

Participation of EU Member States' Citizens on Foreign Culture and Cultural Products

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Abstract: Culture is an important topic of the present time. It is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy. The international organizations, like UNESCO, OECD, Council of Europe, as well as European Commission are affirming, that respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, are among the best guarantees of international peace and security. Therefore the cultural and creative sectors are considered as very important in European Union countries. The article deals with the issue of the participation of EU citizens on foreign cultures and cultural product as the expression of interest and openness of the citizens of individual EU member countries to get known foreign culture of other EU member state. The willingness of EU citizens to participate in foreign cultures across EU is evaluated based on the indicators describing the level of foreign languages knowledge and the participation in foreign cultural products. The evaluation was performed by usage of multi-criteria decision making methods, of MAPPAC method. As the result of the analyse is evident the different attitude to foreign culture of citizens in individual EU countries.

Keywords: Cultural participation, European member states, Evaluation, Language skills

1. Introduction

Culture is an important aspect of European Union (EU) policy. It is a driving force for economic and social development, as well as innovation and cohesion. It contributes to people's well-being, to social cohesion and inclusion. Cultural and creative sectors are considered as very important at EU level. They are considered as drivers of economic growth, job creation and external trade. The EU is diverse in cultural matters and the EU member countries are different with diverse culture backgrounds. The main EU's cultural priorities are therefore to contribute to the development of the culture in the member states, to encourage contemporary cultural production and to promote cultural cooperation and diffusion of culture across EU. Moreover, also the issue of cultural cohesion and multiculturalism is very topical in the contemporary, rapidly changing environment. Currently we are experiencing a number of manifestations of insufficient cultural integration in today's highly differentiated European societies. As evidenced by UNESCO (2002) culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, in addition to art and literature, also lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. In accordance with Article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty, "the EU shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore". Culture is also an important element and determinant of many concepts and strategies, as evidenced in Good Governance concept evaluation in EU countries or Sustainable Development Assessment.

As stated by Eurostat (2016a) culture is one of Europe's greatest strengths: "it is a source of values and identity and gives the continent a sense of belonging". It also contributes to people's well-being, to social cohesion and inclusion. The cultural and creative sectors are drivers of economic growth, job creation and external trade. In our increasingly diverse societies is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and

dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are therefore guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace (UNESCO, 2002).

1.1 Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture. Cultural pluralism is distinct from multiculturalism (Nagle, 2009). Multiculturalism lacks the requirement of a dominant culture. If the dominant culture is weakened, societies can easily pass from cultural pluralism into multiculturalism without any intentional steps being taken by that society. If communities function separately from each other, or compete with one another, they are not considered culturally pluralistic (Pantoja, Perry and Blourock, 1976). Cultural pluralism seeks, on the one hand, the conditions and limits of peaceful coexistence of different cultures, but also examines the unexpected advantages of such cultural diversity. Historical and empirical studies show that culturally mixed society in the cities or in the border areas have been exceptionally productive (Kallen, 1997; Anghel, 1994). The task of cultural pluralism is therefore to explore and apply the conditions of fruitful communication among diverse cultural groups, to draw attention to the advantages and risks of culturally inhomogeneous societies and to promote cultural and intellectual exchanges between them. The basic conditions include knowledge of a common language, a fundamental recognition of the other, and finally the discovery of its potential importance and benefit to the majority society (Kallen, 1924). Multiculturalism is the school of thought and political stream, which is of the opinion that in a democratic state can live not only individuals but also groups with different cultures and highlights the benefits of cultural diversity for society and the state. It is applied in countries whose residents come from different cultural backgrounds and in some of them is also applied as a specific policy of the state. The aim is to unite politically all citizens, regardless of their origin, ethnicity or belief, so as to preserve their cultural differences if possible, as stated by Wayland (1997) or White (2001).

