

The work of the network 'Investigating Cultural Sustainability' was supported by the European COST Association (Cooperation in Science and Technology) and funded within the European Commission's research programme Horizon 2020. COST Actions are designed to build new knowledge by bringing together researchers to cooperate and coordinate nationally-funded research activities, and to build up new transnational and international research co-operation. The funding provides an opportunity for researchers to develop their competences, share experience and expertise with colleagues in other countries, and improve their research career through workshops, training and exchange programs. The Action 'Investigating Cultural Sustainability' in its four years organised eight workshops or symposiums hosted by its members across Europe, and a cross-cutting meeting was organised in Brussels for stakeholders in order to collate and produce new knowledge with the help of external experts, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners. Over 30 research missions between the research institutes were carried out by members of the Action, and two training schools were organised to strengthen the topic among the young researchers working in this field. The Action resulted in a number of joint publications and research proposals, and a Master Course in Cultural Policy on Cultural Sustainability. A key outcome of the Action is the book series 'Routledge Studies in Culture and Sustainable Development'. The conclusions of the work were reported in 'Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development' and discussed in a final public conference in Helsinki on 6-8 May 2015, 'Culture(s) in Sustainable Futures: theories, policies, practices'.

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Book series 'Routledge Studies in Culture and Sustainable Development'

The new book series 'Routledge Studies in Culture and Sustainable Development' aims to analyse the broad and multiple roles that culture plays in sustainable development. It takes as one of its starting points the idea that culture in sustainability serves as a 'meta-narrative' for bringing together ideas and standpoints from a diverse body of academic research currently scattered among different domains, disciplines and thematic fields. Moreover, the series responds to the call for inter- and transdisciplinary approaches which is being strongly felt, as in most other fields of research, in the field of sustainability and sustainable development. By combining and confronting the various approaches, in both the sciences and the humanities and in dealing with social, cultural, environmental, political, and aesthetic disciplines, the series offers a comprehensive contribution to the present day sustainability sciences as well as related policies. The first three volumes of the series, which is edited by Katriina Soini and Joost Dessein, were edited and mostly authored by the members of the COST Action.

Theory and Practice in Heritage and Sustainability. Between past and future

Edited by Elizabeth Auclair and Graham Fairclough

Cultural Sustainability in European Cities. Imagining Europolis

Edited by Svetlana Hristova, Milena Dragičević Šešić and Nancy Duxbury

Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development. Theories and practices of Territorialisation

Edited by Joost Dessein, Elena Battaglini and Lummina Horlings

www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/sustainability/culture.php
www.routledge.com/books/series/RSCSD/

Culture *in*, for and as Sustainable Development

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE COST ACTION IS1007
INVESTIGATING CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY



Culture matters in sustainable development. Yet still, almost 30 years after the Brundtland publication 'Our Common Future' and despite a few recent attempts by transnational and international organisations, and some cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific endeavours, the incorporation of culture into sustainability debates seems to be a great scientific and political challenge, and one that questions the prevailing conventional sustainability discourses.



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During its four year period (2011-2015) the main objective of The COST Action IS1007 'Investigating Cultural Sustainability' was to highlight European research across its members' countries in order to provide policy makers with instruments for integrating culture as a key element of the sustainable development. The Action's network was composed of around 100 researchers from 25 countries within the EU, with participants as well from Israel, New Zealand and Australia. It held a wide variety of disciplines and fields of research, ranging from cultural, humanistic and social sciences, through political and natural sciences to planning. These were organised in three thematic clusters - Concepts, Policies and Assessments - which are broadly reflected in the structure of the Action's final report 'Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development'.

www.culturalsustainability.eu/outputs/conclusions.pdf

The COST Action IS1007 'Investigating Cultural Sustainability' is a European research network that studied in a multidisciplinary perspective the multiple meanings, connotations and complex interrelationship of the concepts culture, sustainability and sustainable development. The network built a comprehensive analytical framework that recognises three 'roles' of culture in sustainable development. This allows the study and application of 'culture and sustainable development' in a structured way.

First, culture can have a supportive and self-promoting role (characterised as 'culture *in* sustainable development'). This expands conventional sustainable development discourse by adding culture as a self-standing 4th pillar alongside separate ecological, social, and economic considerations and imperatives. Second, a role ('culture *for* sustainable development') which offers culture as a more influential force that can operate beyond itself. This role moves culture into a framing, contextualising and mediating mode that can balance all three of the existing pillars and guide sustainable

development between economic, social, and ecological pressures and needs. Third, a more fundamental role ('culture *as* sustainable development') which sees culture as the necessary overall foundation and structure for achieving the aims of sustainable development.

