



## CULTURE - A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FACTOR IN EUROPE

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### ***Abstract***

*Culture is an important factor of social development, an instrument through which various problems can be solved, including social-economic. In this sense, culture appears as a factor of community development, modernization and sustainability, of identity, cohesion and integration, being at the same time the exponent of the quality of human life. In a society that assumes sustainable development as a fundamental strategic objective, citizens must have access conditions to basic education, to the process of continuous training and continuous cultural enrichment, to benefit from the chance to be producers of culture, thus exceeding the status of simple entertainment consumers, the status with which they are often identified. In this article the author demonstrates through conclusive examples that culture, cultural heritage, is not only a consumer of resources as is sometimes claimed, but, on the contrary, culture appears as a factor of community development, economic performance, modernization and sustainability, of identity, cohesion and integration, being at the same time the exponent of the quality of human life.*

**Keywords:** *culture, cultural heritage, human society, cultural values, sustainable development, economic development.*

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**Introduction.** Culture is the defining element of society. Appeared through culture, human society exists and has been maintained for millennia thanks to culture. The society based on cultural foundations manifests itself as an innovative one, able to build a balanced social construction, with a train economy and a assured way of life. The



inherited culture and cultural heritage represents the spiritual condition of development, economic growth and social cohesion. Apart from a well-focused cultural environment, genuine social-economic growth has no chance of success.

Culture is an important factor of social development, an instrument through which various problems can be solved, including social-economic. Culture is not just a resource consumer as it is sometimes claimed. In this sense, culture appears as a factor of community development, modernization and sustainability, of identity, cohesion and integration, being at the same time the exponent of the quality of human life.

In a society that assumes sustainable development as a fundamental strategic objective, citizens must have access conditions to basic education, to the process of continuous training and continuous cultural enrichment, to benefit from the chance to be producers of culture, thus exceeding. The status of simple entertainment consumers, the status with which they are often identified. The sustainable development of the society is a cultural issue.

**Methods applied:** description, comparative study, modeling, analysis, synthesis, generalization etc.

**The results of the investigation.** A strong economy can only be built through a “strong economic culture”, a developed agriculture can only be achieved through an “advanced agricultural culture”, and the two taken together cannot be produced without a support. General cultural viable. However, the mission of the culture consists in the construction, maintenance and development of the value axes of the society, which represent conditions of the existence of the human species. Being a component of the social system, culture determines all the other components (economic, demographic, political, psycho-social) and is determined by them as well. The cultural development model of the society has become very popular in european macroeconomic analyzes. Within the cultural process, the set of relations between the individuals of the society forms the cultural communication of three participants, in which, as 1) subjects of the communication are the cultural actors (institutions or individuals, creators of cultural goods and services), 2) the object of the communication are the consumers of cultural goods and services, and 3) the communication channel - all the reports related to the cultural heritage.

The foundation of the communication process, and respectively of the



cultural process, is the cultural heritage. Communication within the cultural process is a creative act, which adds value to the cultural heritage, diversifying it and multiplying it in a continuous way. The main actors that manage and manage the cultural process are the respective ministries of each country (in the case of the Republic of Moldova - the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research), the local public administration, the state and private culture institutions, the civil society.

At the same time, taking into account the contemporary development of the cultural and creative industries, which represents a global movement for the production of cultural goods as a commodity, the cultural process has major capacities to influence the country's economy. The cultural and creative industries are characterized by a dual nature (which distinguishes them from any other industrial sector): on the one hand economic - through their contribution to employment, economic growth and welfare creation and, in parallel, predominantly cultural - through activities within these sectors that contribute to the fulfillment and social and cultural integration of citizens. In order for all of the above to be achieved, good governance is necessary. And "the task of a modern government is to encourage the political or private exploration of culture, in all its forms and variations, without using it to stir up the potential for the division of culture for political purposes." [8, 6] The fundamental objective of good governance consists in the activity of establishing a healthy, safe, tolerant and creative society. In this context, the applied development model will promote the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, while guaranteeing the access of the population to the culture and heritage. Thus, the inherited culture, creativity and heritage are part of the natural needs of man, outside of which he cannot exist.

