

7.9 Research and analysis

by [Javier Brun González](#)

In a social context in which information and knowledge emerge as key elements, the true capital through which today's world operates, cultural managers cannot be mere transmitters of a series of inherited instruments or perpetrators of methodologies who left their mark in the second half of the 20th century. Cultural management should include a series of techniques which turn each intervention, each programme or project into an element capable of providing information and renewing knowledge about themselves, as well as of pointing out the advances for a better achievement of objectives.

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1. Introduction

No matter how much we are used to work and to write in a linear way, in a piece of paper. Cultural management, as life, is a cyclical phenomenon, as cyclical are years, seasons, and generations of the existence of people. It makes us aware of our reality with perspective, with those breaks to breathe and to think about, which in essence are part of the same professional, working, life and social process, among others.

In our grandparents' society, only 3 or 4 generations ago, the coercive capital or power made the difference of classes which was generally determined by familiar origins. And people perpetuated the role of their ancestors. Today, although we know that the financial world is still determining in a very important way, information and knowledge become *social lifts* and, in a more and more clear way, productive capitals.

In recent years in which we have witnesses the crisis, we have undoubtedly verified that the solutions which were valid and constituted dogma in our country since the seventies do not perform in the same way, and some of them are in obsolescence since they have not been constantly reviewed.

It is irrelevant that we talk about the change of cycle —according to some people, of *paradigm*—, what is true is that the boost produced by the inertia who took us to this point (in professional terms) is, or is almost, disappeared.

Why? There could be many reasons, but they can be summed up in a general reason: *Society has changed*. But did it happen overnight? Has there not been warning signs?

A series of reasons why we have not paid attention to symptoms (which could undoubtedly be found) could be mentioned. However, it is enough to mention that the relative opulence of the years before the crisis could probably allow that they system worked despite everything.

The result is that we now rack our brains to find “new models” of operation appropriate to the situation which has changed. *The cultural management in the change of paradigm* and several similar and grandiloquent titles which allows us to play to be visionaries among unawareness, exploration, and prophecy.

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Let us be serious. If we want that Cultural Management is a respected profession, we should forget more and more the pure intuition and shamanism, and include such informers who, in real time if possible, give us information on the evolution of our intervention and of the environment in which we act.

When reading the title of this chapter, **Research and analysis**, more than one person has probably thought: This is not for me. I am not going to work in the University. I am going to manage. I am not going to research...

So, why this chapter is titled "Research and analysis"? We have the feeling that the word "research" is very pretentious or a very complex synonym. We are not referring to the academic world. Actually, every project or intervention carried out in culture are little research studies... or should be.

In addition, each cultural project presents a hypothesis:

I want to turn A into B and, for this purpose, the best option is to do X.

We always do this intuitively. If we start from scratch, we would be committed to present countless possibilities:

...If a tenor sings at night, while inhabitants are sleeping... during a week... after a week all citizenship will love music and will go to all concerts... (Solution to generate audience: to hire a night tenor).

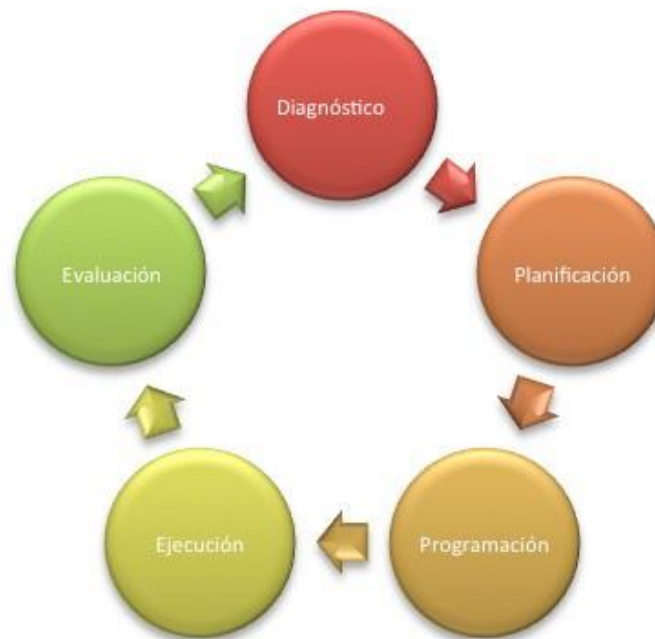
Our confused observation previously informs us about the fact that things are not so simple as in this ridiculous example. We have intuitions, experience. Undoubtedly, we take note of some things, although unconsciously. We already know that the most appropriate public for a music concert is not the residents of a centre for older people. Some things are learnt. Some realities are understood, although in a systematic way... *free time activities are better carried out in the afternoon, in the evening or at weekends...*

But many others are beyond our control. It is said that the human being, or even animals, learn through the system *test-error*, and this is the reason way **each cultural project should a research project** itself. To make a mistake is acceptable (it is said it is human). What is not acceptable, and much less in professionals, is not learning from errors or successes.

It is not acceptable the following approach either: *if I did it in this way and the result was good, I will always do it in that way and the result will be good*. Zygmunt Bauman, our head sociologist and philosopher, uses the expression "Liquid Modernity" to term the society in which we are living as a way of illustrating its changing nature, as a metaphor of the lability of social structures. Well, given the rapid evolution of the contexts in which we move, he would undoubtedly recommend us to adopt measures to guarantee a Liquid Cultural Management more adaptive to constant changes which prevent us from guaranteeing that "past performance should not be seen as an indication of future performance", paraphrasing the financial system.

To conclude this introduction, there is nothing better than an image showing perfectly such integration of research as a generator of knowledge in the cycle of the cultural intervention.

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Obviously, as many other things, this image is just a scheme which tends to simplify to make it more understandable. The information input and output flux are or should be more integrated into the set of the cycle stages.

2. The interrelationship of these tools

[Chapter 5](#) of this handbook deals with Planning. However, some issues should be specified. Among the many definitions which could be provided on cultural planning, we could first present an own and intuitive definition:

(Cultural Planning). A procedure, generally with a shorter temporary approach than in the case of the strategic planning (usually from one to three years), by which a cultural entity or facility develops its main performance lines and, through programming, materialise them in services, programmes, projects, and activities.

To consider territorial, sectoral, legal and socio-political contexts in its most correct formulation is required.

