STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

CDCPP (2015)7 Addendum   Strasbourg, 12 May 2015

4th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-3 June 2015

THE INDICATOR FRAMEWORK ON CULTURE AND DEMOCRACY

INTERIM REPORT ON PROGRESS AND TESTING OF SOME PRELIMINARY HYPOTHESES FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

Item 5.1 of the draft Agenda

The Committee is invited to take note of the following report.

Democratic Governance Directorate, DG II

The Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD)

Interim Report on Progress and Testing of Some Preliminary Hypotheses for the Council of Europe

By

Helmut K. Anheier, Michael Hoelscher, Regina List, Nora Regoes, CJ Yetman, and the Indicators Team
Hertie School of Governance / University of Heidelberg

1 May, 2015

1. Introduction

An important impact of culture on democracy is mentioned in many scientific as well as political discussions. Hard empirical evidence on this relationship is, however, scarce. The Council of Europe is therefore developing an Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD) as a basis for future evidence-based policy-making. The outline for such a framework was developed by Helmut Anheier (Anheier, 2013). In 2014, a research team refined this outline, started to collect data and discussed the progress with international experts (Anheier, Hoelscher, Regoes, Yetman, & Ziaja, 2014 from the Hertie School context; Sacco IULM University; Inkei Budapest Observatory; Wiesand ERICarts; Kern KEA as well as the Compendium experts from forty European countries).

The results to date seem to be promising, although significant problems with data availability—especially in the field of culture—continue to exist. The full development of the framework will need additional efforts and resources to be successful. To prove its usefulness the current form of the framework is therefore submitted to an empirical test. The question to be addressed was to what extent the framework can be used to test important hypotheses on the relationship between culture and democracy. This paper presents the results of this assessment.

2. Culture and democracy – some general thoughts

Culture can have an influence on democracy on very different levels. The most important and straightforward causal mechanism can be identified on the individual level (micro level). To give an example, the discussion on cultural education in primary and secondary schools and beyond gained importance over recent years (Banks, 2015; Putz-Plecko, 2008). The claim is that exposure to culture increases people's democratic attitudes. One argument is for example that culture allows people to realize the importance and even beauty of heterogeneity and difference, thereby increasing

also their tolerance towards others, for example, minorities. In the German context a classic example would be the so-called "Ring Parable" from Lessing's "Nathan the Wise".

A second level is the meso level, either focusing on organizations (e.g. democratic organizational cultures) or on regions and cities (Anheier, Isar, & Hoelscher, 2012; Bekemans, 2007; Commission of the European Communities, 2011). The Intercultural City Index is an interesting example here (Intercultural Cities Index, 2015).

The level addressed by the IFCD is, however, the level of the nation state (macro level). There are good reasons for doing so. The concept of culture is referring explicitly to something shared. Individuals can have attitudes, values, beliefs, certain lifestyles, etc., but they cannot have a culture. They can, however, belong to a certain culture, shared by a community or group of people. In many scientific approaches, this group of people is identified on the national level. From a historical perspective, Gellner argues that the development of a shared culture was an important prerequisite for the emergence of the nation state (Gellner, 1992, 2006). From more recent empirical evidence we know that the belonging to a certain country is one of or even the single most important predictor for many values and attitudes (Hoelscher, 2006; Immerfall, 1996). So there are ample reasons why there would be something like a national culture.[1]

Furthermore, from a political or governance perspective, the national government is in many countries still an important funder of cultural institutions. An additional influence of central governments can be exerted through laws, support programmes, public-private partnerships, etc. So the question of how to govern culture at the national level is, and will probably continue to be, of special interest.

Last but not least, the domains of culture and democracy are heavily interrelated on the level of the nation state.

Despite these compelling reasons to look at the relationship between culture and democracy at a national level, there are also some problems related to this perspective. To name some of the most important:

- First, the mechanisms of causal relationships are difficult to grasp at this highly aggregated level. Ideally we would be able to analyse the relationship within multi-level modelling, taking both the individual and the national level into account.
- Second, the restricted number of available cases does not allow the quantitative empirical testing of complex models. Only a limited number of variables can be analysed at a time.

---

[1] This does not mean, though, that this national culture has to be homogeneous or that we need something like a "Leitkultur". We cannot deduce an "ought to be" from a "being". Yet, the analysis of at least some heterogeneity measures shows positive influences of heterogeneity on culture and democracy.

