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity - Report*, (UNESCO 1996), 14 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001055/105586e.pdf.

Like the notion of 'culture', the concept of 'development' is still unsettled: see, among others, D.D. Bradlow, *Differing Conceptions of Development and the Content of International Development Law*, in A.F. Munir Maniruzzama et alii (eds), *International Sustainable Development Law*, I, 1 ff. (2010); M. Bussani, *Il diritto dell'Occidente. Geopolitica delle regole globali*, 48 ff. (2010); A. Bigsten, *Development Policy: Coordination, Conditionality and Coherence,* in A. Sapir (ed), *Fragmented Power: Europe and the Global Economy*, 94 ff. (2007); B. Rajagopal, *International Law from Below. Development, Social Movements, and Third World Resistance*, 146 (2003). On the use of indicators in the field of development cooperation, see M.A. Prada Uribe, *Development through data? A case study on the World Bank's performance indicators and their impact on development in the Global South*, 5 (2012).

[12] This is not the place to survey in detail the contents and the significance of the 2005 Convention. For a summary of the Convention's themes and merits, see, among others, S. von Schorlemer and P.T. Stoll (eds), *The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions – Explanatory Notes* (2012).

revenues, drive innovation, and enhance sustainable growth, and as platforms for conveying identities, fostering social inclusion and nurture a sense of belonging.[13] As this history shows, the Convention represents the final segment of a long process of diplomatic consensus building that transformed the protection of cultural diversity from a mere soft law obligation into a binding commitment.[14]

The 2005 Convention is significant for our purposes for an additional reason. Article 13 of the Convention is the most important UNESCO text highlighting the specific link between, on the one hand, the protection of diversity in cultural expressions, and, on the other hand, countries' sustainable development.[15] Believing that culture is not only an effect of, but also a means for development, and that culture is a missing factor in many policies for development, Article 13 states that 'parties shall endeavour to integrate culture in their development policies at all levels for the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development and, within this framework, foster aspects relating to the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions'.[16] As we will see,[17] Article 13 is the legal basis on which the UNESCO CDIS are built.

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[13] UNESCO, *Re-shaping Cultural Policies - A Decade Promoting the Diversity of Cultural Expressions for Development*, 3 (2015).

[14] J Wouters and M Vidal, *UNESCO and the Promotion of Cultural Exchange and Cultural Diversity,* in AA. Yusuf, cit. at 8, 168. In particular, signatories States are under a duty to adopt technical measures to place cultural diversity at the service for sustainable development: C. De Beukelaer and R. Freitas, *Culture and Sustainable Development: Beyond the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, in C. De Beukelaer et al. (eds), *Globalization, Culture, and Development. The UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity*, 214 (2015).

[15] Sustainable development 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs': World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), *Our Common Future - Report*, (1987) 15, available at <un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.

[16] Article 13 (Integration of culture in sustainable development) of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

[17] See infra para 3.

3. Quasi-Legal Competences.

Besides conventions, recommendations and declarations, UNESCO has developed a wide array of other means of interventions that, although not fitting in the traditional set of legal tools, are nevertheless of legal significance. Among these means, that we will call 'quasi-legal' ones, there is UNESCO's guidance of Member States in their national efforts to collect statistics and draft cultural indicators, that is, data purporting to represent the past or projected cultural performance of a country.[18] As an example of UNESCO's contribution to national statistical campaigns, one could think of the Framework for Cultural Statistics,[19] first proposed in 1986 and established in 2009 for providing a conceptual foundation and an operational methodology for the production and dissemination of comparable cultural statistics.[20] More recent is UNESCO's turn to indicators, the best illustration of which comes from the UNESCO's initiative on CDIS. The CDIS –as we will see in more detail in the next paragraph – aim to support countries' self-assessment of how culture contributes to development at a national level, as prescribed by Article 13 of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.[21]

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[18] Paraphrasing the seminal definition of 'indicators' given by K.E. Davis et al., *Introduction: Global Governance by Indicator*, in K.E. Davis et al (eds), *Governance by Indicators. Global Power through Quantification and Rankings*, 3, 6 (2012). See also K.E. Davis et al. *Introduction: The Local-Global Life of Indicators: Law, Power, and Resistance*, in S.E. Merry et al (eds), *The Quiet Power of Indicators: Measuring Governance, Corruption, and Rule of Law*, 4 (2015); R. Urueña, *Indicators as Political Spaces Law, International Organizations, and the Quantitative Challenge in Global Governance*, 1, Int. Org. L. Rev., 12 (2015); S.E. Merry, *Measuring the World: Indicators, Human Rights, and Global Governance*, 52, Curr. Anthr., 83 (2011); M. Green, *What we talk about when we talk about indicators: current approaches to human rights measurement*, 23, Hum. Rts. Q., 1065 (2001).

