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RESEARCH PUBLICATION

# UNESCO Cultural Policies 1966–1972 – the Founding Years of ‘New Cultural Policy’

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## ABSTRACT

This article is a study of UNESCO cultural policies in the period 1966-1972. That period was the founding years of what was later called ‘new cultural policies’. In 1966 UNESCO adopted a declaration of international cultural cooperation, and during the following years UNESCO organized a series of conferences and expert meetings that developed a strategy for cultural policies. The process was finished by a conference of European cultural ministers in Helsinki in 1972. UNESCO practiced a sociological approach to cultural development and argued that culture as a social good should be part of other social and economic goods offered to the citizens by a welfare state. Despite the fact that UNESCO member states had very different values and understandings of ‘culture’ and ‘policy’, and they had very different political systems, it was Western European liberal and democratic values that dominated its aims and policymaking process. Among Western European countries the ministry of culture in France with their leading bureaucrat Augustin Girard was the most influential agent in the policymaking process.

## Keywords

UNESCO cultural policies | new cultural policy | cultural development | Western European welfare state | France | Augustin Girard

## INTRODUCTION

In 1994, Pierre Moulinier, French researcher of cultural policies, published an overview of UNESCO’s cultural policies from the 1960s to the late 1980s (Moulinier 1994). His report contains summaries and comments to conferences, reports, documents and expert meetings organized by UNESCO’s during that period. Moulinier’s main focus is on the period after 1970 but he traces UNESCO’s cultural actions back to the 1960s.

However, the purpose of this paper is to focus on the development of UNESCO cultural policies during the period 1966-1972. My argument for this periodiza-

tion is: In 1966 UNESCO adopted the «Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation» (UNESCO 1966a) which defined the ideological and political basis on which international cultural co-operation within the organization should rest. This work – which was formally initiated by the 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO in 1966 – was followed up by several general conferences, expert meetings and ministerial conferences in the following years, and it was finished by a final conference of cultural ministers in Helsinki, Finland, in 1972 (UNESCO 1972a).

This period was the founding years of the so called ‘new cultural policy’ – which was adopted by many countries, especially in the Nordic region and in Western Europe, in the 1970s. The Helsinki conference in 1972 introduced a series of regional conferences which were organized by UNESCO later in the 1970s and in the 1980s (Moulinier 1994, Planeix-Crocker 2017).

The research questions of this paper are:

- Which were the bearing ideas of UNESCO’s cultural policymaking and its recommended cultural actions in the period 1966-1972?
- Which interests and which kind of ideology dominated the UNESCO cultural policymaking these years?

## RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Since the aim of this article is to analyse the policy process and the result of it, my main research materials are documents produced by UNESCO – like conference reports, expert reports, declarations or other policy documents. These documents are considered as primary source materials from the UNESCO negotiations and its decisional processes, written by the UNESCO secretariat or by external experts hired by UNESCO for specific purposes.

My approach is historical, empirical and institutional: It is historical and empirical because it is based on analysis of primary source material from the policymaking process. My perspective is institutional (Kangas and Vestheim 2010, Rothstein 1998) because my research focus is on UNESCO as an international political organisation, consisting of political and bureaucratic representatives from national member states. The structure and the working processes of UNESCO had decisive effects on its policymaking and the practical results of it.

The time span I focus on in the paper falls within the era of welfare state building in Western Europe, which in its turn had strong influence on the cultural policymaking of UNESCO. But there was also a broader context that affected the political climate of UNESCO at the time – the cold war between capitalism and communism, apartheid in South Africa but even race struggles in the US, civil and colonial wars in Africa, repressive politics in China and the Soviet

Union, illiteracy, de-colonialization and social and economic misery in earlier colonies, etc. (Mawete 2005:128-129). Together these international conflicts affected what happened in UNESCO in the 1960s.

The following sections of this article have this chronological structure: I start with a presentation of the historical background of the establishment of UNESCO in 1946 and analyse its initiatives for cultural development till 1966. The next section deals with the report from an expert round table organised by UNESCO in Monaco in 1967, and their report turned out to be the constituting document for later decisions on general conferences and expert meetings. Already at this stage the French top bureaucrat Augustin Girard appeared on the international scene as a front figure of UNESCO’s cultural policymaking. Further preparations for an intergovernmental conference of cultural ministers in Venice in 1970 were made at a second expert meeting in Paris in 1969. That expert meeting was more oriented towards practical challenges of cultural policymaking. The intergovernmental conference of cultural ministers in Venice in 1970 was the first conference where politically responsible delegates met, and the report from this meeting contained all elements of a ‘new cultural policy’ for the 1970s. An intergovernmental conference for Europe in Helsinki, 1972, represents a final step in UNESCO’s efforts to establish ‘new cultural policy’ as a policy model for the cultural field. My analysis and comments to this conference together with a final section of discussion and conclusions end this article.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: UNESCO AS A PEACEBUILDING ORGANISATION

UNESCO was established in the ashes of World War II. The first initiative was taken in 1942 by nations that were at war with Nazi Germany (Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, CAME). They also met in November 1945 and the Constitution of UNESCO was signed by 44 governments at this meeting. It was ratified by 30 governments at the first General Conference in Paris in 1946.<sup>1</sup>

The principal purpose of UNESCO is formulated in its Constitution and says that the organization should «contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations».<sup>2</sup>

The quotation above shows that UNESCO was founded as a *political* organization by nation states to promote politically defined aims and values, and

1. UNESCO 1945-1995: A fact sheet (ARC.95/WS/1).
2. UNESCO Constitution, Article 1.

hence considered education, science and culture as instruments or means to obtain these objectives. UNESCO's recommendations in these three fields of action are therefore per definition instrumental and *normative* (Singh 2010). This follows from the fact that any form of political decision is instrumental (Vestheim 2009). The instrumental character of UNESCO's policymaking is legitimated by the purpose and the aim of the organization (see above).