1.2 Language Diversity in EU

Language diversity across EU is great. In EU, there are 24 official languages. According to Council of Europe (2018) in their daily lives, Europeans increasingly come across foreign languages. There is therefore a need to generate a greater interest in languages among European citizens. Due to the influx of migrants and refugees, Europe has become largely multilingual. For example in London alone some 300 languages are spoken (Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Berber, Hindi, Punjabi, etc.). According to Eurostat (2018) that contains information on foreign language skills in EU, in many member countries, more than 9 out of 10 pupils in lower secondary education are studying two or more foreign languages.

For example in Luxembourg it is 100 % of pupils, in Finland 98 %, in Greece 97 %, in Italy 96 %, in Estonia and Romania 95 %. The EU average is 59 %. In the Czech Republic 65 % of pupils are studying two or more foreign languages. The lowest share of pupils studying two or more foreign languages in EU member states is in Ireland (13 %), Austria (9 %) and Hungary (6 %). Not surprisingly, English is by far the foreign language most studied in the EU. 97 % of pupils studied English in lower secondary education in 2015, followed by French (34 %) and German (23 %). However, in some member countries English was not the main foreign language to be studied. This was the case in Belgium (French was the first foreign language), Ireland (French), Luxembourg (German).

1.3 Cultural Participation in EU

Cultural participation is an essential dimension of personal well-being and integration of individuals in society (Eurostat, 2016a). According to Council of Europe the right to take part in cultural life is - and shall be recognised as being - pivotal to the system of human rights (Compendium, 2017). Participation in cultural activities and on cultural products is a

fundamental human behaviour and is promoting human well-being (Brook, 2011, Schuster, 2007). Wider participation in cultural life is a major concern of national cultural policies in different countries around the world (Compendium, 2017). Cultural practices can be defined according to three categories (Morrone, 2006): home-based (watching TV, listening to the radio, reading books and newspapers, watching and listening to recorded sound and images, reading and using computer and the Internet), going out (visits to cultural venues such as cinema, theatre, concerts, museums, monuments and heritage sites) and identity building (covers amateur cultural practices, membership of cultural associations, popular culture, ethnic culture, community practices and youth culture).

Nevertheless according to studies of European Commission from 2007 and 2013 (TNS Opinion & Social, 2013) the cultural participation is decreasing in the EU. For example the share of readers fell from 2007 to 2011 by 10 percentage points (the indicator Number of books read in the last 12 months), see Eurostat (2016b). Moreover the statistical data document the new trend on EU book market – increasing share of e-books and decreasing trend of printed books. Also going to the cinema and visiting live performances is significantly influenced by the entry of ICT. The main reasons to non-participation in cultural activities are according to Eurobarometr survey (TNS Opinion & Social, 2013) lack of interest, lack of time and expense. Also only small minorities of Europeans participate in cultural activities and on cultural products from another European country, and even fewer participate in activities in another EU country. The most commonly accessed activity is reading books by an author from another European country (31 % of Europeans have done so at least once in the last 12 months), followed by watching or listening to a cultural TV or radio programme from another European country (27 %). Fewer Europeans participate in cultural activities in another EU country: 19 % have visited a historical monument or site and 10 % have attended a live performance, exhibition or cultural activity.

1.4 Problem Formulation

The EU is diverse in cultural matters and EU member states are different with diverse culture backgrounds. The paper is focused on the issue of participation of EU citizen on the foreign culture. The willingness of EU citizens to participate on foreign culture is evaluated based on the indicators describing the level of foreign languages knowledge and participation on foreign cultural products as the expression of openness to foreign culture.

As a cultural product, the art and cultural heritage and everything associated with it is referred to. For example, traditional arts (like writing, painting, sculpture and dance), theatre, museum, gallery, monument, exposition, individual exhibits and accompanying services, all of this, can be described as a cultural product (Johnová, 2009). Cultural product is also the output of cultural-products industries (service outputs that focus on entertainment - motion pictures, recorded music and print media, etc.).

The aim of the paper is explicitly to evaluate the EU member states citizens in the area of foreign language knowledge and participation on foreign cultural products by usage of multi-criteria decision making method MAPPAC.

