

# SOME SUGGESTIONS AND PROPOSALS

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## *Some Analytical Points*

While there is obviously need for quantitative surveys of cultural financing, as well as of variations both in the structure of cultural financing, and of variations in priorities as they exist, and in so far as they can be influenced, — to quote the Annotated Agenda, 'creation, dissemination, animation, conservation' — there are, obviously, great difficulties in quantifying such information.

In defining the scope of culture, I would like to suggest a distinction at a primitive level. Anthropologists and students of society distinguish between 'traditional' and 'modern' cultures, and study the process of 'modernisation' and its paths in individual cultures.

There are two important elements in this analysis which would specially affect both monetary evaluation and policy.

One could divide cultures into literate and pre-literate cultures. Or, alternatively, into technological and pre-machine cultures.

From such information as is available, my intuition is that, while there would be a certain degree of overlap in our findings using both these terminologies, there will also be significant differences. For instance, many technologically advanced societies are heavily dependent upon non-literary media for the practice and dissemination of culture; most pre-literate societies lack these media, and are therefore regionalised in their cultures. Different proportions of these factors exist in almost all countries of any size.

I think that for our purposes it would be best to bear this distinction in mind, and agree to talk in terms of technological and pre-technological cultures, since the media (the press,

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broadcasting, television, films, etc) are a very important and financially comparatively more easily measurable factor in the cultural expenditure in which the State is involved. It is also the area in which governmental policy can most deeply influence existing cultural patterns and norms.

If we accept this primitive and analytical distinction we could build into the picture quite easily the structure of literacy in any particular country. This could be done quite simply, and monetarised, by asking what proportion of the national and regional budgets goes into (a) promoting literacy (b) maintaining literacy, and (c) providing materials for the literate or sub-literate at various stages in their lives.

A further simple practical basis for distinction could then be whether education in the country is compulsorily enforced by the State, and the extent to which the State finances education, subdivided by age, and ranges of education — for instance, technology, the arts, sports activities and training, adult education and re-training facilities etc.

#### *Pre-technological societies*

From our point of view the most important factor in the treatment of pre-technological cultures is that they tend to be non-monetarised or imperfectly monetarised societies. And, in the majority of cases, to make the problem more complex, societies on the way to monetarisation.

The concept of 'the State' has, therefore, to be modified to describe and analyse this kind of situation.

Neither is culture commercialised. And education is not enforced by the State, nor paid for by the State.

Nevertheless, the *society's* contribution, through traditional modes, both to education in its conventional forms of the acquisition of reading and writing and numeracy, as well as the skills needed for survival, and to the creative arts, might be considerable.

Per capita 'private consumption' and production of the arts, and creative possibilities, would, in such a hypothetically purely pre-technical culture, be largely determined by the social structure, and the extent to which the society is content to perpetuate and conserve existing cultural forms and activities, or wishes to, enjoys,

and participates in the modification of its existing schemata of acculturated perception.

Such societies in their 'pure' state still exist, though not very frequently, in various part of the world.

But a far larger part of the world is emerging from this kind of structure into monetarised societies.

They have come into the orbit of media, particularly, of broadcasting.

An equally important factor in determining the forms of cultural activity is the process of urbanisation, and the availability and cost of transportation. The modes of cultural activity in a town are necessarily different from those of a rural community, which, in turn, is influenced by its methods of agriculture.

I have suggested a brief consideration of the 'pure' case, in order to see whether we can build in criteria into our long-term fact-finding structures, that could take account of these differences, and the details of change and growth. A large number of the societies we are involved with are likely to be at different stages of change. They are likely to vary considerably in social structure.

If we could build into our activities an analysis of the social structure and its modes of functioning in cultural activities, according to an agreed common terminology, we may be able, on the basis of such information, to work out a system of *weightage*, which could serve as a tool for quantification.

The value of this, to my mind, would be twofold. Firstly, it would avoid the errors that ensue necessarily from applying concepts derived from alien social and organisational patterns. Secondly, it would have the advantage of providing a terminology that can be extended to the technologically advanced societies. It could thus help us to deal with some of the problems raised in paragraph 4 of Section II of the Annotated Agenda, viz. 'Besides local groupings, staff or works committees and private associations are playing an important role which should be taken into account.'

#### *Technological Societies*

These tend to be largely urban or urban-oriented societies. They are by and large literate to different levels of sophistication. The level of in-

formation is often higher than the level of literacy, because of the media.

Where there is State spending on education, culture, and the media, it is obviously easier, in one sense, to collect data on cultural expenditure, national and regional. It is also likely that these States would be more articulate about their own cultural policies, and committed to them. Nor would a body like UNESCO wish to influence committed cultural policies, or the priorities of its member-states.

#### *Modes of Assessment*

To my mind neither per capita state expenditure nor the proportion of the State's total expenditure spent on cultural activities can be a true index of its cultural activities, over such a wide spread of nations. The former would be a crude index, and would not take historical, regional and class factors into account. The latter can only be meaningful in terms of the total lay-out of the budget in all its detail.

The cultural expenditure of individuals would be extremely difficult to compute, and would be subject to all the errors of random sampling; a large enough sample covering regional, professional and class diversities would be exorbitantly expensive. Besides, it would not take into account the non-commercial activities that exist in any society: folk dancing, or theatre workshops, or the storytelling and singing and dancing that goes on in an Indian village festival or fair.

It is for this reason that I suggested that we need an analysis of the social and cultural structure of any community, nation or region before we can evaluate the need for financial stimulus or support.

#### *A Suggestion*

Following from this I would suggest that a negative concept of 'cultural impoverishment' may in fact turn out to be a more useful tool to work with. Such a condition could have been brought about by history, wars, disasters, rapid social change and consequent maladjustment, and a number of other reasons. It would then be incumbent on member-states to state their cultural policy, and the reasons for giving stimulus or support of a particular kind in a particular place at a particular time. A fair amount of work has been done in many countries on regions of cultural impoverishment or decay. It

would be, a useful idea to introduce where it has not been thought about, and to encourage member-states to formulate a cultural policy. This could be done with international co-operation, and the sharing of experience gained from other contexts; it could be a value in itself in promoting inter-cultural understanding.

#### *Relation with Inter-cultural Studies*

Clearly, the problem of budgeting and financing cultural activities cannot be separated from UNESCO's interest in promoting inter-cultural studies. Project evaluation techniques can only develop alongside the progress of such studies, to my mind. They would need, too, to keep abreast of the changing needs of particular cultures, and their necessarily different cultural and social objectives, different not only from those of other societies but from their own at other times in their history.

#### *Conclusion*

To sum up, some of the neutral factors that would influence any policy of cultural financing, and the evaluation of projects involving cultural policy, which necessarily has to be a national responsibility, are:

- (a) The social structure and dynamics of a society at any given time
- (b) The degree of urbanisation, and the state of technology, which would determine relevant criteria: like the choice between theatres and museums, etc.
- (c) The existence or absence of mass media, including the press, and the extent to which these are financed and influenced by the State
- (d) The degree of monetarisation of a culture, and non-monetarised cultural forms
- (e) The extent of state financing of education
- (f) The proportion of literacy.

On the basis of such information it may well be possible to work out a unit-system of weightage, which would minimise the role of private value-judgments in inter-national cultural financing.