[19] H. Sung *UNESCO Framework for Cultural Indicators*, in A Michalos (ed), *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, 6768-6772 (2014).

[20] General Conference, *The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS)* (UNESCO 2009) 1. The long gestation is evidence of the difficulties in the development of cultural indicator frameworks: E. Blomkamp, *A Critical History of Cultural Indicators*, in L. MacDowall et al., *Making Culture Count: The Politics of Cultural Measurement*, 12 (2015); H. Horowitz *The UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics and a Cultural Data Bank for Europe*, 5 J. Cult. Ec., 1 (1981).

[21] See supra para 2. Similar initiatives have been carried out at the national level: see E. Blomkamp *A Critical History of Cultural Indicators,* cit. at 20, 12-13.

Underlying both the Framework for Cultural Statistics and the Culture for Development Indicators there is the assumption that, given the close link between culture and development, getting reliable data about culture is a fundamental step for understanding and promoting development policies. What should be underlined in our perspective is that, in spite of their being allegedly 'pure' descriptive, statistics and even more so indicators contribute to strengthening UNESCO's grip on States' management of cultural resources. By deciding what should be measured and how, UNESCO explicitly and implicitly conveys a set of targets and best practices that reinforces the obligation of States under Article 13 of the 2005 Convention to include culture in national plans and policies, and helps normalize particular visions of what should be attained, by whom, and through what means. In this light, the collection of statistics and the drafting of indicators under the guidance of UNESCO can be best understood as a tool for the socialisation of States[22] within UNESCO's global community, rather than as a neutral occasion for data reporting. What might result from UNESCO's activism is the absorption at the national and international levels of the legal standards implicitly issued by UNESCO itself – an absorption that might be equally, if not more compelling than the traditional legal measures of hard or soft law[23].

Statistics and indicators can therefore be seen as a 'technology of global governance'[24] employed by UNESCO in the

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[22] Socialisation is the 'general process by which actors adopt the beliefs and behavioral patterns of the surrounding culture': D. Jinks *How to Influence States: Socialization and International Human Rights Law*, 54 (2004), Duke L. J. 626. More generally, on the many forms that processes of State socialization may take, see R. Goodman and D. Jinks, *Promoting Human Rights through International Law* (2013).

[23] M. Infantino *Global Indicators,* in S. Cassese (ed), *Research Handbook on Global Administrative Law*, 356 (2016); R. Urueña, *Indicators as Political Spaces Law, International Organizations, and the Quantitative Challenge in Global Governance,* cit. at 27, 5 ff.

[24] D. McGrogan, *Human Rights Indicators and the Sovereignty of Technique*, 27 Eur. J. Int'l L. 400 (2016); K.E. Davis et al. *Introduction: The Local-Global Life of Indicators: Law, Power, and Resistance*, in S.E. Merry et al (eds), , cit. at 18, 1; M.A. Prada Uribe, *The Quest for Measuring Development: The Role of the Indicator Bank*, in S.E. Merry et al (eds), cit. at 18; S Cassese, and L. Casini *Public Regulation of Global Indicators*, in K. Davis et al. (eds), *Governance by Indicators: Global Power through Quantification and Rankings*, 467 ff. (2012); K. Davis et al, *Indicators as a*

field of culture. UNESCO's unique competence allows it to spread its authority to set legal standards of culture in the public discourse, and to govern through technical instruments the legal duties and expectations of those who interact with the organisation.[25] The transformative effects of this technology go beyond the mere circle of the actors who strictly participate in collecting statistics and preparing indicators network, that is, the target-states. UNESCO's culture of statistics and indicators provides a platform where other international organisations and other states, but also civil society, minorities, and non-governmental organisations can transact and communicate through the common language of numbers and data.[26]

The most advanced example of these 'quasi-legal' tools are the UNESCO's CDIS.

4. Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS).

