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A GENERAL APPRAISAL OF THE PROBLEM OF CULTURE IN SENEGAL

The two concepts of „culture” and „development” are frequently associated together, and, in fact, there is a dialectical link between them. Economic development can lend impetus to the flourishing of culture just as cultural development can be a key factor in economic development.

You will have noticed that I used the word „can” and not „does”, for the dialectical link between „culture” and „development” does not exclude the possibility of either and each of these entities playing a relatively autonomous role.

For, in fact, a country with an under-developed economic infrastructure can still have a highly developed cultural suprastructure (as in the case of ancient Greece). Today one can also find economically highly developed countries which are culturally under-developed. In other words, there is no necessary and obligatory correlation between the national income level and the scope of cultural activity, either in space (when making international comparisons) or in time (in the course of a country's economic development).

It is important to stress this point in order to understand certain aspects of cultural policy in an under-developed country such as Senegal.

CULTURAL POLICY IN SENEGAL

In Senegal, the Government's cultural policy is carried out by a given number of ministries:

- Ministry of Education (national education, technical education, higher education)
 - Ministry for Youth and Sports
 - Ministry of Information
 - Ministry of Cultural Affairs

As one can see, the competencies of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs do not exhaust all the possibilities of cultural activity in the country.

The operation of all these organisms dealing with culture calls for certain financial resources. I have already said that „economic development” need not be a synonym or correlative for „cultural development”. We have many illustrations of this point in Africa. Despite its slower economic development and lower national income, Senegal has a more developed cultural policy than the Ivory Coast.

Since Senegal gained its independence, culture has truly become the concern of the Government.

Cultural activities are financed out of two basic sources:

- the central State budget, and
 - outside aid

Outside aid is especially used to finance education (1/3rd of total expenditures on education).

Generally speaking, cultural policy constitutes one of the Senegalese Government's priority fields, which may seem like an anachronism for an under-developed country. Regardless of one's opinion, however, one should try to explain the reasons for such a political orientation.

ELEMENTS WHICH EXPLAIN SENEGAL'S CULTURAL POLICY

(1) Without wanting to assume an idealistic stance, the principal reason behind the cultural efforts of an under-developed country such as Senegal should be sought in the personality of the country's leading figure, Mr. Seng-

hor, a man of letters and of culture. Even those who contest his overall policy freely admit that he would make an excellent Minister of Cultural Affairs.

(2) The second element explaining this policy can be found in the basic doctrine of the Senegalese Government: „Africa's road to socialism”, whose ideological basis is „negritude” (= the sum total of the cultural values of the black civilization).

(3) And finally, there is the economic factor to be considered, for cultural policy in Senegal is also considered as a factor of economic growth. From this standpoint, education is the most banal example. But there are also other aspects to be considered with respect to Senegal. Tourism is a field which enjoys a privileged position by the Government, and the development of cultural activities is considered to be a factor which stimulates tourism (tourism makes use of the sun and the sea but also a great deal of local artistic folklore).

AN ATTEMPT TO APPRAISE SENEGAL'S CULTURAL POLICY

Two observations can be made here:

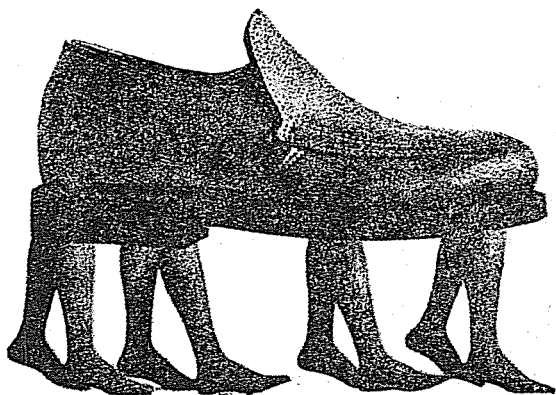
1. Senegal (like Guinea) has one of the most developed cultural policies in Africa.
2. Senegal's cultural policy is one of the most positive aspects of the Government's overall policy. Nonetheless, certain problems do arise.

In terms of quantity there are those who, having adopted the line of economizing, think that too much is being spent, that cultural activities are absorbing a major part of the budget at the expense of other activities which are of a more economic nature and are considered to be more profitable. Although and probably precisely because I am an economist, I do not view cultural expenses as unproductive, even in an under-developed country. Apportionments for activities of an economic nature should be augmented, yes, but not from the budget for culture, but rather from supplementary means available to the General Administration.

In terms of quality, one should not underestimate the risks inherent in this cultural drive of the State. For, state control over cultural activities tends to turn artists into functionaries, drawing all forms of entertainment activity under the law of the market so that there is a

danger of entertainment becoming official, of having to be paid for. Thus, the street which was once the site of spontaneous artistic expression loses its charm, its spontaneity, its typically African quality.

Non-official and non-commercial cultural activity should continue to prosper. Fortunately, there are still a considerable number of non-controlled artistic manifestations in Senegal, and throughout Africa. This is a form of gratis cultural activity (songs, dances, music), to whom the thought of money and public financing is alien. This shows that cultural activities as a whole cannot be limited only to what is called the cultural policy of public authority. This approach only complicates the work of those studying the financing of culture.



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