From its beginning UNESCO has focused on four fields of activity – education, science (natural sciences, social sciences and human sciences), culture and communication.<sup>3</sup> But education and science came first, it took twenty years before UNESCO started to develop an international strategy for the *cultural* field. That happened at the 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO in Paris in 1966.

The 13<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO in 1964 invited the Director General, with the assistance of the Executive Board, to elaborate a declaration on international cultural co-operation, and it was the result of this work that was presented to the 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference in 1966. The draft of this document was written by Augustin Girard, delegate of the French National Commission for UNESCO and director of the research unit of the French Cultural Ministry (Service des études et recherches – SER). Girard served as secretary of a group that worked out the document but it was not he who presented the document (UNESCO 1966a: 87-89) to the General Conference. That was another French delegate, Pierre Moinot (Martin 2011:216). Moinot had a more prominent political position in France so he had higher legitimacy as representative of the French government.

The Declaration was general, abstract and vague. This was probably because it could not be too concrete since UNESCO tried to be neutral in the controversial political issues of the time. But in fact there is no doubt that the principles expressed in the text represented Western liberal democracy, which is not surprising since the process was initiated and driven by liberal democracies in Western Europe. So after all it was not politically value neutral.

One thing is interesting: 'Cultural policy' as a concept was *not* mentioned in the Declaration. 'Cultural cooperation' was a wider concept and opened up for all forms of cultural co-operation between all kinds of agents on all levels. The document did not contain any substantial measures to be taken by the member states but they were recommended «to use their best efforts to implement the provisions of this Declaration, so that it may serve the cause of peace and the well-being of mankind» (Article XI). And since the document held the formal status of a declaration in the UN system, there were no legally binding obligations for the member states to implement.

The Declaration was the result of a working process that could be traced back to 1960. Several expert meetings, drafts, hearings among member states and

3. UNESCO 1945-1995: A fact sheet (ARC.95/WS/1), p. 4.

discussions with the Executive Board had taken place during the years 1960–1966 (UNESCO 1966b:1). The heterogeneous body of member states from North, South, East and West did not have a common understanding of concepts like ‘culture’ and ‘policy’ – only practical action could help to clarify such challenges.

Gabriela Toledo Silva (2015:8-9) points to the fact that different conceptual traditions, different political systems and different images of the social role of culture challenged UNESCO’s aim to bring about cultural action by governments around the world. The 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference therefore approved a resolution that should contribute to support efforts to establish public cultural policies in old and new nations. Indirectly ‘cultural policy’ was launched in the *Programme and Budget for 1967-1968* (UNESCO 1966c:358-359) in a paragraph that dealt with «assistance to artistic creation in the modern world». The resolution made a statement which said that higher education, mass communication, more leisure time and higher standards of living had changed people’s cultural requirements and that cultural development had now taken its place together with educational and scientific development. However, there was no systematic knowledge available which could inform about the situation in different member countries, and the Secretariat therefore wanted to prepare «a list of the problems involved in assisting artistic creation in the modern world» to be presented and discussed at the next General Conference (UNESCO 1966c:358).

The scope of the task seemed relatively narrow since it should only focus on studying the conditions of artistic work, but the practical consequences became wider and more encompassing. The text mentioned four key elements which should constitute future public cultural policies – the role of culture in social and political development, the need for institutions, for finances and for administration. At this time the concept ‘cultural policy’ was not commonly used among member states of UNESCO, but in many countries the public authorities had supported cultural work and the arts for many decades. Public support to culture and civil society activities travelled under other labels, for example ‘enlightenment work’, ‘popular education’ or ‘Bildung’.

### **A FIRST DECISIVE STEP: A ROUND-TABLE MEETING IN MONACO, 1967**

The next and decisive step to realise the task that the Secretariat had been given, was taken at a round-table meeting in Monaco in December 1967. At this meeting, which was organized by the Secretariat, the participants agreed upon a document, *Cultural policy – a preliminary study* (UNESCO 1967). This document was later presented to the 15<sup>th</sup> General Conference in 1968.

The round-table meeting had 32 expert participants from 24 countries. They were all there as experts from different fields – from the creative and cultural

field, from the bureaucratic and administrative as well as the academic world. They came from all parts of the world and the group represented experience across geographical borders, basic cultural values and ideological and political systems.

If the Declaration from 1966 was abstract and general, the Monaco report from 1967 was direct and concrete by content, and it was action oriented. Already in the foreword of the report the concept 'cultural policy' was defined:

In this context, 'cultural policy' is taken to mean a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State. Obviously, there cannot be *one* cultural policy suited to all countries; each Member State determines its own cultural policy according to the cultural values, aims and choices it sets for itself (UNESCO 1967:7).

