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Following the 2021 CIVIS Call for Proposals, with a specific interest in Hub 2 - Society, Culture, Heritage, Hub - 4 Cities, Territories, Mobilities, and Hub 5 - Digital and Technological Change, the Institute of African Studies and the Department of Ancient History, Archaeology, and History of Art (affiliated to the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest) propose an interdisciplinary, bilingual (English and French), project: **Cultural heritage and global epistemologies**.

Through our initiative, we aim to address several important sustainable development goals, such as: SDG 4 – Quality Education and Lifelong Learning, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Brief description of the initiative:

Cultural heritage, in its multidimensional constitutive structure, is inexorably linked to discursive mechanisms (in the analytical approach developed by Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard, among others) of operational identity construction and reproduction, making it an object of international and national public policies, its existence and preservation having direct socio-economic and political consequences. Furthermore, cultural heritage is additionally linked to an acknowledgement of *longue durée* processes and paradigmatic awareness regarding historical macrostructural cumulative civilizational factors. This very attribute can make it a target for various political and ideological agendas. The discursive paradox emerging from this factual development consists of the ideological instrumentalization of “traditional” cultural patterns and the re-emergence of identitarian reductionistic formulas, in spite of the apparent tendency, observed in the past approximately 30 years, toward the prioritisation of multiculturalism, simultaneously as one of the results and explicit long-term benefits provided by the process of globalisation.

To better understand the diverse, yet continuously changing, role of cultural heritage and its socio-economic, as well as cultural and political implications, we propose for debate three major themes:

- I. **Public policies and the safeguarding of cultural heritage** – Considering recent armed international events, together with socio-economic and political tensions in fragile states, and their implications upon the safety of cultural heritage, we propose the following question:
 - How have legal national and international frameworks involving the protection and preservation of cultural heritage change during the previous two decades? Specificity in terms of key players, laws and regulations, logistics, geographies, social initiatives, as well as comparisons between concepts and actions taken is fully encouraged.
Following Art. 1 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: *Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations*, we encourage two issues for debate:
 - The consequences of the above-mentioned regulatory changes from a political, social, and economic point of view, with a special emphasis on ethics and the constantly

evolving relation between policies and the various facets of the identity/identities spectrum.

- The issue of the protection and preservation of natural heritage in the context of climate change, and the manner in which natural heritage is, based on Fernand Braudel's *longue durée* approach, connected to the systemic geographic and climatic determination of specific socio-economic, political and cultural historical patterns. The effects of climate change on natural heritage will also be discussed, though the integration of economic and social effects.
- Controversial heritage: preservation of colonial buildings or punishment-by-demolition?

II. Diverse Societies, Inequality and Social Change – Migration, Integration and Identity in the African – European Relational Context: Convergence or Divergence? A Research Framework Based on the World-Systems Analysis - Transactionalism - Structural Functionalism Triad – Based on the present cumulative overlap of the 4 main systemic problems facing human society on a global scale, climate change, sustainability, poverty and inequality, which has conditioned the new migrational paradigm. Based on sociological and anthropological theories, methodologies and frameworks, such as transactionalism, symbolic interactionism and structural functionalism, which provide objective reference markers necessary for understanding the new dynamics of migration, brain drain, capability transfer, new identitarian configurations, as well as the complicated integration of migrant groups, by concentrating mainly on the Africa – Europe mobility axis, we propose an interactive workshop in which the following questions will be discussed:

- What are the most recent academic developments and most practical components observed in the world-systems analysis, developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, and how can they clarify the persistence and, in certain cases, even increase in global structures of inequality and dependence, that condition the unprecedented rise in migrational patterns?
- What are the main challenges impeding functional gradual integration of migrant groups in the European context?
- In what ways is the project of globalisation conceptualised as being appropriated by neoliberal capitalism? How does a non-instrumentalised, non-ideologised, universalistic version of globalisation adapt to the new circumstances produced by the re-emergence of nationalism, identitarianism, traditionalism, and nativism?
- How are the institutional, administrative, management, allocational and redistributive mechanisms provided by the European Union, the United Kingdom and Norway correlated to quantifiably positive results regarding the integration of African migrants in Europe?
- How do these integrational factors differ in the case of highly educated, specialised and professionally qualified members of migrant groups? How does this brain-drain affect long-term economic development in African countries?
- To what degree is there a transactional–determined increase in identitarian discourse formulated by migrant groups? The problem of religious/cultural radicalisation: a response to socio-economic marginalisation, local nativism, or to both?

III. Diverse Societies, Inequality and Social Change – Heritage for all – As recent events have demonstrated, cultural heritage can easily become a target of various political agendas or religious propaganda, facing irreversible destruction. However, there are now possibilities to recreate what was lost or what is in a fragile context: cutting-edge 3D digital technology, depicting both the original characteristics and the current condition of the destruction of

ancient cities. Following this approach, we propose a third encounter to help answer the following questions:

- Considering the several digital heritage initiatives that have already been developed, how do we measure the success of their implementation through various indicators, regarding the relationship between heritage and identity (in terms of perception, acceptance, adaptation, etc., with an emphasis on minorities and immigrants), the social and economic outcomes (both on a national and international level)?
- Does a digital approach, broadly accessible, help strengthen diversity and social inclusion? Can a “heritage for all” initiative promote positive social change and equality?
- What are the operational strategies, as well as the technological and educational resources required for an efficient dissemination of knowledge and expertise, in the current objective context of the global multiscalar digital divide? This problem is correlated to a profoundly asymmetric distribution of capabilities in ICTs (information and communication technologies), observed between states, depending on overall economic–infrastructural development and specific policies, but also between social, ethnic, gender and demographic groups.
- What are the computational methodologies necessary for such digital initiatives to be undertaken by national institutions or by private organizations? What are the costs, medium-term allocational patterns, qualifications, specializations, the overall level of technical and management expertise required for this type of activities?

Expected outcomes: Our objective is to achieve a better understanding of the complex and paradoxical processes underlined, for the purpose of providing solution–focused initiatives and to create the conditions for future collaborations in this direction.

From an empirical, solution-based perspective, we strive to achieve a better understanding of the digital transition, the systemic implications of new computational methodologies, and the needed human and material resources, in order to create future improved initiatives, which efficiently correlate essential SDG goals.

Based on the underlined aspects, we aim to develop the following components:

- Provide the institutional and organisational basis for the participation of professors and researchers at a webinar, journée d’étude, and summer school, which shall provide the necessary functional elements for the exchange of expertise and good practices.
- Integrate MA and PhD students/candidates in the summer school, thus creating the practical basis for their connection to the latest research methodologies, analytical frameworks and theoretical developments.
- Create a blended learning interactive online platform, which shall represent an essential factor for the sustainability of the long-term collaboration and expertise dissemination between students, researchers and professors affiliated to universities situated on different states or continents.
- Enable the capitalization of the Institute of African Studies as a research and teaching hub, and effective academic connector between African and European universities, through the collaborative framework provided by the CIVIS consortium.
- Elaborate a fluid transition between the three presented themes by underscoring their common constitutive elements, as well as emphasizing their relevance in the wider Sustainable Development Goals systemic extensions.
- Identify a clear target audience from the specialised and general public for the purpose of establishing educational outreach and informational dissemination activities, through open webinars and Q & A sessions with the participating experts.