Culture is not just a resource consumer as it is sometimes claimed. Culture is an important factor of social development, an instrument through which various problems can be solved, including social-economic. In this sense, culture appears as a factor of community development, modernization and sustainability, of identity, cohesion and integration, being at the same time the exponent of the quality of human life.

In the most widely used sense, sustainable development refers to a type of economic, social and human development that responds to the needs of present generations, without compromising or limiting the abi-



lity of future generations to meet these needs as well. In this sense, the social concept is at the heart of the idea of sustainable development.

The cultural dimension of sustainable development involves several important moments:

- modification of the modes of production, including the way of production of cultural goods and services;
- evolution of consumption practices, implicitly the diversification of cultural consumption practices. The reform of the country's economy not only for the purpose of quantitative growth, but also for the qualitative performance of the domestic product. Quality indices are indispensably linked to culture and education;
- social inclusion of individuals, through mechanisms of social integration and access / participation in cultural life.

In a society that assumes sustainable development as a fundamental strategic objective, individuals must have conditions of access to basic education, to the process of continuous training and continuous cultural enrichment, to benefit from the chance to be producers of culture, thus exceeding the status of simple entertainment consumers, the status with which they are often identified. The sustainable development of the society is a cultural issue.

Historical events and culture have a major impact on a country's economy. In addition, the culture of a region defines the history of economic development. Thus, culture is of great importance for highlighting the traditions of a society from the past to the present. Cultural perspectives offer references that exemplify values, attitudes and behaviors that influence economic development. Culture is the combined reflection of politics and economy in any society and can be perceived as a type of production force. As some Chinese researchers say, politics, economy and culture are the three mechanisms of any society and only when they function harmoniously can the society as a whole develop rapidly. [3]

The subject of the interaction between culture and economic development is not new, but economists usually overlook the role of culture in the economic development of states. Culture generates goods such as cultural products - skills, forms of expression and ideas, which contribute to the social and economic well-being of a community. The values respected by a company also affect the economic development efforts.



Cultural heritage is an important job creator throughout Europe, covering a wide range of job types and skill levels: from construction - to conservation, to repair and maintenance, to cultural tourism, to businesses. Small and medium-sized start-ups, most often in the field of creative industries.

In 2013, the European Union launched the Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe Project (CHCfE) - The Cultural Heritage Matters for Europe, with an ambitious goal: to collect and analyze existing and accessible case studies and research, based on evidence of economic, social impact, cultural and environmental heritage, in order to assess the cultural heritage, which was recognized in 2014 by the EU Council of Ministers as “a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe”. [2] The project also aimed to provide conclusive evidence - both qualitative and quantitative - showing that cultural heritage makes an essential contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy [16]. The CHCfE project provides a response to the position paper “Towards an EU strategy for cultural heritage - the case of research” [1] presented to the European Commission in 2012 by the European Heritage Alliance 3.3, an informal platform comprising 32 active European / international networks and organizations in the extended field of cultural heritage . This document identified, inter alia, a pressing need for evidence-based research on cultural heritage, to support strategic policy developments at both European and national levels, and to ensure that EU institutions and Member States fully realize the potential of cultural heritage as an engine of sustainable development. The report of the CHCfE project - containing key results and strategic recommendations - was presented to the EU institutions and the Member States at a time when the new European Commission started to implement the EU’s integrated approach to cultural heritage (European Commission, 2014) and at the same time, as a contribution to the ten newly defined priorities of the European Commission.