Or this definition more focused on a strategic framework:

Cultural Planning is an inclusive consultation process of the community, as well as a decision-making process which is useful for the (municipal) administration to identify cultural resources and to strategically think about how such resources could be useful for the community to achieve their civic objectives. It is also a strategic approach which directly and indirectly includes the cultural resources of the community in a wide range of programmed activities.

Regardless of which one we choose, we are talking about making decisions on what we want to achieve, which goals we want to reach. Objectives just define and specify the arrival point.

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Planning, plainly speaking, shows us the way we should follow to not get lost. In essence, it is our itinerary. However, if we have a goal, we would need another element for our path. Has anyone ever tried to consult a map of a city, those maps placed at the underground entrances? We could easily look for our destination, but, if we do not know where we are, we could not arrive for sure. For this reason, *that red circle saying you are here* is so important.

Well, to know where we are and how is the ground we are walking on (figuratively speaking), the previous diagnosis techniques intervene in the context of a cultural intervention, and this is the first thing we see.

The oldest hand on this subject matter possible remember that this was called differently, in particular we used to talk about the analysis of reality. Both concepts are closely related because to, as we know, fashion changes and instruments develop.

In this sense, we talk below about some concepts, such as territorial diagnosis, cartography, mapping, context indicators...

3. Tools of diagnosis, mapping, cultural cartography

There are many tools of diagnosis, but I basically mention two groups of different typologies which can be complementary:

1. The first tool tries to determine how is the environment in which we intervene, that is, in which playing field we move and, to a certain extent, “which is our position” in such environment. In this sense, we talk about “drawing” or mapping.
2. The other tool tries to analyse, to determine in which situation is the organisation/entity/project where I work as manager. For this purpose, the most useful technique is the SWOT analysis (Spanish initials: DAFO, or FODA, depending on the order of symbols). In certain way, it is an internal analysis, although it does not prevent from sometimes trying to have an external vision of ourselves.

Cultural maps

An explanatory is first required. When we talk about maps, we naturally think of a physical space, relate it to a tangible territory. However, this is not always the case.

- **Territorial diagnosis:** A mapping could be focused on diagnosing the existing situation in a specific territory in which we develop our action, that is, a city, a province, a region, a country,... or a geographic reality which does not coincide with an administrative division (for example, a set of settlements of the Hungarian population in the middle of Europe, which can take “pieces” of Hungary itself, Austria, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia or Ukraine).

Territory of the Hungarian population in Central Europe

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- Today, the concept of territory is very variable, particularly in the digital and interconnected world.
- **Sectoral diagnosis:** But a mapping could be focused on illustrating the reality of a certain cultural sector and, especially, of a specific artistic discipline. A specialised cultural agent could be interested in this case. All the important cultural information of a certain area could be not required, but the analysis and the image of the characteristics of the thematic scope in which their activity is developed.

Obviously, by combining both, we are usually talking about mixed diagnosis, that is, focused on a certain sector in a certain territory. For example, the map of performing arts in Andalusia.

Independently of the scope we deal with, either thematic or geographical, many elements are common. We deal with them below:

Cultural Cartography is understood as an inventory or cataloguing process hierarchically, exhaustively and spatially ordered (also ordered by categories) of the cultural resources of a territory/sector in question.

The first question is: **what would we invent in a territory?**

A first approach will give us very clear answers:

- **Cultural Agents** (which are in turn classified by their main typologies. At least: public, private, third sector).
Creators (who can be also subdivided into several categories. On the one hand, according to their discipline (music, performing arts, net art, literature, traditional arts... depending on how we consider their division), but also according to their dedication: amateur, professional, in transition between both...)
- **Facilities** (cultural centres, spaces for being used). We could subdivide them as we want: by ownership, by districts, by discipline (general, of proximity, concert halls (public/private/associative...), for public reading

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(libraries), of heritage nature (museums, archives, etc.), and so on. But also, natural spaces, public space to be used for cultural activities...

- **Heritage or identifiable elements:** Places of special interest or with a special meaning for the community; it is important to consider them.
- **Economic, financial resources:** It allows us to know where they come from, who deal with this purpose; beyond the intuitive knowledge we probably have, it is advisable to know these aspects in a systematic way.
- **Main events, celebrations, programmes, programmings, festivals, popular festivals...** To consider the existing activities cycles to not coincide.

We should also value the intangibles which are decisive in culture many times, although they are more abstract or conceptual variables, such as:

- Main cultural dynamics of the territory (flows of information, leaderships, relationships, attitudes...).
- To understand the concept, it is maybe advisable to provide some examples of cultural dynamics which could be included in a territory or sector:
 - To have a liking for the traditional / To have a liking for the innovative.
 - Difficult relationship among different ethnic communities.
 - Existence of a cultural group which predominates over others.
 - A preferential tendency to consume live performances.
 - Not much cultural consumption.
 - Proud of the own culture.
 - Inbreeding.
 - "Let the others invent".
 - Not used to attend events outside the historical centre, etc.

... All of this said in a non-exhaustive way: some usual dynamics are mentioned, which could come to our minds in general. Obviously, there could be many others which characterize the relationship among agents or between the public and agents in a certain territory or sector.

Some authors, which I would stand out the contributions by Robert Palmer, also mention some important elements, such as:

- Dominant cultural values, significant cultures and subcultures...
- Catalogue of imaginary groups...
- Constitutive elements of the memory of the place

As Palmer himself states, stories, legends, etc. are the chromosomes of the local culture. We should answer the following questions:

- *Which defines this place, this territory?*
- *Which icons define it?*
- *Its place of interest.*
- *Stories, legends.*
- *That producing the life quality of the place.*
- *Which narrative constitutes the imaginary of a place and [culture](#)?*

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Obviously, this process, which could be the purpose of a deep work, should be in some way frequently updated, as we should control the changes of the environments in which we work.

How we materialise a cultural cartography?

As other many things, to materialise a cultural map depends on our objectives when making it. It could be important that the information provided is related to the territorial reality we intended to study, precisely because the spatial distribution is important. Or maybe, it could only be important to have an organised list of the resources we have studied, but their geographical distribution is not very important, although the interrelationship among the elements found is important, as well as the tendencies mentioned.

