

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

What are the implications of that awareness about the role of evidence when it comes to policy making in the field of cultural heritage? On several occasions, the European Council has underlined the need to develop cultural statistics and the European Parliament has regretted the absence of data in this field. Still today, Culture statistics for the EU are not collected by a single stand-alone survey, but come from different Eurostat data collections. Starting from statistical conceptual frames established by ESS-net-Culture Commission, the paper discusses the characteristics of sources and data on cultural heritage available today for supporting policymaking at the EU level.

Keywords

Cultural statistics; Cultural heritage; Cultural indicators

1. *The six-stone weakling and the four-hundred pound brute*

“There is no such thing as evidence-based policy. Evidence is the six-stone weakling of the policy world. Even its most enthusiastic advocates are inclined to prefer the phrase ‘evidence-informed policy’ as a way of conveying a more authentic impression of research’s sway. [...] The big problem [is] the four-hundred pound brute called politics”. (Pawson, 2006).

The ex-ante use of evidence for policy, with special reference to the European Commission, has been recently discussed by Saltelli and Giampietro (Saltelli & Giampietro, 2017). Evidence-based policy, they argue, citing other research (Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014), has a flip side, namely policy-based evidence and it is impossible to extricate the two, exactly as it is impossible to extricate facts from value when operating at the interface between science (statistics) and policy. Another recent work (Benessia, et al., 2016) stresses that the crisis of science qua science impacts science as used for policy, and that is shown acutely through frictions affecting: the paradigm of evidence-based policy; the use of science to produce implausibly precise numbers and reassuring techno-scientific imaginaries; the use of science to ‘compel’ decision by the sheer strength of ‘facts’. Those

works, and many others along the same line, point to the risk that data and evidences are curbed and tamed for providing policies with an apparently neutral and value-free support.

By contrast, it may be useful, here, to recall the beauty and the conceptual power of the notion of preference functions as developed by the Nobel laureate Ragnar Frisch in the late 1950s and fully explained in his Nobel lecture: “a function whose maximization defines the goal of the decisions that might be studied through the model. With a preference function, it becomes possible to say that one alternative constellation of the values of the set of variables is better than another and it might even be possible to proceed to determining an optimal solution. Otherwise the model is only a purely descriptive one, that can be used to produce a sample of alternative constellations, or to answer questions of the type: “What will happen if. . .” (Frisch, 1970). In other words, the role of politicians is to express their value-laden preferences; the role of scientists is to assist policy decisions by providing ex-ante information about impacts of each course of policy. No matter how good, reliable, detailed and trustworthy, scientific evidence can never serve as a substitute or a justification for political choice and responsibility.

In the light of the above observation, what is the role of evidence when it comes to policy making in the field of cultural heritage? An

interesting exercise is reading from this visual angle the intensive European Commission policy planning activity, peaking with the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

The 2015-2018 EC Work Plan for Culture of the (Council of the European Union, 2014), lists Cultural Heritage among its four strategic priorities. It is related to the European Agenda for culture: Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (3.1) and to the Europe 2020 strategy: Smart and sustainable growth (priorities 1 and 2). The Work Plan states that the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the member States meeting within the Council agree that “reliable, comparable and up-to-date cultural statistics are the basis of the sound cultural policy-making and therefore statistics are a cross-sectorial priority in this Work Plan; and therefore look forward to the results of the work to be carried out under the auspices of Eurostat in order to ensure the regular production and dissemination of statistics on culture, while taking into account recommendations contained in the ESS-net culture report”. This represents a clear indication about the kind of evidence the EC seeks in support of its policy in this field and its uses.

Topics, instruments and working methods, as well as target outputs for the relevant actors (Member States and the EC), spelled out in the Annex to the Work Plan, also entail targeted data or information collection, processing and dissemination.

