

Call for Papers:

The logics of change – poverty, place, identity and social transformation mechanisms

November 24 – 25, 2011

ifz Salzburg, Mönchsberg 2a, 5020 Salzburg, Austria

Conference designated to the ifz-project

“Tu was, dann tut sich was” / „Do something and things will change“

We live in a world of constant change. While this is an intrinsic fact and experience of our daily life, change itself has many guises ranging from very sudden, often unexpected occurrences like job loss or natural and man-made hazards (like in Japan) to very slow, subtle and hardly perceivable processes like demographic change or changes in moral attitudes. Change affects us directly in our immediate environment but also beyond our ‘own doorstep’, in other continents: on the other side of the world (see: the ‘World Risk Society’, Ulrich Beck). Transformation may be something perceived just by an individual or by society as a whole. Change can be a linear process of gradual transition, but it can also be recurring, wave-like; sometimes desirable, sometimes not.

Change is thus associated and correlated with logic at manifold levels and varying in its complexity and extent. As such, this conference is trans-disciplinary in nature and addresses both theorists in Philosophy, Sociology, Economics or Geography, but also practitioners in wider fields of enquiry and research.

Background of the Conference: the organizers of the conference have initiated a “social festival”, entitled “Tu was, dann tut sich was” (“Do something and things will change”).¹ It deals with awareness of poverty and inequality, and aims at local empowerment and participation. Privately funded and sponsored, the festival aims to encourage local people, businesses and institutions to come up with and put forward ideas that will tackle social and cultural problems of poverty, identity and social institutions in their local communities. It is hoped that social commitment both at the local and regional level can be increased, thus contributing towards improving the ‘quality of life’ for those hit by (sudden) changing circumstances. This year the festival, whose character is explicitly bottom-up, takes place in the Lungau region (in the south of the Province of Salzburg, Austria), a region where e.g. unemployment and outmigration is comparatively high. It is hoped that social commitment both at the local and regional level can be increased, and that this contributes towards improving the ‘quality of life’ for those hit by (sudden) changing circumstances.

¹ The concept of „Tu was, dann tut sich was“ was inspired by the model of the European Capitals of Culture, a cultural festival held in different places (cities or regions) each year, accordingly „Tu was, dann tut sich was“ is called a „social festival“ (see www.tu-was.at).

Abstracts of approx. 300 words are welcome for one of the four sessions below and should be submitted to akoch@ifz-salzburg.at and elisabeth.kapferer@sbg.ac.at . Deadline for submission is **June 15, 2011**. Notification of acceptance will be given by June 30, 2011. Invited colleagues are asked to prepare a paper for publication in spring 2012: deadline for submitting manuscripts is October 30, 2011.

Session I: “Social festivals” as a tool to eradicate poverty and promote local identity

“Social festivals“ deal with local knowledge such as the everyday experience of and insight into social, cultural and local conditions, and they mirror specific perceptions and local theories of their settings. They follow certain interests and intentions and appeal to certain target groups, though they may also appeal to a wider audience and “unusual suspects”. – This kind of event strongly refers to its social-cultural environment, be it in an interactive or in an effective way. Local or regional players can act as key figures in implementing such festivals, and accordingly in making local knowledge and local theories applicable for the benefit of the local community.

In this session we want to take a closer look at examples of so-called social festivals that can be seen as outstanding, especially when it comes to interaction, impact, and side-effects. The questions we pose are: To what extent can festivals promote local identities? In how far can they help support social cohesion and empowerment, and can they contribute to reducing poverty and social disparities? And do social festivals contribute to a responsible, sustainable regional development?

Session II: Methods for understanding and evaluating social belonging, regional embeddedness, and local acceptance

Manifold relationships between the individual Lebenswelt and social-spatial environments are to be discerned when surveys are carried out to better understand agency and social belonging. Context sensitive interpretation of specific structures and processes in regions on the one hand, and efforts of generalizing observations in order to attain common rules on the other challenge the appropriate application of methods and techniques. Additionally, different scales and scopes of complexity raise the question of an adequate integration of change concepts in respective methods (from process to evolution, from local to global, from individual to society). In this session we wish to discuss methods and techniques from a wide range of disciplines, their goals, assumptions, benefits, and difficulties. Examples are (but are not restricted to): Social network analyses, social capital surveys, action-setting analyses, qualitative interviews, or multivariate statistics.

Session III: What is a ‘contented and happy life’ in a world of inequality, exclusion, and poverty?

Change can be for the better or for the worse. When we think about change for the better, the motives for change may be lying in a dissatisfying status quo, or in a promising vision of an improved future condition. One common goal, as wide-ranging and far-reaching as it is challenging, would be a “contented and happy life”.

A “good life” does not solely depend on money and, or material wealth. It also relies heavily on the intangibles of life such as a sense of perspective, opportunities and chances for fulfillment, traditions and values, fairness and recognition, social and cultural participation or a sense of purpose and belonging. At the same time we live in a world where the preconditions for a contented and happy life, both financial and intangible, are constantly at risk. For many people, their status quo is characterized by inequality, exclusion and poverty, and they feel threatened by change for the worse. Bearing this in mind, we will focus on ideas of what a “good life” comprises, and on factors that can influence, promote or obstruct well-being in different circumstances and different areas of life.

Session IV: Theories & reflections about locality, agency, regional awareness, and identity.

A wide range of disciplines are concerned with the (supposed) antagonisms between micro- and macro-phenomena. Tensions between for example embeddedness and participation, structure and agency, infrastructure and inclusion have been discussed for a long time. There are, in addition, theories dealing with hybridity, actor-networks, or the idea of palimpsest. This session intends to introduce and illustrate different theoretical approaches which shed light on social-spatial scale enquiries, hybrid phenomena, but also on local theories of agency, resilience, poverty, vulnerability, and identity issues in order to better understand the complexity of a ‘good and happy’ life under contemporary conditions of globalization, crisis, risk, and uncertainty.

Contact for queries and abstracts:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Andreas Koch

akoch@ifz-salzburg.at

ifz – International Research Center Salzburg

Mönchsberg 2a, A – 5020 Salzburg

<http://www.ifz-salzburg.at/?p=1322>

Mag. Elisabeth Kapferer

elisabeth.kapferer@sbg.ac.at

Center for Ethics and Poverty Research (University of Salzburg)

Mönchsberg 2a, A - 5020 Salzburg

www.uni-salzburg.at/zea