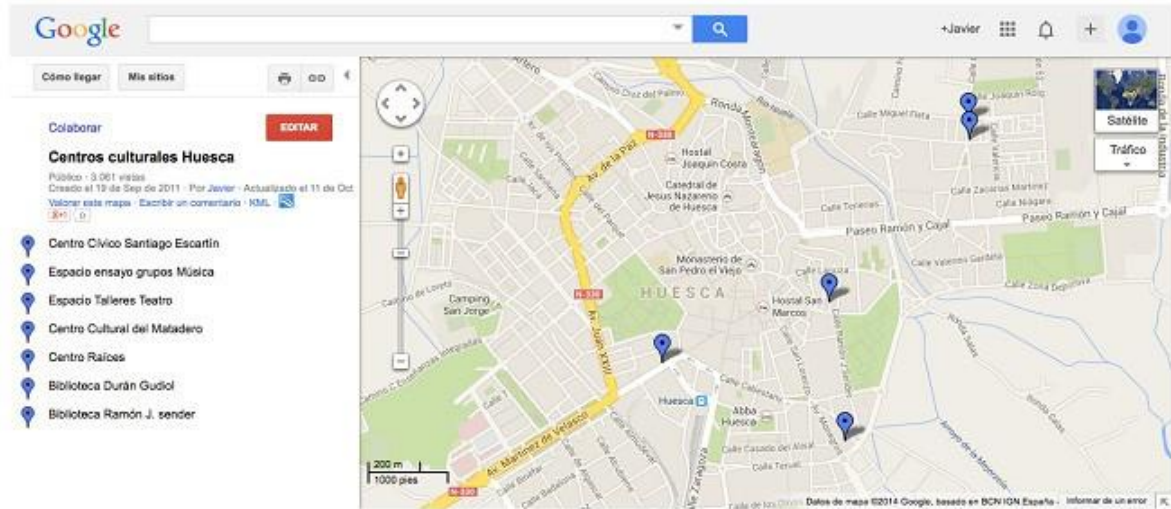
In this sense, it is usual that the map has the following forms:

- A graphic map (made by a designer, an artist) based on the data provided.



- With a GIS support, which makes possible to work later informatically and spatially.

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Map of municipal Cultural Centres of Huesca

- As a conceptual map. This process could be applied, for example, to a sector and all its value chain, in which the role played by each agent is more interesting than their certain geographical situation.



Ruiz Acero, D. Et al: Mapa de relaciones interinstitucionales Sector cine y contenidos digitales-Cali

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Now, it would be appropriate to focus on explaining a little more these two last concepts as they are a little bit more complex. (The first one is an approximate graphic copy of the data obtained).

Geographic Information System and cultural maps:

GIS: A Geographic Information System (GIS, or the Spanish initials: SIG) is an organised integration of hardware, software, and geographic data designed to capture, to store, to manipulate, to analyse, and to deploy in all possible ways the information geographically referenced to solve complex problems of geographic planning and management. It could be also defined as a model of a part of the reality referred to a system of terrestrial coordinates and built to meet specific information needs.

In the strictest sense, it is any information system capable of integrating, storing, editing, analysing, sharing, and showing the information geographically referenced. In a more general sense, GIS are tools which allows users to create interactive consultations, to analyse the spatial information, to edit data and maps, and to present the results of all these [operations](#).

Focusing on a more known field, GIS which are usually within our reach are those using the mashup of Google Maps, already shown in the figures and whose state use reach us.

Sectoral maps, to cross territory, and value chains:

The following graphic shows a possible value chain of a sector:



A general scheme of a value chain of the musical sector

In a certain territory —which can be as big as we want—, to identify the various agents and resources in relation to their function in the specific “sectoral ecosystem” becomes important to analyse a cultural sector or sub-sector.

For this purpose, the scheme included in the figure below should be useful:



Scheme to identify agents in the various stages of a value chain of a cultural sector in general.

It would be the identification, as far as possible and if applicable, of the previous elements described in each box. Also, the analysis of how the relationships among agents are, either from a same part of the chain or from various.

Finally, to draw conclusions and to make a report on it, a sort of “fixed picture” of the sector which, together with the others, will be useful to have a comprehensive view.

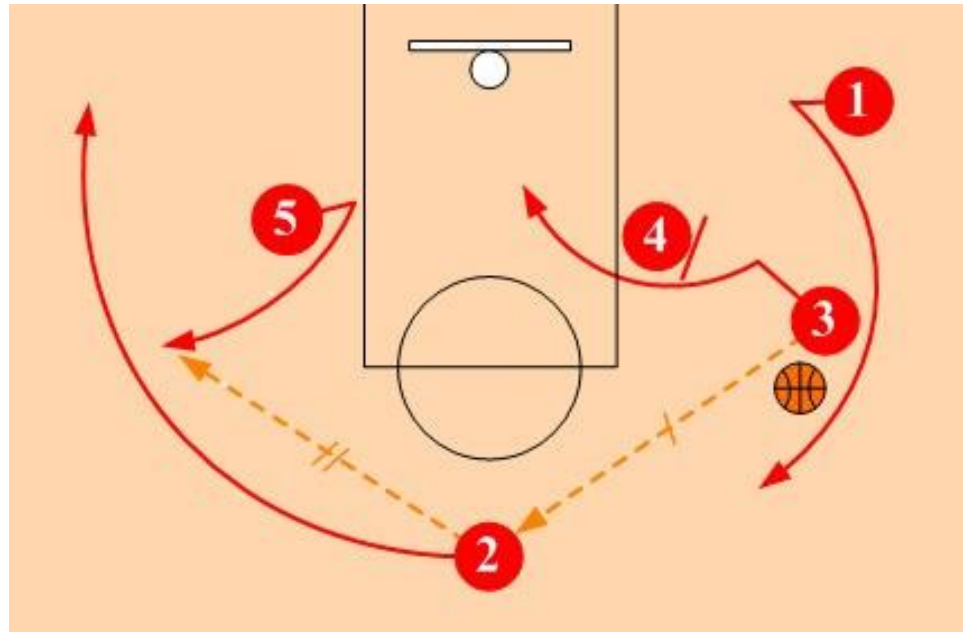
In this regard, it is advisable to observe the specific work given as a reference, which analysis the value chain of the cultural firms of four sectors in the city of Cali (Colombia), as I think it is an interesting exercise which shows everything explained here.

The perspective given by this sectoral exercise also allows us to make two types of analysis:

1. On the one hand, it would be necessary that a sector does not show fragilities or gaps in any link of the value chain, so that the sector is healthy in a certain territory/context. If we are in a position of public, regulator, financing or training agent, among others, that is, in the upper axis of such scheme, the results of this exercise will give clues about which decisions should be made to strengthen a certain sector.
2. Also, and in relation to this, I mention that undoubtedly, when we deal with a mapping work, and except we have a role of academic consultant or researcher, we will generally be part of the sector we are analysing. Seeing the panorama organised by steps in the value chain will allow us to analyse the existence of competitors, of services which are not provided, to analyse the needs of the sector which are capable of being provided by our organisation.