The first topic under the Cultural Heritage heading, for the action of SMs, is participatory governance of cultural heritage, described as the identification of innovative approaches to the multilevel governance of tangible, intangible and digital heritage, which involve the public sector, private stakeholders and the civil society. Cooperation between different levels of governance and policy areas will be addressed. Open Method of Coordination (OMC) orients instruments and working methods for this topic: experts will map and compare public policies at national and regional level to identify good practices also in cooperation with existing heritage networks, with the planned output of a Manual of good practice for policy makers and cultural heritage institutions.

The second topic, also for SMs, addresses skills, training and knowledge transfer: traditional and emerging heritage professions,

and involves capacity building for heritage professionals. Focus is on the transmission of traditional skills and know-know and on emerging professions, including in the context of the digital shift.

The participation of education experts is encouraged. In this case, too, OPM orients instruments and working methods: experts will map existing training schemes and identify emerging skills and training needs in the tangible, intangible and digital heritage field. The expected output is similar: a manual of good practices for cultural and education institutions.

Last, the Commission is called to action for a third topic, Risk assessment and prevention for safeguarding cultural heritage from the effects of natural disasters and threats caused by human action. This will consist of mapping existing strategies and practices at national level. Over-exploitation, pollution, unsustainable development, conflict areas and natural catastrophes (fire, floods, and earthquake) are among factors to be considered.

The interesting trait of the 2014 Conclusions lies in the explicit connection it establishes between the policy field it designs and the information and data deemed necessary to support it.

In this view, I proceed to consider in the next sections what statistical data are available to date with reference to the policy field of Cultural Heritage as defined in the WP 2015-2018. Section 2 is devoted to the place of Cultural Heritage in the major statistical effort carried out in the EU between 2009 and 2012, ESSnet-Culture. In Section 3, I discuss what sources and data are currently available on Cultural Heritage at the EU28 level. The last Section presents a few reflections on evidence for Cultural Heritage policies.

2. *Statistical representations of Cultural heritage: Conceptual reference frames and data sources*

On several occasions, the European Council has underlined the need to develop cultural statistics and the European Parliament has regretted the absence of data in this field. The European Commission, and Eurostat in particular, carried out a significant work back in 1997 on structuring the data and the methodology for cultural statistics, which led to the establishment of the Leadership Group Culture (LEG-Culture),

then the publication of the first Cultural statistics in Europe Pocketbook in 2007.

The Working Group European Statistical System Network on Culture (ESSnet-Culture) was established in 2009. Its task was updating the definition of the cultural field, creating a new framework for this field that would be compatible with the framework that UNESCO adopted in 2009, while reflecting on recent phenomena on creativity and the development of creative industries, on the measurement of new cultural habits and practices, and on the transformations in the cultural economy due to digitization. Through its conclusions and its pragmatic recommendations in the Report released in 2012, ESSnet-Culture prepared the ground for a production of European statistics on the culture (Bina, et al., 2012).

As Eurostat states clearly in the page devoted to culture statistics, “Culture statistics for the EU are not collected by a single stand-alone survey, but come from different Eurostat data collections.” Different means not only “many”, but also “not-specifically-designed”. I will return later on this, but the fact that there is no targeted data collection at the EU level on culture was clear also to the participants in the ESSnet-Culture working group, who have devised the most advanced ways to extract data and information on various aspects of the cultural sector from existing databases.

The scope of ESSnet-Culture is vast: it comprises a framework for statistics about cultural activities and products; financing and expenditure (included public); cultural industries and employment; cultural practices and social aspects of culture. It covers individual domains: Cultural Heritage, Archives, Libraries, Books and Press, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Audiovisual and Multimedia, Architecture, Advertising, and Art Craft.

It also addresses how to measure intangible cultural heritage: cultural spaces, oral traditions and expressions, performances and processes. The report tackles the long-standing issues of cultural diversity and satellite accounts on culture, the emerging creative industries, cultural participation and its measurement.

The huge 2012 Report (nearly 600 pages) offers a plurality of contributions for the statistical description of Cultural Heritage, intertwined with other domains and themes. What follows is a recollection of those that appear

most suitable for providing a basis or relevant information for the dedicated policies.

