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Regional disparities in territorial dynamics across official categorisation of urban and rural areas (Occitanie, France)

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“New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies“

European Rural Geographies Conference

June 14 – 17, 2017
Braunschweig, Germany

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Book of Abstracts

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Conference background

The first European Rural Geography Conference was held in Nantes (France) in 2014, jointly organised by the French Commission de géographie rurale (CNFG), the Spanish Grupo de Geografía Rural (AGE), the British Rural Geography Research Group (RGS/IBG) as well as the German working groups "Ländlicher Raum" and "Dorfentwicklung" (DGfG) together with the Universities of Nantes, Caen, Rennes and Angers as well as the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). The conference succeeded a number of bilateral meetings in previous decades for the main purpose of bringing together scholars engaged in rural research. As a platform for exchange of research on rural areas and ruralities in geography and related disciplines, the conference wanted to establish a new tradition of European exchange in this field. The theme of the Nantes conference was "The countryside: spaces of innovation in an urban world".

Building on the participants' feedback as well as the success of the conference, the idea for a periodical exchange was born: Regular conferences every two to three years shall enable a steady exchange of scholars interested in rural research throughout Europe.

The conference "New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies" at the Thünen Institute of Rural Studies in Braunschweig, Germany, in June 2017 constitutes the second meeting of rural researchers within the European Rural Geographies conference series. This conference titled "New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies" applies a broad focus on rural research in Europe and invites to discuss the roles of actors, the impacts of policies, and the underlying processes of rural change within the following set of themes:

1. Socio-demographic challenges
2. Regional disparities, territorial justice and cohesion
3. Rurality/ruralities as narratives, lifestyles and/or practices
4. Governance and policies
5. Conflicts and actors of rural change
6. Economic issues of rural development

The organisers of this 2nd European Rural Geography Conference do hope that the new tradition will be continued in 2019 or 2020.

About the organisers

The conference is jointly organised by the Thünen Institute of Rural Studies and the Rural Geography Group (*Arbeitskreis Ländlicher Raum*).

The **Thünen Institute of Rural Studies** is one department out of 14 constituting the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute, Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries under the auspices of the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). It develops scientific basics as decision-making support for the policies of the German government. The headquarters of the Thünen Institute are in Braunschweig, where they build upon a research tradition mainly in agriculture and agronomy since the late 1940s.

The Thünen Institute of Rural Studies conducts interdisciplinary research on policy impact assessment, living conditions in rural areas, economy and labour markets in rural areas and resource use, environmental protection and nature conservation within the scope of rural research.

More information: *www.thuenen.de/en/lr/*

The **Rural Geography Group** (***Arbeitskreis Ländlicher Raum***) is a platform for continuous exchange and research cooperations within the field of rural geographyh. It invites scholars of German speaking countries to discuss theoretical, conceptual and methodological issues of rural development.

The Rural Geography Group is a working group within the German Association of Geography (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geographie*/DGfG).

More information:
www.uni-muenster.de/AKLaendlicherRaum/index.html

Programme structure

	Wednesday 14 June 2017	Thursday 15 June 2017	Friday 16 June 2017	Saturday 17 June 2017
09:00 10:30	Opening session	Panel sessions	Panel sessions	2 optional field trips: • WENDLAND: Peripherality revisited • VORHARZ: The former inner German border – a “phantom border”?
11:00 12:30	Keynotes 1 + 2	Keynote 3 + Round table debate	Poster and photo awards / Keynotes 4 + 5	
12:30 13:30	Lunch break			
13:45 15:45	Panel sessions	Panel sessions	Panel sessions	
16:30 18:00	Panel sessions	Panel sessions	Closing ceremony	
18:15 19:00	Poster session		Departures / free evening (optional offers in the city of Braunschweig)	
19:00 - - : - -	Welcome reception Thünen Institute	Reception Old Town Hall Braunschweig		