It is therefore important to see where our organisation or project is placed. It could be an entity which intervenes in more than one box. In somehow, we should make that double reflection, which can be shown with a sports comparison.

- To know how the playing field is.
- To know in which position I play, which is my task.



Strategy scheme to play basketball

To culminate the subject of cultural maps and cartographies, it should be appropriate to refer to some works which, in my opinion, are outstanding exercises and show what is mentioned above, beyond the abstract arguments here used.

Some interesting examples of cultural maps:

- Cultural Cartography of Chile. www.cultura.gob.cl
- An element worth to be mentioned, aside from those already mentioned, is the final glossary included in the work. It is very important as the classifications we could make when making inventories, which constitute a cultural map, could have a certain degree of subjectivity. It is therefore important to explain to which we refer when making a series of categorisations.
- Atlas of cultural infrastructure of Mexico. www.sic.gob.mx
- Apart from the complexity of the exercise itself, it is worth mentioning the high degree of importance of statistics and the relations with other serie of data, such as the population and welfare indexes, which address us to indicators: in this case, as mentioned above, context indicators.
- Analysis of value chains of four sectors in cultural industries in Cali. industriasculturalescali.com
- Atlas of the intangible heritage in Andalusia. www.iaph.es
- A nature different from the others, finishing the panorama presented by using examples.

SWOT analysis. An intuitive tool easy to use to know something more about ourselves as well as about our organisation and its environment.

The word SWOT comes from the initials of the components which are analysed in relation to an organisation:

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In Spanish, it is known as DAFO (Debilidades, Amenazas, Fortalezas y Oportunidades).

It is a tool provided (as many others) by the business world. Its advantage is that it is very simple and intuitive. As many methodologies of the world of the business management, it is a commitment between the need to know to take decisions and the agility so that the process is viable without implying excessive resources, from the human economic or temporary point of view.

Its value increases (and this is related to the Knowledge Management) when it is done in a participatory way with the people involved in the organisation or with the usual members or other agents intervening in our territory or sector.

It is a detailed analysis of the weaknesses and strengths of a territory or an organisation in a cultural environment, in relation to technical, human, and economic resources. It is based on pointing out the aspects making the achievement of strategic objectives something of a challenge, or the aspects which have become the main assets of the entity.

If we focus on the structure of this type of analysis, there is a part dealing with the internal reality of the organisation: Strengths and Weaknesses:

- **Strengths:** Those internal factors of the entity, territory or centre which are an optimal quality or a starting point to deal with this process and to reach such objectives.
- **Weaknesses:** Weaknesses are the internal factors of the entity, territory or centre which are a brake in the process to achieve the objectives established.

The environment is analysed at the same time, thus relating it to the whole previous exercise, naturally with a much more modest reach. To analyse the opportunities and threats which our environment provides us:

- **Opportunities:** Those *factors outside the entity*, territory or centre, which could facilitate the fulfilment of the mission and objectives.
- **Threats:** Those *external factors of the entity*, territory or centre which are a brake in the achievement of objectives.

It is fundamental to mention again that this reflexive exercise is not exclusively and carried out by a manager, a strategy chief, etc. It is crucial that all levels of the organisation participate in it because of two reasons.

1. On the one hand, it implies a more complete, plural, and maybe less biased view of the internal and external situation of our organisation.
2. On the other hand, it is a good excuse to obtain from the human team of the organisation:
 1. A higher degree of motivation in work and in the role in the entity.
 2. It is an opportunity to implement the virtuous circle of knowledge management, to share information, methods of working, etc.

The exercise is not just a mere description and realisation of the situation as it is important per se, as well as it is the starting point to solve the problems found (remember that we are talking about what was called analysis of reality).

The work is finished with several measures recommended to turn threats into opportunities, as well as weaknesses into strengths, that is, the main objective of any entity aims to improve its management.

Logically, this is not the only method to analyse our entity or organisation internally or externally, but it is the most known and used. The most important thing of this learning is not to make an analysis in an impeccable way, but to appropriate the methodologies and to use them. We insist again in this chapter on the importance to prioritise what is desired, that is, that the pursuit of the perfection does not stop the achievement of advances, although they are timid and gradual.

4. Cultural indicators Assessment, types, levels, comparability of results

Another section in this web handbook deals with the assessment at the project level. However, when we talk about levels higher than a particular activity or project, the complexity increases. This issue can be addressed by starting in many ways. To whom underwrites these lines, it is important not to lose sight of the set and motivations to address the assessment, which could be several, but are always related to the objectives established. We should then go back to take perspective.

For this purpose, we should talk again about planning at the level we want to: strategic, annual, programming... As mentioned above, there are two elements in all of them:

- A starting point.
- A goal, a desirable arrival point.

In some way, we have identified the starting point with the diagnosis techniques explained above, which could be completed with much more complex and expensive tools, including the surveys on cultural consumption and habits, or with the use of existing statistics. In the Spanish State, for example, and with levels of desegregation of unequal data, there are interesting and many useful statistical sources for the cultural management in bodies, such as:

- Ministry of Public Administrations.
- Ministry of Public Works.
- Ministry of Industry, Tourism, and Trade through the attached body Institute of Tourist Studies.
- Ministry of Economy and Treasury, as well as attached bodies, such as the National Institute of Statistics.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport, with own services and attached bodies, such as the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (Spanish initials: INAEM), apart from the countless statistics of services in education, libraries, etc.
- General Society of Authors and Publishers (Spanish initials: SGAE).

As the study *Información sobre la Acción Cultural Local Disponible en Organismos de Ámbito Estatal*, assigned by the Spanish Federation of Municipal Councils and Provinces to Interarts. This information is significantly complemented with bodies dependent of several autonomous regions, such as autonomous institutes of statistics.

The goal is established by determining general and specific objectives in the planning process. General objectives set us goals which have to do with the social changes we are looking for rather than with what is below identified as

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effects and impacts. Specific or operational objectives should specify these general frameworks, so that we could find measurable variables.