The democratic aspect, cultural policy for all, was put forward as a main argument, and besides that, cultural policy was supposed to be a policy area equal to educational, research and technology policies:

It is for all people to have access to cultural life and an active share in it. Cultural development must now catch up on and keep in step with technological and scientific progress; it must gradually take its place in over-all policies for development, along with those for education and scientific activity (UNESCO 1967:9).

Culture was thus thought to be an integrated part of political planning in general, not an exotic field isolated from everyday politics. What the text said implicitly was that cultural policy should not be about aesthetics and art only, on the contrary, it should be lifted up and be relevant to ordinary citizens' everyday life. So 'cultural development', as used in the text, did not mean development of aesthetic quality, for example, it meant that culture should contribute to social, political and economic development in a society. And it could not, according to the report, be left to private initiatives: «It must be promoted by the public authorities, which have the necessary means for carrying out such a tremendous task».

The programme that was described in the document, was permeated by social welfare thinking. Cultural policy, as the latest area of public activities and services, was finally put on the agenda of welfare state building.

One important mission of the expert group was to launch ideas about how to produce research based knowledge about the cultural needs of common citizens, taking into account the social, technological, economic and cultural changes of that time. So the expert group proposed that research and evaluation of cultural needs should be a prerequisite and a necessary investment in the development of long-term cultural policy programmes. A specific chapter in

their report argued for evaluation and research as an integrated part of cultural policy planning (UNESCO 1967:12).

An implicit assumption in their proposal was that an economic analysis, based on the model of supply and demand, was also relevant and applicable in research of cultural activities and behaviours. But this was not their only answer. The experts made an analytical distinction between ‘cultural demand’ and ‘cultural needs’: The latter «may remain latent, without being expressed as a demand», the report said, cultural needs «are not a fact; they are discovered by sociological research».

Long-term public planning of cultural policy programmes was the desirable model which the expert group proposed as the way to promote cultural development. But in their report they admitted that this was a challenge for many countries which often preferred short-term plans. However, they mentioned two countries which worked with long-term cultural planning: One was USSR which reported that they did cultural planning in a twenty years perspective; the other was Poland where the Polish Academy of Sciences and The Ministry for Culture and the Arts co-operated to develop ‘cultural models’ (UNESCO 1967:14). Both countries were communist states and parts of the Soviet system in Eastern Europe, and as such they represented a political system that was quite opposite to capitalist liberal democracies in Western Europe. This was under-communicated and not problematized in the expert report, and the reason was evident: UNESCO was in these years an arena for power struggle between the blocs of the Cold War but at the same time UNESCO’s mission was to alleviate the conflicts between East and West, North and South. UNESCO therefore had to take on a position of diplomatic neutrality, which meant that some controversial issues were put aside and ‘hidden’ in a discourse that could be accepted by all member states.

Long-term *cultural planning* was at this time in its beginning in Western Europe and elsewhere, although the idea of government planning and intervention for social development was a basic element in the general economic and welfare policies. After World War II it was even adopted by right wing democratic regimes in Western Europe. De Gaulle’s France with its strong tradition of ‘etatism’ and a centralized state power is a good example – with André Malraux as Culture Minister from 1959 cultural planning became part of the ‘five year plans’ of the French state (Dubois 1999, Poirrier 2000).

Since members of the expert group came from all over the world with very different backgrounds and values, is it not surprising that they had different images of ‘art’ and ‘culture’. Despite that, all proposals that were put forward by the group, reflect political, historical and cultural experiences of the modern, Western and industrialized world. Or to put it on the edge – one might even say that there was a ‘colonial’ cultural bias in the expert report. That in its turn demonstrated the power relations within UNESCO – and it was very unlikely that the power relations of the cultural policy area should be different from

other policy areas of the organization. We can observe a gap between the harmonious rhetorical level of the report and its turbulent world context of economic and political conflicts. I do not believe this bias was intended by the experts but probably it was the best possible solution to their task, given the historical conditions they were working under.

Since democratic access to cultural goods and services was a principal issue to be handled by the expert group, they were much occupied with channels for distribution of culture. Among all these channels, traditional as well as new, the experts had very strong and optimistic expectations to television, film/cinema and radio because these technically advanced media could reach masses of people across geographical distances, social classes and ethnic barriers.

On the other hand they criticised traditional Western theatre heavily: «In the Western world the theatre has gradually left its popular origins behind and has become a form of expression for the élite; it is guided chiefly by conservative middle-class taste, the aesthetic promptings of *avant-garde* artists, or by an intellectual desire to challenge society. The last two factors may go together, but all these types of theatre remain inevitably restricted to a small public» (UNESCO 1967:29). The quoted text illustrates that the expert group was more oriented towards sociological and political aspects of cultural practices than aesthetic norms.

The overall aim of UNESCO was to start and support a process that should result in establishment of long term national cultural policies worldwide. How this could come about and which administrative and financial resources that were necessary, was described in the expert report in its last and biggest chapter, «Administrative and financial structures» (UNESCO 1967:36-49). What the experts in reality did was to design a political model for cultural policies that was based on the historical heritage of liberal democracies in Western Europe. They typically underlined the importance of the nation state and its coordinating role in cultural policymaking, which they considered necessary to arrive at «The possibility of establishing priorities, in keeping with the aims of democratization, with a view to decentralizing cultural activities. A centralization phase is necessary as a preliminary to pressing for decentralization» (UNESCO 1967:37). Centralization should go together with geographical and administrative decentralization. The ideal was to strike the balance between the two. Some examples of different forms of decentralization were mentioned and the question about federal states (for example USA and Western Germany) contra centralized states was shortly discussed. They flagged a positive attitude to strong local cultural policies – hopefully in line with and in cooperation with the nation state policies.