2.1 Domains, dimensions, and functions.

The European statistical framework distinguishes ten cultural domains: Heritage, Archives, Libraries, Book and Press, Visuals Arts, Performing Arts, Audiovisual and Multimedia, Architecture, Advertising and Arts crafts. A cultural domain consists of a set of practices, activities or cultural products centred on a group of expressions recognized as artistic ones.

To each cultural domain, correspond four dimensions: employment, expenditure, consumption and practice.

The European statistical framework distinguishes also six cultural functions: Creation, Production/Publishing, Dissemination/Trade, Preservation, Education and Management/Regulation.

2.2 Cultural activities and products

Cultural activities for each domain were then established according to their economic function. “Admittedly, this economically based approach to culture may appear reductive, but its aim is to respond to the demand for cultural statistical analysis in Europe” Cultural activities are understood as all types of activities based on cultural values or artistic expressions. Cultural activities include market- or non-market-orientated activities, with or without a commercial meaning and carried out by any type of producers and structure (individuals, organizations, businesses, groups, amateurs or professionals). One cultural activity is carried out within a cultural domain and according to the function necessary for its achievement. For the production of data and measurement, cultural activities are described theoretically and then linked with statistical classifications, mainly economic classifications NACE Rev.2 (2008). Cultural activities described in the framework according to the NACE codes represent the cultural sector. The cultural sector is therefore made of cultural economic activities. (Bina, et al., 2012).

Cultural Heritage (CH) is one of the ten cultural domains and expresses all the six cultural functions.

In particular, CH as defined in the 2012 Report, encompasses museums, historical places

and archaeological sites. Of the six functions, Creation is intentionally empty, as CH is understood mainly as a legacy of the past; the others are described in terms of statistical measurable cultural activities as follows:

- Production: Museums scientific activities (constitution of collections); Recognition of historical heritage;
- Dissemination/trade: Museums exhibitions, Museographic activities; Art galleries activities (incl. e-commerce); Trade of antiquities (incl. e-commerce);
- Preservation: Operation activities for historical sites; Preservation of intangible cultural heritage; - Restoring of museum collections; Restoring of protected monuments; Archeological activities; Applied research and technical preservation activities;
- Education: Formal and non-formal artistic or cultural teaching activities;
- Management/Regulation: Administrative management (State, local or other bodies).

CH does not cover cultural tourism, as the working group ruled out that domain from the final list.

The domain Cultural Heritage corresponds to the following economic activities in the classification NACE Rev.2:

Section R: Arts, entertainment and recreation services. Group 910 (partial):

- Class 9102 Museums activities, which includes operation of museums of all kinds: art museums, museums of jewelry, furniture, costumes, ceramics, silverware, natural history, science and technological museums, historical museums, including military museums, other specialised museums, open-air museums. Botanical and zoological gardens, and nature reserves are excluded.
- Class 9103 Operation of historical sites, buildings, and similar visitor attractions.

The domain Cultural Heritage corresponds to the following services in the CPA- - STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION OF PRODUCTS BY ACTIVITY-2008:

- 91 02 10 Museum services: Display services of collections of all kinds (art, science and technology, history); Management and conservation services for the collections; Organisation of travelling collection exhibitions.
- 91 02 20 Museum collections: collections and collectors' pieces of historical, ethnographic,

zoological, botanical, mineralogical, anatomical or numismatic interest.

- 91 03 10 Operation services of historical sites and buildings, and similar visitor attractions: Operation of, and access and visiting services to historical sites, monuments and buildings; Preservation services for historical sites, monuments and buildings.
- 47 00 68 Retail trade services of stamps and coins
- 47 00 69 Retail trade services of souvenirs and arts
- 47 00 91 Retail trade services of antiques (incl. retail trade services via auctioning houses)
- 71 20 19 Other technical testing and analysis services (certification and authentication of works of art).