All this is better understood if we look to the scheme of what a matrix of planning is, which is its core:

Objetivo general (Largo/medio plazo)	Objetivos específicos a medio /corto plazo (outcomes)	Resultados esperados (outputs) (en el periodo x)	Indicadores de resultado (output)
1	1a		
1b			
2	2a		
2b			
3	3a		
3b			
4	4a		

The key word of this section appears for the first time in this matrix: that word is **Indicator**, that is, *result indicators*. Actually, result indicators are usually measured, either in a project, as the respective chapter will explain, or in a programming or planning, but we should consider that they are a specific type of indicators.

At this point, it is necessary to precise what an indicator is and is not, as well as what types of indicators we have. There is nothing better that take advantage of the outstanding publication by AECID on the subject matter and in which Salvador Carrasco deals with important methodological issues:

An indicator is the generally numeric demonstration of the analysis of a process to identify and to measure an information. If the indicator aims to monitor and to assess the key variables of an organisation or institution by comparing in two moment the time, it is a performance indicator. There is a wide literature on this matter in which different meanings of indicator could be found. (Miguel, J. M. & Sevilla-Guzman, E. 1973; Gallopin, 1996; Carrasco, S. 2006; AECA, 2002; Bonnefoi, J.C. & Armijo, M 2005; MAEC, 2007). Carrasco, S. in (AECID,2009;45).

Types of indicators

Depending on whether they are numeric magnitudes or not, they are classified in two main groups:

- **Quantitative indicators:** A quantitative indicator is a statistical data processed and related to other statistical data to provide a specific information.

This image includes examples of quantitative indicators:

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- B 022** • nivel I
Nº de empresas ligadas a la conservación, formación, creación, producción/prestación, distribución/comercialización, difusión/comunicación, consultoría y gestión de bienes o servicios culturales radicadas en el ámbito local contabilizadas en 1 año⁽¹⁾ / nº de hab.
- B 025** • nivel III
Nº de m² dedicados al comercio de bienes culturales (libro, disco, vídeo, arte, antigüedades, artesanía, etc.) en el ámbito local contabilizados en 1 año⁽¹⁾ / nº de hab.
- B 039** • nivel I
Presupuesto de Inversión⁽⁴⁾ total que el área de cultura del gobierno local destina a medidas directas de apoyo o fomento del tejido cultural local en 1 año⁽¹⁾ / nº de hab.

Source: *Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales. FEMP - 2009.*

- **Qualitative indicators:** They come from responses or consultations to select an item among several items.

The figure below shows some examples of qualitative indicators:

<p>A 017 • nivel II</p> <p>¿Qué mecanismos existen para tomar en cuenta, valorar y coordinar dicho impacto en la definición de la estrategia del área de cultura del gobierno local?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flujo de información continuo de doble dirección sobre objetivos estratégicos, programas y acciones. • Grupos de trabajo conjunto entre las áreas de urbanismo y cultura del gobierno local. • Mesas consultivas. • Otros (especificar). 	<p>B 053 • nivel I</p> <p>¿Existen otras áreas dentro del gobierno local que generen medidas de apoyo de las que se beneficien los agentes de los sectores culturales? ¿Cuáles son estas otras áreas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoción económica. • Turismo. • Innovación. • Comercio. • Otras (especificar).
<p>B 021 • nivel I</p> <p>¿Se maneja habitualmente algún censo, base de datos, lista de distribución, etc., que permita conocer esta información?</p> <p>En caso afirmativo, indicar cuáles.</p>	<p>A 014 • nivel I</p> <p>¿Se reconoce expresamente, dentro del gobierno local, el potencial de contribución que existe entre desarrollo urbano y cultura?</p> <p>Aportar documentación (planes estratégicos, plan general de ordenamiento urbano, programas de actuaciones, etc.) en la que se establezca este reconocimiento.</p>

Source: *Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales. FEMP - 2009.*

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The dream of any assessor is to have as much obtainable quantitative indicators as possible. It is not always an easy task, and an excessive concern for having numeric data could prevent us from assessing important issues. On the contrary, there are also simple ways to quantitatively translate qualitative indicators. For example, percentages of positive responses or valuations can be considered in a satisfaction survey, two quite evident cases, but there are other many techniques for this purpose.

Another way to categorise indicators is considering what they observe. Several types can be distinguished:

- **Context:** They include all the information of the environment which directly influences the project and, in turn, is outside it.
- **Product / Result:** They provide numeric information of the quantity and quality of products, goods or services generated from programmed activities, from the processes carried out, and from implemented actions. This is the short-term result, the direct purpose of planning.
- **Process:** They analyse how the actions, the processes, the activities or the performances programmed have been carried out.
- **Resource:** From which we know the nature and quantity of factors directly or indirectly used to carry the intervention to achieve the purpose established in the project.
- **Effect:** Their aim is to measure the effects as direct and medium-term results on users to whom the projects are addressed.
- **Impact:** They measure the ultimate result obtained in the long term as a result of the intervention as well as affect users' environment.

This same distribution of typology of indicators shows that there is a certain cyclical logic. Context indicators are closely related to what we have dealt with in the phase of diagnosis and mapping. Actually, impact indicators (and, in some way, effect indicators) stem from the medium-term change of such context indicators. In the middle of the scheme, indicators of result, process or resource are more related to the implementation and development of actions.

Indicators of Process are useful to exercise control over more important, quality, and value issues when developing an intervention.

On the other hand, indicators Result measure, in general terms, if we were effective in the achievement of results, indicators of Resource are useful to assess the efficiency of the intervention.

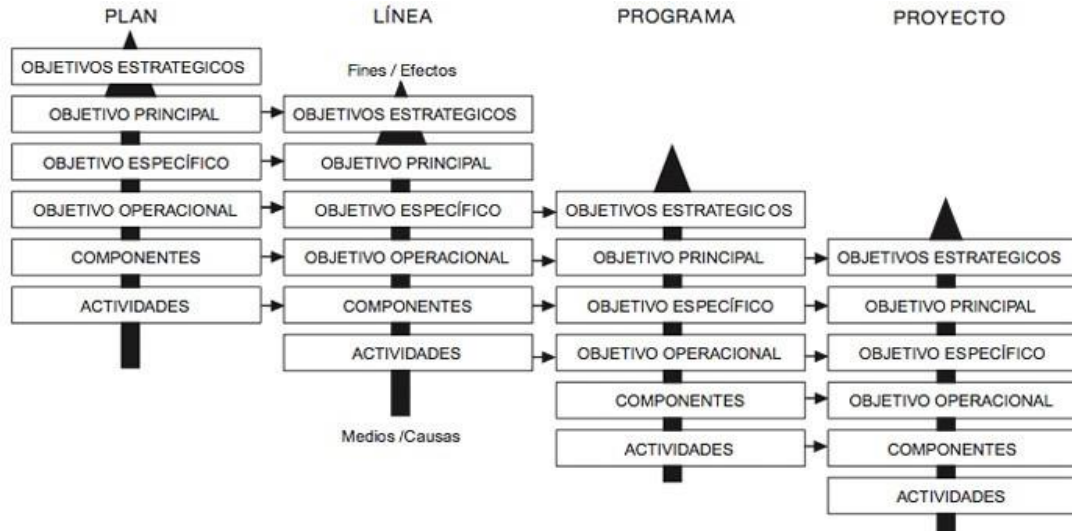
Finally, if our objectives are related to social change, indicators of Effect and Impact provide responses in the short and medium-long term, respectively, and logically, they will be closer to main objectives than to the political sphere of intervention, in the wide sense of the word "politics", not in the usual restrictive sense, that is, not as a definition of a power sphere but, for example, according to Wikipedia, a moral branch dealing with the activity by which a free society, made up of free people, solve the problems arising from their collective [coexistence](#).