The careful mapping and analysis of evidence from across Europe, presented in this Report, deepens and extends the understanding, knowledge and awareness of the full potential of European cultural heritage as a key resource in the context of sustainable development. It is essential to include this result in local, regional, national and European decision-making processes and thus provide a solid basis for effective policies in the field of cultural heritage. Such evidence will also provide intelligible data for all



types of investors - governments, entrepreneurs business owners, private owners, philanthropists, civil society organizations - who need to compare options and make choices. The six partners of the CHCfE Consortium have provided a valuable service to Europe in demonstrating the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of the European cultural heritage. The result of this project proves the added value of European cooperation between partners with varied academic and life experiences, from North, South, West, East and Central Europe. These are arguments about the value of heritage beyond the cultural register, that value that is exercised economically and socially, which is already recognized for a while, but which until now could not be supported by clear evidence, collected by scientifically verified and validated methods. Here are some examples: it has been estimated that the cultural heritage sector produces up to 26.7 indirect jobs for each direct job, much more than, for example, the automobile industry, which reaches a share of only 6, 3 [12, 154]; the number of people directly employed in the field of cultural heritage in Europa is estimated at 300,000, but the potential of cultural heritage lies in inducing job creation in other sectors - jobs created indirectly amount to 7.8 million people-a-year [12, 153-154]; the World Bank study (2001) indicates that for every \$ 1 million invested in building rehabilitation, 31.3 jobs are created, while the same amount invested in manufacturing industries creates only 21, 3 jobs in the market [12,155]; it has been shown that a single historical monument can have, only from income taxes, even an annual return of over 600% - which, of course, makes it a more political and administrative argument than convincing [12, 156].

Cultural values are long-standing beliefs whereby certain modes of behavior, or states of existence, are socially preferable to those opposed to them [13]. Cultural values shape people's beliefs and attitudes and guide their behavior. The national culture is best embodied in the values supported by the people. A value system is seen as a relatively permanent conceptual framework that influences an individual's behavior. Cultural values establish the norms or standards after which everything is judged in a society. Not all members of a cultural group embrace the same values. In the last two decades, researchers have tried to develop a robot image of culture by studying the differences between cultural values. This has been accomplished in two ways. Some studies have analyzed cultural dimensions that reflect similarities and differences between



cultures, others have used these conclusions to group countries into nations with similar cultures. Culture also influences the ability of societies to create and properly manage institutions. For example, in the post-war period, Japan, South Korea and other East Asian countries adopted industrial policies in which the state and not the market gave credit to national industries to encourage economic growth. The notion of culture has undergone transformations at certain intervals. 130 years ago, E.B. Taylor [18] defined culture as a complex that includes the knowledge, faith, art, morals and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. In the middle of the 20th century, A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn [9] described culture as consisting of explicit and implicit patterns of behavior acquired and transmitted through symbols that constitute the distinctive achievements of human groups and which include their embodiments in artifacts. They claim that the essence of culture is represented by traditional ideas and the totality of the social inheritance acquired by man as a member of society. [14; 15]

Culture consists of common or distinct forms, or patterns, that shape human behavior, and its essence is the values embodied in people's beliefs. That is why the essential features of culture are patterns based on these values. Discussing the relationship between culture and development, Gao Xian, a well-known researcher from China, addresses the issue from a macro-cultural point of view. He shows that macro-culture includes not only culture in the narrow sense (art, literature, academic activities, etc.), but also culture in the broadest sense. Therefore, the macro-cultural approach to development is a holistic exploration of the development process, material and moral, current and historical, partial and total. According to Xian, the macro-cultural approach focuses mainly on the problem of an objective attitude towards tradition and on the relationship between traditional culture and modern development [21]. In discussing culture, we must pay attention to the tradition of a nation. Xian states that tradition is what a society inherits from its history and what forms the norms of morality, the concept of values, patterns of behavior, methods of thinking and ideas. Macroculture serves as a foundation for the cultural identity of the respective society. However, tradition should not be regarded as good or bad and people should neither blindly accept everything that comes from the past, nor dispose of tradition as completely harmful.



Traditions, which are closely linked to culture, need to be constantly renewed and improved.