- Third, cultural as well as democratic processes take their time, not only, but also on a national level. We have therefore to be careful when arguing for the existence of some relationships, as important time-lags may exist. This raises the need for the collection of time-series data to identify these lags and estimate their duration.
- Fourth, it is quite difficult to develop good indicators for some aspects of culture, especially on the aggregated level of the nation state.

What does this mean for the envisaged current indicators project? First, because we know of the huge importance of culture for democracy from personal experience, from qualitative case studies and from quantitative studies on the individual level, it is of utmost importance to make progress with the analysis of the relationship between culture and democracy on the national level. For this, we need improved interrelated measures of culture and democracy as well as improved availability of data from the nation states; we need the advancement of comparative methods to analyse the existing data in meaningful ways; and we need theories, theoretical imagination as well as sound background knowledge to put the empirical results into perspective. The current project partners provide all three, with the Hertie School's strength in indicator work, with Pier Luigi Sacco and Guido Ferilli (IULM University, Milan) and others applying new methods in data analysis, and with the Compendium background of country experts and online cultural policy profiles.

3. Outline of the framework and its methodology

The general aim of the IFCD is to examine the relationship between culture and democracy and to monitor trends in European comparison. The framework addresses the issue of culture on two related, but different levels: a broad understanding of culture, comprising for example also values and beliefs, and a narrow understanding focussing on cultural artefacts and artistic production. The IFCD is thereby able to delve into details of specific art forms (literature, cinema, etc.) as well as touch upon the broad issues of culture in relation to democracy (e.g. Harrison & Huntington, 2000).

The framework is innovative in that it encompasses two broad concepts or domains at a time: The main concepts of culture (narrow understanding) and democracy. Values (broad cultural understanding) are added as a kind of linchpin for both. A second innovation is the division of these concepts / domains into the three phases of input, throughput and output. Thus, dynamic processes within the fields of culture and democracy can be grasped theoretically and described empirically. Relationships can then be analysed either within or across concepts.

To be able to address very specific questions, the framework breaks down each of the domains into spheres: the political sphere, the civic sphere, the economic sphere and a normative sphere of freedom and equality. These spheres are developed in parallel for both concepts, allowing detailed analyses of relationships and trends. Each of the spheres is again separated into different aspects (e.g. individual active cultural participation), and each of the aspects is measured by one or more indicators (e.g. playing an instrument; reading a book). The aim is to collect indicators for different units of analysis: institutions, organizations and individuals. All indicators are aggregated at the national level (e.g. percentage of people playing an instrument).

Where possible, indicators are combined into indices, as this improves measurement of the complex phenomena at hand. The overall matrix structure of domains, phases, spheres and aspects allows for re-arranging indicators in different ways. It would be, for example, possible to combine topical (e.g. Internet-related) indicators that are spread over the whole framework for a more focused analysis of this topic.

This theory-driven framework is filled with data from very different sources. A significant amount of work went into a review of existing indicators in the field, which were then assigned within the framework. Where possible, data were downloaded, documented, and put into a central database. As a result, data availability is heterogeneous for different aspects as well as for different countries. Additional resources will be needed to supplement the existing data by producing new data from own research, extracting data from country-specific reports, and using new approaches (e.g. smart / big data) to collect data. Nevertheless, for important aspects and many countries data is or will in the near future be readily available.

4. Applying the IFCD framework: Some empirical hypotheses and their results

In light of these considerations, it becomes clear that the application of the IFCD in its current state can only be a first preliminary step and that the full development of such a framework will need additional time and resources.

It should also be clear that the empirical correlations shown on the next few pages are not causal relationships in a straightforward way. They should be interpreted as plausibilities, as evidence of some underlying mechanism or mechanisms. Still, they can be used to assess the overall usefulness of the framework and to what extent it allows the examination of interesting relationships between culture and democracy.