2. Research Methodology

MAPPAC method is the example of MCDM methods based on the preference relation (Fiala, 2013; Brans, et al., 1984). The MAPPAC method was chosen because, apart from the information from the multi-criteria matrix and the vector of weights, does not need any additional information, such as threshold values or the choice of generalized criteria. The MAPPAC method is based on paired comparisons of variants, whereby each pair of individual criteria results in a decision on which of the two objects is the more important, or whether they are indistinguishable in terms of the selected criteria (Matarazzo, 1991). The MAPPAC method works with the criterion matrix and weights of the criteria. The method splits the variants into

several preferential classes. MAPPAC method uses a normalized multi-criteria matrix $C = (c_{ij})$, where r -th row corresponds to variant a_r and s -th row corresponds to variant a_s . First the paired comparison of variants is processed (Martel and Matarazzo, 2005). On the basis of the results there are possible two relationships between variants. Either preference (variant a was rated better than variant b) or indifference (variant a and variant b are assessed in the same way). In the last step preferences are aggregated, resulting in a final order. The row totals of the aggregated matrix π are calculated according to the equation (1):

$$\sigma^l(a_i) = \sum_{j=1}^p \pi(a_i, a_j), \quad i \in J^l \quad (1)$$

Variants with the highest σ^l values are placed on the first place in the ranking. The set of variants is reduced from these variants, new set of variants A^l is created, the set of indexes of variants from A^l are marked as J^l . The procedure is repeated for m steps where m is the number of preferential classes by the ranking from above. In a similar procedure is reached the value of $\tau^1, \tau^2, \dots, \tau^n$, where n is the number of preferential classes in the ranking from bottom, by usage of equation (2):

$$\tau^t(a_i) = \sum_{j \in J^t} \pi(a_j, a_i), \quad i \in J^t, \quad t = 1, 2, \dots, n. \quad (2)$$

The overall ranking of variants is reached by averaging of the serial numbers of variants by the ranking from above and bottom. As the best evaluated is the variant which has the lowest overall serial number.

In this paper was performed the evaluation of language skills of EU citizens in individual member states and evaluation of participation on foreign culture products. The evaluation of language skills was based on 7 indicators (criteria) available from the Eurostat database - Adult Education Survey (AES) (Eurostat, 2018). AES is a source of data on the knowledge of languages by the adult population (self-reported competencies). The survey focused on people aged 25–64 living in private households and the reference period was the 12-months prior to the respondent's interview. This unique dataset enabled the reliable analysis of foreign language knowledge, because it contains comparable data of all 28 EU member states based on the results of questionnaire from the year 2016.

The evaluation of the cultural participation of EU citizens on foreign cultural products was carried out on the basis of 7 cultural indicators which were obtained in the framework of the Eurobarometr survey (TNS Opinion & Social 2013). The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) commissioned this survey in an effort to measure the attitudes of the European public to individual cultural activities. The survey involved a total of 27,563 European citizens from all 28 EU countries. The last available data refer to the year 2013.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Multi-criteria decision models show decision-making issues where the consequences of decisions are judged by multiple criteria. Multi-criteriality characterizes almost every decision-making situation. In these models of multi-criterial analysis of variants, a final set of variants is given, which is evaluated according to selected criteria. In the research, there was selected the final list of variants, which were 28 EU member states and two sets of criteria. 7 criteria for evaluation of language skills (different weights for individual criteria – in total 0.5):

- Number of foreign languages known - no languages (weight 0.11842);
- number of foreign languages known - 1 language (weight 0.02632);
- number of foreign languages known - 2 languages (weight 0.06579);
- number of foreign languages known - 3 languages or more (weight 0.11842);
- level of the foreign language reported as best-known - proficient (weight 0.11842);
- level of the foreign language reported as best-known - good (weight 0.03948);
- level of the foreign language reported as best-known - basic (weight 0,01316);

and 7 criteria for evaluation of foreign cultural participation (the same weight 0,07142 for all criteria – in total 0,5):

- Visit of ballet, dance performance or opera from another EU country;
- visit of theatre performance from another EU country;
- visit of musical performance (concert, band, etc.) from another EU country;
- watching/listening to cultural programme on TV/radio from another EU country;
- reading a book by an author from another EU country;
- visit of historical monument/site (palaces, castles, etc.) in another EU country;
- attending live performance, festival or cultural activity in another EU country.

