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UNESCO: The Coinage and Evolution of Cultural Policy

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ABSTRACT

UNESCO offers the most comprehensive global snapshot of cultural policies, encompassing all regions and cultural sectors. UNESCO seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture. This paper evaluates the role of UNESCO in promoting world peace through international cooperation in arts and culture. UNESCO is known for its World Heritage Mission which encourages world countries to protect Natural and Cultural Heritage sites. It necessitates stringent measures for the protection and preservation of historical monuments. This paper provides boundless resources in responding and adapting to development challenges by playing a transversal. World Heritage Sites promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value.

Keywords: cooperation, historical, cultural, education, communication, monuments and culture

INTRODUCTION

Culture defined solely on aesthetic criteria does not translate the reality of other cultural forms. There is a unanimous feeling in favour of a socio-anthropological definition of culture. Culture should describe the sum total of the existential, concrete characteristics of entire peoples. It includes ways of life and production, value systems, opinions and beliefs. Hence there is impossibility of applying a single, interchangeable cultural policy. The dynamic aspect of this definition is its recognition of cultural specificities. The UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that seeks to build peace and promote sustainable development through international cooperation in education, science, culture, communication and information. It develops international standards, generates and shares knowledge, supports capacity-building and brings countries and stakeholders together to address global challenges while promoting dialogue, cultural diversity and human rights.

Since culture is linked to the various aspects of social life, any cultural policy should be defined in terms of its interactions with policies for education, science and technology, environment and communication. Hence this is the key idea of the cultural aspect of development. In Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional, Administrative and Financial Aspect of Cultural Policies at Venice, States became aware of their new responsibility in the cultural field and of the growing importance of cultural values in the life of nations. Human race came to include the right to culture. Governments found themselves under an obligation to create conditions favourable to the exercise of that right. The Venice Conference widened the notion of culture to include the way of life of the people, and began to regard cultural development as an essential feature of the overall development of any society. It seems indispensable to develop a policy of cultural action which would promote the democratisation of culture. Access to culture does not imply the acceptance of a finished cultural product; the aim should be for the community to participate actively in cultural events. The American lawyer Juliette Passer describes the declaration as "one of the most beautifully written international documents" whose text and action plan "can be an outstanding educational tool for developing a dialogue about diversity while humanizing globalization"(Passer, Juliette 2020)

Intergovernmental Conference of Cultural Policy in Europe at Helsinki considered the cultural ends of development and dealt with the interaction between culture on the one hand and education, communication and environment on the other. It brought out some highly significant links between culture and social justice, between culture and youth and between cultural activity and attempts at democratisation. It paid special attention to artistic creativity and status of the artist; to the increasing participation of the people in cultural life; to innovations stemming from the intelligent use of the mass media;

and to the safeguarding of the environment and the improvement of the habitat. The acceptance of cultural diversity within a community and the reconciliation o' cultural pluralism with national unity constitute one of the major challenges for cultural policies in the future. It entails "a large, heterogeneous set of individuals and organizations engaged in the creation, production, presentation, distribution, and preservation of and education about aesthetic heritage, and entertainment activities, products and artifacts".(Wyszomirski, Margaret J.2002)

Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Asia was held at Yogyakarta, The main original feature of the Yogyakarta Conference was that it put forward the idea of the cultural development of the individual and society as a factor for national identification and a means to social progress. It advocated the search for original development models to hold the balance between material and spiritual and between social and individual values and between the reservation of national cultures and necessary assimilation of science and technology. It encouraged the definition of national communications policies, having in mind the potentiality and dangers of the mass media tor cultural development. "Dissemination was the key concept with the aim of establishing equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in publicly organized and financed cultural activities"(Duelund, Peter. 2001:34)

Tradition is not to be confused with a rejection of scientific and technological progress. Access to modernity should not take place beneath the form of alienation and economic imperialism. Science and technology should be controlled by the user countries and developed in forms adapted to the social and cultural characteristics corresponding to the real needs of population. Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa was held at Accra where the idea of cultural identity was highlighted as the historical basis for any process of indigenous development by societies and as the quickest way to recognition of the diversity of cultures. Cultural policies were defined in their organic links with educational, environmental and communications policies and policies for the revalidation of the national heritage. While considering that African cultures must remain open to outside contributions and receptive to the main creative trends of the modem world, the conference nevertheless advocated that the terms of international co-operation be altered so as to foster intercultural dialogue on the basis of fair reciprocity.

Education is the key concept in all problems related to culture. Formal and informal education must be thought in the perspective of lifelong education. It is above all necessary to study the environment and the people for whom education is being considered so as to avoid the adoption of foreign models. Education should be critical, Creative and liberating, and thus narrow the gap between popular and elite culture. More democratization means more social justice. UNESCO's founding mission, which was shaped by the Second World War. Kevin V. Mulcahy dubbed this "cultural Darwinism" is most pronounced in the United States where public subsidy is limited and publicly supported aesthetic activities are expected to demonstrate a direct public benefit"(Mulcahy, Kevin V. 2003:57)

Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean at Bogota went more deeply into the problems of cultural identity on the basis of the unusual experience of the region, where cultural crossbreeding has produced syncretic cultures with a universal mission. Cultural identity was also seen as correlated with respect for cultural pluralism and the preservation of the heritage. The conference also stated that no cultural policy worthy of the name was possible without special attention to artistic creativity, to the fostering of creative imagination in books and films, to the training of cultural developmental staffs and to conduct research in the field of cultural policies. Knowledge about human action on the environment should be a part of children's education, and one of the tasks of the authorities should be to train specialists in cultural development and to make them aware of the consequences of the choices they formulate in fields which they may think are totally distinct from culture.

