

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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RAPPORTEUR REPORT FOR CULTURAL STATISTICS

Note prepared by Statistics Finland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. International interest in cultural statistics has grown notably in recent years. Statistical data describing culture are needed to steer the planning and monitoring of not only cultural policy but also more broadly economic and social policies. The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council and Commission of the European Union have emphasised the significance of cultural statistics to evidence-based policy making.
2. This report is a brief overview of the work international organizations have recently undertaken to develop cultural statistics. While this report is written for discussion within the ECE/CES countries, less attention is devoted to the problems and development work of cultural statistics within the other regions or in developing countries.
3. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has launched a review of the UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics dating from 1986. The UIS has also studied possibilities of compiling statistics on cultural diversity. The Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) has published a "Cultural statistics" pocketbook and is about to re-launch a working group for the development of cultural statistics with the Member States. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has studied the interrelationship between culture and economy in its project entitled Measurement of the Economic and Social Importance of Culture.
4. The development of cultural statistics has been rather poorly co-ordinated and information flow between the different actors has not been the best possible. There are no international recommendations for statistics on culture and classification work leaves a lot to be desired though UNESCO's 1986 Framework for Culture Statistics has formed the basis of many countries' approaches to culture and cultural statistics. The situation is partly because, in practice, very scant - if any - resources have been allocated by both international organisations and nationally for the compilation of statistics on culture. Most of the related statistical projects in recent years have been implemented on ad-hoc basis and by private consultants.

5. This report puts forward a number of ideas for the development of methodologies and contents of statistics on culture. Moreover, it proposes that an international co-ordinating meeting concerning cultural statistics should be organised, and attended by as large number as possible of the bodies with some activity in the field of cultural statistics. The meeting should discuss the key development targets for cultural statistics and if possible, agree on the assignment of responsibility for heading and co-ordinating them.

PROGRESS BEING MADE COLLECTIVELY BY ORGANISATIONS IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL STATISTICS

6. Culture is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It can be seen e.g. as

- a repository of human identity/achievement/diversity
- an economic phenomenon
- a means to development
- a motivator for tourism
- a major component of digital content
- a means to stimulate local economies
- a major component of leisure/recreation activities leading to linkages with wellbeing, health etc.

7. Depending on the chosen scope, culture can be conceptualised in different ways and this in turn will determine how the sector is defined, monitored and assessed. Cultural statistics are usually considered as a mix of a great variety of economic and social statistics. Cultural statistics may consist of statistics on cultural employment, cultural enterprises, consumption and trade of cultural goods and services, cultural participation, etc. There are also statistics on different sub-topics of culture, such as libraries, the media, visual arts, performing arts, etc. In this report, cultural statistics are considered as cross-sectional by nature without any strict definition in mind.

8. A brief overview of international organisations' past and ongoing activities relating to cultural statistics is presented in the following.

UNESCO/UIS

9. The UIS is responsible, among other things, for the development, production and dissemination of international cultural statistics. The UIS was established in 1999. Prior to this UNESCO's Division of Statistics was responsible for the production and development of cultural statistics.

10. As regards cultural statistics, conducting statistical surveys among the Member Countries is the core function of the UIS. When the UIS was established, all activity relating to cultural statistics was suspended and inquiries previously conducted by UNESCO's Culture Sector were discontinued. The inquiries were re-assessed by the UIS under the key notion of shifting the conceptual description from infrastructure to activity. In addition specialised units in UNESCO's Culture sector are involved in international data collection on World Heritage sites, handicraft, languages, and intangible heritage.

11. The present inquiries of the UIS mainly focus on the area of mass communication. In 2005, the UIS launched a survey on newspaper statistics. Its results were released in 2007. An inquiry concerning radio and television was launched in 2006 and one on cinema statistics in 2007. In addition, a survey for library statistics was piloted with the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in Latin America and the Caribbean. Initial results are scheduled for release in 2008. The results from these statistical surveys are published in table format on the UIS website. The quality of the responses is monitored by direct communication between UIS and national statisticians, through UNESCO National Commissions, and the data are triangulated with those of other sectoral organisations (e.g. World Association of Newspapers) or academic experts.