Programme – Wednesday, 14 June

Time		
09:00 – 10:30	*Opening plenary* ***Peter Weingarten, head of Thünen Institute of Rural Studies*** ***Ulrike Grabski-Kieron, spokesperson of the Rural Geography Group (DGfG)*** ***Annett Steinführer, Anna-Barbara Heindl, organising team*** Venue: Forum 1	
10:30 – 11:00	*Coffee Break*	
11:00 – 12:30	*Keynotes:* ***Sarah Skerratt, Scotland's Rural College, Great Britain: "Rural communities revisited: on empowerment,*** ***Susanne Stenbacka, Uppsala University, Sweden: "Gender relations and rurality: construction of spatial*** Venue: Forum 1	
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch Break*	
	Parallell sessions	
13:45 – 15:45	**Civic engagement in rural areas** Session chair: *M. Woods* *P. A. Berger / M. Tulaszewski / H. Fischer*: Markets of Singularities. Socio-cultural and religious networks in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania *Z. Kruzmetra*: Culture-led practices for renewal of society in rural areas of Latvia *A. Margarian / J.-C. Peters*: Can civic engagement effectively support social inclusion? A spatially explicit model *J. Reda / S. Ehret*: Investigating the heartbeat of rural development – metaphors of civic engagement in a rural development discourse Venue: Forum 2	**Disappearing and newly emerging basic services I** Session chair: *A.-B. Heindl* *S. Neumeier*: Why can street petrol station shops not be an alternative to a missing local food supplier? Contribution to the German discourse on 'Daseins-vorsorge' *T. Haartsen / B. Bock*: The perceived importance of facilities for rural citizens in Fryslân, the Netherlands *U. Jürgens*: Who frequents village shops? Studies in rural German areas *M. Mießner*: Political struggles in German spatial planning about the empty signifier 'equivalence of living conditions' Venue: A12 lecture-hall
15:45 – 16:15	*Coffee Break*	
	Parallell sessions	
16:30 – 18:00	**Material and immaterial values of farmland** Session chair: *I. Mose* *Y. Le Caro*: An axiological exploration of farmland from focus groups in western France *A. Tietz*: Non-agricultural investors in German agri-cultural companies *A. Reichert-Schick / J. Hollweg*: Investors on farmland markets in East Germany: actors, implications and control option Venue: A12 lecture-hall	**Newcomers as actors of rural change** Session chair: *A. Steinführer* *D. Meschter / P. Mehl*: The integration of refugees: a chance for rural areas? Case studies in Germany *T. Weidinger*: Learning rural areas: refugees as driv-ers of economic and social change in Lower Bavaria, Germany *S. Meier*: On the doorstep: refugee experiences of solidarity in the German region South Westphalia Venue: Forum 1
18:15 – 19:00	**Poster session**	
19:00	**Welcome reception Thünen Institute** ***Folkhard Isermeyer, president of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute***	

resilience and complexities – making the invisible visible"
identities and implications for planning"

Parallell sessions

Rural ageing: actors, structures, impacts

Session chair: *S. Kordel*
M. Petrová Kafková: Ageing in rural areas: case of the Czech Republic
A. Steinführer: Coping capabilities and service use of the elderly: findings from rural Germany
N. Mehnen / P. Schaal / E. Schäfer: Demographic change in the Wadden Sea region – situation analysis, stakeholder involvement and development strategies in tourism municipalities

Venue: Forum 1

Rural governance and participatory processes I

Session chair: *I. Mose*
S. Kundolf: Decision making processes in rural regeneration partnerships: participation and influences of new and weak actors
G. Robinson: Playing and participating: engaging communities in rural development through participology
S. Schmitz: Draw me a sheep: a pedagogical tool to discover the complexity of rural planning

Venue: AT lecture-hall

Parallell sessions

Constructions of the rural I

Session chair: *K. Halfacree*
G. Tuitjer: The house of one's own – materialisation of the rural idyll?
A. Decker: Entrepreneurship and activism in rural Czech Republic: educational visitor programmes on family farms
A. Navarro: Resurgence of open air food markets: symbol or mirror of the rurality?

Venue: AT lecture-hall

The contemporary role of agriculture for rural areas I

Session chair: *S. Depraz*
K. P. Schumacher: The geography of manure in northern Germany
S. Witzel: Digitisation – a chance for women in agriculture?
H. Pina: Olive cultivation in the Douro Region (NE Portugal), where tradition and innovation combine

