From Intergovernmental to Global:

UNESCO's Response to Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Whilst there is an ever-growing literature on the economic and political aspects of 'globalization', at present there are few studies analyzing how intergovernmental organizations have reacted to this phenomenon. This article aims to fill this gap by analyzing the response to globalization of UNESCO, one of the least studied organizations of the UN constellation. Addressing the global orientation of some of the current programs, this article shows how a recent re-evaluation of scientific humanism – the main philosophical framework contributing to the creation of UNESCO – has influenced both UNESCO's self-understanding and its understanding of globalization. Scientific humanism is a philosophical utopia that couples the advance of scientific knowledge with the diffusion of a common philosophical framework and promotes a universal system of education in order to establish a global community. Based on the philosophical appeal of a culture of peace based on science, humanism and human rights, UNESCO's representation of globalization represents an intriguing example of how our global future may be conceived and, to some extent, realized.

From Intergovernmental to Global: UNESCO's response to globalization

By Vincenzo Pavone [*]

What is essential today is not so much the rehabilitation of schools and libraries, or shops and factories, as the rehabilitation of man. We must re-create man if we are to re-create a new world community

(Federico Mayor, 1995)

1 Introduction

In his last speech, delivered at the 1999 General Conference, the then Director General Federico Mayor affirmed that UNESCO was the philosophical agency of the UN. Actually, during the early years of UNESCO's functioning, the debate concerning the philosophical ideals underpinning the organization was vibrant and witnessed two main approaches suggesting opposite views of how UNESCO should serve the cause of peace. Inspired by a functionalist approach, the US delegates suggested a short range of actions *directly* linked to peace building. Supporting Huxley's scientific humanism, many other delegates replied that UNESCO should implement long-range actions, and promote science, education and culture in order to serve *indirectly* the cause of peace. T. V. Sathyamurthy (1964) outlined and discussed this debate in what remains the last significant contribution on the philosophy of UNESCO.

With the exception of Sathyamurthy's book, there is no up-to-date study on UNESCO's philosophical and organizational identity. Nor is there any discussion on the impact that philosophical ideals have had on the concrete production of its documents, projects and field actions. Finally, a critical analysis of UNESCO in the context of globalization is also missing. In

spite of its remarkable effort to drive and guide the process of globalization towards the goal of international peace, democracy and human rights, UNESCO's role has been largely neglected so far. Starting with the philosophical debates characterizing the early years of UNESCO's functioning, the present article studies and outlines the philosophical, organizational and operational transformations that UNESCO underwent ever since the end of the Cold War. This article shows how, under the new conditions triggered by globalization, UNESCO re-evaluated a universal and humanist orientation, and replaced the strictly intergovernmental profile with a distinct global profile. Consequently, UNESCO proposed, and then consistently pursued, the implementation of a model of global governance that encompasses not only cultural and educational projects but also ethical and political ambitions. Centered on the philosophical appeal of a culture of peace based on science, humanism and human rights, UNESCO's account of globalization represents an intriguing example of how our global future may be conceived and, to some extent, realized.

2   The philosophical controversy behind UNESCO's foundation

According to Charles Asher, UNESCO's birth was the result of conflicting forces. First, he focused on the opposite views held by the CAME (Conference of Allied Ministries of Education) and France. Second, he also emphasized the tension between the lobby of the International Council of Scientific Unions, which pressed for an agency that could support scientific research internationally, and the US interest for popular culture, propaganda and mass-media communications. The interaction of conflicting forces emerged soon in the tension between the vast and lofty preamble, and the more pragmatic and focused Article I. In addition, the double constituency of UNESCO, i.e. member states as opposed to NGOs and expertise groups, constituted an additional source of tension. Allocating 60 per cent of 1949 budget to NGOs, UNESCO clearly expected NGOs to perform certain specific tasks on the behalf of the organization rather than freely develop their programs and projects (Asher 1950: 14-16).

The idea of adopting scientific humanism as a working philosophy in order to reconcile the ideological conflict between liberalism and communism was then widely shared both within UNESCO and in the academic world. Actually, in 1950 the whole leadership of UNESCO "went as far as to suggest that it would be possible to create a culture of scientific humanism which would serve as a binding cultural element for the whole world community" (Niebuhr 1950: 7).

According to Julian Huxley, the first Director General, the activity of UNESCO had to be organized around a coherent working hypothesis concerning human nature. As the latter could not be derived from any competing theologies or ideologies, Huxley suggested adopting his scientific humanism, which – he argued – was universal and did not fall into any particularistic trap. Huxley (1964) defined *scientific humanism* as a philosophical utopia, based on the universal appeal of science and humanism. Combining a global advancement of knowledge, a universal reform of education and the diffusion of a common spiritual framework, scientific humanism aimed at establishing a global community free from war and violence. Scientific humanism, as he affirmed, placed correctly the human being into the realm of nature, offered guidance to distinguish desirable and undesirable trends, supported the advance of progress and provided a safe link between natural science and human history. Moreover, it would have encouraged the emergence of a single world culture and, therefore, of a more solid foundation for a peaceful world community. I quote:

> The general philosophy of UNESCO should be a scientific world humanism, global in extent and evolutionary in background […] to help the emergence of a single world culture (Huxley 1948: 58-61).

Adopting scientific humanism, UNESCO could then contribute to the speediest realization of human evolution: "UNESCO had to understand the process of evolution and its mechanisms, direct and steer it in the right direction" (Huxley 1964: 144-145). Among the first national delegates, Johnson, Wallace, McKean, MacLeish and, to a lesser degree, Dewey held very similar views (Sathyamurthy 1964: 44-55).[1]

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[1] For further information on the debates and the various national positions, please refer to the UNESCO General Conferences Proceedings in the documents 1946 1/C, 1947 2/C, 1948 3/C, 1949 4/C Proceedings.