There is consensus that the primary goal of the contemporary era is to seek development and peace. By identifying the causes of underdevelopment, there is a temptation to focus more on external factors, such as colonial domination and long-term exploitation, unfair trade and the absence of a fair international economic order. However, it is also necessary to take into account internal factors. Development is the result of both internal and external factors, but in many cases internal factors play a more important role. As for the internal factors that determine the economic development, more and more emphasis is placed on non-economic factors, such as culture. Lawrence E. Harrison, in his famous book “Underdeveloped is a state of mind,” states that underdevelopment is a state of mind, a way of expression, and a collective personality marked by chronic disabilities and forms of maladaptation. [7]

Similar institutions created in different states of the world have proven their efficiency differently. If an effective industrial policy is partly a matter of institutional design, it is also strongly influenced by culture. The world became richer and better educated, religion did not disappear, and nationalism and tribalism did not diminish. The global economy and technological forces do not erode local cultures and values, on the contrary, culture and values influence economic development. As an eloquent example, it can serve the economy of a country from another geographical area, far from Europe - China’s economy. It is important to note and note that China has a long and complex history, over 4 millennia, and with a rich cultural tradition. China’s cultural traditions continue to exert a strong influence on most aspects of human interaction, including business [10]. Cultural differences became more pronounced as people gained more power through wealth and education. Once absorbed the conceptions of life produce different levels and types of social and cultural capital. Culture covers all dimensions of the social capital of a society, such as mutual trust and responsible civic behavior. The values sustained by a company influence its development efforts. The moral codes used by business people are part of the productive resources of a company. If these codes emphasize values associated with the equitable development project, they will encourage develop-



ment. The values deeply rooted in the predominant culture are essential for sustainable development.

According to UNESCO [3], culture is a key element in the fight against poverty. The poor have their own values and often they are the only thing they have to defend. The disadvantaged groups have values that give them their own identity. If these values are not respected then even the most productive proposals can be blocked. The preservation of cultural values is very important for the development of a country. In order to be able to take culture into account we need to consciously integrate culture information into the analysis of economic development. Culture obviously has an effect on development outcomes and development projects. Cultural differences may also influence government tendencies to structure foreign investments in certain sectors. Another category in which the influence of culture on economic behavior is recognized is the formation of social networks. The different impact of cultural values on social relations is the basis of the concept of social capital. Social networks influence economic growth through the implementation of informal institutions. Besides the internal and external factors that determine the economic development, there are other factors that affect the economic development. One such factor is trust. In an excellent socio-economic approach from the work "Trust - social virtues and creating prosperity", Francis Fukuyama considers that the extraordinary success of developed economies is based on what he calls "high capital". This capital, unlike the other forms of human capital, is created and transmitted through cultural mechanisms (religion, tradition, historical habit) and represents a capacity generated in society by the predominance of trust. According to the author, there are three countries in which this capital has made a substantial contribution to economic development: Japan, the USA and Germany. The most representative of all is Japan, because here is something in addition to the other two countries, namely the religious element. The analysis of the influence of the religious factor on the economic behavior is not new. At the beginning of the 20th century, Max Weber [19] came to the conclusion that the economic act cannot be analyzed outside the religious culture of a nation or community. The communities formed on the basis of mutual trust have generated economic performances far superior to those of the conflict societies. . Trust leads to cost reductions and, therefore, communities based on the premise of mutual trust have succeeded in developing a number of powerful, oversized, yet economically efficient



bodies. Francis Fukuyama says that trust is the mutual acceptance between two or more entities (persons, organizations) on the premise that any ordinary daily behavior is honest, cooperative and predictable based on shared rules and that the parties to a market transaction will not try to exploit the vulnerabilities of the other. Fukuyama further states that because trust depends on expectations of others' future actions, shaping expectations in an economic growth situation should have a positive effect on our inclination to trust others. Moreover, in situations of economic growth, individuals may be willing to risk more, trusting the other data, with the potential for greater benefits. Fukuyama's hypothesis is that trust is the product of hereditary and rigid patterns of cultural heritage. [5] When there is economic progress, the importance of trust increases as the exchange system becomes more complex, the probability of repeated interactions decreases and the specialization deepens. The promotion of confidence encourages internal exchange and economic progress through size and specialization is stimulated.