To show how this framework could contribute to this evidence base, we developed several possible hypotheses on the relation between culture and democracy and explored how they might be operationalized. The following describes the results of three preliminary analyses showing the potential of the framework in its current state. The idea is not to show the most important results with regard to the available data, nor the most interesting hypotheses. The aim of the testing is to show in which ways the IFCD can be used to address interesting relationships on different levels. The first hypothesis links the input and output phases within the cultural domain. The second looks at the impact of culture on democracy; a third looks at outcomes: Is the well-being of citizens influenced by the cultural and democratic domains?

a. Cultural participation: Institutions can make a difference

Studies on cultural participation have provided evidence that cultural activity varies with the individual's education, occupational status and affluence (Coulangeon, 2013; Danielsen, 2008; DiMaggio & Useem, 1978). However, less attention has been paid to the access of certain minority and gender groups to cultural goods and amenities. Thus, the existence of a constitutional framework that protects minority groups from unequal treatment and discrimination can reasonably be seen as a prerequisite for higher rates of cultural participation (Moghadam & Senftova, 2015).

This hypothesis examines within the cultural domain whether the political institutions of legal rights and basic freedoms (in the framework: input in the political sphere of culture) have an impact on the cultural participation of certain societal groups (in the example: women). The basic idea is that the existence of extensive political freedoms allows women to participate equally in cultural activities (input influences output).

Figure 1: Legal rights and basic freedoms lead to cultural participation of women

legal rights and basic freedom vs. cultural participation of women
correlation = 0.73

Figure 1 shows the results of the empirical analysis on the level of broad dimensions, integrating different indicators for both aspects. The dots are single countries (no country names are included at this point); the line in the middle is the regression line and the dotted lines are confidence intervals.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the degree to which women participate in cultural activities is strongly related (r = 0.73; N = 19) to legal rights and basic freedoms: The more legal rights and basic freedoms are available in a country, the more women participate in culture.

However, especially important would be whether differences between men and women exist. To test for equal participation, we plotted the extent of basic freedoms and legal rights against the *ratio* of women compared to men (1 = equal participation, so that a lower ratio means that more men than women participate) that engage in cultural activities (as we have the shares for women and for men, this can easily be done within the framework). Figure 2 first shows that women generally are less active than men in most countries. Still, the impact of legal rights and basic freedoms holds, although the correlation drops (0.35) and some outliers exist.

Figure 2: Legal rights and basic freedom lead to equal cultural participation (gender)

legal rights and basic freedom vs. equal cultural participation (gender)
correlation = 0.35
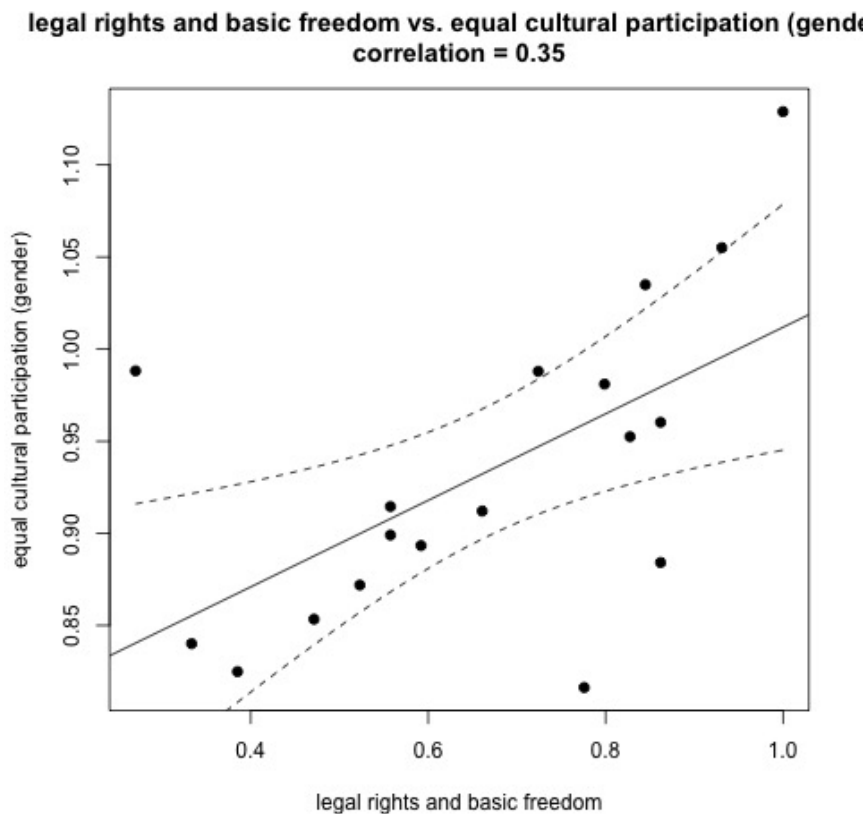
This can be interpreted to indicate that basic freedoms and legal rights contribute to cultural participation of both men and women, but especially of the less represented women. In addition to the presence of legal rights and basic freedoms, it has been shown that cultural policy that accounts for the integration of underprivileged groups is an important element in tackling unequal participation in the cultural domain (Danielsen, 2008; Jancovich, 2011; Looseley, 2004). Future analyses might therefore focus on the impact of integrative cultural policies (Stevenson, 2013) on the cultural participation of certain societal groups.