Yet, in the context of the rising ideological conflict, several other delegates, such as Maritain, Sharp, Wilson, Dexter and Niebuhr, held the opinion that the establishment of an international society was at best an interesting long-term project, at worst a nonsense utopia. Jacques Maritain fundamentally disagreed on the need and the possibility of actually adopting one single philosophy. He contested that the human community could ever share a common philosophy and argued that, in any event, science could never constitute such a universal platform.

> Agreement between minds can be reached spontaneously not on the basis of common speculative ideas, but on common practical ideas, not on the affirmation of one and the same conception of the world, of man and of knowledge but upon the affirmation of a single body of beliefs for guidance in action. [2]

A US delegate, the protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, proposed the most relevant critique of scientific humanism. He argued that the existential judgments relative to the meaning of our life are non-rational and non-negotiable rather than purely rational and negotiable (UNESCO 1949: 120). He also rejected the idea that holds traditional beliefs, illiteracy or ignorance responsible for warfare by showing that the vast majority of human conflicts had been conducted by developed countries with a highly rational culture, which knew each other very well (Niebuhr 1950: 8). Scientific humanism, Niebuhr concluded, contained three controversial assumptions. First, it believed that the diffusion of a rational culture would have eventually caused the gradual dissolution of religious beliefs. Second, whilst the promotion of a crusade against illiteracy and ignorance was a necessary and urgent endeavor, the promotion of a specific culture based on scientific humanism amounted to a much more problematic enterprise. Finally, the creation of a global community implied the establishment of a global moral authority equipped with the necessary power to enforce moral laws.

In Niebuhr's view, UNESCO had to focus on the establishment of minimal common principles of justice based on pragmatism, tolerance and cooperation. Moreover, Niebuhr argued that the

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[2] UNESCO 1947, 2/C Proceedings, as quoted in UNESCO Courier Feb. 1948, 1 (1): 1-8 (1)

establishment of a free world community could only take place within the western world and specifically under the leadership of the United States.[3] Consequently, the only feasible goal UNESCO could achieve was the elaboration of a minimal concept of justice and the diffusion of a spirit of pragmatic tolerance among different cultures (UNESCO 1949: 118). In fact, Niebuhr's vision aimed at depriving the original project of UNESCO of its universal reformism, reducing it to a provision of economic, medical and technical aid to the countries falling into the U.S. sphere of influence (Sathyamurthy 1964: 42-44).

The philosophical debate on UNESCO's nature remained very lively until two main events in the Fifties altered the balance in favor of the functionalist approach. First, the Korean War forced UNESCO to renounce to its ambition of autonomy from the UN and to side, along with the western coalition, against Korea. The optimistic period following the Second World War, in which scientific humanism had gained consensus, quickly ended. Gradually, pragmatism and ideological loyalty to the UN replaced the euphoria of philosophical universalism. Second, in 1952 the Director General Torres Bodet opposed the US attempt to include the programs of technical assistance in the ordinary budget. Avoiding budget resources being detracted from the ordinary long-term projects, Bodet wanted to prevent technical assistance from becoming the dominant activity of UNESCO. Unfortunately, the US provided for the majority of the budget and enjoyed the support of the majority of the Member States. Although supported by France and various Latin American countries, Bodet's proposal was eventually defeated and he resigned.

After Bodet's resignation, the US delegate Luther Evans became the new Director General. Evans's ideological position was largely coincident with the US conception of UNESCO. During

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[3] R. Niebuhr expressed many of his ideas on UNESCO during the 1949 General Conference, whose proceedings are recorded and filed under the title 4/C Proceedings. However, Niebuhr published several articles on the argument, most notably R. Niebuhr 1950, The Theory and Practice of UNESCO. *International Organisation*, 4 (1) 3-11 and also R. Niebuhr 1949, *Peace through Cultural Cooperation*", Christianity and Crisis, n. 9

his Directorate, the autonomy of UNESCO and its residual global orientation were severely undermined. Whilst Julian Huxley had claimed that UNESCO had to pursue "*the advance of world civilization*", Evans argued that "UNESCO, as a technical agency, shall advance peace without taking any ideological or philosophical positions" (Sathyamurthy 1964: 142-143). From a global oriented humanist organization, UNESCO had turned into a pragmatic intergovernmental organization more interested in technical assistance than in the cultural and educational reform of the human mind.

Theoretically speaking, the comparison between a utopian ideology like scientific humanism and a pragmatic approach like functionalism may appear unviable. Whether theoretically feasible or not, this dispute was nonetheless at the heart of UNESCO's foundation and the participants at the first conferences did divide along this line. Presenting functionalism as a pragmatic and neutral approach served the ideological function of providing an interpretation of reality and history alternative to the Marxist narrative. Although it was not a confrontation between two utopian philosophies, the pragmatic functionalism was no less ideological than the utopian humanism. The permanent confrontation between these two views remained unsolved because the first view appeared to be premature and utopian whilst the second proved too limited to serve as a rationale for the organization. As none of these two views managed to become completely dominant, the relative models ended constituting the upper and lower limits of the working of the organization. In fact, the real working of UNESCO depended and still depends on the interaction between these two interpretations (Sathyamurthy 1964: 214). In any event, here I do not intend to compare the two intellectual frameworks but the two conceptions of UNESCO that these intellectual frameworks have inspired.