Venue: Forum 2

Programme – Thursday, 15 June

Time		
	Parallell sessions	
09:00 – 10:30	**EU policies and rural development** Session chair: *U. Grabski-Kieron* *F. Navarro*: Social innovation in LEADER approach in Puglia (Italy) and Andalusia (Spain) in 2007 – 2013 cycle programming *B. O'Keeffe*: The legacy of LEADER and perceptions of rural development in Ireland *K. Pollermann*: Results of the LEADER-approach: findings from evaluation of LEADER-regions in Germany Venue: Forum 1	**Disappearing and newly emerging basic services II** Session chair: *S. Neumeier* *I. Sirodoev*: Do disappearing infrastructure and services represent a declining provision or an increasing optimisation? The case study of Argeș county (Romania) *A. Klärner*: Is rural poverty some-thing special? A case study in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany *S. Kroismayr*: The relationship between the municipal authorities and the local community after the closure of a small primary school – some evidence from Austria Venue: Forum 2
10:30 – 11:00	*Coffee Break*	
11:00 – 11:30	*Keynotes:* ***Luís Chaves, Minha Terra, Portugal: "From LEADER to Community-Led Local Development: A critical*** Venue: Forum 1	
11:30 – 12:30	*Round table debate:* ***"Shaping rural areas with EU policies: LEADER's achievements, impediments and the role of science"*** ***Sabine Weizenegger, Regional Development Agency Oberallgäu, Germany – Luís Chaves, Minha Terra –*** Venue: Forum 1	
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch Break*	
	Parallell sessions	
13:45 – 15:45	**Tourism and cultural landscapes: matters for rural development** Session chair: *U. Grabski-Kieron* *A. Voth*: Heritage protection, tourism and rural development in the Alpujarra: initiatives and challenges in a Mediterranean mountain area (Sierra Nevada, Spain) *S. Panzer-Krause*: Potentials for a sustainability transition in the tourism industry on the island of Rügen, Germany *I. Mose / N. Mehnen*: Sustainability, governance and tourism in English national parks – what can we learn from the Peak Park case? *G. Staacke*: The impact of the renewable energies "wind energy, photovoltaic and bioenergy" on cultural landscapes – development of a new evaluation method Venue: AT lecture-hall	**Rural energy transitions: exploring the rural dimension of socio-technical change I** Session chair: *M. Naumann/ M. Phillips* *G. Pierre*: The social construction of renewable energy projects: through localised social relations *E. Roberts*: Living at "the end of the line": exploring everyday energyscapes in rural northwest Wales *J. Dickie / M. Phillips*: Living in an energised countryside: public discourses and narratives to the self in village England *F. Authier*: Analysis of the role of social capital on renewable energy projects achievement and territorial development: case studies of two endogenous renewable energy projects in France and Germany Venue: Forum 1
15:45 – 16:15	*Coffee Break*	
	Parallell sessions	
16:30 – 18:00	**Constructions of the rural II** Session chair: *A.-B. Heindl* *K. Halfacree*: Loving the rural: superficial banality or topophiliac connection? *F. Dünckmann*: Politics of the idyll *V. M. Carlow*: Exo Village, Peri Urb, and Meta Town: TOPOI of settlement types in the METAPOLIS Venue: AT lecture-hall	**Newcomers and transient population in rural areas** Session chair: *S. Kordel* *M. Phillips*: Revisiting Pahl's countryside: an examination of transformations in gentrification of rural Hertfordshire *S. Depraz*: Rural gentrification in France: a critical approach *M. Eimermann*: Recognising opportunities? Rural place marketing and lifestyle movers in northern Sweden Venue: Forum 1
18:15 – 19:00	Transfer to Old Town Hall	
19:00	***Reception by City of Braunschweig, Old Town Hall***	

Parallell sessions

Economic structures and development of rural areas I

Session chair: *P. Küpper*
K. Schuster: Occupational choice from a spatial perspective: some stylised facts and a micro foundation
M. Graffenberger: Relational configurations in innovation processes: insights from businesses in peripheral regions in Estonia and Saxony
L. Kvarantan / S. Henn: Highly-skilled migrants in peripheral areas: a potential for small and medium-sized enterprises?