The experts were spokesmen for a broad concept of culture, which should encompass not only the classical fine arts, but even film production and distribution, radio and television, leisure time activities, popular adult education and sports.



The 1967 Monaco report communicated policy ideas based on Western European, liberal and democratic values. And one may ask if there already existed other texts that served as models for the expert group?

The answer is yes. And one person who falls into the eyes is Augustin Girard and his work. I have already mentioned that he wrote the outline of the Declaration that was adopted in 1966. He was at that time director of the research and evaluation unit Services des études et recherches (SER), established in 1963 by the French ministry of culture. But at the Monaco expert meeting he was even acting as consultant for the UNESCO Secretariat. As a high rank civil servant in this field he was a prominent person not only in France but even internationally. A Swedish colleague and collaborator, Carl-Johan Kleberg (2011:236-237), says that before the expert round table conference in 1967, Girard sent a working document to the participants entitled *Réflexions préalables sur les politiques culturelles*, which functioned as a basic input to the discussions of the meeting in Monaco. That means that Girard formulated the premises for the discussion in the expert group. A revised version of the document appeared in 1968 and was finally published by UNESCO in 1969 (Martin 2011:216, Girard 1969). Girard’s active role in the organization of these actions and his contributions to the substantial content of the discussions, leave little doubt that he held a very influential position in the formation of UNESCO cultural policies from its beginning in the 1960s. And if we go back to 1965 we can find two interesting articles from his hand that expressed some of the bearing ideas that we met in the expert report from Monaco.

The first one is «Les Tâches du présent» (Girard 1965a:2-3) where Girard focused on the concept ‘leisure’ (‘loisir’) and argued that when the majority of the population got more leisure time and fewer working hours, this would have consequences, not only for everyday life, politics and the economy, but even for cultural life. From a sociological point of view the cultural needs of the broad masses of people should be researched and included in public cultural policies, Girard argued. He also spoke for comparative and international research so that countries could be compared and learn from each other. Girard worked with a sociological concept of culture and cultural policy. What he proposed was a widened and more democratic perspective on culture and cultural policy.

In another article, «Pourquoi les recherches? La fin de l’ère des goûts et des couleurs» (Girard 1965b:4) he provoked the French cultural bourgeoisie by asking for systematic statistical research on cultural behaviours, cultural production and cultural distribution, which as a next step should serve as basis for public cultural policymaking. In professional artist circles that approach was a ‘sacrilège’, a complete break with the romantic myth of ‘les mystères sacrés de l’art’. Girard’s strong belief in what research could mean for cultural policy practices, had its origin in the political and administrative practices of the five years plans of the French state in the early 1960s: «L’initiative d’étudier les pratiques culturelles des Français n’est donc pas venue du ministère d’État, chargé

des Affaires culturelles, mais des équipes du Commissariat au Plan, où des polytechniciens sociaux donnait le ton» (Girard 1997:83).

My conclusion is that Girard's pen was clearly visible in the report of the Monaco round table, and he was even a front figure in the organization process. From his leading position in the French ministry of culture he tried to reform French cultural policy, and he also brought his reformist ideas to the international cultural policy scene. Girard argued for an ideological move from conservative and elitist values to social democratic and egalitarian ideas. As we have seen, that was also clearly expressed in the Monaco expert report. Thus UNESCO's cultural policymaking made a turn to the political left. But since this happened within the practices and formal principles of liberal democracy, it was basically different from cultural policies in the communist systems of Eastern Europe, with one party rule and censorship.

### A SECOND STEP: AN EXPERT MEETING IN PARIS, 1969

The report of the Monaco expert group was approved by the 15<sup>th</sup> General Conference in 1968. Further steps to be taken were also decided for at this session: To improve research and documentation of art education and cultural policy development, the General Conference wanted to organise a new expert meeting in Paris in 1969. That meeting should introduce the first phase of a ten year-programme (1969-1979), and «the main task will be to facilitate exchanges of information and experience between persons responsible for cultural action and to provide them with documentation on the problems encountered and the results obtained in the various countries, through assembling, comparing and analyzing the cultural policies that already exist in Member States». The participants of the Paris meeting should even «prepare for the Conference of Ministers by e. g. the suggestion of an agenda and themes for discussion» (UNESCO 1968a:360).

It is worth noticing that the planned conference of ministers (in Venice in 1970) would be the first one which directly addressed *governments and politicians*. From a democratic point of view this meant that national governments became more involved in the policymaking process, but the premises were still to be worked out by civil servants, high rank bureaucrats, cultural administrators, representatives of non-government organizations and academics. Swedish top bureaucrat Carl-Johan Kleberg, who was present at the General Conference in 1968, said later in an interview: «I was even more satisfied with that decision, because, in my interventions, I had underlined that it was necessary with meetings for the responsible politicians, who, quite curiously, had not been invited to Monaco. For me cultural policy is a political question!» (Kleberg 2011:237).<sup>4</sup>

4. The interview with Kleberg is in French, the quotation above is my English translation. The reference here is to the French original text.