In all three roles, the recognition that culture is at the root of all human decisions and actions and an overarching concern (even a new paradigm) in sustainable development thinking, causes culture and sustainability to become mutually intertwined; the distinctions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability thus begin to fade.

What are the policy implications of the three roles of culture? In the first role, policy strengthens the key intrinsic values of culture, and tends to focus on creativity and diversity of cultural expressions and their contributions to human-centred sustainable development trajectories. In the second role, the policy extends to influence, share and shape the aims of other public policies, like livelihood, industries, social and environmental well-being. In the third role, policy promotes broader transformations towards more holistically sustainable societies, for example through increased awareness and behaviour changes that can provide catalysts and enablers for grassroots collective actions, and through the development of the capacity and capability of individuals and communities to adapt and carry on more sustainable ways of life.

Culture having these three different roles is relevant for the flows of thought and action that policies follow. We identified eight of these different, but still overlapping 'scripts' that reveal the broad contours of a new type of policy landscape: the negotiation of memories, identities and heritage; the relevance of place, landscape and territory; the complexities of social life, commons and participation; the centrality of creative practices and activities; culturally sensitive

policies for economic development; nature conservation; the importance of increasing awareness and knowledge of sustainability; and finally, policies aiming at transformations.

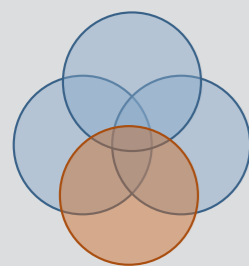
Hence, culture is not just a topic of cultural policy; it should also inform and be integrated with all other policies. Policies dealing with education, tourism, research, cultural diplomacy, social policies, and city and regional planning, as well as other areas, can integrate culture in the core of their policy-making to various degrees.

Assessments are an important part of both policies and politics and 'indicators' are perhaps the most commonly used. They select from the complexity of everyday life a few representative threads, headlines or leverage points that can be distilled into more easily comprehensible evidence for the impacts of events and trajectories, the effects of different courses of action, and the quality and direction of change. Existing culturally-sensitive indicator sets are limited, and there are specific challenges such as the availability, standardisation, aggregation and ranking of data, all of which are required to allow cultural statistics to be consistently constructed and made useful. We offer suggestions for the way forward, including the importance of joint learning processes and participatory development of indicators, the need for the collection of good examples and practices (notably of qualitative indicators, with illustrations of how they can be used and combined with quantitative indicators), the acknowledgment in indicator construction of the three different roles of culture and the recognition of the time- and context-specificity of indicators.

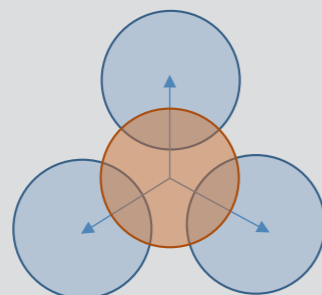
Building on a number of general research principles, the COST Action suggests lines for future research, categorized in four clusters: refining and operationalising conceptual approaches; developing methodologies and practices; expanding the evidence base; and a selection of thematic topics that currently seem to us to be key. New European and global funding streams, for example within the ERA and Horizon 2020, are becoming available for research that addresses sustainability issues, and supported by our extensive webs of cross- and inter-disciplinary collaborations, we can see the necessity and the advantages for everyone of culture gaining a more central and transformative role in sustainable development discourse, and in action. We envisage that the insights of this COST Action will help to ensure a strong 'cultural stream' in future research and policy.

Dessein, J., Soini, K., Fairclough, G. and Horlings, L. (eds) 2015. *Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development. Conclusions from the COST Action IS1007 Investigating Cultural Sustainability*. University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Available at: <http://www.culturalsustainability.eu/outputs/conclusions.pdf>

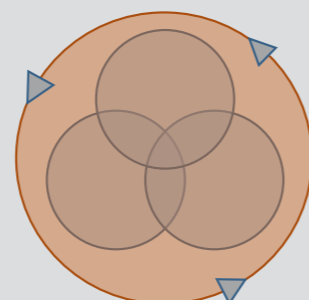
Culture in sustainable development



Culture for sustainable development



Culture as sustainable development



The three roles of culture (represented in orange) in sustainable development (the three circles represent the three pillars). Culture added as a fourth pillar (left diagram), culture mediating between the three pillars (central diagram) and culture as the foundation for sustainable development. The arrows indicate the ever-changing dynamics of culture and sustainable development (right diagram).

