



CALL FOR PAPERS

- Date:** Friday, 9th June – Saturday, 10th June 2006
- Venue:** Sofia (Bulgaria)
- Organisers:**
- National Centre for Regional Development (Bulgaria)
 - Classic Foundation Weimar (Germany)
 - Bauhaus-University Weimar (Germany)
 - Bulgarian National Radio (Bulgaria)
 - Goethe-Institute Sofia (Bulgaria) (to be confirmed)
- Conference language:** English
- Conference fee:** none

Heritage and politics – the politics of heritage

The concept of heritage addresses many different dimensions. Heritage sites and objects, or cultural patrimony in a wider sense, usually encompass the aspects of time (history in particular), aesthetics and the arts, moral, religion and identity, education, entertainment etc. All of these can be subsumed under the label of 'culture' in that they are all related to the issue of meaning. As such, we can conceptualise 'heritage' as the meaning attributed to various kinds of phenomena. But, where does this meaning come from? Where does it 'go'? Who has an interest in its content? What happens if more than one meaning is projected onto a particular heritage? And who is responsible for certain representations of the world as heritage, and through heritage?

All these questions (and many more) relate to what one might term 'the politics of heritage' – i.e., heritage as socially constructed meaning embedded in issues of identity and power in societies, and as such often conflicting and contested. Heritage can be viewed as an expression of (often divergent) interests in society, and as an instrument for furthering these interests.

A specific dimension of the politics of heritage is the issue of spatial planning and regional development. At present, it remains unclear to what extent heritage is considered a development asset by agencies of planning and development at various levels. An important question in this context, especially with regard to the political dimension of heritage, is to determine which functions cultural patrimony actually intends to fulfil? What are the main benefits of and obstacles to including heritage in development strategies?

Intention and structure of the symposium

The 3rd HERMES symposium will provide a forum for the discussion of these issues, i.e. the political dimension of 'heritage' with particular regard to spatial planning and regional development strategies. The conference aims to facilitate the exchange of views and expertise between heritage practitioners, experts and academics. Participants will include representatives from political and planning practice as well as experts from related academic disciplines such as history, sociology, geography, cultural studies etc.

The symposium will also offer a platform for presenting practical case-studies, especially from Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, a post-conference half-day trip to Plovdiv will be offered (at no extra cost) as well as a further optional 3-day excursion to interesting heritage sites in Central Bulgaria (see below).

5-6 separate sessions are planned for Friday (9th June) and Saturday (10th June), each dedicated to a different aspect. The sessions will consist of several short presentations, followed by an opportunity to discuss these in detail. Abstracts of the speaker presentations will be circulated in advance among all the participants.

Deadline for registration is 15th April 2006.

Contact

Please contact Sebastian Schröder-Esch, M.A., M.E.S. for further information and/or proposals for presentations. Please use the [separate registration form](http://www.swkk.de/hermes/lang_en/seite4.html) (pdf-file, available from http://www.swkk.de/hermes/lang_en/seite4.html).

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Conference topics

In addition to exchanging views and opinions, the symposium also intends to elaborate policy recommendations for integrating heritage into spatial planning processes and regional development strategies. Possible topics which papers may cover include:

- **The politics of heritage**
 - Negotiating the meaning of 'heritage' in society: Which voices are strongest in determining categories and content of heritage, and which voices are excluded? Whose messages are transmitted through heritage?
 - The significance of a national framework for the identification and interpretation of heritage in various European countries: How does it relate to the local/regional level on the one hand, and to the supranational (European) level on the other?
 - Dealing with heritage: Who decides how this is done? Who owns the heritage? Who are the main agencies and stakeholders (at different levels)?
 - The significance of heritage for identity-building and the legitimisation (or the questioning) of power structures: Whose interests and which purpose does heritage serve? How does heritage relate to the politics of remembering and forgetting, on an official as well as private basis?
 - Heritage as an issue of contestation: What conflicts (social, ethnic etc.) are involved in issues of heritage, i.e. in terms of inclusion/exclusion and the representation of the 'Other'? Can heritage also help to settle social conflicts?
 - The question of the 'scale' of heritage, i.e. local, regional, national, international, European, global/universal heritage etc.
 - Heritage and the media: How do (mass) media function as a means of representing the past and constructing heritage? To what extent are they subject to politicization?
- **Heritage in spatial planning and local & regional development**
 - Heritage as an issue in political decision-making on the national and the supra-national level in present-day Europe: What are the basic principles and main expectations towards heritage and the way it is dealt with?
 - Heritage and spatial planning in present-day Europe: How important is it on the national and the supra-national level? How is it defined and conceptualised, for instance, in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)?
 - The dissonance of heritage: How do political actors deal with the discordance between the economic and the cultural functions of heritage? What can be done in the case of conflicts of interest and contested meanings?
 - The sale and consumption of heritage (e.g. by the tourist industry): What influence (or control) do political agencies have?
 - Heritage as an asset in strategies of place-marketing and development: To what extent is heritage (officially) recognised as such? Does it (necessarily) enforce the neo-liberal concept of 'inter-regional competition' and 'regional competitiveness'?
 - Funding heritage: Who sets the priorities for work in the heritage sector? Who reaps the benefits, who bears the cost?

Post-conference excursion

After the conference, participants will be offered the opportunity to take part in a 3-day excursion to interesting heritage sites in Central Bulgaria from Sunday 11th June to Tuesday 13th June. The guided trip will be lead in English by Trifon Trifonov, a recognised expert on Bulgaria's cultural heritage. The proposed itinerary is: Plovdiv – Kazanluk – Shipka – Sokolski monastery – Tryavna – Arbanasi – Nikopolis ad Istrum – Sofia. The price will be max. € 250 including transport and half-board accommodation and depends upon the total number of participants.

Background & organisation

The conference is the third of four academic symposia organised by the HERMES project ('Heritage and New Media for Sustainable Regional Development'). HERMES is a joint initiative by 16 institutions from eight countries and is part-financed by the European Commission from 2004-2006 as part of the community initiative Interreg III B CADSES. HERMES investigates innovative ways of preserving and enhancing cultural heritage through the use of new media technology. The aim is to explore the potential of cultural heritage as a factor for sustainable regional development. For further information see: www.swkk.de/hermes.

A synthesis of contributions made and discussed at the symposia will be used to evaluate HERMES as well as to formulate possible policy recommendations. This includes examining the attitude of HERMES towards the political dimension of heritage and exploring how HERMES can influence decision-making processes in the fields of heritage and regional policy.

Contributions

Symposium contributions can be made in the form of a 15-20 minute presentation (paper) on a theoretical and/or practical aspect of cultural heritage, or by taking part as a moderator or discussion panelist. Speakers are kindly asked to submit short abstracts of their paper in advance (deadline: 19th May 2005) so that these can be circulated among all the participants before the symposium. Conference papers will be published in English in book form by the Institute of European Urban Studies at the Bauhaus-University Weimar as well as on the web.

Deadline for registration is 15th April 2006