Article 13[27] of the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* calls for the integration of culture in development policies at all levels.[28] In order to help the implementation of this obligation, UNESCO, with the (only) support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID),[29] launched in 2009 its CDIS

Technology of Global Governance, 46(1) Law & Soc'y Rev., 81 (2012); S.E. Merry, *Measuring the World: Indicators, Human Rights, and Global Governance*, 52 Curr. Anthr., 83–95 (2011); D. Kaufmann and A. Kraay, *Governance indicators: where are we, where should we be going?*, 23, The World Bank Research Observer, 1 (2008); A. Rosga and ML Satterthwaite, *The Trust in Indicators: Measuring Human Rights*, 27, Berkeley J. Int. L. 255, (2009).
[25] J.E. Alvarez, *International Organizations as Law-Makers*, 120 (2005); M. Infantino *Global Indicators*, cit. at 23, 352.
[26] M Infantino, *Human Rights Indicators across Institutional Regimes*, 12, Int. Org. L. R (2015), 152-3; S Cassese, and L. Casini *Public Regulation of Global Indicators*, cit. at 24, 467 ff.
[27] See supra para 2.
[28] UNESCO, *Culture for Development Indicators*, at <unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/programmes/culture-for-development-indicators/>.
[29] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Methodology Manual* (UNESCO 2014) 7. This situation is criticized because it makes the CDIS depending on a single, Western donor: C. De Beukelaer and R.

initiative, to propose a novel methodology to measure the role of culture in national development processes.

Officially, the scope of UNESCO in this project is neither to furnish the 'definitive' picture of culture in the considered countries, nor to draft policy guidelines and recommendations tailored to the context of those countries. Instead, the CDIS aim to offer Member States, especially middle- and low-income ones,[30] a learning tool to illustrate how culture can represent a sustainable mean of achieving key development goals. But this is not all. Through the implementation of the CDIS, UNESCO is trying to document culture's contribution to development in economic and non-economic terms, and to raise global awareness of the virtuous cycle between culture and development.[31]

It goes without saying that the project itself is thought of as no more than a step in the long process of unveiling culture's potential for development and fully integrating culture in development strategies.[32] In UNESCO's words, the goals of the CDIS are to

> contribute to the operationalisation of the culture for development agenda by offering countries an advocacy and policy tool intended to demonstrate, with quantitative and qualitative data, how culture and development interact; assess the environment in place for sustaining and enhancing cultural assets and processes for development; reinforce capacities in data collection and an analysis related to culture and

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Freitas, *Culture and Sustainable Development: Beyond the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, cit. at 14, 214.

[30] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 13.

[31] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 12; see also id., *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* 5 (2014). To this purpose, the CDIS consider culture not only as a sector of human activity, but also as values and norms that orient human action: see G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 5.

[32] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *Analytical Framework, UNESCO Culture for Development Indicator Suite*, 3, 9 (2011).

development; and promote an evidence based process
of policy formulation and implementation.[33]

To gain a vision encompassing the many benefits that
culture might produce in economic and non-economic terms, the
CDIS embrace seven key policy dimensions of culture as forms of
interaction between culture and development. Some dimensions
are directly related to the impact of culture on development
process, while others concentrate on the role that culture can have
in creating an enabling environment for development. The seven
key policy dimensions of culture and development are:
    1) economy, on the contribution of culture to economic
development;
    2) education, on the place given to culture within the
educational system;
    3) governance, which focuses on the national ways of
governing the cultural system;
    4) social participation, which observes the impact of culture
practices, values and attitudes on social progress;
    5) gender equality, on the role of culture in promoting both
real and perceived gender equality;
    6) communication, about the conditions for diffusion and
access to diverse cultural content;
    7) heritage, which assesses public frameworks for
protecting and promoting heritage sustainability.[34]
    To highlight the interrelated role of culture in national
development processes, every dimension contains some (from one
to five) specific core indicators, that are identified and
summarized in the so-called CDIS matrix. The core indicators are,
in total, 22.[35]

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[33] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at
29, 10.

[34] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at
29, 27, 46, 62, 82, 103, 116, 130. Some have criticized UNESCO's choice of
putting 'economy' as the CDIS first dimension, believing that this choice was
contrary to the (implicit) guideline of the 2005 Convention to give equal weight
to all cultural dimensions: C. De Beukelaer and R. Freitas, *Culture and
Sustainable Development: Beyond the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, cit. at 14,
214.

