

Transformation in coastal zones: Coping with global change (OP4-01)

25-28 September 2018, Fukuoka, Japan

Call for Papers

This panel critically explores the assumptions, triggers, catalysts and motivations for transformation in the contexts of coastal realms. We ask whether the concept of transformation is adequate to cope with the complexities of global social and environmental change and innovation, with aspirations for sustainable development set by the 2030 Agenda, but also with issues of power and representation across scale and social positioning as they manifest in coastal areas.

Many coastal areas are characterised by a high and even growing population density and strong urbanization trends today. Growing coastal populations and global environmental change, including effects of climate change and coastal hazards, are responsible for human-environment relations that get more and more under pressure. Yet, coastal societies have perpetuated and fostered innovation through the centuries to cope with prevalent risks, if we think of coastal protection systems, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), or “floating houses” as adaptation measures, amongst others. The 2030 Agenda addresses several aspects of coastal vulnerabilities and security in the context of sustainable development through its cohesive framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), even though coastal areas are explicitly mentioned in only two of the agenda’s 169 targets (SDG 14, targets 14.2 and 14.5). By that, the 2030 Agenda also lays a foundation for innovation and transformation in coping with coastal vulnerabilities and directing sustainable futures.

It is timely to analyse, take-up and develop technical innovations, but also social innovations that are emerging in our dynamic coastal zones. The concept of transformation is a heuristic tool to capture these emerging processes. It is a much disputed “rising star” in social ecological debates (Brand 2016). Transformation relates to the increasing observation that human-environment relations are in crisis. Notions of transformation point at the complex and interrelating features of this ‘naturecultures’ crisis, including a global environmental governance deficit. We suggest that transformation concepts must be explored more deeply- both theoretically and in practice - in order to analyse their critical material and social effects, including for the coastal zones. Which social or material formations activate and facilitate transformation? What role have different actors such as state officials, experts, business or social movements in transformation processes to a more sustainable world? What are the challenges, pitfalls and implications of transformative processes? What does transformation mean to different agents? What can we learn from transformation in coastal areas and how can we foster these processes? To what extent can the Agenda 2030 contribute to fostering transformations that address coastal vulnerability issues, and how can these be operationalized?

Key dates and paper submission

The session is part of the panel “OP4. Security and the 2030 Agenda” at the World Social Sciences Forum 2018 in Fukuoka, Japan, 25-28 September 2018.

Call details: http://www.wssf2018.org/session-parallel-02-list.html#a_p4

Submission: <http://www.wssf2018.org/call-for-papers.html>

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