12. The UIS has also produced extensive, analytical reports on culture. Its recent publications worth mentioning include the reports *International Flows of Selected Cultural Goods and Services 1994-2003* and *Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet*. It has also contributed analysis to the culture sector for reports such as the World Heritage Centre report *World Heritage Challenges for the Millennium* (UNESCO 2007).

13. An essential part of the activity of the UIS is provision of assistance to countries in their efforts to improve their capacities for data collection, processing, quality control, analysis and dissemination through training and other support. Although the vast majority of this activity concerns educational statistics, it is also lively in the area of cultural statistics.

14. One of three main priorities in the UIS Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 is strengthening of statistics on science, culture and communication.

15. In accordance with the strategy, the UIS is currently revising the *UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics* dating from 1986. The formal consultation of the draft framework is planned to take place in 2008. A revised framework should be presented to the UNESCO General Conference in 2009. The proposal is derived from the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the International Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and the Central Product Classification (CPC), but gives weight to social factors, in particular education and traditional knowledge.

16. Another development project launched by the UIS relates to UNESCO's 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The aim is to examine whether and how the diversity of cultural expressions could be measured to serve the monitoring of the Convention. An initial meeting of experts was held on the subject in autumn 2007.

17. In the 1990s, UNESCO produced a large number of world reports on diverse topics, including culture. They contained highly valuable dialogue about cultural statistics, as well as fairly extensive sections of statistics prepared by a private US research institute. Within international development, these seem to have remained isolated and detached projects. The policy concerning the production of world reports was later reviewed so that they are now published one at a time on a selected theme. Work is currently being done on UNESCO's world report on cultural diversity. The UIS will contribute to the preparation of its statistical section.

European Commission/Eurostat

18. Within the European Union, work on the development of cultural statistics was started in the mid-1990s, when a joint project was launched between Eurostat and the Member States for the development of cultural statistics. This so-called LEG project was headed by a leadership group (LEG) comprised of representatives of Member States, and divided into four Task Forces: Methodology, Employment, Financing and Participation. Each Task Force produced recommendations for the development of cultural statistics within its own area of interest. A Working Group on Cultural Statistics, which last convened in 2004, was established to continue the work of the project and to produce statistics.

19. Recently, and especially during 2007, the European Commission has declared in numerous ways a strong need to develop cultural statistics. A European agenda on culture has been adopted and the need for harmonised cultural statistics has been expressed in this context. For the 2008-2010 period, the EU Council of Ministers has decided on five specific priority areas of action, inclusive of development of data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector, and improvement of their comparability.

20. The EU bodies have emphasised the need to facilitate evidence-based policy-making, improve national statistical information and ensure better comparability of national statistics, under the co-ordination of Eurostat. They urge strengthening of the work on the promotion of statistics on culture and economic growth, and pursuit of work on definitions and methodologies in the field of cultural statistics.

21. The first volume of *Cultural Statistics* was published in Eurostat's Pocketbook series in autumn 2007. It was prepared by a contractor, the French Ministry of Culture, and an analysis of the quality of the data sources is also being prepared under the same contract. In addition, Eurostat's recent publication *Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue* contains fairly extensive statistical data concerning culture.

22. The goals in Eurostat's work programme for 2008 include activation of work on the development and production of cultural statistics and arrangement of a meeting of the Working Group on Cultural Statistics during 2008. The decision of resources, however, has not yet been made.

23. The European Commission DG for Education and Culture has been interested in comparable figures on cultural participation. In 2003, it used the model questionnaire on cultural participation designed by the LEG on cultural statistics and conducted a Eurobarometer Survey in the candidate countries of that time. In 2007, the Eurobarometer was used to study cultural participation and values attached to culture in the EU Member States. The results were published in late 2007.

24. In 2007, the Commission DG for Education and Culture published an extensive report *The Economy of Culture in Europe*. This report was prepared by KEA European Affairs with the support of the Turku School of Economics and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung.