[35] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at
29, 47. The 22 indicators, divided for each 'dimension', are: contribution of

We will now see the specific methodology set up by UNESCO to guide countries in working with the indicators.

5. CDIS Methodology.

Under the CDIS, the drafting of the indicator is a country led process, which requires the participation of relevant national stakeholders both to ensure the efficiency of data collection and analysis, and to strengthen the long-term impact of the initiative on the national policy landscape[36]. To assist countries in the implementation of the CDIS, UNESCO designed a Methodology Manual and a Toolkit.[37] These tools are the result of a four-year process of applied research involving the participation of UNESCO experts, international experts, and most importantly, the stakeholders directly affected by the project.[38]

The Methodology Manual is a sort of guide for the construction of the 22 core indicators, which give detailed instructions to the Member countries on how to process the CDIS

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cultural activities to GDP; cultural employment; household expenditure on culture (Economy dimension); inclusive education; multilingual education; arts education; professional training in the culture sector (Education dimension); standard-setting framework for culture; policy and institutional framework for culture; distribution of cultural infrastructures; civil society participation in cultural governance (Governance dimension); participation in going-out cultural activities; participation in identity-building cultural activities; tolerance of other cultures; interpersonal trust; freedom of self-determination (Social participation dimension); gender equality objective outputs; perception of gender equality (Gender equality dimension); freedom of expression; access and internet use; diversity of fictional content on public television (Communication dimension); heritage sustainability (Heritage dimension). See G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 19, 45, 61, 81, 101, 115, 129.

[36] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 2.

[37] They are both available at UNESCO website.

[38] Among others, took part in the construction of the methodology statics institutes, ministries of culture, planning organisations, social affairs and education, civil society organisations, academics, and bilateral and multilateral development agencies of 11 countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Namibia, Peru, Swaziland, Uruguay and Viet Nam): G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 5.

in their national context.[39] The declared features of the methodology are (i) pragmatism, because the indicators aim to take into account the specific characteristics of the involved countries; (ii) adaptability, because of their flexible contents; (iii) broad participation, due to the fact that the construction of the CDIS should involve not only national public administrations from key development fields (culture, economy, social, gender, communication), but also national statistics and research institutes, as well as civil society organisations; (iv) multidimensionality, due to their multiple variables and transversal analysis; (v) capacity-building and policy impact, insofar as the final indicator offers itself as a research and statistical tool for policy purposes.[40] By emphasising these features, the CDIS methodology is designed to overcome traditional problems of cultural statistics, such as their limited (not to say, null) context-dependency, their technocratic mode of production, their confined focus on a narrow dimension of what culture is and what it has an influence on. [41]

The implementation process of the CDIS at the national level is coordinated by the national leading partner,[42] which has to identify and select the local contractor(s) responsible for collecting – preferably on the basis of national sources[43] – and analysing the data on which the indicator is based.[44] Obviously, the circumstance that national actors are essentially self-evaluating

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[39] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 5.

[40] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 13-14.

[41] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 14.

[42] A leading partner, for example, can be a UNESCO Field Office, a government ministry, a research institute, a national institute of statistics or a development agency: G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 2.

[43] The CDIS approach has a strong preference for national sources, because the CDIS makers think that they are more reliable, up to date, and offer more opportunities for disaggregation by demographic variables. When no national data are available, global sources can be used: G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 5-6.

[44] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 2-3.

their own state produces an internal conflict of interest in the making of the indicator, because those actors might have an incentive not to adequately report the actual situation. Yet, this shortcoming is counterbalanced by at least two benefits. If having indicators implemented by national actors makes 'objectivity' a problem, the fact that these indicators are country-specific and drafted by subjects who are in close contact with the situations examined minimizes the risks of de-contextualisation of the data gathered.[45] Moreover, as anticipated above, the aim of the CDIS is not only to provide 'neutral' and 'objective' data, but also to socialize states in a global discourse about the relationship between culture and development. In this light, the participation of states in the CDIS is a success in itself, no matter whether, and the extent to, states are sincere in data reporting.

