

Call for Sessions – Forums “Fields of Transformation”

*** Deadline: 16.12.2018 ***

“The Great Transformation: On the Future of Modern Societies”

Final Conference of the DFG Research Group “Landnahme, Acceleration, Activation: Dynamics and (De-)stabilization of Modern Growth Societies” and the 2nd Regional Conference of the German Sociological Association

Friedrich Schiller University Jena, September 23 to 27, 2019

There are many indications that Western and early industrialised countries, having passed the days of rapid growth, are currently undergoing a profound transformation (James Galbraith). If economic growth is generated like it has been in numerous countries in the period of prosperity after 2009, it often coincides with unequal distribution, accelerated energy and resource consumption, and an increase in climate-damaging emissions. For a long time it was considered a precondition of social stability, but the social legitimacy of regimes whose growth is based on fossil fuels is increasingly fragile.

Following Karl Polanyi, the associated social change can be understood as a “Great Transformation.” In all likelihood it involves a departure from long dominant growth patterns, forms of production, and lifestyles. However, the direction of this transformation is by no means predetermined. All that is certain is that previously self-evident facts have to be put to the test and hitherto valid background assumptions – also for social theory, empirical social research, and social diagnoses of the times – seem to be more uncertain than ever. Not only the standard of living but also the pacification of class conflict, the redistributive effect of the welfare state, and the integrative power of democracy are based on permanent economic growth. What happens if this growth does not materialise, if it is accompanied by increasing inequality, if it is no longer ecologically responsible, or if it is culturally no longer desirable?

With the double conference in Jena we want to focus on *the dynamics of change*. Particularly on the second day of the conference (Wednesday, 25.09.2019) we will focus on setting the course in different social areas and the corresponding discourses, including their social, cultural, ecological, economic, technological, and political implications for modern capitalist societies. Of course we understand that “transformation” is an ambiguous term. On the one hand, it describes a profound, long-lasting upheaval that by no means must lead to steady progress in social development but which can, for example, also lead to authoritarian forms of rule. On the other hand, there are also many attempts to use democratic means to give the transformation process a direction that aims at social and ecological sustainability. We cordially invite you to submit ideas and event concepts that will help in further analysing the various fields of transformation. The following aspects can be considered as examples which focus on processes in specific areas but also on interactions between areas:

- the levelling of economic growth rates in early industrialised societies which contrasts with the dynamic, high-growth societies that are catching up;
- the accumulation of ecological dangers that threaten to exceed planetary limits of burden;
- the increasing inequalities within national societies while at the same time the reduction of inequalities between countries in the north and south;
- the change of industrial relations and of inequality structures, including, among others, increasingly diversified, sometimes even precarious, forms of work and life in transnational production and care chains;
- the change in gender relations and the gender division of labour;

- the increasing movement of refugees and migrants who now reach the old capitalist centres, thereby forcing them to confront global and transnational dynamics;
- the populist movements which, even if they take place within democratically constituted states, use authoritarian mechanisms of domination;
- digitisation with its contradictory and contested effects on other fields;
- opportunities for shaping development that result from the upheavals in various social fields.

We cordially invite all interested parties to Jena for this “constructive controversy,” in which different points of view and interpretations will be related to each other, and also different perspectives and theoretical-methodical approaches to the topic will be expressed.

Thematically framed events can be submitted in the form of an academic panel discussion.

The lineup of the panel can already be fixed at the time of the submission of the event concept, but it can also be made after a commitment for the event through a separate call. The final notice of all speakers must be made at the latest by April 30, 2019.

Please also note that the names of the organisers, the title of the event, and a brief description, which should also be submitted, will be used in the publicity of the conference except in the case of exceptions.

The event concepts submitted are limited to a length of 6,000 characters. The maximum number of characters for the brief description of the event is 1.500.

The event format has a designated duration of 2.5 hours.

Please send your **report in the following format: the forum “Fields of Transformation” with an event concept, a brief description of the event, the names of the organisers, and the title of the event by 16.12.2018** at the latest to the DFG Research Group “Post-growth Societies” care of Kathy Kursawe: **Kathy.Kursawe@uni-jena.de**.