By the end of 1950s, these conceptions began to co-exist within UNESCO (Tab.1). The first one, supported by Julian Huxley and Torres Bodet, was largely predominant before the Cold War and defined UNESCO as an organization globally oriented and humanist. This conception of UNESCO, which we might define *Global UNESCO*, drew inspiration from scientific humanism and

presented utopian features. It aimed at the establishment of a peaceful universal community of humankind, with a system of global governance, a common morality and a shared philosophy, based on scientific knowledge and humanism. The Global UNESCO was concerned with long-term objectives, claimed autonomy from the UN, possessed its own ideology and pursued intellectual and political goals. The Global UNESCO defined peace, cooperation and mutual understanding as opposed to violence, conflict and war in cultural, educational and spiritual terms. In structural terms, the Global UNESCO model was well reflected in the constitutional profile of the Director General and, initially, of the Executive Board. For the proponents of this model, the intergovernmental structure was the price to be paid to make sure that an innovative organization like UNESCO could come into existence. The global conception of UNESCO was very influential in the *educational policy*, with the ASP (Associated Schools Project). It also had a remarkable influence in the *cultural policy*, with the Major Project on mutual cultural understanding between the East and the West and the publication of a Universal History of Mankind. Finally, it significantly influenced the *scientific policy*, with the promotion of autonomous research and the cooperation with the NGOs. Mainly France, the Latin American Countries and India supported, and still support, such model.

The opposite conception, which we might define *Intergovernmental UNESCO,* advocated by Niebuhr and Evans, was largely predominant during the Cold War. It envisioned UNESCO as a common intergovernmental organization and considered the Article I of the Constitution the actual rationale of UNESCO's existence. It drew inspiration from the theory of functionalism and presented pragmatic features. Acknowledging the non-negotiable nature of ideological, religious and traditional beliefs, it aimed at the establishment of a common practical ground to reach a shared consensus whereby science, education and culture might help to resolve and negotiate only specific conflicts. It was concerned with short-term objectives and approved a strict subordination of the organization to the UN and, less explicitly, to the US liberal ideology. At a structural level, this

model found representation in the General Conference and, after 1954, in the Executive Board. The intergovernmental model tried to restrict UNESCO's educational policy to basic education and UNESCO's scientific policy to the function of a clearinghouse. In cultural terms, it tried to limit the activities of the organization to logistic and technical assistance. The US, the UK and the Scandinavian countries have so far strongly supported this model.

Although from the end of the 1950s onwards the humanist model of UNESCO lost importance (Sathyamurthy,1964 and R. Hoggart, 1970), in the following I will try to show how the end of the Cold War seems to have encouraged a return of UNESCO to its initial global and humanist orientation. If so, the new global model of UNESCO elaborated after the Cold War may become a topic of great interest, not only for the consequences of its revival within the organization but also for its impact on the broader phenomenon of globalization.

3   The Culture of Peace revolution

The year 1989 was revolutionary not only for world politics, but also for UNESCO, which gained more confidence in its aims and potentials and tried to play a new role in the international arena. The first signs that UNESCO was undergoing a major change, however, had occurred before the end of the Cold War. When the 1974 General Conference decided not to include Israel in the European group of States, Israel protested and the US suspended payments until Israel was re-admitted. To the US, the Israeli crisis was the first sign that the situation within UNESCO had considerably changed from the time in which western cultural and political supremacy, however disguised under the functionalist approach, was unchallenged. Various political issues, which could not remain outside UNESCO forever, had become increasingly dominant in the agenda, with the aggravating factor of an ideological pluralism unknown before. In a few years, the tension grew to a point in which the US and UK decided to withdraw on the ground of an alleged process of "politicization" negatively affecting UNESCO since the early Seventies.

The term *politicization* had a variety of meanings. It meant the tendency to deal with issues that were extraneous to the agency's field of competence as well as the agency's adoption of an anti-liberal, anti-western ideological stance. In this case, UNESCO was charged of having replaced the initial pragmatic functionalism with a new form of international cooperation based on redistribution of resources, adopting the profile of an aid-giving agency. More specifically, the US accused UNESCO of dealing with issues extraneous to its fields of competence as well as of having adopted an anti-western stance, siding with the USSR on matters like disarmament, collective rights and Palestine. Moreover, the US could not tolerate the tendency of UNESCO to legislate and regulate matters like communication order and multinational corporation activity. Finally, the US worried about the rapid increase of UNESCO's budget and the wastes of its inefficient administrative system (Imber 1989: 96-120).

In the twelve months separating the notice from effective withdrawal, UNESCO tried hard to meet US requests, freezing the budget and dropping some controversial programs. Still unsatisfied, the US officially withdrew in 1984. In fact, the UNESCO withdrawal was part of the Reagan administration design to foster a new conservative foreign policy, based more on a revitalized competition with the USSR than on improving international cooperation. At the time of the withdrawal, simply UNESCO did not serve US interests any longer (Imber 1989: 121-137). However, despite the severe budget restraints due to the 1984 US-UK withdrawals, UNESCO's activity in the second part of the Eighties was characterized by an unusual dynamism, which anticipated the great reforms that followed the end of the Cold War.

In 1986, a meeting of natural scientists, organized in Seville by Federico Mayor, the head of the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO, seems to have triggered the re-evaluation of the early humanist ideas. The final declaration, known as the *Seville Statement on Violence*, denied the connection between human warfare and our animal ancestors, rejected any genetic or biological basis for human warfare and finally discarded the belief that human warfare was the result of

natural selection. In the end, the Declaration endorsed UNESCO's motto: "We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war […] Just as 'wars' begin in the minds of men, peace also begin in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace" (UNESCO 1989a: 1-3).