In addition to the Manual, UNESCO provides countries with a Toolkit to help make clear the sequence of actions for constructing the indicators and for achieving results at the national level that could be compared with the result of countries.[46] Besides defining the roles of key partners and stakeholders, the Toolkit proposes a four-stage implementation, starting with the launch of a participative process ('preparatory' phase), proceeding then to the 'data collection' and to the 'analysis' phases, and ending with a 'results sharing and advocacy' phase, where informed dialogue and selection of policies are supposed to take place.[47] The goal of the Toolkit is to give countries advice on logistical, administrative and institutional arrangements to let them implement the CDIS in their own way as opposed to a common methodological framework.

Similar to the Methodology Manual, the Toolkit keywords are pragmatism and adaptability. For instance, the Toolkit offers no one-size-fits-all formula, since solutions that work in one place might be less appropriate, or not appropriate at all, in other

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[45] G, de Beco, *Human Rights Indicators for Assessing State Compliance with International Human Rights*, 77, N. J. Int. L. 28-31 (2008); M Infantino, *Comparative Law in the Global Context: Exploring the Pluralism of Human Rights Indicators*, 2, Eur. J. Com. L. & Gov., 164 (2015).

[46] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 3.

[47] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 1.

contexts. Moreover, if a country cannot collect data on one or more core indicators, or have data available on topics related to, but not covered by, the CDIS, it may propose alternative or additional indicators to those included in UNESCO's set.[48]

6. Results So Far Achieved.

According to the Toolkit, the CDIS, when implemented at the national level, allow to detect the national 'Culture for Development DNA'.[49] As the human DNA represents the sequence of information for building and maintain an organism, the CDIS DNA contains, in a single but complex picture, the entire range of data about the relationship between culture and development in a given country.[50]

The CDIS DNA consists in a visualisation scheme enabling a transversal analysis of indicators and a multidimensional reading of culture and development at the national level. It is formed by 22 barcodes, summarising the results at the national level for the 22 indicators. Each dimension is characterized by a colour, and indicators from the same dimension are grouped by the same colour. Then, the bar is coloured in grey if the indicator could not be constructed.[51]

Far from mapping the pace of change or identifying causal relationships, the CDIS DNA visualisation provides a snapshot of the situation of implementing countries, and thus may reveal correlations and trigger national and global debates.[52] Moreover, the CDIS DNA facilitates the comparability of results among countries, but at the same time does not end up in a global ranking.[53] Awareness of each country's specificity and the desire to avoid the common shortcoming of global rankings, that often promote states' rank-seeking behaviour, rather than efforts to

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[48] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 6.

[49] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 12.

[50] Ibid. See infra para 7.

[51] Ibid 12.

[52] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 15.

[53] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators – Implementation Toolkit,* cit. at 31, 12. See infra para 7.

improve actual performances have led UNESCO to refuse recourse to rankings.

As of now, the CDIS have been fully implemented in 12 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Montenegro, Namibia, Peru, Swaziland, Uruguay and Viet Nam.[54] In the last two years, many other South-Eastern European countries have joined the initiative and started to implement the CDIS.[55] Where the CDIS have been totally implemented, it has been noted that after their implementation there was a change in the perception of culture that helped justify budgets on cultural activities[56] and a reinforcement of states' capacities of data collection and analysis

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[54] The Global Database is available at <http://en.unesco.org/creativity/development-indicators/toolbox>.

[55] Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Albania started the implementation in 2015. Montenegro started in February 2015 and presented the preliminary results in April 2015. Both the validation of the indicators and the finalisation of the report are ongoing. Bosnia and Herzegovina completed the implementation CDIS during the pilot phase in 2013: UNESCO OFFICE IN VENICE, 'Countries in South-East Europe in new drive to promote culture for development' (UNESCO, 24 June 2015) <unesco.org/new/en/venice/about-this-office/single-view/news/countries_in_south_east_europe_in_new_drive_to_promote_culture_for_development/#.V0x70fmLTIU>.

Some countries of South-Eastern Europe (Montenegro, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Albania) are presenting in these months their preliminary results during regional meetings organized by UNESCO to share the (partial) results of the implementation and to promote the extension of the activities to other countries of the same region. The meetings are also an occasion to monitor and eventually improve the framework of the implementation toolkit: UNESCO, *Countries in South-East Europe share experiences on culture and development* (UNESCO, 11 April 2016) <unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/countries_in_south_east_europe_share_experiences_on_culture_and_development/#.V3FFmPmLTIU>.