The input data were processed by MAPPAC method. The weights of selected criteria were established by usage of scoring method. These weighted values were used for the calculation by MAPPAC method.

The output of MAPPAC method is the arrangement of variants according to preferential classes. In Table 1, it is possible to see the variants in the order according to the rankings from the top (column Top) and from bottom (column Bot.) and the final ranking of EU member states (column Range) according to the selected criteria. It is evident, that the first five places (Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, and Finland) are clearly given, because the countries are ranked in the same place as when ranking from top and also from bottom. It means that the citizens of these countries were evaluated as most skilled with knowledge of foreign languages and most interested in foreign cultures.

Table 1: Ranking of EU member states according to participation on foreign culture

Country	Top	Bot.	Range	Country	Top	Bot.	Range
Luxembourg	1	1	1.	Cyprus	15	16	15.
Sweden	2	2	2.	Czech Republic	17	17	16./17.
Denmark	3	3	3.	Ireland	19	15	16./17.
Netherlands	4	4	4.	Croatia	16	19	18.
Finland	5	6	5.	France	18	18	19.
Austria	6	7	6./7.	Hungary	21	20	20.
Malta	8	5	6./7.	United King.	22	21	21.
Slovakia	7	8	8.	Spain	20	24	22.
Belgium	9	9	9.	Portugal	24	22	23.
Estonia	11	12	10.	Greece	25	23	24./25.
Germany	10	14	11./12./13.	Italy	23	25	24./25.
Latvia	14	10	11./12./13.	Bulgaria	27	26	26./27.
Slovenia	13	11	11./12./13.	Poland	26	27	26./27.
Lithuania	12	13	14.	Romania	28	28	28.

Source: Author's calculations, Eurostat (2018), TNS Opinion & Social (2013).

The next two variants (Austria and Malta) are placed in the same preferential class. Average serial numbers of these variants are the same. These two countries are placed on the 6. and 7. position together. For the 8.- 10. place the rank is clearly given – they are Slovakia, Belgium, Estonia. Germany, Latvia and Slovenia are placed in the same preferential class again. It means that these three countries are placed together on the 11., 12. and 13. position. The Czech Republic ranked on the 16. and 17. position together with Ireland. On the worst positions ranked Greece together with Italy (24./25.), Bulgaria and Poland (together on position 26./27.) and Romania (28. position). It means that the level of language skills and participation on foreign cultural products is in these countries the lowest across EU.

4. Conclusion

Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity are, at first glance, obstacles to communication and clearly complicate social life. But closer study reveals that if these diverse segments of society learn to communicate, it brings unexpected benefits to the majority and minorities. Conversely, if the different cultures only live side by side, avoiding contacts and simply "tolerate" themselves, this represents a certain danger that in a crisis can erupt in violence.

The paper was focused on the evaluation of EU member states according to the citizens' attitude to the knowledge of foreign languages and consumption of foreign culture products. The EU member states were ranked based on 14 selected criteria by usage of MCDM method MAPPAC. It was confirmed the diversity across EU member states in terms of willingness of citizens to participate on foreign culture. The most inclined to use foreign languages and to consume foreign culture products are the Luxembourgers, Swedes, Danish, Dutchmen and Finns. On the other hand the Greeks, Italians, Bulgarians, Poles and Romanians are less keen to get known foreign languages and cultures. The Europe is facing the process of globalization that involves mixing of different cultures. The trend of current time is also the rapid development of new Information and communication technologies. This all is representing a challenge for cultural diversity and creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

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