What UNESCO expected from the experts, was models and programmes for ‘cultural development’, i.e. long-term plans for cultural actions integrated in general policy planning.

The expert meeting took place in Paris in June 1969 and was attended by 40 experts, in addition to 13 representatives of the Secretariat. The Director General and the Secretariat had distributed a working document where they invited the experts to give their opinion on a selection of issues that the member countries apparently ought to address in their work with cultural development plans: institutional, administrative and financial questions. The proposals from the experts should be input to the planned intergovernmental conference in 1970, and they should even recommend appropriate documentation that should be elaborated by the Secretariat before the ministerial conference (UNESCO 1969a, Annexe III:1-8).

The experts of the Paris meeting, like the experts of the Monaco round table in 1967, argued for a wider concept of culture and pointed to «la nécessité de se détacher de la conception conventionnelle de la culture, limitée au secteur des beaux-arts», and they made the statement that «il a été généralement reconnu qu’il fallait parvenir à un équilibre de manière à respecter la diversité des cultures» (UNESCO 1969a:2). This statement referred to two challenges – one being the narrow Western concept of culture as ‘the fine arts’, belonging to the cultural elites; the other being the wide spectre of different national and regional cultures and values among the member states.

This meeting, like the one in 1967, put much attention to the decisive role of the central *nation states* in cultural policy planning, but the participants even raised the question of decentralisation – politically, geographically and administratively. They spoke for a balance between central coordinating government agencies and cultural policy bodies on the regional and local level.

The expert meeting was unable to present an elaborated answer to the question of comparative statistics and other comparative research methods for national cultural policies, but the participants expressed a strong belief in such methods and wrote that they were desirable and necessary for cultural policies.

A conclusive remark to the Paris meeting could be that it functioned as an intermediary and a preparation to the more *political* upcoming intergovernmental conference in 1970. It represented a continued policy line from the Monaco round table in 1967, but it was less analytical and more concretely advising to UNESCO.

### THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE IN VENICE, 1970

The Venice conference in 1970 (UNESCO 1970) was the first conference where ministers responsible for cultural affairs met. At this meeting UNESCO lifted cultural policymaking from the expert level to the highest political level. Experts

had so far contributed as premise deliverers, now representatives with the highest political legitimacy were brought directly into the decisional process.

The documentation that was accessible to the participants of the conference was encompassing and demonstrated the continuity of UNESCO's actions in the late 1960s. It included reports from the Monaco round table in 1967 (UNESCO 1967), an expert meeting on cultural rights as human rights in Paris in 1968 (UNESCO 1968b), an expert meeting on cultural centres in Budapest in 1968 (UNESCO 1968c), and the expert meeting in Paris in 1969 which prepared the Venice conference in 1970 (UNESCO 1969). Among all these documents the basic one was the final report of the Monaco round table in 1967 (UNESCO 1967). In addition the Secretariat presented background and working papers (UNESCO 1970:9). All together the documentation was quite impressive so the government representatives had – at least theoretically – an opportunity to formulate recommendations which were founded on solid knowledge.

At this conference there arose a quarrel which reflected the climate of the cold war: The delegate from the Socialist Republic of Romania regretted the absence of the People's Republic of China (mainland China) which he considered to be the only legitimate representative of the Chinese people. He also missed delegates from the Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany) and he argued that the representatives of the (anti-communist) authoritarian regimes of South Vietnam, South Korea and the Republic of China (Taiwan) were illegitimate representatives of their peoples. This caused protests from the delegates from these countries, but nothing more was reported in the general report (UNESCO 1970:10). It was a small incident, but it illustrates the underlying tension between the countries on each side of the blocks in the cold war.

In general the Venice conference was considered to be successful and the delegates agreed upon the principal issues, which can be summed up in the following seven points (UNESCO 1970:10-12): 1) Laissez-faire in cultural affairs was considered inadequate, public authorities should be responsible for financial and administrative planning and provide all citizens access to culture. 2) Cultural rights were defined as parts of general human rights, and the State should secure that all citizens could enjoy these rights within all social areas. 3) Member states were recommended to enlarge and deepen the concept of culture to include more than heritage and the fine arts. 4) The conference left no doubt that cultural policy should be part of general policymaking: «The Conference agreed that culture is not merely an ornament but an integral part of social life, so that cultural policy should be appreciated in the broad context of general governmental and social policy, regardless of the administrative arrangements adopted». 5) The conference also pointed to the connection between education and participation in culture, especially for children: «(...) children with poor socio-cultural background are often educationally handicapped. Hence the need to pay more attention to increasing the cultural content of education». 6) The delegates stressed the

importance of adequate education and training for artists, and also argued for the freedom of artists: «The freedom of the artist is a fundamental human right but it also serves the common good as an antidote to sterile bureaucratization and in fostering creative criticism, initiative and innovation in the society». They even recommended that «Artists should also have a say in the bodies where cultural policy is made». 7) The conference declared that all cultures were equal and there «should be no room in the contemporary world for cultural imperialism in the historic sense of the word». Independent cultural development should be assigned to all, and indigenous societies were mentioned as examples of small cultures that «may be eroded by the commercialized mass culture of the rich and powerful countries».

