

Dynamics and Change. 2nd Annual Seminar, Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology

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The Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology held its second Annual Seminar, titled „Dynamics and Change“, that gave junior researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their research projects in an interdisciplinary setting and benefit from lectures and panel discussion with eminent scientists from both disciplines.

The opening keynote talk was given by JAN ASSMANN (Heidelberg University) who spoke about „Cultural Memory - And the Dynamics of Change and Fixation“. Assmann outlined a comprehensive approach to the conference questions, both in terms of time perspective and theoretical generalization. For Assmann the crucial question is not concerning ‘dynamism’ or ‘change’ as such, but how dynamics and changes are mediated by cultural memory. Cultural memory relies on different media that present and represent the past in the present and prefigures future expectations. Historically, the invention of written language marks the turning point in which, ‘modernity’ as we know it today, began: „Writing creates history where myth was“. Since then, cultural memory breaks with societies that integrated themselves via the narration of timeless ancestors. Furthermore, writing enabled ‘truth questions’, since written assertions can be verified, falsified and reflected upon in a repetitive mode. Assmann called the process of increasing reflection and exegesis ‘first and second canonisation’.

Conference proceedings started then each morning with an opening lecture on theoretical and methodological issues in the realm of dynamics and change. On the first day, ARND HOFFMANN (Managua) presented a paper on „Contingency and the Impossibility of Calculating Change“ that offered valuable defini-

tions of key concepts for getting change into perspective. Based on Reinhard Koselleck and Niklas Luhmann, Hoffmann argued against a historiography that sees change as an inevitable outcome of structural constellations and stressed that contingency as experienced by historic actors has to be taken into account. Actors perceive reality in the horizon of other possibilities, and they also consider the behaviour of other actors. This double contingency is a form of experience that can be distinguished – on the one hand – from the experience of chance, but makes – on the other hand – the direction of change very hard to fathom. Tracing change requires that the view of historic subjects has to be adopted.

The opening lecture on the second day of the conference was delivered by sociologist MARTIN DIEWALD (Bielefeld University) who spoke about „Social Mechanisms Explaining Stability and Change“. He defined social mechanisms as recurring intermediary processes that are relatively general and potentially instantiated differently for different social groups and contexts. Mechanisms are causal links between an initial constellation and an outcome and are the focus of a more „modest“ approach to understand change that does not involve „grand theories“, but offers a taxonomy of possible explanations that can be applied to individual cases. Diewald opted for using mechanisms as tools for individual studies rather than trying to construct a „general grammar of the social“ from them. There are, as Diewald pointed out himself, open questions about this approach, for instance to what extent mechanisms can be aggregated to bigger processes. In the discussion, it was also disputed whether mechanisms can be found in the observed reality or are a category of observation. In any case, it became clear that due to its middle range and its sensitivity for contexts the mechanism approach might provide a common ground for empirically-minded sociologists and historians alike.

Taking part in the panel on „social, discursive and institutional change“, chaired by AXEL HÜNTELMANN, DETLEF SACK and DOMINIK SCHRAGE, one got the impression that the general topic of dynamics and change suited historians and sociologists

with diverse research projects alike. Many participants, such as LUKAS GRAF (Social Science Research Center Berlin) and THOMAS BLANCHET (Centre Marc Block, Berlin), referred explicitly to the question of how to theoretically model stability and change. Graf outlined his PhD project on the potential impact of European harmonisation of vocational training in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Blanchet tackled the question why French companies have only limited success in gaining contracts for water management in Germany.

Participants were also very willing and able to cross disciplinary borders and link their specific research interest to the general discussion. More often than not, they found overlapping interests that provided a basis for stimulating debates, the session with COLIN F. WILDER (University of Chicago) and DAVID GILGEN (Bielefeld University) being a case in point, the former presenting a model of legal change in Early Modern Europe, the latter talking about the formation of the patent law in Germany in the late 19th century. But also when research topics seemed very far apart, as in the case of CHRIS MOLNAR (Indiana University) and RUMIN LUO (BGHS) who gave presentations on the integration Croatian refugees in post-war Germany and on contemporary migration in China, participants managed to provoke engaging general discussions from what at first glance might appear as diverse and highly specific projects. The key seems to have been that the two participants of each session commented on each other's papers. This forced participants to address their papers to readers from different disciplinary backgrounds and challenged the commentators to apply their knowledge to something they might not have been familiar with.