b. The influence of culture on democracy: The example of participation

While the first hypothesis analysed relationships within the cultural domain, the second looks at the potential influence of culture on democracy. The specific hypothesis for the example is that participation in culture has a positive impact on participation in democratic activities. Since Tocqueville, who underlines the importance of culture for democratic development, little effort has been made to examine the interrelationship between these two categories. One notable exception is the study from Silva and colleagues, who point out that democratic politics is promoted by membership in culture-related associations. They concluded that "cultural organizations nurture a wider range of civic virtues than most other types of associations" (Silva, Clark, & Cabaço, 2014: 343).

Political participation as a concept has to account for country differences in political institutions and legal opportunities to become politically involved. Therefore, different indicators such as voter turnout and the effective use of public petitions and referendums are important measures for explaining differences in political activities across countries, but each might be biased or can grasp only a certain aspect of participation. For our example, we use the involvement in activities of political organisations as one of the most reliable indicators for voluntary political engagement. Future analyses would probably use combined indices.

Figure 3 shows the aggregate relationship between participation in cultural activities and in activities of political parties and trade unions. Both are positively linked, and the correlation is of medium strength (0.53). This supports the idea that active cultural participation may enhance the awareness of community and civic virtues, and therefore political engagement.

Figure 3: Active cultural participation is related to strong political engagement in a society.

Cultural participation vs. Participation in political parties or trade uni

correlation = 0.53
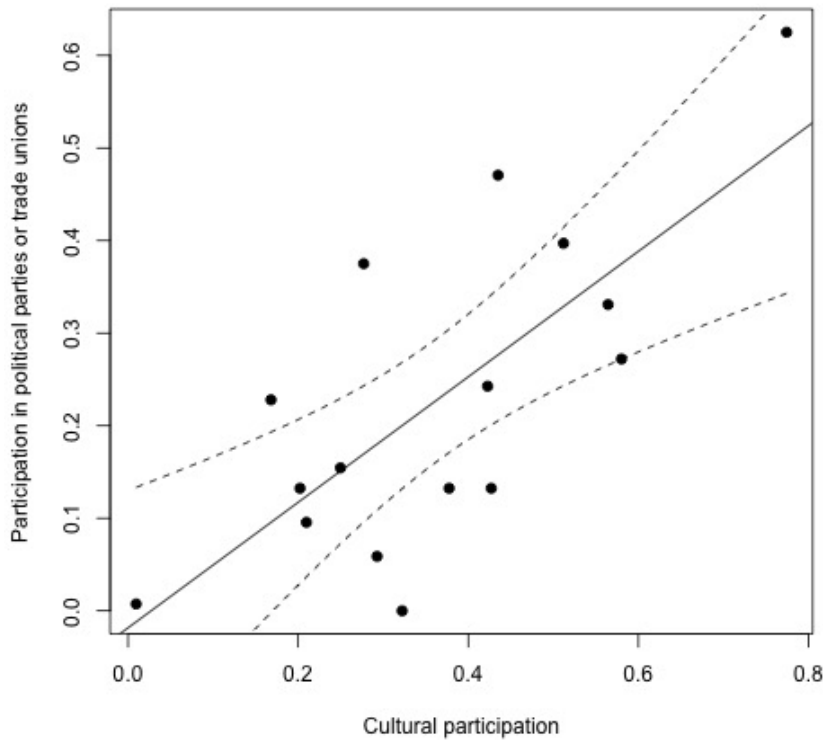
### c. Culture and democracy on outcomes: Well-being

Not only since the financial crisis, but with growing emphasis since then, governments and researchers all over the world claim that economic strength and growth are not the only, and maybe not even the most important, goals for societies. Health issues, happiness and the like have gained importance in the discussion of future goals for nations and humankind as a whole. An overarching term for these is well-being. Unlike welfare, well-being is a concept that relies particularly on subjective assessments of one's own life circumstances.