25. In 2006, with support of the LTB Foundation the OECD launched a project on the *Measurement of the Economic and Social Importance of Culture*. The final report of the phase 1 of the project was prepared by the end of the same year. The report concentrated on examining the feasibility of producing reliable comparative measures for the cultural sector. Initial measures were produced for five countries and four cities using data from official sources only in order to maintain maximum coherence with other published estimates.

26. The two other planned phases were:

- Phase 2: Establishment of detailed definitions and methodologies for selected sub-sectors, production of a methodological manual, pilot data collection and negotiation of commitments from OECD member countries for ongoing support.
- Phase 3: Implementation of regular data collection and dissemination of internationally comparative measures for the cultural sector.

Only Phase 1 was completed because LTB Foundation did not renew the funding.

Funding is being sought from other sources.

27. This was the first time the OECD launched a wide-ranging project relating to statistics on culture. The project built its proposals on earlier international development work, especially on that done by UNESCO on the 1986 framework for cultural statistics and the LEG project of the European Commission on cultural statistics.

28. The OECD project took a holistic view on culture, inclusive of social and economic aspects, and quality of life. As the project progressed it established that there was no universally accepted functioning framework for cultural statistics that would also contain conceptual definitions. The project explored the possibility of using the System of National Accounts (SNA) for describing the economy of culture. The Cultural Satellite Accounts within the SNA were viewed as a particularly interesting approach to depicting the economic significance of culture in society.

29. The project studied international classifications relating to the economy, their limitations and possibilities in describing culture. The project saw it necessary to have a methodological manual that would contain agreed provisions on how the economy of culture should be described basing on general classifications and how the problems of boundaries encountered in depicting culture should be solved. The classifications relevant here include the International Standard for Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC), Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) and Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP).

30. The project report also discussed aspects of the social importance of culture. It emphasises that economic outcomes are not why most people become involved in culture, therefore economic measures alone cannot adequately describe the benefits/pleasure people and society derive from cultural participation.

Other organizations

31. In 2004, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) published an interesting Human development report on culture entitled *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*. However, the listed indicators of development contained no indicators on culture.

32. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has many activities in the field of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and traditional cultural expressions/folklore that might be relevant to development work on cultural statistics. WIPO also has activities concerned with statistics on the economy of copyrights, which is closely related to the economy of cultural industries.

33. Together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) WIPO has conducted case studies on the music industry in Brazil, India and Ireland.

34. The United Nations Environment Programme group responsible for the Biodiversity Convention has been working with the UN Forum on Indigenous Groups and UNESCO on an important initiative concerning the culture of indigenous groups. The UN Forum has produced a major recommendation for statistical indicators while UNESCO has been leading development of indicators on linguistic diversity. UNSD's new Census recommendations for the decade from 2007 have also given clear consideration to statistics on these issues.

35. The World Tourism Organisation has also made significant headway in developing internationally comparable approaches to tourism statistics, including the increasing use of tourism satellite accounts, and a statistical framework for sustainable tourism. They have partnered with UNESCO on surveys of handicraft production and visitors to World Heritage Sites.

36. Other regions are also developing their approaches to measuring culture. In Asia UNESCO is co-ordinating a regional initiative on statistics of culture industries with UNDP, UNIDO, and WIPO. The initiative is currently being implemented in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Thailand. In Latin America the Convenio Andres Bello has taken the lead in culture statistics using an approach based on satellite accounts and cultural information systems.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

37. International development work on cultural statistics has been sporadic, fragmentary and disconnected throughout its whole history. Different actors have also taken the leading role at different times and during different waves. The situation is not satisfactory. International development of cultural statistics would need a home base, or a number of home bases according to content, as agreed.

38. There is little explicit discussion on distinctions in the way culture can be conceptualised (look at paragraph 6 on page 2) even though this kind of discussion would clarify the roles the different international organisations could play in contributing to development of cultural statistics.