Another factor that influences economic development is the work culture. The culture of work directly results in productivity. The culture of a people can be compared to a gigantic computer, extraordinarily complex and subtle, its performance directs the actions and responses of the human being in all respects.

It is necessary to note that, although cultural factors are important, it should not, however, be exaggerated. Compared to other internal factors that determine the economic performance, the cultural factors occupy a position inferior to the economic policies. In this way, the culture serves only to facilitate or obstruct the creation of an environment in which healthy economic policies can be conceived and implemented. And again, as an example, we call on China. In the early 1960s economic data on China were similar to those in Bangladesh and Kenya, with an annual income of about \$ 90 per capita. After 60 years, China has become an industrial giant, with the world's second-largest economy, a member of the G20, with multinational corporations, massive exports of electronic equipment and other sophisticated finished products, and per capita income has grown to 9567 dollars in 2019, exceeding the per capita income of Bulgaria (9280 dollars for the same year), which is a member state of the European Union. [20] No country in the world has experienced such remarkable growth. How can this extraordinary



development be explained? Undoubtedly, by several factors, but an important element of the explanation is the culture. The people of China value the economy, investment, sustained work, education, organization and discipline. Thus, the Chinese culture has a major role in the economic development of the country.

All that is needed for the golden tree to bear fruit, seems to be an open door for investment and a telephone in hand. Obviously, in order to attract investments (be they in dollars, euros or other currency) some conditions must be met: a stable government, legal certainty and a favorable investment climate, so any country may be able to become a new China or Singapore, countries driven by constant economic growth.

However, not all states in need of investment are able to meet these conditions. In some parts of the world, almost no country does this and even when the basic conditions are met, when the government is accountable and the country has the red carpet ready for foreign businessmen, there are other factors that cause investors to shake head and decide to take their money elsewhere. This shows that the ingredients of economic development are more subtle and profound than the usual conditions. These subtleties have to do with the national ethos and traditions of a country. In other words, economic development can be affected by certain intangible factors, known under the general term of culture.

**Conclusions.** However, culture is seen today as a driving force for development. Economic life must be judged in close connection with cultural influences. The modern economy needs to pay more attention to the social environment. Although culture and, as a component of it - sociability, do not directly influence GDP, they put their mark on the environment, the way in which companies are created and functioning (Fukuyama). Companies in which individuals have been able to associate spontaneously have had a faster economic evolution and no major disruption. The scientific discoveries and the improvement of the technologies have revolutionized the way to produce wealth, so that Alvin Toffler [17] speaks of the new type of “suprasymbolic economy”, in which the processing of information and communication becomes decisive forces. Also, the American political scientist Samuel Huntington, considers that, in today’s conditions, “culture matters”, and cultural factors have a special relevance for social transformations and for modeling geopolitical relations... “culture is a force that both divides and unifies ...” [8, 36]. The economic life, argues the



author, must be judged in close connection with cultural influences. The modern economy needs to pay more attention to the social environment. Although culture and, as a component of it - sociability, do not directly influence GDP, they put their mark on the environment, the way in which companies are created and functioning.

The cultural phenomenon has been intensively investigated in the last decades by a series of social and human disciplines, with a new methodological apparatus. Human behavior is increasingly explained by the use of cultural data, values, mentalities and attitudes. The historical orientation lines of the societies are dependent on their cultural stock. The geopolitical grouping of states is also redefined according to cultural origin criteria. In many approaches in the contemporary world, we talk about non-economic factors of development, factors regarding education, knowledge and new means of communication, changing mentalities and political culture. The economic behavior of social groups and individuals is guided by values, attitudes and motivations that have their source in the cultural environment. Geopolitics is complemented today by approaches that take these new factors into account, so that terms such as “geoeconomics” and “geoculture” are increasingly used. Finally, we frequently encounter terms such as informational, psychological, media, cultural, symbolic violence, manipulation etc. - terms that cannot be understood without resorting to different cultural processes and strategies.

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