Many studies contend that democracy is an important ingredient for citizens' well-being (Owen, Videras, & Willemsen, 2008). Orviska and colleagues, for example, argue that democracy has a positive impact on subjective well-being. Using data from the World Values data set, they observe that regional democratic satisfaction impacts on both individual happiness and life satisfaction (Orviska, Caplanova, & Hudson, 2014). Along the same vein, Dorn and colleagues find a significant effect of democracy on well-being and life satisfaction after controlling for socioeconomic, demographic and cultural variables (Dorn, Fischer, Kirchgässner, & Sousa-Poza, 2007).

However, we can also assume that culture also has an important influence on this outcome. Reuband, for example, shows that life satisfaction (and well-being) in three German cities is correlated with cultural participation, also when taking into account gender, age and education (Reuband, 2013). The argument here is that participation in cultural activities goes hand in hand with the accumulation of social capital. This underlines the argument made by Gundelach und Krainer, who emphasize that social capital is the most important predictor of happiness (Gundelach & Kreiner, 2004). The specific hypothesis we test would be that participation in culture (individuals going to live performances such as concerts, operas, etc., visiting cultural sights or practising visual arts) as well as democratic participation (participating in activities of political parties or trade unions, participation in election, signing petitions, etc.) has a positive influence on people's well-being.

As a comprehensive measure, the life satisfaction index taken from the OECD Better Life Index (OECD, 2015) shows the self-evaluation of people's current life compared to the best and the worst possible lives for them. Figure 4 displays the mean of this index for every country, compared with our index of cultural participation.

Figure 4: States with higher cultural participation rates tend to exhibit higher levels of well-being.

Cultural participation vs. Life Satisfaction index from Better Life Ind
correlation = 0.75
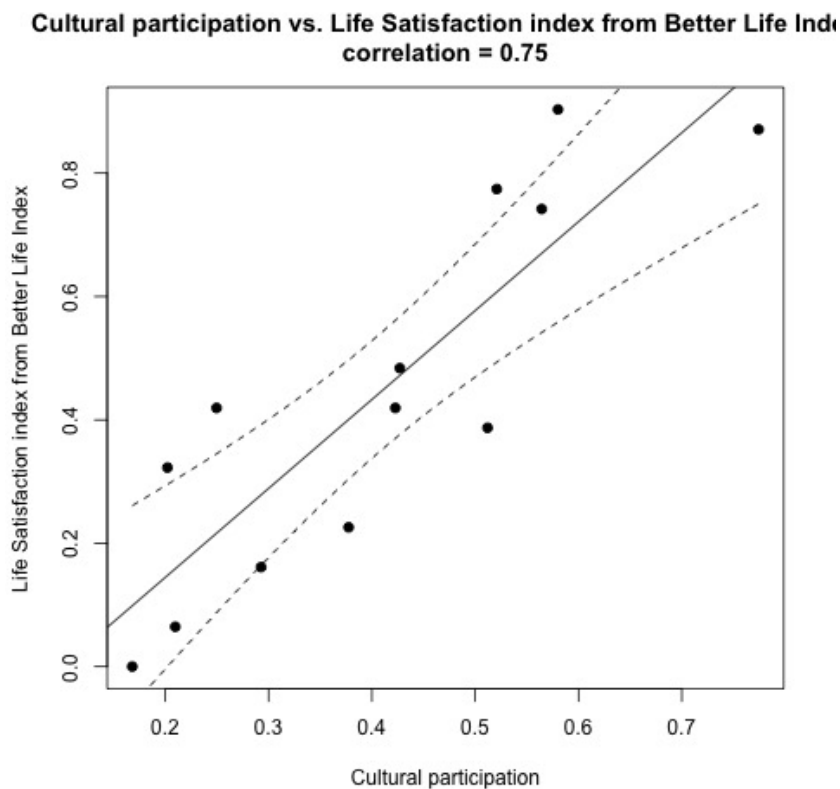
Obviously there is a high correlation between both indices (0.75; N = 13), supporting the hypothesis that cultural participation contributes to increased life satisfaction.

Figure 5: States with higher political participation rates tend to exhibit higher levels of well-being.