39. The biggest achievements in international statistical co-operation have so far been made in the development and introduction of international classifications and forging of international statistical recommendations. At the moment there is no valid international statistical recommendation for cultural statistics even though the need for one is obvious.
40. While discussing the development and co-ordination of cultural statistics it should be borne in mind that in many countries national statistical offices do not participate in the production of cultural statistics at all. The responsibility for the compilation and development of these statistics rests on cultural policy makers, in most cases on Ministries.
41. Considering the cross-statistical nature of cultural statistics, experiences gained from international development of information society statistics could be drawn on in their development.
42. Political needs for cultural statistics have clearly gained strength lately. This is true especially in the European Union where evidence-based policy making is today viewed as important even in the area of culture. *The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression* has also increased international political pressure for the development of new kinds of cultural statistics.
43. International interest in cultural statistics is now so lively that it would be pertinent to organise an international co-ordinating meeting which should be attended by as large number as possible of the bodies that have some activity in cultural statistics. The meeting should discuss the key development targets for cultural statistics and if possible, agree on the assignment of responsibility for heading and co-ordinating them.
44. UIS (and formerly UNESCO) has been the central actor in the development and co-ordination of cultural statistics. The work it has done has built a foundation for what cultural statistics mean in modern society. The UIS is presently drafting a new recommendation for a cultural statistics framework, intended for global applicability. The status of the recommendation will largely depend on how well the views of different national statistical offices, other national producers, international organisations, Eurostat and other bodies responsible for cultural statistics are taken into consideration at its drafting state.
45. Although at the moment there is apparent political pressure for the development of cultural statistics it is not reflected in resourcing for them, which is quite scant or non-existent in the key organisations. The UIS has two statistical experts working on cultural statistics. At Eurostat, no formal resource is allocated to culture statistics. For the moment, the situation is similar in the OECD. International cultural statistics have suffered from lack of resources throughout their existence. Development projects have been set up, and based on the volunteer work of the countries, which, of course, is an established practice in the cultural sector. In consequence the development projects have remained just development projects without the ability to put plans into action. Indeed, it would be important that adequate resourcing could be ensured for the development of continuous production of cultural statistics at UIS, Eurostat and OECD alike.
46. Most of the work related to international cultural statistics in recent years has been outsourced and performed by contractors or by small-scale, collaborative networks of

experts. This manner of operating has kept countries poorly informed about international happenings in cultural statistics.

47. Due to the continuous interruptions of international projects on the development of cultural statistics, there are hardly any comparable basic statistics that focus on culture. By contrast, high-quality national cultural statistics are produced in many developed countries, with the systems of Canada, Australia, France, Spain and Finland as good examples of this.

48. The inquiries of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics that mainly focus on the media are the only continuous international statistical surveys in the field of culture. UNESCO's media surveys were revised in the 2000s by UIS. Their usability as part of an international system for statistics on culture has not been examined as yet. As far as the description of the economy of culture is concerned the problem with international data and statistics is that they have generally been collected and compiled for other purposes. Their exploitation for cultural statistics would require extensive further work on methodology and content. In addition, there are diverse opinion polling systems, such as the Eurobarometer and the World Value Survey, with which data on cultural participation and civic society are collected from time to time. The data for them are mostly collected by private research institutes and the quality, usability and comparability of the information they produce would need to be analysed.

DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

49. Essential development targets concerning methodology and contents have been summarised in what follows. The usability of existing statistical data on each development target area should be analysed, and exploited and refined further wherever possible. It is important that countries also fully participate in the development.

(a) Framework for Cultural Statistics

50. At the moment there is no guiding framework or other statistical recommendation for cultural statistics. The UNESCO framework that is currently being revised and updated could become one. So that it could be given as high a status as possible, it must be reviewed prudently and thoroughly so that strong international consensus is reached about commitment to it.

51. Recently, the growing interest in the role of the creative economy/creative industries enforces a need for revision of the framework for cultural statistics. The measurement of creative or cultural industries' contributions to national economies has become a significant part of many countries policy frameworks and this should be reflected in the future development of cultural statistics. Relating to this, the borderlines between definitions of creativity, culture, innovation etc. should be defined.