Venue: A12 lecture-hall

perspective on European rural policies"

Petra Raue, Thünen Institute of Rural Studies

Coming and staying: changing population structures

Session chair: *A. Steinführer*
T. Haartsen: From stayers to staying: young adult stayers in depopulating rural areas
S. Kordel: Invisible population as powerful protagonists in rural areas? Local implications of US-soldiers in rural Germany
M. Woods: Precarious rural cosmopolitanism and neoliberal globalisation in Irish small towns

Venue: Forum 2

Rural governance and participatory processes II

Session chair: *N. Neumeier*
M. Méténier: Facing rural gentrification in protected areas of England: the community land trusts as actors of rural change
Š. Guštin: Conflicts as catalysts of change in rural areas
P. Raue: The interdependence between local institutional settings and governance arrangements in LEADER
C. Lüer: The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as an EU instrument to promote cooperation in rural cross-border areas

Venue: A12 lecture-hall

Economic structures and development of rural areas II

Session chair: P. Küpper
J.-C. Peters: Quantifying the effect of labour market size on learning externalities
F. X. Armas Quintá: Approach to new rural area functions in the information society. A case study in Galicia (Spain)
J. Walsh: Revitalising Ireland's rural economy: challenges and opportunities

Venue: Forum 2

Programme – Friday, 16 June 2017

Time		
	Parallell sessions	
09:00 – 10:30	**Territorial disparities and spatial dynamics** Session chair: *I.-V. Stoica* *A. Baysse-Lainé*: The impact of the Terre de Liens civil society land trust on the access to the land of alternative farmers. A land-related tool to support food relocalisation in France *P. Küpper*: Delimitation and typology of rural areas in Germany *F. Navarro*: The lack of rural development initiatives for deep rural areas. The case of the LEADER approach in Andalusia (Spain) in 2007 – 2013 period Venue: Forum 2	**The contemporary role of agriculture for rural areas II** Session chair: *K. M. Born* *J. Kister / G. Rainer*: Going global – re-inventing the local: the quality turn in wine production and regional restructuring in South Tyrol *A. Firmino*: Olive groves in Portugal: a challenge to actors of rural change *P. Jutteau*: Do the agricultural structures and economic conditions of rural spaces influence the forms of organisation and ownership in the biogas sector? Venue: AT lecture-hall
10:30 – 11:00	*Coffee Break*	
11:00 – 12:45	***Poster and photo awards*** *Keynotes:* ***Christine Tamásy, University of Vechta, Germany: "Sustainable development or excessive exploitation?*** ***Ioan Ianoş, University of Bucharest, Romania: "Territorial disparities and village dynamics in Romania:*** Venue: Forum 1	
12:45 – 13:30	*Lunch Break*	
	Parallell sessions	
13:45 – 15:45	**The urban in the rural and the rural in the urban** Session chair: *Y. Le Caro* *D. Deville*: Urban agriculture and precarity: grow for a better food safety *U. Grabski-Kieron*: "Baukultur" in the revitalisation of areas in small and medium-sized rural towns with declining populations *I.-V. Stoica*: Challenges of small towns in Romania – heading towards a rural future? Venue: AT lecture-hall	**Rural energy transitions: exploring the rural dimension of socio-technical change II** Session chair: *M. Naumann / M. Phillips* *F. Weber / O. Kühne*: Energy transition and upheaval – the impact of grid extension and wind turbine plants in rural Germany *L. Holstenkamp*: Are rural community energy companies more inclusive than their urban counterparts? Rural-urban differences in the German community energy sector *A. Schaffrin*: The dynamics of energy networks for regional innovation *M. Naumann / D. Rudolph*: The intricate relationship between energy transitions and regional marginalisation – insights from wind farm developments in rural Germany and Denmark Venue: Forum 1
15:45 – 16:00	*Coffee Break*	
16:00	***Closing ceremony*** ***Ingo Mose, spokesperson Rural Geography Group*** ***Annett Steinführer, Anna-Barbara Heindl, organising team*** Venue: Forum 1	

Parallell sessions

Dimensions of rural quality of life

Session chair: *T. Haartsen*
T. Mettenberger: "You don't want to raise your kids in Berlin": hard and soft location factors for attracting general practitioners to rural regions
R. Nadler: The elephant in the Room. On the relation of demographic change, public services and civic engagement
J. Kreis: Quality of life in rural areas in Germany: work-family balance as a component of quality of life

Venue: Forum 1

A transition management perspective on areas of intensive agriculture"
post-socialist trajectories and post-accession challenges"

New forms of agriculture and food production

Session chair: *A. Firmino*
C.-T. Soulard: From grassroots initiatives to urban food system governance? Case studies in Montpellier and Toulouse
J. McCarthy: From co-production to co-discipline: emergent agrienvironmental governance in the Republic of Ireland
A. F. Tulla: Social Farming (SF) in the Barcelona periurban area: a social and ecological urban agriculture alternative