Democratic participation vs. Life Satisfaction index from Better Life In
correlation = 0.38
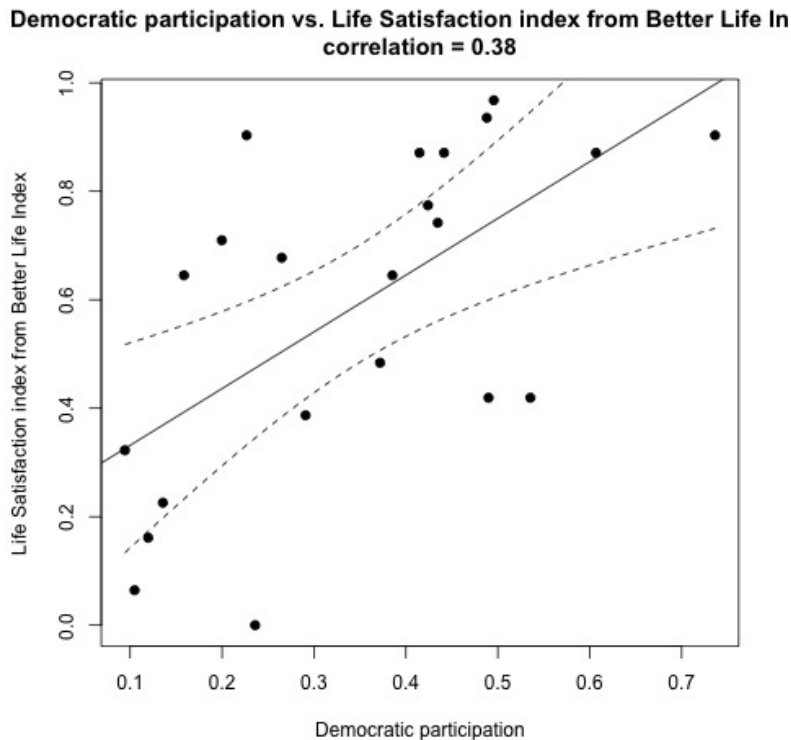
Looking at Figure 5, a further positive relationship can be observed for democratic participation. It seems that overall democratic participation goes along with higher levels of life satisfaction, although some variations remain evident.

What is important, though, is the much stronger impact of culture on well-being. Further analyses are necessary to show how democracy, culture and well-being interact with each other.

5. Outlook

In this report, we applied the IFCD to some important hypotheses on the relationship between culture and democracy. It could be shown that the framework is able to address this relationship on different levels and from different perspectives.

First, the internal distinction of different phases (input, throughput and output) allows for domain-specific analyses of underlying processes. Second, culture seems to have a positive impact on democracy, at least with regard to participation. And third, while democracy contributes to citizens' well-being, it looks like culture contributes even more strongly. Indeed, we find both stronger and weaker relations that could be built up to develop a coherent story.

Yet, while the IFCD in its current state is able to produce some preliminary results with regard to these questions, it is far from being a fully developed and reliable basis for evidence-based policy- and decision-making. With regard to the theoretical framework, the assignment of indicators and their validity has to be improved. With regard to the data, more data with regard to variables and countries has to be collected, especially in the cultural domain. And with regard to analyses, specific techniques for small-N analyses as well as the sound building of overarching indices (including missing-value treatment, etc.) is necessary to improve the robustness of the results.

Especially with regard to the third hypothesis, it was argued that economic measures may not suffice as indicators for successful policies. Economic measures such as GDP or unemployment rates are still used, often quite successfully, in econometric analyses as well as for governance, although huge problems with comparability are well known. For the well-being and welfare of a society, however, cultural and political issues are probably as important as economic ones. We therefore argue that it would be extremely helpful to have data on democratic and especially cultural issues, even if they would be collected with only a fraction of the expenditure that is put into the collection of economic data. On the basis of better data availability from national administrations, together with improved ways of gathering data from big and smart data sources, it will be possible to develop coherent theoretical models as well as sound measures to analyse and assess the impact of culture on democracy on a national level.

The aim of the project, therefore, has to be a constant improvement on the basis of substantive-methodological synergies. Improvements in the measurement of culture and democracy can be used to enhance our theories and the indicator-building. Complementary, refined theories and better indicator-building will result in improved measurement. We think that the IFCD is a good starting point for such an important endeavour.

