



Awareness Raising about Culture and Development in Europe ARCADE Project

The 3rd ARCADE Seminar on ‘Preservation of cultural heritage and local community development, History, Identity, Heritage and Memory’

May 28-30, 2008 – Stalowa Wola – Krakow, Poland

Call for Papers

Deadline for proposals: April 7th, 2008

We are welcoming proposals for presentations, and working groups

Project Overview

The ARCADE Project is coordinated by the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) in partnership with ENTP, the European New Towns Platform and the CIR, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences. Funded in part by the European Commission (EuropeAid Co-operation Office), this project aims to **raise awareness in Europe about culture and development** among European development actors (local authorities, NGOs, Foundations, international organisations). By highlighting the role that culture can play in development strategies and programs, ARCADE will promote the respect of cultural diversity as a prerequisite for successful and sustainable development projects.

Seminar Overview

The Seminar will bring together actors of culture and social development from various backgrounds (including representatives of local authorities, NGOs, foundations, research centers, universities, international organisations as well as artists and cultural practitioners.) The objective is to exchange the latest ideas and practices on culture and heritage preservation as it relates to community development in both developed/developing environments.

The sessions will be held in the city of Stalowa Wola (Poland), with an additional session in Krakow, hosted by the Jagiellonian University

Background and description

While terms like “multiculturalism,” “development,” “diversity” and the “global,” are constantly deployed in the media, social policy, and intellectual production, the debate concerning their ideological implications on “culture” (identity, memory, heritage, “authenticity”) have yet to be fully developed and sufficiently engaged.

If modern “societies of change” scour individuals of collective memory and empty “culture” of its contents, how do we think through the problems of historical and cultural memory in the age of post-histoire? What does it mean to “reconnect” to the past in these shifting contexts? If the problems of “culture,” “identity,” and “memory” in the post-modern are, as have often been claimed, those of loss and reconstruction, one must ask what exactly has been lost and what is being reconstructed. Is “society” a domain of hybridity, syncretism, and assemblage, where “tradition” never remains static, but has new elements and symbolic structures attached to it? Or, on the contrary, is there a deep social substrate that must be constantly resurrected in order to fortify



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consciousness against the chaotic fluxes of integrated world capitalism? While these questions can be framed at a normative level, they also call for detailed empirical investigation.

History, Identity, Heritage and Memory will attempt to rethink and problematize these questions through exploring the conditions of belief and cultural memory in connection with development. We ask if these are structures which mutate and find themselves modeled “on the spot” or whether the real or imaginary imagoes of some “original” resonate within them. Does the announcement of the “death of culture” come too soon? Are traditions simple semiotic networks that may be readily reinvented? Like religion, “culture” appears as a deep structure of trans-historical memory and belief. Hence, the problem of modernity is how to reestablish such a field of memory in a universe that is ruled by its devotion to the instant. Does the post-modern era replace or collude culture with the consumption? Does the global establish culture’s presence as absence?

Of particular interest are cases of various untenable entre-deux. For example, unlike North America and Western Europe, post-communist Europe stands at the crossroads of a communist past and global future and thus, finds itself in the midst of a transition between an imposed identity and an imposed cosmopolitanism. The inter-zone between communist regimes and nascent globalization thus problematizes the nodal points that are said to comprise “identity.” How does one begin to speak of “memory,” “history,” “culture” and “authenticity” in a socio-political landscape that disavows its past while struggling to adapt to a future that liquidates the identitarian, uproots subjectivity, and demands that it be capable of refashioning itself on a regular basis. What are the consequences of rapidly introducing “multiculturalism” and “diversity” into nations that are still involved in the nation-building process?

We ultimately ask if the so-called death of culture produces a nihilistic void or a highly charged space of production which adapts itself to modernity and finds its materials of bricolage. Is it possible to construct a space of cultural production that remains irreverent, refusing capitalism’s atomization, wastefulness, and homogenizing currents, while embracing its freedom, playfulness, and emancipatory potential? Can the cultural sphere then profit from the liberty of modernity, but refuse its reifying structures and avoid the real and subjective traps of recuperation?

As the ARCADE project is devoted to raising awareness and sensitizing European development actors to the crucial role that cultural sector plays in international development, it aspires to simultaneously to critically confront the rapport between “culture and development,” and chart new pathways for developmental policy where the regional and the cultural, supplement and enrich international development. Hence, in a larger sense, this conference looks not only at the residues of the past and “history,” but also focuses on the future of cultural memory and heritage as they pertain to the immediate future; a future which is intrinsically bound to questions of development, sustainability, and the international system.

With this conceptual framework for considering the issues of history, identity, heritage, and memory in mind, papers may address general issues or specific cases from any disciplinary or methodological perspective. Accepted papers will be presented at the conference to be held by the ARCADE project in Stalowa Wola and paper-givers’ travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the organizers. Selected material for the conference will subsequently be published as an edited volume.

Two page abstracts should be submitted no later than April 7th, 2008 to Romi Mukherjee (CIR Paris) at: r.mukherjee@iccr-international.org.

For further information on the ARCADE project, please visit <http://arcade.acted.org>.