Similar preoccupations were considered at the Conference of Arab Ministers of Culture convened in 1981 by ALECSO. The participants admittedly dealt with questions specific to Arabic culture and to the cultural policies of Member States, but also tackled more general questions such as the specificity and universality of culture in the world, the right to culture and the cultural dimension of development. These cultural meetings, bridging the frontiers between Europe, Africa, the Arab world, Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, naturally gave regional, interregional and international cultural co-operation between States, its rightful place as one of the prime prerequisites for the maintenance of a fruitful climate of comaraderie, security and peace in the world.

All the UNESCO conferences stress the need to consider the freedom of, choice of creators and of peoples as absolutes which cannot be transgressed, seeing in them the means of placing man at the centre of development. Communication may be the vehicle of packaged culture or it may transmit endogenous cultural values. Thus from one conference to the next and from one cultural area to another certain constants emerge in varying degrees of intensity which illustrate the main topics of world cultural problems as they affect men's hopes and dreams at the time, viz. cultural identity, the cultural dimension of development, Cultural rights and the role of imagination and creativity. The declaration spells out general principles that

member states are expected to implement, working with private and civil organisations. It was published with an outline action plan listing various ways to promote cultural diversity" (Matsuura, Kōichirō 2002).

The dynamic safeguard of cultural authenticity implies the revaluation and promotion of minority languages and their insertion in States' educational and social systems, as well as the study and promotion of the oral tradition and folk arts. Nowadays there is no country in the world without an urge for cultural activity, whatever the level and type of action taken by the government. Many governments are pursuing cultural policies or programmes of cultural activity. The great majority of Member States of UNESCO have a ministry or body in charge of cultural affairs, and also more or less substantial and diversified networks of cultural institutions and socio-cultural centres. In some countries, particularly those with a federal constitution, the deliberately limited central structures are complemented by regional and local structures, semi-administrative bodies including professionals and experts which act to foster artistic creativity. There is a great deal of parallel action, though it is not usually integrated in an overall plan.

As regards the objectives, scope and protagonist of cultural action, three main types of policy may be distinguished. The first, the most widespread stresses the development of the arts at professional level or the preservation of the heritage, the role of the State and the big institutions going unchallenged. The second, the most 'advanced' of present-day cultural policies, sets out to link culture with education, communication and the environment. Government action is more directed towards the decentralization of action decisions and resources, and to getting minorities and the underprivileged to play a bigger part in cultural life, particularly through cultural leadership. The same time other administrations begin to take over cultural activities in their own sectors, e.g. youth, education, equipment, health, information and tourism.

The third type of cultural policy, which so far exists only in the form of forward- looking studies or very limited experiments, aims radically to remodel all aspects of development and give them cultural ends, by taking human factors into account. What is regarded as essential feature is that peoples play a part in creating their own culture, rather than merely having access to the culture of the elite or to the products of mass culture. A UNESCO recommendation, of overriding importance, proposes to States sociology of creation, through a critical vision of social reality, artistic creation being considered as the creation of new values. The recommendation attempts to reconcile creative freedom with the economic and social security of the artist.

Obviously the great majority of existing situations fall short of the theoretical level reached by key centres in the international community. The internal reasons for this situation are no doubt economic (i.e. small budgets), technical (i e. lack of facilities or specialized staff and insufficient research and information) or psycho-sociological (i.e. conservatism, bureaucratic influence or failure to appreciate present requirements for creation and participation).

But the real reason for the limitations encountered in most cases seems to be more structural; the lack of a really integrated approach to cultural development and socioeconomic development is the fundamental defect of present-day cultural policies, all too often devised and implemented without organic links with policies which could inject a cultural dimension into all major development projects. In fact nearly all cultural policies are in varying degrees limited to the specifically cultural field, and support the big institutions (mainly in the capital cities) the preservation or the historical and artistic heritage, professional creativity and distribution. All too few of them are defined in terms of the whole social spectrum, or incorporate in their thinking the real-life experience, the aspirations and the dreams of the teeming masses. International cultural co-operation should be thought of in terms of equality and reciprocity, the recognition of cultural diversity implying respect for national independence and sovereignty.

World conference on cultural policies (Mexico, July 26 Aug. 6, 1982): Now that Mondia-cult is to be convened in Mexico, new life for cultural policies would take the form of energetic theoretical and practical action calculated to mobilize the creative efforts of individuals and groups at all levels of society. Such a vital force could radically revitalize exchanges and specific relations between the members of a given society and between the peoples and nations that make up the international community. In this new atmosphere, economics and politics, the output of goods and services and the symbolic output of ideologies and the arts would all become ways of achieving a cultural life closely linked to dairy life and the happiness and fulfillment of individuals and social groups.

The portents of this transformation in the role of culture in society call upon people wherever they may be to make a qualitative change in their cultural adventure, like the one they made when harnessing the forces of nature. In this way they will bring together he still all too scattered currents of world solidarity in a great world cultural project that will save from the nuclear catastrophe the very roots of a new understanding worthy of each and every man. Mondia-cult may be this focal point, where those outstanding intergovernmental conference convened by UNESCO will reach a new view of the world and thus arrive at a decisive change in cultural relations between individuals and the nations.

CONCLUSION

It aims to promote peace, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue through education, science, culture, and communication. The heritage is not only the sum total of historic monuments but the dynamic and living totality of human creation. From now on culture can only be seen as a part of a system of relationships, a process of give and take is imperative for each national culture. The idea is gaining ground that no headway can be made without a consensus. UNESCO has become the promoter of this consensus, of which it intends to be a focal point. its role in recognizing and preserving cultural heritage globally.

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