References

Anheier, H. K. (2013). *Culture and Democracy. Inventory of Terms, Indicators and Data Sources for a Future Culture & Democracy Index by the Council of Europe.*

Anheier, H. K., Hoelscher, M., Regoes, N., Yetman, C., & Ziaja, S. (2014). *The Indicator Framework for Culture and Democracy (IFCD). Report on Progress, Developments, and Future Outlook for the Council of Europe.*

Anheier, H. K., Isar, R., & Hoelscher, M. G. E. (Eds.). (2012). *Cities, Cultural Poliy and Governance.* London: Sage Publications.

Banks, J. A. (2015). *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon.

Bekemans, L. (2007). Urban Environment of Intercultural Dialogue in Europe: Why Cities Matter in Building a Democratic «Urban Civitas». In L. Bekemans, M. Karasinska-Fendler, M. Mascia, A. Papisca, C. A. Stephanou & P. G. Xuereb (Eds.), *Intercultural Dialogue and Citizenship. Translating Values into Actions. A Common Project for Europeans and their partners* (pp. 113-134). Venice: Marsilio.

Commission of the European Communities. (2011). *Cities of Tomorrow. Challenges, visions, ways forward.* Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

Coulangeon, P. (2013). Changing policies, challenging theories and persisting inequalities: Social disparities in cultural participation in France from 1981 to 2008. *Poetics, 41*(2), 177–209.

Danielsen, A. (2008). The persistence of cultural divides - Reflections on the audience for culture and the arts in Norway. *International Journal of Cultural Policy. Feb2008, 14*(1), 95.

DiMaggio, P., & Useem, M. (1978). Cultural Democracy in a Period of Cultural Expansion: The Social Composition of Arts Audiences in the United States. *Social Problems, 26*(2), 179-197.

Dorn, D., Fischer, J. A. V., Kirchgässner, G., & Sousa-Poza, A. (2007). Is it culture or democracy? The impact of democracy and culture on happiness. *Social Indicators Research, 82*(3), 505-526.

Gellner, E. (1992). *Beyond Nationalism? Cultural Homogeneity and Diversity in the Modern Age* (dt. Übersetzung eines Referats No. 3+4). Wien: Institut für Kulturstudien.

Gellner, E. (2006). *Nations and Nationalism* (2nd ed.). Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Gundelach, P., & Kreiner, S. (2004). Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Advanced European Countries. *Cross-Cultural Research, 38*(4), 359-386.

Harrison, L. E., & Huntington, S. P. (2000). *Culture matters*. New York: Basic Books.

Hoelscher, M. (2006). *Wirtschaftskulturen in der erweiterten EU. Die Einstellungen der Bürgerinnen und Bürger im europäischen Vergleich*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Immerfall, S. (1996). *Einführung in den europäischen Gesellschaftsvergleich* (2nd ed.). Passau: Rothe.

Intercultural Cities Index. Retrieved 13 April 2015 from http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/intercultural-cities-charts.php?language=en

Jancovich, L. (2011). Great art for everyone? Engagement and participation policy in the arts. *Cultural Trends. Sep2011, 20*(3), 271.

Looseley, D. (2004). The development of a social exclusion agenda in French cultural policy. *Cultural Trends. Jun2004, 13*(2), 15.

Moghadam, V. M., & Senftova, L. (2015). Measuring women's empowerment: participation and rights in civil, political, social, economic, and cultural domains. *International Social Science Journal, 57*(184), 389-412.

OECD (2015). Better Life Index. Retrieved 20 April 2015 from http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/life-satisfaction/

Orviska, M., Caplanova, A., & Hudson, J. (2014). The impact of democracy on well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 115*(1), 493-508.

Owen, A. L., Videras, J., & Willemsen, C. (2008). Democracy, Participation, and Life Satisfaction. *Social Science Quarterly, 89*(4), 987-1005.

Putz-Plecko, B. (2008). *Background report on Cultural education: The promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education*. Paris.

Reuband, K.-H. (2013). Macht Kultur glücklich? Überlegungen und Befunde zum Verhältnis von kultureller Partizipation und Lebenszufriedenheit. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 38*, 77-92.

Silva, F., Clark, T., & Cabaço, S. (2014). Culture on the Rise: How and Why Cultural Membership Promotes Democratic Politics. *International Journal of Politics, Culture & Society, 27*(3), 343-366.

Stevenson, D. (2013). What's the problem again? The problematisation of cultural participation in Scottish cultural policy. *Cultural Trends, 22*(2), 77.