The Sevilla Declaration paved the way to a social and cultural interpretation of violent conflicts. In 1987, Federico Mayor, newly appointed Director General, organized a Congress on the "*peace in the minds of men*" with the aim of highlighting global trends offering the promise of peace. In Mayor's opinion, it was time to re-evaluate the ideas of the founding fathers and to encourage the universal diffusion of an *ideology of peace* at the expenses of the *ideologies of war* (Mayor 1988a: 1-4). Held in Yamoussoukro in June 1989, the Congress documents defined peace as a mode of behavior guided by the principles of justice, liberty, solidarity and harmony between humankind and the environment (UNESCO 1992: SHS.89/CONF.401/6). In Mayor's view, the cultural origins of war urged UNESCO to formulate and implement an action program to eradicate violence from the human mind. I quote:

> Violence and the recourse to force are not constituents of human nature; violence is not innate; it is not inevitable. Unfortunately, it is created by society, it stems from the will of certain groups to dominate and oppress others. However, since it is produced by society, it can also disappear. It is therefore vital to take every step to ensure that violence does not become an attitude, that it is not reflected in behavior, that it does not become embodied in attitudes. It must be eliminated wherever it is found - whether in interpersonal, intercultural or international relations (Mayor 1989b: 2).

After a vibrant debate, the Congress proposed science and humanism as promising bases for the construction of a culture of peace. Elsewhere, Mayor had expressed this idea more explicitly:

> The major challenges facing humanity on the threshold of the third millennium are of direct concern to us all. They place our Organization at the world crossroads where all who seek ways - such arduous ways - towards a truly worldwide humanism must meet and join forces. They make it essential for the Europe region to shoulder its global responsibilities in preparing the societies of the twenty-first century (Mayor 1989b: 3).

In Yamoussoukro, UNESCO set new priorities: the construction a new vision of peace, the safeguard of the biosphere and the inclusion of human rights in all its educational programs

(UNESCO 1989b: 5-6). However, although Yamoussoukro constituted the intellectual turning point, UNESCO began to implement the Culture of Peace model of education only *after* the publication of *An Agenda for Peace*. UNESCO perceived this document as an open invitation to choose peace building as one of its main fields of activity and to elaborate a long-term policy for the establishment of a global civil society sharing scientific education, human rights and democracy. Very soon, the diffusion of a culture of peace philosophy became a priority for UNESCO, which in 1994 inaugurated the *Culture of Peace Program*. I quote:

> Today, in response to the great challenges and opportunities of our time and within the framework of the United Nations "Agenda for Peace", UNESCO is re-dedicating itself to the task of nurturing the roots of peace, of promoting a **culture of peace** in place of a culture permeated by violence and war, of encouraging vital investments in peace-building - the only kind of peace-keeping that is ultimately viable since it lays the foundations of peace in the hearts and minds of men and women (Mayor, 1994a: 3).

Largely inspired by scientific humanist ideas, the culture of peace revolution affected UNESCO in various ways. On the one hand, it affected UNESCO's intellectual debates, its operational priorities and its programs. On the other hand, it also encouraged an organizational reform of some of its internal organs and stimulated UNESCO's response to globalization. In the following section, I will first try to outline and discuss these changes in relation to the intellectual debates, the operational priorities and the internal structure. Finally, I will deal with UNESCO's response to globalization.

4   Science, humanism and global governance: UNESCO's response to globalization

With the withdrawal of UK and US, functionalism lost two of its most important proponents. Their absence heavily conditioned the intellectual debate inside UNESCO. Although some Scandinavian countries kept defending a pragmatic approach to international cooperation, the unusual intellectual dynamism of Mayor combined with the contemporary optimism generated by

the end of the Cold War created an environment very favorable to a resurgence of philosophical

universalism. In turn, several UNESCO delegates felt free to turn for inspiration to Huxley's ideas.

Mayor was the first who officially and explicitly promoted the re-evaluation of scientific humanism.

In 1990, Mayor remarked the importance of Julian Huxley's legacy. I quote:

> In his first publication on the Organization's activities Sir Julian Huxley wrote: 'the application of scientific knowledge now provides our chief means for raising the level of human welfare'. He thus highlighted the significance of science and technology for the development of modern societies and asserted the Organization's determination to work along those lines. He was one of the first to realize that the strengthening of international scientific co-operation was an essential step towards a more equitable sharing of knowledge and the uniting of the efforts required to meet people's basic needs (Mayor 1989c: 2).

Again mentioning Huxley, Mayor also addressed the question of science and humanism:

> UNESCO's Constitution speaks eloquently of 'building the defenses of peace' in the minds of men. I have set UNESCO's future course in education, science, culture and communication in a direction prescribed by that Constitution. This new approach, based on a concern to put individual human rights and dignity at the centre of all our work, looks towards a new definition of science and technology. Ethics and humanism must now come to the fore in a resolve to accomplish two basic goals: scientific knowledge, precise and rigorous, must inform public awareness and political decision-making at all levels in confronting environmental problems; a new humanization of scientific planning and technical applications must be mobilized to create a culture of peace, based on harmony with nature (Mayor 1990: 8).

In 1991, the UNESCO Courier published an article on the inspiring philosophy of Huxley,

entitled "*A Planetary Utopia*".[4] In 1996, a year marked by the second philosophy forum, UNESCO

republished the philosophical speeches, delivered at the Sorbonne during the first General

Conference by Huxley, Maritain and other philosophers. Mayor was not alone in quoting Huxley

and pushing for a re-evaluation of scientific humanism. Ladislav Kováč, President of the

International Jury of the 1995 UNESCO Peace Prize and former Ambassador of Czechoslovakia to

UNESCO, urged UNESCO to return to its original scientific humanism. I quote:

> Luckily, for the arising United Nations organization for education and culture in 1945,
> a leading personality in conceiving its conception was Julian Huxley, a prominent
> British biologist. […] In his pamphlet UNESCO: its Purpose and its Philosophy,

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[4] UNESCO Courier, *A Planetary Utopia*, Paris 1991, XLIV, 2, 41-42

Huxley formulated and substantiated his main idea: the activities of the Organization must be based on scientific humanism. […] I want to use this occasion to plead for the reintroduction of the idea of evolutionary humanism as the basis of the activities of UNESCO (UNESCO 1997b: 13).