Venue: Forum 2

Programme – Saturday, 17 June

Time	*Field trip*
07:45 – 18:00	**Wendland: Peripherality revisited** *Departure: 07:45* *Approx. time of return: 18:00* Venue: Main entrance of the Thünen Institute, Bundesallee 50
08:30 – 18:00	**Vorharz: The former inner German border – a 'phantom border'?** *Departure: 08:30* *Approx. time of return: 18:00* Venue: Main entrance of the Thünen Institute, Bundesallee 50

KEYNOTES

Keynote

Rural communities revisited: on empowerment, resilience and complexities – making the invisible visible

Sarah Skerratt
Rural Policy Centre/Scotland's Rural College, Great Britain

Rural communities are increasingly perceived to be the appropriate 'home' of rejuvenated local democracy, a strengthened local voice, and locally-led change delivering significant and inclusive place-based outcomes. The policy direction of travel is towards a rights-based approach which puts individuals and communities at the centre of decision-making, with local appropriation of resources and responsibility for their use and management being viewed as entirely appropriate. Capacity-building is part of this growing lexicon, but is rarely resourced to the same extent. Similarly, sound governance processes are referred to but not always exhaustively examined as prerequisites for programmes or projects. The policy and practice trajectory pervades the public sector.

This paper focuses on Scotland's journey towards rural community empowerment, whilst also reflecting more widely on the UK's devolved administrations of Wales and Northern Ireland to observe common threads. I will particularly examine themes of community empowerment, rural poverty (including fuel poverty) and mental ill health.

What we can see are patterns which: assume and presume capacity and interest amongst communities; do not address the growing inequalities within and between communities; have not assessed the implications for equity and social justice in how citizens are variously experiencing empowerment and disempowerment through these processes.

Rural communities, and individuals within those communities, do not start off as equals – in terms of resources and access to resources. As the "community empowerment" process continues to gather unquestioned pace, those inequalities are persisting and in some cases increasing. This leads to three sets of questions now facing us.

Firstly, who is responsible for these growing inequalities? Communities? Policy-makers? Public sector service providers? Who will pick up that responsibility in practice? Are we going to see increasing pressure on the third sector/charities who traditionally have been at the forefront of dealing with market failure, now having to deal with a new kind of empowerment distribution failure?

Secondly, what are the long-term implications of this failure for rural community resilience – where there is a growing gap between the new haves and have-nots? What new disempowerment landscape will we see, in a context of tighter public sector service budgets and a re-imagined and re-budgeted present and future of community-centric services? How can social justice and social inclusion actually be delivered within this environment?

Thirdly, what is our response to be as researchers? Do we continue to examine empowerment and resilience in unproblematic ways, remaining relatively unquestioning in our stance? Or do we dig deeper to ensure that we are rigorous in looking at the empowerment processes from multiple perspectives, remaining dissatisfied until we know we have exhausted the evidence and saturated ourselves with triangulated data?

In this paper, I conclude that we who are in a privileged position with time, space and resources to reflect and inform, have a duty to share responsibility for building a more complete picture, one which demonstrates the complex, non-linear, excluding nature of empowerment, the unevenness of engagement. We need to remind ourselves and others that realities are rich and diverse. We know that we are complex and would rarely accept being reduced to a series of binary choices and two-dimensional characteristics. So it is with individuals and communities. I would therefore argue that we have a responsibility to persist in our articulation of complexity, in clear and purposeful ways, to ensure that we do not fall into reductionist traps and simplistic landscapes of empowerment reproduction but respect the complex realities of those who are experiencing (dis-)empowerment within today's rural communities.

Keynote

Gender relations and rurality: construction of spatial identities and implications for planning

Susanne Stenbacka
Uppsala University, Sweden

When gendered relations are analysed at local level, negotiations about the gendering of everyday practices become visible. The focus for this presentation is on analysing the (informal) strategies in such negotiations and how people act and react in relation to them. Two parallel processes can be observed. Women and men either adapt to the mainstream gender contract of the region, and adhere to it regardless of changes in society's demands, or challenge existing norms, practices and representations in their public and/or private lives, according to changes in local conditions. The local context is thus active in reproducing and maintaining, as well as transforming, gender relations.