My final comment to the Venice conference is that it followed the agenda proposed by the expert meeting in Paris in 1969. The importance of the conference was that it primarily addressed politicians on ministerial level, not bureaucrats and academic experts. UNESCO had now developed a cultural policy programme that was supposed to be adapted to various regions of the world. The next step in that process was to organize regional conferences, and the first one was for Europe.

### **A SYNTHESIS OF UNESCO' EFFORTS: THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE, 1972**

This brings us directly to the last event to be discussed in this article – the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Europe, Helsinki, 1972 (UNESCO 1972a). The key elements of earlier conferences and expert meetings was brought together at this conference, therefore one can say that it formed a synthesis of earlier efforts.<sup>5</sup> UNESCO's Secretariat had prepared documentation and research on the following subjects: administrative structures of cultural policies in Europe, the issue of access to and participation in culture, innovation in cultural development, the relationship between culture and the environment, the role of artists in European societies, training of artists and cultural organisers, and finally discussion about instruments for scientific research and analysis for cultural development. The issues were first analysed and discussed in specialized subgroups (Commission I and II) and by a Working Group.

The conference, like previous conferences, recognized «that cultural development was an integral part of overall development and that its cultural policy was an essential factor in each nation's social and economic development» (UNESCO 1972a:12):7-9). It was therefore logical that also this conference rejected «the idea of an elitist culture» and supported enlarged access to and participation in culture – «in the most diverse forms of culture». The delegates recognized that «culture was neither a luxury article nor a decoration, neither an evasion nor an alibi, but an essential factor of life».

5. Similar conferences for other regions of the world were organised by UNESCO in the 1970s and 1980s.

In their report Commission I expressed concerns about the modern mass media – because of their expansion and increasing power they could harm traditional forms of culture and induce a sense of alienation, but they could also be a remarkable tool for wider access to culture. The best way to balance the power of mass media was, according to the report, to give people access to education and thereby make them able to think critically. And the report argued for an alliance between mass media and public authorities: «Clearly a close link must be established between the communication media and the authorities responsible for cultural policies» (UNESCO 1972a:12).

This idea – a ‘normative wishful thinking’ for political harmony – was contrary to the fact that the mass media were in the hands of private business interests and were dominated by market forces, also in countries with social democratic welfare systems. It also violated the principle of freedom of expression, which meant that the media should be independent of direct government influence and pressure – one of the bearing ideas of liberal democracies.

The main task of the Working Group, where Augustin Girard was rapporteur, was to discuss «instruments for the analysis of cultural development». The main question was: How could scientific research contribute to a better cultural development? It was implicit in this approach that researchers ought to serve cultural political aims: «Research is thus one of the essential factors in cultural policy. Admittedly it is not for research workers to define cultural policy, this being the task of governments, but it is henceforth clear that policy-makers must call on research workers in formulating policies as well as in addressing their results» (UNESCO 1972a:16).

The formulation touched a disputable issue, namely the relation between research and policymaking, but it did not go deeper into the problem but took it for granted that it would be possible to draw the line between politics and research. The aims and goals of cultural policy should, according to the report, guide research to make it relevant for policymaking (UNESCO 1972a:17). Several delegates wanted more comparable international statistical research, but the group also expressed scepticism to quantitative data alone because statistical data «necessarily ignore the most essentially qualitative factors, which are often the most vital for the cultural life of a country». Thus it was evident that the group was aware of the challenges connected with ‘measurement’ of the position of culture in member states, not to mention direct comparison between them.

As mentioned earlier, the principle approaches to research for improvement of cultural development can be traced back to Augustin Girard’s writings in the 1960s. One could argue that UNESCO adopted and copied his ideas through the series of conferences and expert meetings that I have analysed in this article. Girard’s strong position in UNESCO’s cultural policymaking at the time |was confirmed by a book written by him that UNESCO published in 1972, and which was revised in 1982 (French version ) and 1983 (English version) : *Cul-*

*tural development: experiences and policies.*<sup>6</sup> This book, which was translated into several languages, became the authoritative reference text for the ‘new cultural policy’ that was adopted by many countries in the 1970s. It was exported worldwide as UNESCO’s basic document for promoting cultural development. I shall make some comments to the book here but otherwise I refer to other research and analysis of the work (Martin 2011, Saez 2011, Meland and Petersen 2010, Vestheim 2010, Mangset 2010).

In the foreword of the book Girard and Gentil (1983) argued that the book is a synthesis of the collective thinking and discussion that took place in UNESCO on conferences and meetings in the 1960s and 1970s. But they admitted that the Third World had not been satisfactorily discussed: «The cultural achievements and specific concerns of the Third World in particular are not discussed as such. No cultural administrator from an old industrial nation has any right to speak for nations that have their own distinctive cultural identity and are quite capable of speaking for themselves» (Girard and Gentil 1983:12). This admission confirms my earlier observation that the concepts ‘cultural policy’ and ‘cultural development’ was a product of liberal, Western European background, ideologically legitimized by welfare state philosophy.