[56] T.D. Nkambule, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators. Technical Report – Swaziland*, 1 (2013). For instance, the result of CDIS led to discussions between UN agencies and their commitment to integrate culture in the next UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) for Ghana: UNESCO, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators. Ghana's Analytical Brief* (UNESCO 2013).

in the formulation and implementation of informed cultural policies and development strategies.[57]

It should however be noted that, even if the CDIS initiative is conceived of as a tool of implementation under Article 13 of the 2005 Convention, countries where they were implemented and where pilots were taken are all 'developing' ones, while the main funder of the project was a Western European state. As it has been rightly pointed out, this situation implicitly creates and reinforces the assumption that developed countries do not need the CDIS because they already have fully functional links between culture and development – an assumption that is clearly far away from being unquestioned.[58]

7. Cultural Indicators and Their Promises.

Mainstream praise and criticism aside, what is certain is that the initiatives taken so far are too few and too young to allow one to assess the long-term efficacy of the CDIS in the collection of relevant data and in the promotion of culture as a development enhancer. Yet a comparison with other global indicators projects allows us to draw some final remarks about the structure and the methodology adopted by the CDIS.

Amidst global indicators, the CDIS are unique in their struggle to achieve a compromise between the need for uniformity and neutrality of data on the one hand, and consideration for local specificities and participation on the other hand. The majority of indicators are top-down and drafted by a single organisation –

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[57] UNESCO, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators. Namibia's Analytical Brief* (UNESCO, 2013) 29 available at <acpculturesplus.eu/sites/default/files/2015/06/18/cdis_analytical_brief_na mibia.pdf>. Just to give some examples: after the CDIS experience, the Colombian Development Department of the Ministry of Culture launched a national project (Cultural Diagnosis of Colombia: Towards the construction of a cultural development index) to measure the contribution of culture to development and to serve as a tool for cultural management analysis (UNESCO, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators. Colombia's Analytical Brief* (UNESCO 2014)), and in Swaziland culture was included in national surveys such as the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (2014-2015) (UNESCO, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators. Swaziland's Analytical Brief* (2013)).

[58] C. De Beukelaer and R. Freitas, *Culture and Sustainable Development: Beyond the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, cit. at 14, 214.

sometimes by small teams of people[59] – with no or little involvement of other actors, including those which the indicator refers to. More often than not, global indicators end up in a numbered ranking that exceedingly oversimplifies hardly measurable issues and transforms them into simplified quantitative information difficult to unpack (not to say criticize) by users of the indicators.[60] Moreover, rankings are well-known for inducing perverse rank-seeking effects, with the subject of indicators focusing more on strategies to improve their rank, rather than on actual change of their behaviour.[61]

Against this picture, the CDIS are an ongoing lesson for the drafters of the indicators. The methodology for the construction of the indicators follows a bottom-up system, since the interested Member States are directly involved in the processing and building of their own indicators.[62] In addition to that, the CDIS indicators do not end up in a single number, but rather in the cultural DNA of a country.[63] The CDIS DNA – composed by a matrix of policies, measures trends, and permits comparisons, but at the same time does not imply a ranking of countries.[64] True, the final output is a product that might provide a not overtly reliable picture of each country's state of the art in the field of culture and development. Yet, that product serves other goals. It contributes to raising states' awareness – that is to say, to 'socialize' them – about the links between culture and development, and to improve states' often limited statistical capacity in the collection of cultural statistics, providing precious data to the global debate in this regard.[65]

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[59] For instance, the team working on the International Finance Corporation's Doing Business Reports is made up of 56 persons in total: *Meet the Doing Business Team* (Doing Business) <http://www.doingbusiness.org/about-us/meet-the-team>.

[60] K.E. Davis et al, *Introduction: Global Governance by Indicator*, cit. at 19, 10.

[61] Ibid.

[62] See *supra* para 5.

[63] See *supra* para 5.

[64] G. Alonso and M. Medici, *UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators,* cit. at 29, 15.

[65] This is indeed a common feature of UNESCO's indicators – and, to a limited extent, of human rights indicators in general: M. Infantino *Global Indicators*, cit. at 23, 348.

If the implication of culture in the development process is a global problem, the spreading of cultural indicators could represent a part of the solution. Without the experience of the UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators, even this part of the solution would be a much harder job to do.