Transformation of the labour market is involving new trends and expectations, including a growing mismatch between local job opportunities and the qualifications afforded by the education programmes sought after by young people, and fluid gender relations associated with place-specific, as well as general, assumptions about masculinity and femininity. As will be discussed, a reflexive understanding of the self affects people's expectations and frames for action in relation to others and young men and women alike are aware of the challenge to deconstruct hegemonic notions of gender.

Keynote

From LEADER to Community-Led Local Development: a critical perspective on European rural policies

Luís Chaves
Minha Terra, Portuguese Federation of Associations for Local Development, Portugal

The community initiative for rural development LEADER, launched in 1991, was an advanced initiative to promote new relations between public authorities and civil society, organised as local partnerships (Local Action Groups) in rural areas. This was a new form of governance, where different the actors of the same territory gained legitimacy to access to financial resources and act together in public life.

Since 1991, until the previous programing period, the number of Local Action Groups, the territory covered and the financial allocation to LEADER have always increased from programing period to programing period.

The presentation gives an overview on the evolution of European policies to support local development in the perspective of Local Action Groups (LAGs), based on ground experience of the Portuguese network of LAGs.

After 3 generations as Community Initiative, LEADER faced the first of two major traps: the "mainstreaming trap". In the transition from LEADER+ to the 2007-2013 programming period, LEADER practitioners and defenders were convinced that the LEADER method, with its principles (the bottom-up, partnership, integrated approach, etc.), should be capable to "contaminate" the Rural Development Programs.

In the preparation of the current programing period, the definition of the general framework of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in the EU, was supposed to extend LEADER heritage (or LEADER DNA) also to European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) and European Social Fund (ESF). Once again, LEADER people started to defend and support this new framework, but the increasing complexity of dealing with several non-coordinated Management Authorities, several national or regional regulations and several IT systems, transformed CLLD in LEADER second trap, the "multi-fund trap".

There is an incoherence between policy objectives and policy tools that emerged with the mainstreaming of LEADER and is being confirmed with the multifunded CLLD.

How can LAGs design and implement solutions to problems to which conventional policies can no longer respond, if they are forced to follow the same conventional paths?

Present challenge is to avoid the consequences of these traps, and to contribute to the design of a really integrated and participatory territorial approach, with a relevant financial expression, an adequate monitoring and evaluation system recognised both by the local communities, the EU level, but also the Member State level in a partnership based on trust to the well-being of local communities.

Several LEADER practitioners and/or supporters – from ELARD to European think-tanks – are engaged in rethinking the renewal of LEADER in the current political, social and environmental context, putting forward the contribution of collaborative approaches based on the creativity and initiative of citizens and local communities.

Keynote

Sustainable Development or Excessive Exploitation? A Transition Management Perspective on Areas of Intensive Agriculture

Christine Tamásy
Department of Rural Dynamics at the Institute for Spatial Analysis and Planning in Areas of Intensive Livestock Agriculture at the University of Vechta, Germany

Intensive agriculture resides in an area of conflict between economic competitiveness in globalising markets and growing societal requirements with respect to sustainability, in particular relating to environmental issues and animal welfare in livestock production. It is often argued that the future of livestock production highly depends on fundamental changes defined as transformative processes towards sustainable development. However, the general principle of sustainability includes a high degree of conceptual fuzziness and even in science definitions are open to varying interpretations. The implementation of sustainability as political principle has, at the same time, most concrete outcomes for livestock production and areas of intensive agriculture. As a start, the paper focuses on structural dynamics in livestock production in Germany and discusses in a spatial perspective challenges in areas of intensive agriculture as so called "sustainability hot spots" with high resource intensity. Subsequently, the transition management approach will be introduced which aims for successful configurations of processes of fundamental change in socio-technical systems.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in combination with input-output analyses allows the quantitative measurement of regional sustainability. It systematically considers available resources in a region and resource transfer flows with respect to economic, ecological and societal aspects. The Oldenburger Münsterland (districts of Vechta and Cloppenburg) can be distinguished by a high degree of resource flows (external resource transformators) while a high proportion of value added remains in the region. The high dependency on external resources induces, however, a significantly lower level of relative sustainability. Therefore, a more efficient use of resources is needed as well as the closing of resource cycles (circular flow economy). One starting point might be an improved slurry management in areas of intensive livestock production.