It is interesting to observe that the most frequently used concept is ‘cultural development’, not ‘cultural policy’. The argument is that cultural policy should be an integrated part of general social and economic development, not an isolated sector policy. And in the first chapter of the book they made a broad sociological analysis of the changing conditions that could threaten people’s quality of life and identity: dehumanising work, discouraging atmospheres in modern cities built for profit, a predominance of leisure activities that is bought and consumed, bombardment of audio-visual media, technological alienation and superfluous consumption and even complex cultural values, within countries and in migration processes between countries. According to the authors, cultural development should «neutralize the dangers and take advantages of the opportunities» of the modern time. A big chapter of the book dealt with the cultural industries (for example film, video, books, broadcasting, television), an issue Girard had been preoccupied with for years. The overall message of this chapter was that cultural policymakers should take cultural industries seriously because it could widen access to quality cultural products for more people, and it could produce new creativity and distribute traditional forms of culture more effectively.

The authors proposed that compulsory schools should take a principal responsibility for cultural contents and activities. That would expose all citizens to cultural experience at an early age and thereby awaken their interest for cultural expressions and events. Out-of-school cultural education would only

6. French title: Développement culturel: expériences et politiques. The first version was published in 1972 with Augustin Girard as the only author. The revised French version, in cooperation with Geneviève Gentil, was published in 1982. In this article I refer to the revised English version of 1983.

reach the few, they argued, and adult education would be an important contribution, but only the school could reach all children and stimulate their sensitivity and imagination, which the authors considered necessary to develop critical and independent attitudes at later stages of their lives. The best solution would therefore be: more culture on the school programmes.

The two authors saw the power of cultural and ideological influence which resided with the public schools (not in the English sense!), which was another argument for state and local authorities' intervention in basic cultural education.

The creative power of the artist in cultural development was much appreciated by Girard and Gentil. With reference to André Malraux and Olof Palme they launched the slogan 'support without interference', a principle that should guarantee the artist his/her artistic freedom. The state should be at 'an arm's length' distance and it «should have a broad range of financial resources at its disposal in order to encourage production and help the underprivileged publics» (Girard and Gentil 1983:131).

By such means the state would improve living conditions for artists and the artist was definitely supposed to be 'useful' for the society, although the democratic right of the artist to decide about the content should not be violated. It was important to avoid that the privileged elite became even more privileged, therefore they proposed a «public-authority intervention policy which is deliberately in-egalitarian and biased in favour of the most disadvantaged members of the publics». Girard and Gentil's pragmatic position was an attempt to combine liberal artistic freedoms with welfare oriented cultural policies.

## FINAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In a historical perspective it is clear that UNESCO's efforts in the 1960s brought culture as policy area in from the margins – the organization argued that cultural policy ought to be equal to other policy areas, and it should be an integrated element in general social and economic policies. UNESCO launched a *sociological* view on culture, not an aesthetic, psychological or moral one.

The overall concept of this holistic view on culture was *cultural development*. Cultural policy actions were the instruments that should promote and support cultural development. Cultural policies within UNESCO was influenced by education policies of the same organization. The political interest for education as a peacebuilding instrument was there from the early establishment of UNESCO, but culture was in practice not recognized for the same purpose before the middle of the 1960s. Culture simply played a more peripheral role within the organization.

The cultural policy of UNESCO was openly anti-elite, one of its principal aims was to give underprivileged groups of citizens access to culture as a social



good. These publics needed support from authorities on state as well as on local level. And they had other cultural requirements than the educated social elite. Therefore the concept of culture was enlarged to include more than the fine arts – like participatory community culture, voluntary organizations, amateur activities, cultural industries, even sports. The ideological justification of this policy was the Western European, social democratic idea of the welfare state: All citizens were considered equal in relation to the state and had the same right to enjoy state supported social goods, culture included.

But despite the anti-elite rhetoric – UNESCO was occupied with the social role of the professional artist. The artist was expected to be ‘useful’ for the society as a whole, but the liberal/social democratic welfare state should also secure the artist financial support and protect his/her artistic freedoms. No form of censorship or direct intervention from the state was accepted, state support to artists should be indirect and according to the ‘arm’s length principle’. That gave the professional artists and their organizations many opportunities to influence public cultural policies.

UNESCO cultural policies in these years was built on a strong trust in the nation state. One reason for this was the simple fact that the members of UNESCO were nation states that cooperated within the frames of an international organisation. But trust in the nation state was also a core element in Western European welfare policies of the time, and UNESCO transferred that principle to international cultural policies. The cultural welfare state represented a universal idea, and UNESCO argued that it could be adaptable to different national cultures and political regimes. The state was seen as the responsible agent of cultural policies, but it was expected to cooperate with regional/local authorities and civil society organisations. Political and geographical decentralisation was on the agenda, but the main focus was on the nation state level. The decentralisation wave in cultural policies that grew so strong in the 1970s came from elsewhere – from regional policies, economic policies, higher educational policies and other dominant policy areas.

It is interesting, but not surprising, that spokesmen within UNESCO for the cultural welfare state often came from countries with great general trust in the central state – for example from France and the Nordic countries. However, the legitimacy of the cultural state in France and in the Nordic countries came from different historical backgrounds:

In France, the roots of the culturally centralized state can be traced back to L’Ancien Régime and royal autocracy, symbolised in the creation of ‘les Académies’ and the royal ‘mécénat’. The French Revolution and the time after saw the establishment of three national heritage institutions that confirmed the dominant position of the state: La Bibliothèque nationale, Les Archives nationales and Le Muséum national des Arts. Philippe Poirrier (1996) argues that a series of administrative and organisational measures demonstrates the historical continuity of state intervention in culture in France, among them the

establishment of a specific department for arts policy (Direction des Beaux-Arts) within the Ministry of Education in 1870, the cultural policy of the Popular Front 1936-1937 (Poirrier 2000), Jean Vilar and Theatre national populaire in 1951, and last but not least – De Gaulle organised a specific ministry of cultural affairs in 1959 and appointed André Malraux to be its first minister. It was within this ministry that Augustin Girard built and managed a department for research and evaluation of cultural policy. From this base he engaged in cultural policy development, in France and internationally.