In a period in which the academic world endorsed post-modernist views and science had renounced to its claims of universality and objectivity, these statements may look surprising. Yet, Kováč was firmly convinced of the supra-cultural, and therefore universal, status of evolutionary humanism. He continued:

Evolutionary humanism recognizes the value of cultural polymorphism. Science, however, is not a culture among other equivalent cultures. Science is the single product of cultural evolution endowed with intercultural, supra-cultural status: it is a process of continuous reduction of ignorance, growth of objective knowledge. Accordingly, it can be neither indifferent to discrediting science nor tolerant to fanaticism.

The scientists participating to the 1999 UNESCO Conference on Science and Humanism expressed similar views:

We wish to affirm firstly that science, by the universality of its methodology, provides a means of bringing all cultures together, ruling out any relativist assertion to the effect that science is merely 'a social construct' not founded upon any objective truth.[5]

Finally, the World Declaration on Science approved at the 1999 UNESCO Conference on Science of the 21st Century remarked the crucial role of science in the construction of a culture of peace:

Governments and society at large should be aware of the need to use natural and social sciences and technology as tools to address the root causes and impacts of conflict. Investment in scientific research which addresses these issues should be increased. (UNESCO 2003c: 16)

However, in spite of the large consensus enjoyed by scientific humanism, especially among some of the NGOs associated with UNESCO, the 1990s were very different from the 1940s. It was a period very fertile for idealism and universalism but the diffusion of postmodernism and cultural relativism prevented an uncritical revival of Huxley's scientific humanist ideas. My argument, therefore, is not that UNESCO re-evaluated Huxley's scientific humanism as such. Rather, UNESCO

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[5] See also the final declaration of the UNESCO Conference: A Century of Nobel Prizes: Science and Humanism, held in Paris in April 1999 available online at: http://www.unesco.org/science/wcs/meetings/eur_paris_nobel_e_99.htm

re-evaluated the global model of international cooperation, originally associated with Huxley's scientific humanism, in an attempt to contrast the unfolding of a globalization purely dominated by the triumph of the market ideology and the growing disparities between North and South. I quote:

> In the face of the multitude of problems induced by this kind of globalization - the growing contradiction between wealth and impoverishment, social marginalization, the commodification of culture, xenophobia, exclusion, poverty, misery and violence - the universal ideals of democracy and human rights have a special role to play. They form the foundation of a culture of peace and tolerance which, in our culturally diverse and 'globalized' world, has become an absolute necessity" (Mayor 1998b: 2).

4.1 The new priorities

In the following, I will try to show how the re-evaluation of the global model of UNESCO not only affected the traditional sectors and programs of UNESCO's endeavor but also triggered the elaboration and implementation of new ones. In the educational sector, after the *Education for All Conference* held in Jomtien in 1990, UNESCO no longer focused on traditional education and launched the *Project on Education for All.* The Project affirmed that *education* was global in the sense that it had to cover all aspects of life: not only scientific and technological knowledge but also professional skills and moral values. Consequently, it had to include *all* people and had to be provided *throughout all life* and *by all*, i.e. not just by the institutionally designated teachers in the institutional places.

After the conference, UNESCO set an *ad hoc* Commission, which published its final report in 1996 with the title "*Learning: the treasure within*". The Report considered education as a process of self-understanding or, in their words, as 'an inner voyage'. It also defined life-long education as a *necessary utopia*. It was utopian because it aimed at promoting an ever more harmonious form of human development. It was necessary because it could benefit from the opportunities provided by globalization without succumbing to its threats (UNESCO 1996a: 1-16). In a future that looked dominated by increasing world interdependence, UNESCO's reform of education was necessary to move from a globalization "*dominated by the logic of the market, the weakening of the states, a*

productivist concept of education and violation of human rights" to one regulated by supranational institutions and inspired by a universal humanist education (Hallack 1999: 16).

In 2002, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education even published a sourcebook for teachers, students and tertiary level instructors that specifically addresses the teaching of global spirituality (UNESCO 2002: 144-145). Inspired by a humanistic combination of scientific knowledge and allegedly universal cultural values, the new approach addressed the *totality* of human life. I quote:

> A major shift in our educational and personal paradigms is called for. A human-centered philosophy of development, based on a holistic concept of the human person and founded on the values of human dignity, respect for cultural identity and diversity, the integrity of the environment, peace and tolerance […]. We need to educate towards a globalization that humanizes, […] a scientific humanism that chooses humanistic technologies which improve the quality of life for all, help solve our human problems of poverty, injustice and inequality, ignorance, hunger and disease, cruelty, conflict and violence, the loss of our human, ethical and spiritual values. We need to educate for a Science with a conscience, Technology with a human face, at the service of humanity.[6]

In the sector of Natural Sciences, UNESCO shifted its focus to environmental protection, sustainable development and biotechnologies. Without reducing its effort on traditional programs such as the Man in the Biosphere Program and the Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO welcomed new issues into the science agenda, such as the role of science and technology in peace-building operations, and biotechnology. In 1988, genetics and biotechnology became a top priority and UNESCO began to support the Human Genome Project. A couple of year later, UNESCO began to increase funds to his MIRCENs (Microbiological Research Centers) in order to encourage research on biotechnologies, especially in agriculture, with the aim of addressing the world problem

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[6] Dr. L. R. Quisumbing, *The importance of values education and its economic and human resource development programme*, speech at the UNESCO Asia Pacific Conference, 26th March 2001, p. 2. Dr. Quisumbing was President of UNESCO National Commission of Philippines and member of the UNESCO Executive Board in the early Nineties. She is now President of the UNESCO-APNIEVE, the Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education.

of hunger (Mayor 1991b: 4). In 1992, the organization became depository of the genetic data provided by French research institutions. In general, UNESCO adopted a double role of research promoter as well as of producer of global ethical standard instruments. In 1993, UNESCO set up the International Bioethics Committee, composed of 40 scientists from all relevant disciplines, even though natural science and law were largely over represented. Based on the deliberations of the IBC between 1993 and 1997, UNESCO and the UN adopted a Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights in 1998. Since it received top priority in 2002, the IBC has issued the Declaration on Genetic Data in 2003 and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics in 2005.