Products have been classified as belonging to the domain CH are:

- Antiques; postage or revenue stamps; collections and collector's pieces
- Works of art (paintings, engravings, sculptures, designs, etc.).

Due to the dynamic nature of the cultural sector in general, and of the cultural heritage domain in particular, the European Commission has launched in 2019 a review process of NACE classifications.

Some scholars would prefer that cultural activities and related products and workers were investigated via dedicated surveys, and not merely earmarked as subcomponent of the various Business and Trade registers existing at the EU level. While dedicated surveys are theoretically possible, and carried out locally or at the individual Member State level, they do not cover the entire EU.

2.3. Funding and expenditure

The conclusions reached in the 2012 Report of ESSnet-Culture about Funding and expenditure, while they do succeed in identifying possible guidelines along which data should be collected in the future, with reference to the COFOG classification for public expenditure and COICOP classification for household and private expenditure, remain at an early stage of development, and do not provide yet an adequate coverage of the Cultural Heritage domain.

2.4 Cultural employment and occupations

Cultural employment, on the other hand, benefitted from a procedure similar to Cultural Activities. Cultural employment is made of i) employment in companies practicing an activity in the cultural domain, and, ii) employment in cultural occupations. In the 2012 Report, Cultural occupations include occupations involved in the creative and artistic economic cycle i.e. creation, production, dissemination and trade, preservation, education, management and regulation, as well as heritage collection and preservation. These occupations involve tasks and duties undertaken:

- a) for the purpose of artistic expression (e.g. visual arts, performing arts, audiovisual arts etc.);
- b) to generate, develop, preserve, reflect cultural meaning;
- c) to create, produce or disseminate cultural goods and services, generally protected by copyright.

Over 120 cultural occupations were surveyed and cultural occupations in 48 4-digit professional groups of the ISCO-08 were identified: 32 professional groups in the ISCO-08 (four digits) solely composed of cultural occupations and 14 basic groups from the ISCO-08 (four digits) partially composed of cultural occupations (groups that mix cultural and non-cultural occupations).

There are only three professional groups related to CH (2621 Archivists and curators; 3433 Gallery, museum and library technicians, 3435 Other artistic and cultural associate professionals) in the first set, and four in the second (1222 Advertising and public relations department managers: Art manager; 1349 Professional services managers not elsewhere classified: art gallery manager, museum manager; 2633 Philosophers, historians and political scientists: Researchers related to cultural heritage (semiotic etc.), Managers of cultural enterprises and institutions; 5113 Travel guides: Museum guide, art gallery guide).

2.5. The statistical orphans: Cultural practices, participation and consumption

Cultural practices, cultural participation and cultural policy, another key topic in the ESSnet-Culture endeavor, also have relevance for CH and related strategies.

They propose a model for embracing different forms of participation and practice, named ICET, which includes:

- Information: to seek, collect and spread information on culture;
- Communication and community: to interact with others on cultural issues and to participate in cultural networks;
- Enjoyment and expression: to enjoy exhibitions, art performances and other forms of cultural expression, to practice the arts for leisure, and to create online content;
- Transaction: to buy art and to buy or reserve tickets for shows.

The Taks force devoted to investigating the statistical definition of cultural practice at the ESSnet-Culture proposed a framework covering three dimensions of cultural practices:

- amateur practices, i.e. practicing the arts leisure;
- attending/receiving, i.e. visits to cultural events and following artistic and cultural broadcasts of all kind of media;
- social participation/volunteering, i.e. being a member of a cultural group and association, doing voluntary work for a cultural institution etc.

With reference to this, cultural practices in the domain of CH were listed as follows:

Museums

PRACTICING AS AMATEUR: Being a collector.

ATTENDING/RECEIVING: Visiting museums (actually and/or virtually).

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERING: Working as a volunteer in a museum. Being a member of an association, group or club connected to a museum (such as 'friends of the museum'). Donating to a museum.

Monuments

PRACTICING AS AMATEUR: Not relevant.