Laurent Martin (2013:222-231) argues that Augustin Girard held a double position: On one hand he spoke for intervention in cultural life from a strong national state that could program, coordinate, finance, inform and educate in cultural policy; on the other hand he was sceptical to heavy, centralised state bureaucracies and argued for decentralisation and transfer of political and administrative power to regional and local levels. Martin concludes that Girard in practice went in for the principle of *subsidiarity* – the central state should only take care of functions that the regional and local levels were unable to perform.

Probably Girard was also influenced by the decentralised version of the ‘architect model’ of the Nordic countries, especially by Sweden. As mentioned earlier in this article, he was in continuous contact with his Swedish colleague Carl-Johan Kleberg, and he followed closely the development of Swedish cultural policy. In 1973 La documentation française published a study of Swedish cultural policy (Fabrizio 1973), strongly recommended by Augustin Girard. That indicates that Girard, although he was a civil servant of the centralised French state, was open for other and more decentralised models of state intervention in cultural affairs.

Strong trust in the state in the Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland) had different backgrounds, compared to France. In two of the countries, Sweden and Denmark, there existed an aristocratic public sphere already in the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when national institutions for arts and heritage were established (Duelund 2003:481- 484). Norway, Finland and Iceland were younger nations: Norway was a Danish colony for four hundred years but was ‘given’ to Sweden in 1814 in the negotiations after the end of the Napoleonic, Norway did not get full independence until 1905. Finland was a Russian Grand Duchy 1721-1917, when it was liberated by the Russian revolution. Iceland was under Danish influence until 1944, when it declared itself an independent republic.

But despite different historical backgrounds, the political, social, economic and cultural developments in the Nordic countries converged after World War II. Sweden, Norway and Denmark had social democratic governments with a strong majority in their parliaments from the 1930s till the 1960s and early 1970s. Their principal political project was the building of a welfare state, where better access to culture for the people was one of the aims. The main

instrument to fulfil this aim was to control an active, supportive and intervening state on all social fields, also in culture. But full development of the welfare state programme was postponed till after World War II. Finland followed in the 1960s (Kangas 2003:85) but in Iceland there was a strong resistance against public spending on culture, which was considered to be the responsibility of artistic organizations and institutions (Gudmundsson 2003:126-129). State cultural policy planning in Iceland did not occur before the 1990s.

The welfare state cultural policy of the Nordic countries was historically initiated and driven by strong popular movements: National-liberal and democratic organizations of civil society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (in Sweden, Norway and Denmark), the layman- and temperance movements and the labour movement after 1900. Culture and enlightenment programmes were part of their agendas, and they acted as press groups and a recruitment base for the social democratic parties and the liberal parties. These groups did not consider the state as an instrument of suppression, on the contrary, the state and the government apparatus became their foremost institution for the promotion of democracy and social justice.

What brought France and the Nordic countries together in the UNESCO process? A meeting point between France and the Nordic countries was a common belief in a just and incorrupt state. They were all sceptical to leave the cultural field solely to market forces because the market logic was only focused on maximising profit. At this point they were more state oriented than for example the liberalist USA and the liberalist and conservative UK. Only the nation state could regulate the distribution of cultural goods so that it reached all citizens. This could only be possible in countries with a mixed economy – which was typical for welfare states.

In the welfare states experts (bureaucrats, professionals, academics) played an important role in cultural policymaking. That was also the case in UNESCO. Augustin Girard was the most prominent figure, but as we have seen in this article, a large number of experts participated in the meetings and round tables that were organised to prepare the General Conferences. They played key roles even on the General Conferences themselves. They were experts in two ways: They were academically educated in relevant subjects, and they were experienced and familiar with political and administrative systems. The experts therefore held strong power positions as premise deliverers and as implementers of political decisions once they were made. Politicians were completely dependent on them. And in UNESCO it was taken for granted that researchers should contribute to policymaking in normative ways, their academic freedom in this context could thus be restricted. Politicians and bureaucrats in UNESCO were primarily interested in statistical and quantitative research that could motivate political actions and contribute directly to the development of cultural policies.

But today we can observe that the vision of a harmonious cooperation between policymakers and researchers has not come true. The structural schism

between politics and research has very deep roots in liberal democracies, and UNESCO has not succeeded to overcome this gap. However, in the 1960s a harmonious vision of close cooperation between research and policymaking was part of the greater image of the 'social engineering state', which took it for granted that cultural welfare for all could be 'invented' and 'implemented' by 'social engineers'. This also became a bearing idea of 'new cultural policy' in the 1970s.

'New cultural policy' has proved to be a resilient cultural policy model but since the 1980s it has been challenged by strong waves of new liberalism, which today is reflected in UNESCO cultural policies and in national cultural policies worldwide. But that is another history.

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