

Value

Refers to beliefs and standards accepted, endorsed and sanctioned by an individual, a community or a society about what is right, good, desirable or worthwhile to abide by or pursue in one's thinking, conduct and aims.

The notion of 'value' is of importance for Cultural Heritage from two standpoints.

First, cultural values reflect beliefs that represent or convey a social group's worldview with respect to fundamental ontological and epistemological aspects, such as the purpose of human life and the worthwhile pursuits of human knowledge and action. As such, cultural values are part of a society's cultural system. They are essential elements of cultural identity, a factor of distinction from different cultures, and a source of social cohesion when they are shared amidst members of the same culture, or there is reciprocal respect when more than one culture is involved.

Secondly, 'cultural value' refers to the value assigned to cultural goods and services. This value can be appreciated in relation to its symbolic, aesthetic, historical or spiritual significance, or quantified in terms of its economic utility or worth. Cultural goods and services can be attributed a joint cultural and economic value, which are interrelated, yet can be assessed separately. For instance, a religious artwork can have cultural value attributed to it on virtue of its being the legacy of a reputed sculptor, displaying unique aesthetic qualities, and representing an entity or a scene revered by believers. At the same time, an economic value can be assigned, quantified in the amount of its utility or the money it is worth at a given moment.

Sources:

UNESCO (2005) Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. CLT/CPD/2004/CONF-201/2. Paris: UNESCO.