Building up indicators

The obtaining of indicators could be addressed from different ways, depending on the purpose of our work; the management/planning level in which we are considering an assessment system is decisive. To be at a level of a cultural project or even of a cultural programming or annual planning of a service is not the same as to be in a

system to assess a policy or a broad Action Plan.

Salvador Carrasco (op. cit) clearly shows this difference and these levels in the following schemes:



Intervention levels in the strategic Planning. (AECID, 2009).

If we are working at a level which has more to do with a specific project or an annual planning, an easier task could be to directly consider building up indicators from the matrix of planning and following the scheme included in several planning models. We obviously refer to what is proposed by the logic framework approach or by other related planning methodologies, such as the programming focused on results.

Let's look again the figure "scheme of a matrix of planning".

Objetivo general (Largo/medio plazo)	Objetivos específicos a medio /corto plazo (outcomes)	Resultados esperados (outputs) (en el periodo x)	Indicadores de resultado (output)
1	1a		
1b			
2	2a		
2b			
3	3a		
3b			
4	4a		

The most direct way to operate in a case like this is to deduce, from operational objectives, the expected results and, in turn, the indicators to be used. Then, as we will see, we should think about how to obtain data for assessing them.

It is a “made-to-measure” exercise, with its pros and cons. It is mainly a craft process, but it is also difficult with respect to the particular: it perfectly adapts to the specific context for which it is created, but the choice of indicators is a little bit subjective, thus arising other problems discussed below, such as the comparability. However, it would be the most advisable for the “low” levels of planning and programming due to its viability.

Another way to tackling the problem of building up indicators is using the systematic method suggested by Salvador Carrasco in the work mentioned above, a method which, unlike the previous one, could be described as “industrial” and which has a wide margin of applicability, of validity for several policies and intervention plans.

Actuación Prioritaria		Vinculación Directa:					
		X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆
Condicionada, en relación o en función de:	Y ₁	X ₁ Y ₁	X ₂ Y ₁	X ₃ Y ₁	X ₄ Y ₁	X ₅ Y ₁	X ₆ Y ₁
	Y ₂	X ₁ Y ₂	X ₂ Y ₂	X ₃ Y ₂	X ₄ Y ₂	X ₅ Y ₂	X ₆ Y ₂
	Y ₃	X ₁ Y ₃	X ₂ Y ₃	X ₃ Y ₃	X ₄ Y ₃	X ₅ Y ₃	X ₆ Y ₃
	Y ₄	X ₁ Y ₄	X ₂ Y ₄	X ₃ Y ₄	X ₄ Y ₄	X ₅ Y ₄	X ₆ Y ₄
	Y ₅	X ₁ Y ₅	X ₂ Y ₅	X ₃ Y ₅	X ₄ Y ₅	X ₅ Y ₅	X ₆ Y ₅
	Y ₆	X ₁ Y ₅	X ₂ Y ₅	X ₃ Y ₆	X ₄ Y ₆	X ₅ Y ₆	X ₆ Y ₆
	Y ₇	X ₁ Y ₇	X ₂ Y ₇	X ₃ Y ₇	X ₄ Y ₇	X ₅ Y ₇	X ₆ Y ₇
	Y ₈	X ₁ Y ₈	X ₂ Y ₈	X ₃ Y ₈	X ₄ Y ₈	X ₅ Y ₈	X ₆ Y ₈

Table of variables (AECID, 2009; 52)

As the author explains, the first set of variables (X), directly linked to each main action (Spanish initials: AP), is obtained by identifying and quantifying the actions, the resources for their obtaining and the participants in the action, that is, Action, Beneficiaries, Actors, Financial resources, Human resources, and Facilities/Infrastructures. The procedure to obtain variables is by giving answers to the following questions: Which action? To whom it is addressed? Who acts? With which budget? With which staff? And with which facility? (AECID,2009;52)

A less abstract example, applied to a strategic objective of a museum, could be as follows:

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Objetivo de la programación nº 1
Variable X: Acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo
Variable Y: en función de algunos parámetros que nos interese desglosar

X	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆
X	Acciones	Beneficiarios	Actores / Agentes	Financiación	Recursos humanos	Recursos infraestructurales
	nº Acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo	nº de beneficiarios que participan en Acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo	nº de actores que participan en Acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo	presupuesto destinado a las acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo	nº de recursos humanos destinados a llevar a cabo las acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo	nº de recursos infraestructurales destinados a llevar a cabo las acciones realizadas para la obtención de ese objetivo
Y ₁	En función de ...	En función de ...	En función de ...	En función de ...	En función de ...	En función de ...
Y ₂	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él	Lugar: En el Museo /fuera de él
Y ₃	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado	Asistencia espontánea / público concertado
Y ₄	Gestión: Participación en la decisión/ Propuesta unidireccional	Perfil laboral: trabajador/ estudiante/en para/ pensionista	Públicos/privados / tercer sector	Origen de la financiación	Grado de dedicación (% medio de jornada) (<25, 25<x<50,50<x<75, >75)	Tipo de recurso: Espacial, iluminación/ audiovisual/...
Y ₅	En relación a los contenidos del programa expositivo	Nivel Académico: Estudios superiores / Secundaria / Primaria / Sin estudios				
Y ₆	Presencial / virtual	Minoría étnica: Si /No				
Y ₇		Clase social: a/b/c/d				
Y ₈		Género: Mujer/ Hombre				
Y ₉		Edad: e < 20 / 20 > e < 30 / 30 > e < 50 / e > 50				
Y ₁₀		procedencia: del barrio/ del resto de la ciudad / del resto del país/ extranjero				

Scheme for the case of a museum. (Made by the author).