In the sector of social sciences, UNESCO founded in 1993 the Management of Social Transformations Unit (MOST), with the specific task of promoting research and exchanges on the issues of globalization, global governance, urban development and multicultural societies. MOST has elaborated a model of global governance based on the political participation of individuals and of other collective actors. Individuals are expected to participate at all levels: as members of global civil society associations *and* as citizens of their nation state *and* as members belonging to local groups of various kinds. Collective actors, like IGOs and NGOs are also requested to participate to the global governance system through their knowledge, expertise, mobilization of resources and collective actions. Participation is therefore ensured at all levels whilst power and responsibility are redistributed from the global to the local in relation to the different issues at stake, giving priority to the local whenever appropriate (Beausang 2002: 25-29).

In the Cultural Sector, the Cultural Heritage Program was also given top priority. In 1992, UNESCO celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Cultural Heritage Convention and set up a World Heritage Centre in Paris. However, the cultural focus of UNESCO began to include various new topics. For instance, the theme of intercultural dialogue and cultural pluralism achieved top priority in 1995 (Mayor 1993: 18-21). The issue began to attract attention within UNESCO as the promotion of a universal culture of peace returned at the centre of the debate. UNESCO, in fact,

was engaged, simultaneously and explicitly, in the promotion of a universal culture of peace as well as in the preservation of cultural diversity and pluralism. For decades, UNESCO had responded to this dilemma by preserving the various cultural expressions of humankind while hoping that scientific progress would gradually lead the different groups to agree on a universal civilization.

However, the world scenario of 1995 had proved this vision too utopian and invariably optimistic. Ethnic groups, national groups and religious groups were clinking on their cultural identity even more, in a fierce reaction to globalization. UNESCO could no longer keep its optimistic faith in the gradual reconciliation of the world cultures into a universal civilization, as originally suggested by Huxley. On the one hand, many ethnic and religious communities were dissatisfied with mere recognition. The culture of peace, on the other hand, was far from being a "thin" set of cultural and ethical principles, took for granted an optimistic faith in science, technology and progress, and did not encouraged real dialogue.[7] The priority given to intercultural dialogue tried to address exactly this problem. In 1996, Mayor began to speak of "revitalization" of diverse cultures, as opposed to the static, non-inclusive concept of preservation. I quote: "I stress the world revitalization for our purposes is not just to preserve the heritage by enclosing it in museums, but to incorporate it in the contemporary process of creation and dissemination" (Mayor 1995a: 9). In the end, UNESCO tried to solve the tension between the preservation of cultural diversity and the promotion of a universal culture of peace by separating these activities into two different operational sectors. The Cultural Heritage Project remained firmly within the cultural sector whilst the promotion of a Culture of Peace Program fell into a new category: the trans-disciplinary programs.

The trans-disciplinary programs constitute an emblematic example of UNESCO's new priorities. Created as a response to the new global challenges, such as peace-building, ethnic

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[7] I have elsewhere dealt with this specific issue. For further details please see V. Pavone 'From Negotiation to Dialogue: new philosophical perspective on multiculturalism' in Review Journal of Political Philosophy, University of Sheffield: ANU Books 2005, Vol. 3, (3), pp. 11-27

conflicts and religious fundamentalism, these programs explicitly pursue global goals through

global action. The most important program was the Culture of Peace Program (CPP), which was

launched in El Salvador in 1993. The CPP was a pioneer project trying to encourage and coordinate

the dissemination of a culture of peace in the various socializing institutions of El Salvador. Aiming

at socializing the young people in a peace-oriented frame of mind, the CPP implemented new

dynamics of socialization focused on non-violent conflict resolution, new curricula centered on

science and technology education, human rights and democracy and new training programs for

teachers and educators. On the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of UNESCO's Constitution,

Mayor presented the Culture of Peace Program and UNESCO's mission in the following way:

> If peace is the great destiny of humankind, the culture of peace will be the fount of
> inspiration of a new momentum of civilization. […] For the twenty-first century to
> exist, for it to be equal to our dreams and hopes and for Utopia to be made possible, we
> have to be bold. We have to dare to change for it to exist. No other culture can exist
> than the culture of peace'. […]'UNESCO stands not merely for a new set of
> adjustments but for a new way of life, a new outlook, a new philosophy which will
> inspire humanity . . . (Mayor 1995a: 2-5).

Some years later, UNESCO began to implement the CPP in various other countries and by the mid-

nineties the CPP alone was allocated more than one third of the funding assigned to the entire

Cultural Sector.[8] In turn, UNESCO encouraged the creation of a global movement aiming at the

diffusion of a culture of peace. I quote:

> The proposal of a global culture of peace has the characteristics of a universal
> movement in the process of construction, a utopia that is both viable and historically
> necessary. It has been conceived under the specific historical conditions, in which there
> is a new opportunity for peace and in which there is a strong impulse for the
> construction of a new humanism. It should be understood of a society that is engaged in
> a permanent search for its perfectibility. (Lacayo et al. 1996: 18)

4.2 Structural changes for a global action

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[8] In the budget allocations of for the years 1996-1997 (UNESCO 28 C/PRG/ADM.l, p. 6) the CPP was allocated

16.529.000 Dollars as opposed the 44.941.200 Dollars allocated to Cultural Sector. The trans-disciplinary programs

were allocated 24 million dollars out of the total 287 Millions. The largest portion of the budget (103 millions) was

assigned to the Education for all Project.