A fundamental change in livestock production requires new ways of systematic governance which follow the general principle of sustainability (transition management). Most notably, pioneers of change operating in niches realise innovations with the potential to modify the mainstream regime. An integrated sustainability assessment (static, dynamic) allows a holistic analysis of achievements at the regional level.

Keynote

Territorial disparities and village dynamics in Romania: Post-socialist trajectories and post-accession challenges

Ioan Ianoş
Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics, University of Bucharest, Romania

One of the poorest EU countries, Romania is the most rural, as well. From this fact, a simple question arises: does a correlation between both extreme characteristics exist? It is very difficult to give a negative answer. In any case, historically, Romania inherited huge territorial disparities at all the scales: national, regional, urban-rural, intra-urban etc. In the communist period the extensive industrialisation and cooperativisation of agriculture diminished regional disparities, but increased the rural-urban ones. These last discrepancies explained the huge "transfer" of rural inhabitants to urban centres, especially between 1970 and 1990. In this period, the share of urban population increased from 36.9 to 54.3 %. Since the collapse of the totalitarian regime the territorial disparities have increased at the regional level. Bucharest has become the main attractor for population, foreign direct investments, accessibility etc. This hypertrophic trend is revealed by widening gap between the GDP in comparison with the least developed county (in 1995, Bucharest's GDP exceeded Vaslui's GDP 10.4 times, and in 2014 the difference was almost 27 times).

The main loser of the entire post-socialist period remains the Romanian village. The changes have had contradictory effects due to the different dynamics of three interrelated processes: deindustrialisation, new ruralisation and tertiarisation. The time lag between rapid deindustrialisation and a rather slow tertiarisation of the cities led to high unemployment. In this general framework, the land reforms (by dissolution of the former cooperatives in some successive phases, the villagers received their former land properties) played an important role in diminishing the negative effects of abrupt deindustrialisation. Over 1.2 million daily commuters lost their work place in urban industry and came back to agriculture. So, the first post-socialist decade represented a critical period for the Romanian villages, due to the fundamental restructuring of the economy, involving the changes of the traditional rural-urban relationships: rural-to-urban migration was replaced by urban-to-rural one (especially in the surroundings of the big cities).

After the accession to the NATO and the EU, the Romanian village has registered a further decline, especially in the less developed areas of the country, due to the new opportunities created by migration of workers to more developed countries in Western and Southern Europe. This massive rural emigration affected the majority of the villages, which have lost their demographic potential, while the flipside effects of remittances dramatically impacted their local identity. In the meantime the positive effects of European integration on the rural infrastructure and economy have become increasingly relevant.

An in-depth case study made in the village of Moroieni (Dambovita County) reflects the complexity of the process of self-organisation, the villages' capacity to integrate the changes and to contribute to the knowledge production by a better valorisation of local perennial values.

ABSTRACTS

in alphabetical order

Abstract

Approach to new rural area functions in the information society. A case study in Galicia (Spain)

The intense diffusion process of new technologies and the rise of the post-industrial society is an obvious fact, so rural areas are not oblivious to the changes that this new scenario causes. In the Spanish case, and particularly in Galicia, the rural areas have undergone profound changes in their social, economic, spatial and functional fabric. The importance of agriculture in past decades now shares space with other activities, which head towards a multifunctional and pluri-active profile. Since the second half of the last century, rural areas have been redesigned and have adopted a new, more typically urban area, regional development patterns.

In the scientific literature, there are positions that assume and simplify the most common problems in rural areas, such as demographic and economic decline, marginal agriculture and the much problematic peripheral status. These positions consider the rural environment as homogeneous and overlook the much more, far from homogeneous, complex realities. In the rural areas of developed countries, employment in agriculture has substantially decreased but they are receiving new economic activities. This evolution towards other productive sectors, which are unequally but gradually taking place, need detailed studies into how rural areas are adapting to the emerging new society.

The main aim of this research is to discover what the degree of diversification in the Galician production system is and to detect innovation processes in rural areas. The aim is to make progress in the transformations that took place in the business sector so that the renewal processes, the product range and potential services can be an incentive to stable and sustainable growth. Finally, there is the presentation of a very specific study case in Galicia, where intensive use of advanced Internet services, such as e-commerce in rural municipalities, has been found. The intention is to find out how this advanced use of the Internet is related to innovation processes in rural areas and the changes that are taking place in their economy.