From this point, some variables would be mixed with others to obtain all possible variations. For example, if the variable X2 is mixed with Y3, the following will be found:

- Variable 1: *number of beneficiaries participating in the Actions carried out to obtain the objective _____ who spontaneously go to the Museum.*
- Variable 2: *number of beneficiaries participating in Actions carried out to obtain the objective _____ who could be considered as an officially approved public (organised visits, pedagogical activities...).*

In such way, the possible indicators are writing in an automatic way, which implies a huge amount of indicators, a new challenge for use: to choose the most interesting indicators for our purpose, considering that an assessment should provide a reliable picture of reality with as less data as possible, that is, a picture as much pixel as possible, but representing the reality according to our needs. We do not want reality itself, but a representation of it (...and we do not insist here on Magritte's pipe...)

To select them, we consider the following criteria (probably known by the person reading these lines): Relevance, Pertinence, Reliability, and Efficiency.

Finally, effects and impacts should also be dealt with, which are more related to how we specify our objective, which would take us back to a scheme more linked to the craft systems mentioned at the beginning.

Sources of verification:

A last column in the previous matrix of planning should be included, or in the chart of the system of indicators which would explain us “from where we are going to extract data” or what is usually called as sources of verification, an aspect with which is generally dealt at the end, but it is crucial as, by definition and common sense, the assessment process cannot stop our activity or commit an excess of economic or human resources.

By saying it in a certain way, the assessment is a research tool, a useful method for decision-making, as well as a part of the management process, but it is not the last goal, it is not a goal itself, unless we are professional assessors, a very specific profession.

In this sense, and to ensure the sustainability of an assessment system, we should observe what is the best way to include in the usual operation of an organisation.

To say it directly, everyone is in the situation, to a greater or lesser extent, in which *we call somebody to account or others call us to account*. In other words, we usually give or receive grants, or hire or are hired, or many times both cases.

The economic justification of aids or the monitoring of payments made have been greatly developed (although such development is not always enough). Many scandals have been taken place to build up an economic control system.

Major strides have been made to know whether somebody has fraudulently kept the money. However, little progress has been made to know what has been done with such money. Better explained, the requirements to know if the aid or subvention has been used for their purpose are already very weak. It is important to have the possibility to determine that the money given or received corresponds with that initially explained not only in the ethical and moral sense, but in relation to effectiveness and efficiency if the expected results are achieved.

Although it could seem an enormous work, it is necessary that, together with economic reports which are essential in every administration, execution reports are made beyond the actual empty literature where we use such space to say how good we have worked.

It is time for certificated reports to respond to well-defined items so that monitorings would be better conducted and we finally obtain data in a automatic way and with the necessary economy.

By summarising in a sentence, it is necessary to standardise procedures and protocols, as well as, as far as possible, to make forms which channel data and force organisations to a performance of results and explanation of the processes beyond the current situation. This is the only way in which we make progress in making that the assessment is feasible. This is probably the best way to find most a large part of economic sources of verification.

Benchmarking, such a horrible word dealing with comparability

It is important to point out that these processes of diagnosis and assessment of interventions or policies could be useful to know in which situation is the city, centre or service in relation to others, which is essential to have a view as much objective as possible of our situation.

To measure, as it is already known, is to compare a reality, either with parameters or with another realities. For this purpose, the data obtained should be comparable, so there should be an integration and harmonisation process in the use of indicators.

This is usually called “Benchmarking”, a strange and usual work which refers to such comparability.

Several international bodies are now conducting works in this line. These efforts should have a supranational component in the best scenes. UNESCO’s works, in which I have been lucky for working, and the indicators used by EUROSTAT are included in the references.

In a national context, it is also important to clearly establish referent magnitudes. This is the only way to generate standards, which, as regards Cultural Policy, would be an achievement in many territories which we know.

Some sectors (libraries, archives, museums...) have developed them more than other sectors, but it is a challenge which cannot be postponed anymore.

The great effort made by FEMP is worth standing out, as it allowed to obtain the publication mentioned in this work and has been simplified to give greater viability, in collaboration with the University of Valencia, to result in the BÁCULO project, which is included at the end of this section. Obviously, the role that the Ministry responsible for cultural issues should play is still missed, whatever it is called in each political period.

To assess, to obtain data, to launch statistics... are expensive processes which require annual series to draw some conclusions. If this aspect is not developed, we must keep working in volunteering, the good will or the arbitrary to a great extent.

References:

- UNESCO: Culture for Development Indicator Suite
- www.unesco.org
- EUROSTAT: Cultural Statistics
- epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu
- UCGL: Culture in the Post-2015 Development Agenda
- www.agenda21culture.net
- BÁCULO - Local Cultural Barometer: An Indicator System to assess Local Cultural Policies
- www.mc2-uv.es

Indicators: A tool for processes for public contracts and for the selection of applications for subventions and grants

One of the most important uses of this type of methodologies, particularly when we take responsibilities in public entities, either in local, district, regional or state levels, is the assessment of other projects.

In a healthy democratic system, it is necessary that all selections are carried out by considering some general publicity principles of calls, transparency of processes, free concurrence, objectivity, equality, and non-discrimination.

In this context, it is first necessary that the games rules are established before launching the call to which the projects are presented.

When we talk about *call*, we could refer either to processes to hire services which could be provided by third parties (firms) or to processes of subventions and grants for artistic or cultural projects in general.

The documentation is annexed with the description of an actual selection process of 7 projects in the scope of Performing Arts and how such called was made, especially stressing that the artistic aspect was not the only one valuable. Aside from other considerations, a real example which illustrates the effort to look for indicators to objectify *ex-ante* assessments in subjective environment is the world of performances.

What it all adds up to is that one of the obligations in every process of public contract is to control the work execution. This type of monitoring can be conducted by building up a little system of indicators based on execution projects offered by bidders.

This type of practices could be useful to give credibility to the relationship among public entities, creators, and the firms of the sector. Maybe, it is Utopian to banish forever suspicions or fibs about favouritisms or clientelism, but they undoubtedly decrease the suspicion and credibility gap with respect to supposed bad habits in all these procedures.