ATTENDING/RECEIVING: Visiting monuments (actually and/or virtually).

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERING: Being member of an association, group or club for the preservation of monuments and heritage. Volunteering for or donating to such associations, groups or clubs.

Archaeology

PRACTICING AS AMATEUR: Being an amateur archaeologist.

ATTENDING/RECEIVING: Visiting archaeological sites (actually and/or virtually).

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERING:

Being a member of an association, group or club for the preservation of (archaeological) monument and heritage. Volunteering for or donating to such associations, groups or clubs.

Further, (Bina, et al., 2012) propose a list of indicators on cultural participation and specify the level of priority (1-2-3) for each of them. The list for CH is:

- Percentage of persons who were member of a selected cultural association in the last 12 months (2)
- Percentage of persons who did voluntary work for a selected cultural association in the last 12 months (2)
- Percentage of persons who have visited museums and public galleries in the last 12 months (1)
- Percentage of persons who have visited museums and public galleries in the last 12 months by type (2)
- Percentage of persons who have visited monuments, archaeological sites in the last 12 months (1)
- Percentage of persons who have visited monuments, archaeological sites in the last 12 months by type (2)
- Percentage of persons who have viewed virtual exhibitions of art or any kind of museum objects in the last 12 months (3)
- Percentage of persons who have viewed monuments, historical or artistic places, buildings or sites (on the internet or other media) in the last 12 months (3)
- Percentage of persons who have viewed or listened to a programme about museums (on television, radio, video, DVD, internet or other media) in the last 12 months (3)
- Percentage of persons who have viewed or listened to a programme about monuments, historical or artistic places, buildings or sites (on television, radio, video, DVD, internet or other media) in the last 12 months (3).

The Report proposes to investigate Amateur practices in the domain of CH by means of the following questions:

During the last 12 months...

- Did you collect any kind of objects as a hobby?
- Did you search in archives and/or online for genealogical or historical records?
- Did you conduct excavations yourself and/or participate in excavations conducted by

professional or other amateur archaeologists?

To investigate Social participation/Volunteering in the domain of CH, the 20102 Report proposes the following questions:

During the last 12 months...

- Were you a member of an association, a group or a club, which supports museum(s)?
- Were you a member of a historical or genealogical association, club or group?
- Were you a member of an association, club or group for preservation of monuments and heritage?
- Did you voluntary work for or donated to a museum?
- Did you voluntary work for or donated to a historical or genealogical association, club or group?
- Did you voluntary work for or donated to of an association, club or group for preservation of monuments and heritage?

As for Attending/Receiving, in the domain of CH the following questions are suggested:

- During the last 12 months, did you visit a museum in your own country or abroad?

If yes, what kind of museums, galleries or exhibitions did you visit?

Art

Archaeology and history

Natural history and natural science

Science and technology

Ethnography and anthropology

General, mixed

Other

- During the last 12 months, did you visit galleries or exhibitions in your own country or abroad?

If yes, what kind of museums, galleries or exhibitions did you visit?

Art

Archaeology and history

Natural history and natural science

Science and technology

Ethnography and anthropology

General, mixed

Other

During the last 12 months...

- Did you visit an archive your own country or abroad?
- Did you consult archival records online?
- Did you view virtual exhibitions of art or any kind of museum objects (on the internet or

- other media)?
- Did you view monuments, historical or artistic places, buildings or sites (on the internet or other media)?
 - Did you view or listen to a programme about museums (on television, radio, video, DVD, internet or other media)?
 - Did you view or listen to a programme about monuments, historical or artistic places, buildings or sites (on television, radio, video, DVD, internet or other media) during the last 12 months?

Unfortunately, their statistical coverage was (and remains) a problem. As the 2012 Report points out, “In the meantime culture statistics had become ‘a negative priority’ within the Eurostat, so the Eurostat has suspended the Working Group on cultural statistics in 2004. (...)”