The other two sessions on this panel discussed papers by HANNAH ACKE (Münster University) and KATHARINA POHL (Bielefeld University) on the role of development aid in Scandinavian societies and ENRIQUE MARTINO (Humboldt University, Berlin) on African slave labour. KAREN VAN LEEUWEN (University of Nijmegen) gave an insight into her PhD project on the stagnation of the constitutional debate in the post-war

Netherlands, and EDGAR GUERRA BLANCO (Bielefeld University) presented the theoretical framework of his study on the transformation of a social into a political movement in Iztapalapa, Mexico.

A third panel was dedicated to 'identity and change'. It was chaired by MARTINA KESSEL and HARTMANN TYRELL (both Bielefeld University). PHILIP KNÄBLE (Bielefeld University) spoke about the transformation of the legitimacy of dance within churches and pointed out that research on religious dances is still at the beginning. However, what could be already said is that dance was mostly forbidden in the Middle Ages, but gained a more positive image during Renaissance. THOMAS ABEL's (Bielefeld University) presentation treated his so called 'Photographic Society'. Abel argued that the digitalisation of photographic productions has altered the relations between the photographer and the photographed. The simplification of the picture-production causes turned everybody into a part-time photographer. FLORIAN MUHLE's (Bielefeld University) research focuses on interaction structures within virtual communication processes. Referring to a programmed, thus mechanised avatar in the online-platform 'Second Life', he showed how norms of communication are perceived and interrupted. Muhle concluded that within virtual situations actors are the result of communication, not its subjects. UNDINE STABREY (Collegium Beatus Rhenanus) discussed the 'forms of time' regarding the 'archaeological periodic systems' and the change of methodology in Archaeology. She mainly focused on the geological time logic: Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age while questioning obstacles of the implementation and acceptance of new methods and knowledge. DOMINIK MAHR (Bielefeld University) stressed the problem of reduction contingency via evolutionary biology and politics at the years around 1900. UTE ENGELEN's (Bielefeld University) paper traced the unintentional social changes brought about by the termination of the vacation-programmes of the Volkswagen Company. STEPHANIE HAGEMANN's (Bielefeld University) presentation discussed breaks and continuities of the social welfare monitoring programs, while ques-

tioning whether this should be valued either as tradition or just as temporal stile. JAN-MARKUS KÖTTER (University of Frankfurt a.M.) presented his project on the impact of the death of church-actors on the development of the church during Late-Antiquity. The final paper was given by HILMAR SCHÄFFER (University of Konstanz) who presented a theory of practice built on Deleuze's concept of 'difference and repetition'.

The PhD projects presented during panel 2, titled „Contingency and Planning“, showed diverse approaches towards the conference headline of „Dynamics and Change“. The panel was moderated by BIRGIT GEISLER and MALTE GRIESE (both Bielefeld University). Among the scholars who presented their research were sociologists, historians but also ethnologists and economists. The panel contributions started off with PHILIPP ALTMANN (Bielefeld University), who talked about his PhD project in which he works on the new definition of identity in Ecuador due to the concept of interculturalism. This was followed by a presentation by STEFANIE KLEIN (University of Bamberg, Graduate School „Markets and Social spheres in Europe). In her PhD project „Patterns of regional legitimating and competence enhancement in Spain“ she researches structural transformation caused by Europeanization in the context of regional mobilization and growth of autonomous communities with a discourse analysis. MONIKA SENGHAAS (University of Leipzig) introduced her PhD project on „Nation and social security in Europe.“ Exemplified on Austria she takes an historian approach to research interconnections of the welfare state building and national state. CHRISTIAN SCHMIDT-WELLENBURG (University of Potsdam) spoke about his PhD project „On the concept of the institutional entrepreneurship and symbolic power: discursive dimensions of social change“, questioning the role and impact of management consulting in changing capitalisms. The contribution made by ALMUT KIRSCHBAUM (BGHS) was on „Flexible careers? Women's reflections on career norms in a life course perspective.“ In her qualitative PhD project she focuses on how women experience and reflect on intersections and ambivalences between changing

company's career norms and normative paths of the life course. STEFANIE HOHERZ and TOBIAS GRAF (both BGHS) gave an overview of their current research project on transitions in mother's employment in Germany. With the use of quantitative panel survey they focus on the come-back of mothers into the labor market (after first child birth) and the depending influence of their partners. In her contribution on the socio-political semantics of the Yemeni *janbiyah*, a bent dagger traditionally worn by men in the northern highlands of the country, MARIE-CHRISTINE HEINZE (BGHS) demonstrated how a synchronic and diachronic analysis of different cultural and political symbolic inscriptions into one and the same artifact can offer a broad perspective on continuity and change in a society. During the panel's final presentation STEFANIE MAHRER (University of Basel) gave an inside view on her PhD project about the Jewish community La Chaux-de-Fons“ and the significance of Jewish watchmaking companies in 19th century Switzerland.

