



Arts, Culture and the Public Sphere Expressive and Instrumental Values in Economic and Sociological Perspectives

CALL FOR PAPERS

Venice (Italy), November 4-8, 2008

A joint Conference organized by:

FDA – Faculty of Design and Art – IUAV University, Venice

DADI – Department of Art and Industrial Design – IUAV University, Venice

The Sociology of Culture RN of the ESA - European Sociological Association

The Sociology of the Arts RN of the ESA - European Sociological Association

The FDA – Faculty of Design and Arts, together with DADI - Department of Arts and Industrial Design of the University IUAV in Venice, in cooperation with the Research Network for the Sociology of Culture and the Research Network for the Sociology of the Arts of the ESA - European Sociological Association are organizing the conference:

Arts, Culture and Public Sphere
Expressive and Instrumental Values in Economic and Sociological Perspectives
www.artculturevenice2008.org

The conference also represents the 5th ESA Sociology of the Arts Research Network mid-term conference and the 2nd ESA Sociology of Culture Research Network mid-term conference, and it will be the first opportunity to have three European networks – the two Research Networks of the European Sociological Association, ‘Sociology of Arts’ and ‘Sociology of Culture’, and the network ‘Economics and Planning of Arts and Culture’ – meeting around a common theme in Venice from 4 to 8 November 2008.

Conference Research Framework

Arts and culture can no longer be considered uncritically as vehicles merely related to a ‘civilizing mission’ or to ‘economic development’. In the beginning, Social Sciences and Economic Studies identified the social context of the realms of art and culture, measured their impact and evaluated their management. Later, processes of expanding democratization exposed these realms to the criticism of the public sphere. Consequently, arts and culture became fields of social and economic contestation.

Beneath the increasing examination of these realms rests the growing international and trans-national circulation of people, capital, and culture – different forces that have inspired individuals and groups to challenge well-established authorities, mentalities and semantic codes and socio-economic development models. These processes turned the artistic and cultural fields in a lively crossroads for trans-disciplinary research, spanning areas of inquiry once viewed as unrelated.

Following the main theme of the conference, we will investigate how arts and culture became contested grounds involving multiple social and economic dimensions of contemporary societies.

Theoretical Background

In studying social action, the distinction between instrumental and expressive values is an analytic one. The two sets of values are related, but distinct. The relation of instrumental to expressive values marks both the juncture and disjuncture of economics and sociology. Both disciplines study values of both types, but conceived according to different postulates about phenomenological reality: economists from the perspective of methodological individualism, sociologists from that of methodological holism.

Economists tend to consider expressive values as individual “preferences”, which persons pursue through the operation of a bracketed utilitarian calculus; sociologists tend to conceive those values as embodiments of collective meaning-making that define the very terms of such a calculus.

Economists expand the reach of their discipline by exploring how expressive values themselves serve larger instrumental purposes, such as the role cultural and artistic activities play in improving the level of social and human capital, as well as general well being. Meanwhile, sociologists expand the reach of theirs by exploring the variation and interdependence of instrumental and expressive values.

In the terms of the communitarian organizational sociologist Philip Selznick, economists tend to study the efficiency of *organizations*, formal systems employing instrumental rationality in pursuit of delimited goals; sociologists tend to study *institutions*, which are “*infused with value* beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand.” Institutions – and individuals – are valued according to their positions in the larger community.

Arts and culture are forms of economic activity, whose instrumental values can be measured in relation to the productive and local development processes. Hence, economists investigate not only the impact that cultural activities have intrinsically as productive sectors themselves, but also how they contribute to economic growth and urban development by feeding into innovative and productive processes.

Arts and culture are also autonomous forms of action, whose aesthetic values can be judged by the expressivity and human-centeredness of their symbolic forms. Ultimately, judgments about how fully persons, institutions, or communities are realizing their identities is an aesthetic one – as are judgments about the health of the public sphere.

Given the previous premises, we therefore encourage strongly interdisciplinary papers. To build a special platform for interdisciplinary exchange and debate, in particular between economic and sociological perspectives, we propose a focus on expressive and instrumental values. The conference will be aimed at cross-fertilizing research using mixed research fields in all the areas.

Conference Topics:

For organizational reasons, we are presenting the Conference Topics according to the perspectives of the three Networks. However, the conference will be aimed at cross-fertilizing research using mixed research fields in all the areas. Papers with a cross-national, comparative focus and papers by researchers earlier in their career are particularly welcome.

1. Sociology of Arts

The RN of Arts aims to provide the sociological context for understanding the multifaceted relationship between the Artistic World and the Public Sphere.