52. The framework should direct the production of statistics from all essential perspectives; it should take into consideration both the needs of national statistics and those of international comparability. The draft should also be considered by the UN Statistical Commission.

(b) Foreign trade in culture, inclusive of mobility of contents and cultural employees, and cultural exchange

53. The challenges arise from the quality and accessibility of data: in respect of products, especially hidden subcontracting, such as CD pressing, printing, etc., done abroad, and in respect of exports and imports of cultural services which have become less easy to detect with the development of the internet, as well as a general underdevelopment of statistics compilation. The problems of accessibility of data also concern the mobility of cultural employees and cultural exchange.

54. Among the biggest gaps in international trade data - as recognised in the other statistical areas - are international trade in services, and exchange between affiliates. Both these have been increasing due to globalisation and the digital 'revolution'.

(c) Structural description of culture, supply of cultural content, public support for culture

55. Entrepreneurial structure of culture, institutional structure of culture. National descriptions are important. The compilation of statistics could be steered by the UNESCO framework and by the work done in the European Union. The challenges arise from the accessibility of data.

(d) Cultural employment, cultural professionals

56. Eurostat, UIS and OECD have done defining work. UIS and OECD together with WIPO made a joint proposal for a grouping of cultural occupations to International Labour Organisation (ILO). ILO has preliminarily accepted to include such a grouping to the revised International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). The revision of ISCO is still ongoing.

57. This content area also has connections with amateur activity. With regard to developing countries, it is often claimed that the production of art and handicrafts is a secondary activity, or based on tradition. However, this does not concern just developing countries, because even in the developed countries some of the making of handicrafts and art is based on tradition or is self-learned or represents secondary activity. On the other hand, new technology and the Internet have enabled entirely new production and activity modes that are based on advanced amateurism, as well as new kinds of distribution channels. The measurement of the amateur and the informal economy is vital to measuring the sustainability of cultural traditions.

(e) Cultural satellite accounts

58. Interest has arisen in different parts of the world in the development of satellite accounts for culture. Pilot studies are being or have been made in Canada, Finland and Spain while there are important regional initiatives being undertaken in Latin America (through MERCOSUR and the Convenio Andres Bello).

59. The central co-ordination task in development areas a), b), c), d) and e) is finding a consensus about how the statistical topic (culture) should be defined in different international statistical classifications.

(f) Cultural participation, amateur performance, craft production and civic society

60. Eurostat and the UIS have already done development work in this area, but considerable further efforts are required in terms of content and applicable methodology. Statistical surveys on these issues are usually very expensive, especially if data collection is not combined with other household surveys like time use survey or household budget survey. Linking cultural participation, household artisans' production, and poverty reduction may enable resources to be found for surveys of cultural participation in developing countries.

(g) Culture as development indicator

61. There is much international debate concerning the role of culture in the economic success of societies, and in the overall development of society and well-being. Indeed, defining of these kinds of multi-faceted development indicators represents a major future challenge. This requires extensive conceptual and methodological development.

(h) Cultural diversity

62. *The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression* entered into force in spring 2007. In the immediate future years it will be the essential point of departure for cultural co-operation as well as for cultural statistics. It is also quoted as the key starting point in the EU's culture policy initiatives. This perspective should permeate all development areas. Cultural diversity is a highly complex concept to define and difficult to operationalise.

63. The measurement of ethnic diversity is standard practise in some countries but is controversial in others. It is doubtful whether internationally comparable data on ethnicity can be produced since ethnic classifications differ from country to country.

IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE BUREAU AND/OR THE CONFERENCE

64. It is recommended that the Conference:

- urges international organisations to safeguard adequate resourcing for the production and development of cultural statistics;
- encourages international actors into close cooperation;
- organises an international co-ordinating meeting to discuss division of responsibilities and agree on the most important steps that need to be taken to promote cultural statistics world-wide.

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