



Leibniz-Institut für
Regionalentwicklung
und Strukturplanung

International Conference

“Towards a Communicative Construction of Spaces”

28th/29th of May 2010

at Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning in Erkner (near Berlin)

After the ‘cultural turn’ in socio-scientific spatial research it has become common knowledge that only on the basis of shared human interpretations spaces become social reality. Currently there is a consensus that spaces are culturally shaped and have to be conceived as a ‘social construction’. While the theoretical premise of the social construction of space is widely accepted attempts to elaborate this premise considerably differ.

In some of the approaches the role of ‘knowledge’ is referred to. Several authors reflect on the fact that human interpretations and attributions form the basis of the constitution and shaping of spaces. Other authors prioritise the role of human ‘acting’ and refer to action theories. In the meantime, furthermore, the importance has been realized that ‘communication’ has for a social construction of space. However, in this field systematic research has not established yet. This holds true for the sociology of space, social geography and planning sciences. Scientists in spatial research only sporadically have turned to communication-theoretical approaches.

While in humanities and in social sciences the communicative turn has prevailed since the 1990s, it is yet to arrive in socio-scientific spatial research. This is remarkable, since spaces have neither been thought of, nor were they planned or designed by subjects beyond communicative processes – whether in past or presence. Even in simple societies a communicative exchange of the subjects’ space perceptions is necessary to make space an intersubjectively shared reality. This is even true for modern, functionally differentiated societies, where spatial images and spatial design are negotiated to a great extent communicatively, often in broad public. There are good reasons why terms like governance, network formation, cooperation and participation – that in the end refer to communication processes – became common in the context of spatial development. Actors in the field of spatial development became conscious of the fact that negotiation processes are necessary, that convincing and reaching of consensus are to be accomplished. Marketing of cities and regions is in another way an example for the importance that is attributed to communication. In the context of professionally designed communication processes spatial images are actively managed and controlled. These measures aim at the production of specific spatial images and at the promotion of the most advantageous urban or regional development possible. However, these forms of marketing communications fairly often reach their limits.

All this suggests that communicative processes within socio-scientific spatial research deserve more attention. There is a lack of systematic knowledge on mechanisms of communicative construction of space. We know only little about communicative processes within groups, networks and public discourses dealing with spatial development. There is a particular lack of knowledge with regard to the question of how certain spatial images emerge communicatively, how they are communicatively mediated and spread, how they find acceptance and how they finally find their expression in spatial forms, or how they are blocked and defeated.

On the international and interdisciplinary conference theoretical and empirical concepts shall be reflected that are adequate for analysing the questions spatial research brings up. The conference will be held in English.

The fee for the conference is about 50,00 € the costs for our dinner at Dämeritz Seehotel would amount to about 35,00 € additionally. The fees have to be paid in cash on registration at the beginning of the conference.

The conference will be conducted in the context of the section sociology of knowledge and with the support of the section sociology of cities and regions of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie. Financial background is given by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Furthermore the section sociology of knowledge awards a grant.

Organiser of the conference:

PD Dr. Gabriela B. Christmann

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Head of Research Department 3

“Dynamics of communication, knowledge and spatial development”

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Friday, 28th of May 2010

Theoretical approaches (plenary session)

Chair: Gabriela Christmann, IRS Erkner

09.30-10.00 h	Registration
10.00-10.20 h	Welcome addresses: Timothy Moss (Deputy Director IRS), Reiner Keller (DGS: Section of sociology of knowledge), Heike Herrmann (DGS: Section of urban and regional sociology), Gabriela Christmann (IRS)
10.20-10.40 h	Hubert Knoblauch (Berlin): The turn from the ‘social’ to the ‘communicative construction’ of reality
10.40-11.00 h	Reiner Keller (Landau): Social constructivism und discourse analysis
11.00-11.40 h	Discussion
11.40-12.50 h	Coffee break
11.50-12.10 h	Peter Weichhart (Wien): The social construction of space
12.10-12.30 h	Martina Löw (Darmstadt): The concept of relational space
12.30-13.10 h	Discussion
13.10-14.10 h	Lunch
14.10-14.30 h	Antje Schlottmann (Frankfurt/M.): Space and language
14.30-14.50 h	Annette Hastings (Glasgow): Place, discourse and social class differences: De-constructing ‘Our Vision for Glasgow’
14.50-15.30 h	Discussion
15.30-16.00 h	Coffee break
16.00-16.20 h	Andreas Pott (Osnabrück): Communication and Space
16.20-16.40 h	Gabriela Christmann (Erkner): Towards a Theory of the Communicative Construction of Spaces
16.40-17.20 h	Discussion
17.20-18.00 h	Final discussion forum on theoretical approaches
20.00 h	Dinner (advance reservation is necessary)

Saturday, 29th of May 2010

Empirical approaches and findings (parallel sessions)

	Session 1: Communicative constructions in the urban context Chair: Tobias Schmidt, IRS Erkner	Session 2: Communication and urban planning Chair: Gerhard Mahnken, IRS Erkner	Session 3: Communicative constructions of regions Chair: Anika Neumann, Karsten Balgar, IRS Erkner
09.00-09.20 h	Susan Drucker/Gary Gumpert (Hempstead, NY): The Square Transformed or the Unsquared Square	Ursula Stein (Frankfurt a. M./Kassel): Communicative planning	Sami Moisio (Turku): Communicating transnationalism through space
09.20-09.40 h	Gertraud Koch (Friedrichshafen): Towards an interactionist reconfiguration of space	Oliver Märker (Berlin/Bonn): Electronic participation and communicative planning (theory)	Heidi Fichter-Wolf (Erkner): Towards a communicative construction of spatial cultural change in European border areas
09.40-10.20 h	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion
10.20-11.00 h	Coffee break		
11.00-11.20 h	Petra Jähnke/Anika Neumann/Tobias Schmidt (Erkner): Spatial pioneers in urban quarters	Ilse Helbrecht (Berlin): Communicative urban development policy	Markus Leibenath (Dresden): Suburban areas as 'cultural landscape': Myth, myopia or hegemonic project?
11.20-11.40 h	Loretta Lees (London): Gentrification, social mixing and a communicative construction of urban community	Katrin Großmann (Leipzig): The Communicative Construction of neighbourhoods: how neighbourhood images evolve and transform	Georg Glasze (Erlangen): The discursive constitution of a world-spanning region and the role of empty signifiers. The case of Francophonia
11.40-12.20 h	Discussion	Discussion	Final discussion forum of session 3
12.20-13.20 h	Lunch		
13.20-13.40 h	Markus Hesse (Luxemburg): Reurbanisation: framing and shaping the city through urban discourses	Chik Collins (Paisley): Communicative processes affecting urban and regional development: Some case studies from the west of Scotland	
13.40-14.00 h	Discussion	Discussion	
14.00-14.40 h	Final discussion forum of session 1	Final discussion forum of session 2	
14.40-15.00 h	Résumé, coffee, photo shooting		