Beyond this general statement, stands the will to encourage a theoretical and methodological debate, which can expand our knowledge of the dialectical ways through which Artistic Creativity and the Public Sphere constantly intersect.

Topics can include (but are not limited to):

Aesthetics and Sociology, Artists, Arts and Audiences, Arts and Cities, Arts and Community, Artistic Innovations, Arts and Gender, Arts and Globalization, Arts and Heritage, Arts and Minorities, Arts Management, Artistic Markets, Art Museums, Artistic Networks, Arts and Politics, Arts Support, Art Sustainability, Art Theory, Arts and Trauma, Art-War and Peace, Financing the Art World, Graffiti, Local Arts, Sociology of the Dance, Sociology of the Music, State Support for the Arts, Virtual Arts.

2. Sociology of Culture

How do cultures relate to the public sphere? To which extent is the shape of the public discourse affected by cultural codes? What are the cultural dimensions of public knowledge? Why and how does culture matter? In contemporary societies the public sphere is constantly shaped and reshaped by media discourses. The public discourses can no longer be analyzed at the national levels only because globalization processes are at work. We are witnessing the emergence of multiple global public spheres, which are intersecting each other, articulating both local and global issues. In this context the role of culture is greatly heightened. The visibility of cultural codes becomes global. They are used to express power; to mediate conflicts; to negotiate claims of citizenship; to construct minority identities, gender and ethnicity; and to inscribe the public knowledge of the past in the national and international arena. Aesthetic dimensions are inflecting power relations. Culture matters and it does it in many new ways.

We invite theoretical, methodological and empirical papers on a broad range of cultural expressions in the public sphere, in particular in the areas of:

Culture, Conflict and Power; Culture, Gender and Ethnicity; Cultural Heritage and National Identities; Public Memory and Cultural Trauma; Culture and Globalization; Culture and Media; Culture and Politics; Culture and Religion; Culture and Communities; Culture and Environment; Culture and Ethnography; Methodological Issues in Cultural Research.

3. Economics and Planning in Arts and Culture

Many economically advanced countries have recently faced an intense process of transition from a development model based on the industrial economy to a post-industrial one, in which symbolic and identity features, and thus artistic and cultural elements, play an unprecedented role, thanks to their recognized role in creating and/or regenerating the economic, social and built environments, and in creating the definition of a shared, compelling vision of local social and economic development.

Given the previous premises, the key questions is:

How do arts and culture in socio-economic development relate to the public sphere?

We invite theoretical, methodological and empirical papers following three sub-themes:

3.1 Sustainable development and culture

The topics are: Growth Models, Culture and Sustainability; Cultural Industries, Creative Industries and the Sustainable City; Cultural Policy and Sustainable Development Policy; Sustainability, Localization of Economic Activities and People.

3.2 Local development and cultural policies

The topics are: Culture and Local Development Processes; Regeneration of Urban Areas and Culture: Analysis, Policy and Evaluation; Agglomeration, Clusters / Districts and Culture; City, Culture and Governance Models; City, Culture and Regional Marketing.

3.3 Culture and well-being

The topics are: Cultural Policy as Welfare Policy; Culture Bridging and Bounding Communities; Culture's Intrinsic or Extrinsic Factors for Individual Well-being; Arts, Culture and Capabilities; Cultural, Social and Human Capital.

Submission of abstracts

You are invited to submit your abstract electronically, according to the guidelines. It requires you to fill in the form available at: www.artculturevenice2008.org

Individuals are allowed to apply for one presentation only and may submit a maximum of two abstracts. They may be co-author of several papers but first author of only one.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is 28th April 2008.

Abstracts have to be to a maximum length of 500 words, must be submitted in English and must include:

- Research objective or questions
- Research methodology and theoretical perspectives
- Main findings or conclusion

The authors will be notified of the acceptance of their abstract by 16th June 2008.

Guidelines

The guidelines for authors apply to abstracts and full papers are available for download at www.artculturevenice2008.org

Your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines is greatly appreciated.

For any information about the paper please write to:

abstract@artculturevenice2008.org

Important dates

Submission of abstracts: 28th April 2008

Notification on acceptance of abstract: 16th June 2008

Final date for early-bird registration: 15th July 2008

Final date for late registration and withdrawal: 15th September 2008

Final date for full paper submission (if to be published in the CD-ROM): 3rd October 2008

Information

For any further information please visit:

www.artculturevenice2008.org

For general queries: info@artculturevenice2008.org

Organizing Committee

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