

Measurement and quantification have always been a part of people's perception of the world, making sense of it and giving it meaning. Various indicators and evaluation methods are used today to provide objectified guidelines and bases for legislation and public policy programmes at international, regional and national levels. Over the past two decades, statistics and indicators relating to cultural life and heritage have also been progressively developed by global institutions and bodies such as UNESCO, the World Tourism Organisation and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), regional organisations, notably the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as by and national bodies. Most of these are used to quantitatively measure the sphere of creative and artistic activity in a given territory. They usually include indicators of an economic nature (e.g. revenues of film producers) and behavioural measurements (e.g. relating to ticket buyers, book readers, visitors to heritage sites, monuments, tourist attractions, etc.). However, the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage are generally not subject to such quantification tools. In fact, most of the quantitative data developed in this area relate to various forms of recording, registering and inventorying individual heritage elements. For example, UNESCO programmes aim to document the contribution of culture and heritage to both economic and non-economic development and to raise awareness of the value of this contribution among law- and policy-makers. Indeed, cultural heritage is increasingly seen as central to the realisation of all human rights, integration, sustainable development and peaceful social relations on a global scale. For these reasons, quantification serves to better implement such wider policy goals, as well as to design and introduce regulatory and practical solutions with regard to cultural heritage. Indicators structured in such a way are thus designed to guide allocation of public funds to programmes and activities ensuring the widest possible access to culture and heritage.

This project therefore queries whether it is possible to create global, objective and standardised indicators for the quantification of cultural heritage, and what challenges and risks such uniformity may pose for cultural heritage, in particular for the realisation of human rights attached to heritage. While engaging with the wider phenomenon of employing numeric data in contemporary governance, it will scrutinise the quantification of cultural heritage performance as a regulatory technique and examine how such indicator-based legal regulations shape current understandings of heritage and its use and enjoyment. In doing so, a new conceptual and methodological framework will be proposed for the study of cultural heritage in the current deeply quantified and parameterised social and legal reality. Indeed, until now, the role of quantification of cultural heritage has only been analysed from the perspective of the actions of public authorities in establishing and implementing standards, policies and concrete mechanisms in relation to cultural life and heritage. The impact of quantification on cultural heritage itself and its social roles and meanings, on the other hand, has not been the subject of wider academic research. The studies undertaken in the project therefore aim to fill this research gap. The research scope of the project will not only cover the methodologies and tools of heritage quantification in law and policy, but also their wider social, legal and cultural implications. Going beyond traditional legal analysis, econometrics, heritage governance and cultural studies, the project's ambition is to explore the extent to which indicator-based regulation can contribute to shaping societal understandings of the past. The project will also seek to propose improvements to existing methods and tools for quantifying cultural heritage.