The re-evaluation of humanist ideas, not only affected the intellectual debates and its operational priorities but also its internal structure and its conception of globalization. Mayor's first years at UNESCO were characterized by a series of internal reforms, which rapidly reduced the fragmentation of efforts and the inefficiency of the administration.[9] He adopted a new zero-growth budget for the years 1988-1989 and, with the Medium Term Plan for 1990-1995, inaugurated an epoch of austerity and concentration of efforts, reducing the major programs from 14 to 7 (UNESCO 1987c: 1-18). Yet, Mayor could implement the major reforms to enable UNESCO to face the new challenges of globalization only in 1991. The first area of Mayor's intervention was internal restructuring. First, he introduced a program of decentralization, raising the percentage of the budget allocated to field units from just above 30 percent 1991 to 38.2 percent in 1993 to 45 percent in 1995. This drastic change was achieved by cut in personnel, transfers of resources and staff to field units and prioritization of program actions like the education for all and the culture of peace program, which took place away from Paris.[10] Second, he further reduced the Major Program Areas from seven to five (Mayor 1994). Finally, he cut administrative costs down to just above 58% of ordinary budget (Mayor 1997).

Having realized that UNESCO was also adversely affected by the ambiguity of the Executive Board's nature, in 1991 Mayor transformed the latter into a strictly intergovernmental organ, giving priority to nationality over individuality (Lacoste 1996). Although it may look similar to the one of Montevideo, the 1991 reform had a completely different rationale. The former had enhanced the intergovernmental nature of UNESCO in order to ensure a more disciplined relation with the UN. The latter, in contrast, gave to the Member States a change to make their voice clearly

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[9] The guidelines for Mayor's actions were first presented in the UNESCO, *Practical Guide to the World Decade for Cultural Development*, Paris: UNESCO, 1988, and later developed in the Medium Term Plan 1990-1995.

[10] For further details, see Mayor's Introductions to General Policy Debate, in the documents 26 C/ Inf.11, 27 C/ Inf. 12, 28 C/ Inf. 12, Paris: UNESCO.

heard within the governing bodies, whilst the external trends were concomitantly moving in the opposite direction. In fact, as the UN system was undergoing major changes in the direction of multi-lateralism, UNESCO no longer needed to pursue its global ambitions independently from the UN. With this set of reforms, Mayor wanted to emphasize what he perceived as UNESCO's distinct role, i.e. a worldwide promoter of intellectual cooperation and universal ethics:

> However, UNESCO also makes a direct contribution [to peace], which ensures its specificity in the UN system, a more 'ideological' contribution which involves acting upon the ideas, values, behavior and standards ('culture') that are at the basis of peace and make it feasible" (UNESCO 1999b: 3)

Intellectual cooperation, ethical action and development strategies pointed now at the worldwide diffusion of a universal culture of peace (Mayor 1995a: 1-6). Although the promotion of scientific research and the protection of cultural heritage maintained a remarkable importance, Mayor tried to subordinate them to the construction of peace into the minds of men. I quote:

> To change behavior and to act so that the universal principles laid down in the Constitution will find expression in values, attitudes and ways of living and behaving - that is our object; that is our mandate. Otherwise, what would be the point of the knowledge that education lavishes upon us, the horizons opened up by science, the vital tension between memory and creativity, the unprecedented acceleration of the processes of communication in the world, if, as a whole, they did not help to establish this **culture of peace** that is - in my opinion - the essential expression of the original mandate given to UNESCO? Such was the ambition of UNESCO's founders, and it is our responsibility - 50 years later - to take it up again (Mayor 1995a: 2).

The 1996-2001 Medium Term Plan explicitly justified the new global orientation with a 'global mandate', entrusted to UNESCO not only by the national governments but also by the people of world (UNESCO 1995a: 3). Perceiving globalization as monopolized by the forces of capitalist economy, UNESCO's response to globalization ultimately emphasized the need to promote a system of global democratic governance based on a new reconciliation of economy and politics. In other words, because of the global mandate, UNESCO affirmed the legitimacy of its action to pursue what globalization *ought to be*:

> In order to make progress on an adequate regulation of globalization there is a need to introduce participatory politics into global governance. There is a necessity to go much

further, in order to subject unfettered capitalism to the requirements of a more equitable world order. This can only be achieved through a systemic balance between three equally important dimensions: democratic politics, civil society and the capitalist economy, at the national as well as global levels. However, global institutions, as well as globalization for that matter, have in many ways been monopolized by a small number of nation-states and their globalized elites and corporations, especially from the Northwestern part of the world. […] To sum up, the gradual construction of a global governance that displays democratic features should be founded on the principle of the non-disassociation of the economy and politics, the taking into account of factors such as redistributive justice, welfare, social cohesion, equality, cultural identities. If globalization is to acquire wider legitimacy and thus become sustainable, its key actors have no alternative but to accept dealing with such concerns. [11]

5   Conclusion

A global UNESCO for the new millennium

The foundation of UNESCO and its early years witnessed a vibrant debate between two largely divergent conceptions of international cooperation: one inspired by scientific humanism and the other one inspired by functionalism. Whilst scientific humanism supported a globally oriented model of UNESCO, functionalism defended a strictly intergovernmental profile. Initially dominant, the scientific humanist model gradually lost its influence because of largely contingent and external factors related to the rising ideological conflict between the Western and the Soviet world. However, as a response to the end of the Cold War constraints and to the phenomenon of growing interdependence known as globalization, UNESCO seems to have re-evaluated the model originally proposed by the scientific humanists.