In the closing plenary session FRANZ-JOSEF ARLINGHAUS, ANGELIKA EPPLÉ and ANDRE KIESERLING (all Bielefeld) discussed dynamics and change on a more abstract level. Arlinghaus criticised the assumption that pre-modernity was stable and pointed out that many basic structures have not changed until now. Thus a differentiated view on change is necessary. Epplé referred to the concept of 'multiple modernities' by Shmuel Eisenstadt and argued that different temporalities of change and dynamics exist, and that these multiple forms should not be reduced to one modernity solely. Kieserling explained the fundamental assumptions of functional differentiation. The threshold of change in modern societies lies in the tendencies of structures to reduce former multiple functions to just one function. These processes of functional reduction improve the ability of structures to react to new or unforeseen requirements. As already in the panels, again the mutual perspectives on dynamics and change from historical and sociological backgrounds turned out to be as multifaceted as inspiring.

Conference overview:

Opening lecture

Jan Assmann, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
„Cultural memory – and the dynamics of change and fixation“, Hörsaal 2

Keynote speeches

Arnd Hoffmann

„Contingency: The impossibility of calculating change“

Martin Diewald, Universität Bielefeld

„Social mechanisms explaining stability and change in patterns of social inequalities“

Panel 1: Social, discursive and institutional change

Chairs: Mathias Albert/ Dominik Schrage / Axel Hüntelmann

Chris A. Molnar: Croatians, Catholicism, and Cold War Rhetoric in Post-WWII West Germany

Rumin Luo: Migration, Integration and Life Chances – An Empirical Study of Urban China

Lukas Graf: Europeanization and Vocational Training

Thomas Blanchet: Is the „French model“ of water management leaking?

Katharina Pohl/Hanna Acke: Bekehren, helfen, fördern

Enrique Martion: African Slave Labor

Karin van Leeuwen: The constitutional factor in political system changes in the post-war Netherlands

Edgar Guerra: Collective action, contingent order and social change

Colin F. Wilder: Linear vs. Multipolar Models of Legal Tradition in Early Modern Europe

David Gilgen: Institutionen als Basis von innovativer Dynamik und wirtschaftlichem Wandel

Panel 2: Kontingenz und Planung

Chair: Birgit Geissler

Philipp Altmann: Neudefinition von Identität in Ecuador durch den Begriff der Interkulturalität

Stefanie Klein: Rechtfertigungsmuster regionaler

Legitimation und Kompetenzerweiterung am Beispiel Spaniens

Monika Senghaas: Nation und soziale Sicherung in Europa

Yaman Kouli: Die Bedeutung der Jahre 1945-1950 für die Wirtschaft Niederschlesiens

Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg: Die Figur des institutionellen Entrepreneurs und die symbolische Macht: zur diskursiven Dimension sozialen Wandels

Almut Kirschbaum: Erwerbsbiographisches Handeln von teilzeitbeschäftigten, hochqualifizierten Frauen

Stefanie Hoherz/Tobias Graf: Wandel der Müttererwerbstätigkeit

Nadine Bernhard: Europäisierung von Berufsbildungs- und Hochschulsystemen in Frankreich und Deutschland

Marie-Christine Heinze: The Yemeni Janbiyah as Symbol of Continuity and Change

Stefanie Mahrer: Jüdischen Gemeinde La Chaux-de-Fons im 19. Jahrhundert

Panel 3: Identität und Wandel

Chairs: Martina Kessel / Hartmann Tyrell

Marc Breuer: Liturgie und Säkularisierung

Philip Knäble: Kirche im Wandel, Wandel in der Kirche? – Tanz im kirchlichen Raum

Thomas Abel: Die fotografische Gesellschaft

Florian Muhle: Zum Bruch sozialer Mechanismen in virtuellen Kommunikationsprozessen

Undine Stabrey: Die Form der Zeit – Wissenschaftswandel und archäologische Periodisierung

Dominik Mahr: Kontingenzbewältigung durch Kontinuitätskonstruktion

Jan Markus Kötter: Der Einfluss des Todes kirchlicher Akteure auf die Entwicklung der Reichskirche der Spätantike

Hilmar Schäfer: Dynamik und Wiederholung

Keynote speech

Ute Engelen: Die Abschaffung der Erholungsverschickung bei Volkswagen

Stephanie Hagemann: Brüche und Kontinuitäten: Sozialbilanz – Tradition oder Modeerscheinung?

Closing plenary session

with short statements by sociologist and historians from Bielefeld University

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