Even if the Task Force on cultural participation of the LEG-Culture and its successor of the Working Group on Cultural Statistics didn’t succeed in convincing Eurostat or the NSIs of the Member States to implement at least some of their recommendations, they did succeed in putting, as it were, the topic of cultural practices on the agenda of European statistics. The common European survey on participation in cultural activities was not realised. But, instead, two Eurobarometers on cultural participation were carried out: one in the 15 ‘old’ Member States and one in the new Member States and Candidates: Europeans’ Participation in Cultural Activities (2001) and New Europeans and Culture (2003). Both Eurobarometers used a questionnaire developed by the LEG-Culture Task Force” (Bina, et al., 2012). In the following years, other Eurobarometers have covered cultural values (2007), cultural participation (2013) and cultural heritage (2017).

Questions concerning cultural participation were also included in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) and the Adult Education survey (AES). And if surveys on cultural practices never saw the light, there exists a harmonized European time use survey: HETUS. As a time-use survey includes media, reading and leisure time habits. For cultural participation purposes, the HETUS measurement is, however, very rough. It does not tell anything about the content of preferences, only the total amount of time given to reading, or going to the cinema or watching television. The annual Community survey on ICT

usage in households and by individuals covers a few aspects of cultural digital consumption, creation and participation.

The ESSnet-Culture Report recommends: “Since cultural practices are an important part of well-being, ESSnet-Culture strongly support the recommendation already included in the LEGCulture report, namely to start ‘a common European survey on participation in cultural activities to be repeated periodically, for instance every five years’.

That recommendation remains unheard.

3. *No harmonized specific data on culture are yet produced*

“The ESSnet-Culture recommends to integrate the question of culture in the European works on the development of social and well-being indicators and to continue the research on cultural indicators”. An excellent recommendation. Today, looking for cultural indicators among those proposed, say, by OECD (Better Life Index), or among the Sustainable Development Goals is pointless. The one and only experiment, so far, is Italy’s *Misure del benessere equo e sostenibile*, with an entire domain devoted to Landscape and Cultural Heritage, one synthetic indicator of cultural participation in the domain “Education” and one indicator about employment in the cultural and creative sector in the domain “Innovation and Research” (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2018).

At the beginning of the 2012 Report, the working group contended that the fact that a real European system for cultural statistics, or the production of harmonized statistical data has not been implemented, means that the only data that can be used are those produced by Member States, even though these data are extremely difficult to compare with one another. In view of that, “ESSnet-Culture recommends that Eurostat proposes, as soon as possible, a solid programme of actions and developments in order to rely on the involvement and the expertise of Member States in the future development of European cultural statistics”. And, “If the creation of a specific unit for the cultural statistics is not possible for the moment, ESSnet recommends that Eurostat creates a permanent full-time post dedicated to cultural statistics to ensure the adequate follow-up of the European developments in the domain of cultural statistics”.

3.1. What we do have

Today, the dedicated Eurostat webpage offers living proof that progress has indeed been made. Sure, culture statistics for the EU are still not collected by a single stand-alone survey, but come from different Eurostat data collections.

Available data, thanks to a huge and sustained effort of dedicated and highly competent statisticians, cover:

- Cultural employment;
- Characteristics and performance of enterprises engaged in cultural economic activities & sold production of cultural goods;
- International trade in cultural goods;
- International trade in cultural services;
- Cultural participation (practice and attendance) and culture in cities (such as satisfaction with cultural facilities of cities' residents and 'cultural infrastructure');
- Private (household) expenditure on cultural goods and services;
- Price index of cultural goods and services;
- Public (government) expenditure on culture.

In addition, Eurostat publishes experimental statistics on Unesco World Heritage Sites using Big Data. The experiment is potentially of interest for a similar study on other elements of the European Cultural heritage.

Cultural participation is generally poorly covered, in very generic terms and not frequently. Statistics include the 2015 data from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) ad-hoc module on social and cultural participation, data from Use of ICT (internet) for cultural purposes - from the annual Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals and from its specific modules: on the use of mobile connection to internet (2012) and on cloud computing services (2014); and Cultural activities in terms of time devoted to them during a day - from 2000 and 2010 waves of Time Use Survey.