On the other hand, it is also good to require the firms bidding assessment schemes by defining indicators. This is useful for to mainly practical and positive things: on the one hand, it is a clear control mechanism of its contract, and, on the other hand, it is a way to build up and ensure the assessment practice in our services by taking advantage of the own effort of firms collaborating in a context in which routine and bureaucracy burden our capacity of action.

Reference:

- [Brun, J.](#) *La experiencia aragonesa de evaluación de proyectos escénicos*
- www2.ub.edu

5. Observatories. Stable structures to produce innovation in interventions from knowledge

A perspective of their evolution

In the previous decade, and obviously before the crisis which *destroyed us*, in Spain there was an increase of the awareness of a lack with respect to data and reflections which were useful to better knowing the cultural sector, and the hypothesis of the figure of an observatory as a supportive tool for the decision-making and for agents was considered in some autonomous regions.

Some of the first initiatives were linked to provincial councils, although they were greatly developed as formative elements. The pioneering initiative was the Centre de Recursos Culturals - CERC from the Provincial Council of Barcelona, mimetically followed the SARC in Valencia. Many years later, this possibility was shown in some political programmes or strategic plans at an autonomous level, such as the first tripartite government in Catalonia or the first Basque Plan for Culture in the Basque Country

Then, the El Vigía Observatory, from the Provincial Council of Cadiz, appeared, a very simple structure which has provided some interesting results. Also, there was an ephemeral presence of a self-called Observatory, the CERC in the Provincial Council of Granada which hardly intervened throughout its short duration.

However, the initiative which was clearer consolidated was the Basque Observatory for Culture, which was created from the Basque Plan for Culture.

Similarly, and at a local level, the Culture Commission of the Spanish Federation of Municipal Councils and Provinces started to have in such decade a certain receptivity on this issue from a convergent process which started by establishing a Cultural Agenda of municipal councils and provinces, and then continued by redefining the role of intermediary bodies (Provincial councils, town councils...) in the local administration in culture, which was reaffirmed in the Study of Standards of different typologies of cultural facilities, finally culminating in the *Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales* [Guideline to assess local cultural policies], launched in Madrid the last week. This Government has actively participated in its process.

Finally, to close this first chronological approach, some different supranational initiatives in the European context are mentioned, such as the Grenoble Observatory in France and the Piemonte Observatory in Italy, as well as the Department of Studies and Prospective of the French Ministry of Culture, a reference at a continental level.

In addition, more than 10 years ago, the aim was first to create an observatory dependent of the European Commission from the so-called Ruffolo Report, written in 2001, which pointed out that the European Union should have this type of agency.

From this point, with the participation of cultural networks, the concept evolves and is finally used by the European Cultural Foundation, headquartered in Amsterdam, which launches a Laboratory mainly as a coordination instance of existing initiatives.

The Eurocolt 31 is another project worth to be mentioned: it is included in the 5th European Framework Programme

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for Research. Through the network Eurocities and with the participation of the network Encact and several European municipal councils, such project dealt with the creation of indicators through state workshops, among other objectives. The workshop corresponding to Spain was held in October 2004, and the final conference of the project was held in Barcelona in March 2005.

The Ministry of Culture was restored after the elections of 2004, and a possible cultural observatory linked to the Directorate-General for Cultural Cooperation began to be talked about.

In November of such year, the socialist party (PSOE) presented and approved in the Congress of Deputies a proposal, not a law, to establish a cultural information system.

About two years, the Directorate-General for Cultural Cooperation worked on the implementation of these mechanisms to collect data and reflection. However, the Ministry found a situation at two levels:

Specialised and on the part of university agents who were independent or belonged to the private sector, including Interarts (Barcelona), the Fundación Autor (SGAE - General Society of Authors and Publishers) (Madrid) or the University of Deusto (Bilbao), were at the first level.

At the second level, bodies working from a territorial point of view (Municipal, Autonomous), for which an agreement with the Spanish Federation of Municipal Councils and Provinces (FEMP) was established.

Without specifying how, the Ministry's desire was to articulate all these initiatives through two bodies:

- The Statistical Service of the Ministry of Culture.
- The Cultural Sector Conference (inter-regional).

Similarly, the Ministry of Culture conducted the Study on Cultural Habits and Consumption, supported by the infrastructure of the Society of Authors and Publishers (Spanish initials: SGAE).

On the other hand, internationally and outside the European context, the Observatory on Cultural Diversity, in Montreal, has been very important as it had a very active role in the discussions on this issue held by the UNESCO and which resulted in the Convention on Cultural Diversity.

The idea of creating this Network Observatory by the Ministry was at odds with the complexity of the Autonomous State and its several priorities, as well as with the asymmetry in the development of different territories.

Finally, the ministerial changes implied by the extinction of the Directorate-General for Cultural Cooperation, which was replaced by the Directorate-General for Cultural Industries, shelved such project.

Observatories as one of the possible models to visualise the assessment function of cultural policies

One of the main axes in which an observatory for cultural policies should articulate its action would be the assessment of such policies, something which is not always considered, at least in the geographical environment in which we usually operate. The assessment tradition is limited in comparison with other scopes of public action:

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environmental policies, development cooperation, etc.

This could also derive from a platitude which, as evident, makes no sense: to assess policies, they should be first known and, for this purpose, they should be first formulated.

According to the lecturer María Bustelo, the assessment is aimed at feeding back and improving the action by another, controlling responsibilities, and finally, communicating it. She mentioned “improvement”, “accountability”, and “enlightenment”.

She also pointed out that the assessment processes should have four analysis levels to be completed:

- Empirical discoveries: facts, data, and information collection.
- Interpretations: Explanation of these facts and data.
- Judgements: Valuations about discoveries and their interpretations.
- Recommendations: suggestions of possible lines of action.

As we know, the assessment is aimed at facilitating the decision-making process, as well as the organisational learning. It is usually related to what some people call the technocratic illusion, that is, the belief that the problem is solved by having statistical data, without making conclusions or reflections from them.

Some of the main characteristics of the assessment of cultural policies is their political nature (the policies and programmes assessed are the result of political decisions) and the fact that they mostly depend on the context, thus implying such difficulty of achieving the comparability mentioned above.

We should consider something important to place us in the appropriate context: not confuse assessment and research. In a first state, and according to my point of view, an assessment work should be carried out before the research work. The main differences between both concepts lie in the nature of “applied” and “addressed to action” of the assessment, against the “theoretical” or “basic” nature of research.

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