The return of UNESCO to this global-oriented model was due to three main concomitant factors. First, Mayor's humanist and inspired leadership gave impulse to a re-evaluation of UNESCO's identity and role in the world system. He questioned traditional concepts like aid to development, reformed the educational approach and modified UNESCO's role vis-à-vis the Member States, the UN system and the intellectual communities. He also introduced new concepts

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[11] Ali Kazancigil, Lecture at Rutherford College, Department of International Relations, University of Kent at Canterbury, on 19 January 2001. Mr. Kazacigil was then the Director of the MOST Program.

like the *global mandate* and affirmed UNESCO's ethical and intellectual leadership. He then restructured the organization, reduced staff costs, concentrated the major program areas, decentralized most of the resources, and involved the intellectual communities in the process of policy-making and policy implementation. In addition, Mayor tried to place UNESCO at the heart of the UN system by attributing to the organization a moral, a political and an intellectual status far beyond what the Member States were willing to accept. The second factor relates to the withdrawal of the UK and of the US, which deprived the functionalist model of its two most important defendants. The third factor was due to the end of the ideological conflict of the Cold War and to the growing expectations that such event triggered.

In turn, a closer cooperation between UN and UNESCO gave confidence to the raising utopian visions of a new and peaceful world order. UNESCO actively tried to fill the gap, to lead the intellectual debates and to suggest new ideological perspectives in which science and humanism constituted the pillars of a future universal philosophy. Such a process was gradual and occurred in three steps. The *first* step began with Mayor's re-evaluation of UNESCO's initial years of existence. At this point, UNESCO re-evaluated the 'original sources of wisdom', including Huxley's scientific humanism, re-adapted them to the contemporary situation and re-asserted its 'original' mandates, i.e. intellectual cooperation and ethical mission. In the *second* step, UNESCO responded to what was perceived as a global crisis of values by promoting a new universal philosophical framework. In the *third* step, UNESCO looked forward and perceived globalization as a crucial opportunity to implement the ideals proclaimed by the Constitution.

The implications of this process manifested most clearly in four programs, in which it is easy to trace many of the utopian elements of scientific humanism. They represent, in their own ways, the long sought materialization of some initial aspirations cultivated ever since Julian Huxley had become

the first Director General[12]. The scientific humanist goal of a universal reform of education found tangible expression in UNESCO's projects of global and holistic education for a learning society, launched by the Jomtien Declaration in 1990. The second goal of scientific humanism, i.e. the eradication of social conflicts through the diffusion a common philosophy based on science and humanism, found expression in the Culture of Peace program. The third humanist goal, i.e. the implementation of a world system in which international agencies like UNESCO could complement the nation states and scientists could contribute to policy-making, echoes in the MOST proposal of global democratic governance. Consistently with the humanist fourth main goal, i.e. the diffusion of a universal ethical system, UNESCO's response to globalization included the promotion of global ethics, especially in relation to the life sciences. From this 'global' position, UNESCO explicitly tried to set the conditions for the long-term establishment of a global community of humankind with global governance as the political framework and the culture of peace as its philosophical counterpart.

After the re-evaluation of the global model, UNESCO's mission no longer aimed at the promotion of the general conditions favorable to peace, but assumed the features of a political mission, which hoped to direct, control and steer the process of globalization towards a universally desirable future. More specifically, UNESCO pursued the instauration of a system of multilevel governance in which it could operate as both a political coordinator and an intellectual watchdog, with the right to monitor, control and coordinate national policy makers in its own fields of competence.

In conclusion, I have tried to show how scientific humanism has influenced UNESCO's response to globalization, encouraging the latter to re-evaluate a global model of international cooperation. Along with the more traditional programs, promoting international scientific research and preserving the Cultural Heritage of Humanity, UNESCO endorsed a global action of peace

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[12] For further information about these four programs, see V. Pavone, *Globalisation , Science and the Minds of Men – Scientific Humanism and the Philosophical Foundations of UNESCO*, EUI PhD theses Database. 2005 LIB 306.42 PAV

building, renewing its efforts to advance a universal reform of education and a system of global governance, the adoption of global ethical standards and the diffusion of a culture of peace. The influence of scientific humanism on UNESCO's theory and actions seems to suggest that there is more in globalization than the interaction of largely unpredictable economic forces. Globalization, in fact, is being – at least partially – ideologically envisioned and politically engineered by some conscious actors, which hold different and often opposing ideological positions. Although far from being dominant, UNESCO's vision of globalization represents an intriguing confirmation of the existence of *various* globalizations.

Such evidence contradicts the thesis that argues that globalization is a mere economic phenomenon in search for philosophical and normative directions. It does not seem plausible that the international expansion of capitalist economy has engineered and driven the phenomenon of globalization *in the absence* of parallel philosophical and normative developments. It seems rather that various philosophical and ethical ferments have opposed or underpinned the economic expansion, albeit never reaching the same degree of coherent institutionalization and effectiveness. The institutional and intellectual development of UNESCO, thus, represents a remarkable case study, which casts some light on how the very concept of globalization has emerged and developed even long before it came to be a common interpretive framework.

As the UN troops settle in Lebanon and unilateralism gives way to international cooperation, the UNESCO culture of peace framework may also be of great interest for any further reflection on the trajectory of globalization and its implications for the future world order.

Tab. 1 – The two opposite models of UNESCO.

Global Model of UNESCO	Intergovernmental Model of UNESCO
Philosophical reference: Scientific Humanism	***Philosophical reference: Functionalism***
Constitutional Reference: the Preamble	Constitutional Reference: the Article I
Global action	Intergovernmental cooperation
Utopian visions	Pragmatic features
Final Aim: universal community of humankind	Final Aim: set of guidelines for shared action
Global governance	Intergovernmental functional cooperation
Common morality	Minimum ethical standard principles
Autonomy from the UN	Faithful obedience to the UN
Long-term objectives	Short-term objectives
Active political profile	Neutral political profile
Organs: Director General/Secretariat	Organs: General Conference/ Executive Board
Some Priorities: Life Long Education Diffusion of a universal cultural model Innovative/autonomous science research activity	Some Priorities: Basic Education Logistic and technical assistance Clearing house

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