Data from the City Statistics perception surveys make it possible to assess the satisfaction of cities' residents about the cultural facilities in their cities (cinemas, concert halls, theatres, museums and libraries) as a whole. Coverage of is not uniform, as, apart from capital cities, the percentage of participating urban centres varies significantly from a country to another.

3.2. If indeed you can count them. The Incalculable Museums

In the ESSNet-Culture 2012 statistical framework, the contents of Cultural Heritage, in its tangible form, are museums, historical places and archaeological sites. One could expect that, if indeed historical places and archaeological sites are difficult to detect and isolate with the necessary statistical clarity, museums at least should not be difficult to count. However, if we want to know how many museums are there in the EU, and search that total figure on the website of the European Group on Museum Statistics-EGMUS, we discover that that figure is not available. "The main objective of EGMUS is collection and publication of comparable statistical data. Available data from national museum statistics and surveys are compiled and updated and stored in the Abridged List of Key Museum Indicators (ALOKMI) table. The ALOKMI is the first step towards the harmonisation of museum statistics in Europe". The table includes 37 indicators of museum activity and national socio economic context, which the participating countries should in theory update yearly.

One will not find in the Alokmi table a cell containing the "overall total number of museums", but 673 footnotes to explain differences, mostly about the national variations of museum definitions. To mention just some: Belarus: Only museums registered by the Belarus Ministry of Culture; Croatian Museum Act defines museum activities rather than museum itself; Finland: The Finnish museum statistics cover the professionally-run museums only; France: Only museums registered by the French Ministry of Culture; Greece: Data available only for State Archaeological Museums and Collections; etc. "Notwithstanding the agreement on definitions, the presentation of the data itself still requires quite a lot of explanatory remarks. The source of these data, national statistics and surveys, still vary considerably.

The main reason for these differences are differences in the scope of these sources. For instance, some national statistics only cover those museums which are financed by the state, or professionally-run, while other statistics omit certain aspects of the museums such as staff, income or expenditure. Such explanatory remarks are provided in the footnotes".

3.3. Concluding remarks: Cultural heritage policies on a data shoestring

Traditionally, the cultural sector is capable of sustained endurance and sacrifice. At the end of the 1990s, a number of cultural economists understood that the uncertain, intermittent, informal character of many cultural and artistic occupations, especially in the performing arts, was a predictor of future trends of jobs in general, in Europe (Bodo, Fischer, & Cicerchia, 1998). Recent studies about the incidence of unpaid work of highly motivated young interns (mostly young women) in the cultural and creative sector contribute to reinforce the notion (Shades & Jacobson, 2015) (Roberts, 2017).

One could say the same is true for culture statistics. The sector is used to doing much more with less, to extract any possible information from sources designed and filled for different purposes. This is heroic, but should not be encouraged beyond a certain point, and that point has been reached.

As mentioned earlier, policies may be evidence-informed or based, but evidence may be policy-based. The lack of it, may be policy-based.

What we can observe, today, is that the political commissioning agents still show little, if any, interest in the statistical description of cultural phenomena, apart from those with a direct economic impact. Statistic investigation targeted on the cultural/creative industries has been funded at the EU level in view of a specific policy planning activity. All considered, it worked well. Other areas, instead remain uncovered: cultural diversity, cultural participation, and, paradoxically, cultural heritage. Some are indeed difficult to measure with statistics. Others are not difficult, but still suffer from a negative political priority. I hope that priority will come to be reversed soon. Paradoxically, while relevant research remains neglected and insufficiently funded, the potential positive impact of culture on a increasingly wider range of policy areas is openly mentioned in many EU official documents, as for the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

And while we wait for culture statistics to overcome its empassé, in few years we will be able to look at Horizon 2020 products as an abundant source of relevant and extended, if scattered, data on cultural heritage in its multiple dimensions.

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