To undertake this analysis, data from the Galician Institute of Statistics, from the business directory and local units from 2014, has been found. There are also microdata files from the family living conditions survey, which corresponds to the module on new technologies in 2013.

So far some Galician rural areas have been found to possess citizens that make use of the advanced Network, as is the case of electronic commerce, with values exceeding those in urban municipalities. The research being carried out will discover what economic activities are predominate in the Galician rural areas and will evaluate what rural areas are being more innovative and where the technology sector is more present.

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Notes:

Abstract

Analysis of the role of social capital on renewable energy projects achievement and territorial development: Cases studies of two endogenous renewable energy projects in France and Germany

The purpose of the communication is to analyse the local initiative of renewable energy production through the prism of the multifunctionality (Wilson, 2008; Renting & Alii, 2009), the local governance, and territorial development (Camagni 2006; Campagne & Pecqueur 2014). This work presents the interaction among the social capital, the use of the wind and solar resources, and territorial development. We assume that innovation is not only technological. Economic growth also has a social and organisational component (Camagni 2006). The communication represents part of my Ph.D. thesis that has begun in 2014 and will be submitted in September 2017. The thesis objective is to understand the role of social capital in process of endogen development in six French and German case studies.

Territorial development is based on three dimensions: (i) material and non-material territorial resources, (ii) the relational system between the actors of a project (social capital), (iii) and the local governance system (Camagni, 2006).

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Today, multifunctionality is considered as a way of explaining development pathways of rural areas and their adaptation capacity to economic, political and social changes. Multifunctionality is based on three types of capital: economic, social and environmental (Wilson, 2008). Many authors argue that a high level of multifunctionality leads to high resilience in territories. In that sense, multifunctionality is supporting the development of rural areas (Renting & Alii, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Both approaches show that social capital is part of the development. The goal of the communication is to qualitatively examine this social dimension in endogenous renewable energy projects and analyse its effects on the development of rural areas – or rather the local coordination (nature of the relations, norms and rules that governs these links, structures in which these links are embedded) that would support and foster regional development. How do local initiatives operate and set up their projects? How do these projects impact the rural areas and their socio-economic development?

Based on empirical research and qualitative analysis methods (participant observation, semi-structured interview, qualitative network analysis, one common analysis grid), we will first present the local actor's network, the dynamics that work in the network, and how it links with the outside. Second, we will present how these characteristics may have an impact on a project and improve the development of rural areas.

The communication focuses on contemporary dynamics in German and French rural areas. Two case studies have been selected in the region of Occitanie and Baden-Württemberg. The choice of these two regions is explained by the restructuring movement and the importance of touristic places as a diversification of economic activities with which their rural areas are concerned by. The use of renewable energies is being encouraged by public actors in the rural areas of both regions.

The wind power plant Südliche Ortenau resulted from a communal initiative. Local public and associative actors, supported by an external project developer, seized public policies about renewable energies and developed the necessary procedures to convert an opportunity into a concrete project. The relevance of this case study is in the nature of the actor's cooperation.

Abstract – continued

Analysis of the role of social capital on renewable energy projects achievement and territorial development: cases studies of two endogenous renewable energy projects in France and Germany

The parc agri-solaire d'Ortaffa is a photovoltaic power plant resulted from a private endogenous initiative, supported by the municipality of Ortaffa. The particularity of the project is the integration of energy and agricultural production in one single project (pastoralism, viticulture, apiculture). The relevance of this case study is in the cooperation between local and international actors.

The analyses highlight the interaction between social capital and the valorisation of solar and wind resources. It will be shown that the network configuration played a role in the location of the power plant and the land selection. From an economic point of view, the cooperation facilitates the achievement of the project and favoured the emergence of new projects in the touristic and agriculture sectors.

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Notes:

Abstract

The impact of the Terre de Liens civil society land trust on the access to the land of alternative farmers. A land-related tool to support food relocalisation in France

Terre de Liens (Land of Links) is a new form of collective and solidarity-based non-agricultural investment on farmland markets. Since 2003, this French civil society movement is involved in issues related to farmland law and tenure, farmland preservation and access to the land of alternative farmers. Terre de Liens gathers several organisations (putting forward farmlands as a political issue and helping people not from a farming background to access the land), a land trust (which issues non-profit shares to buy land and farms) and a foundation (which receive land and farms in donation). In keeping with their political project, the land trust and the foundation rent the lands with specific carrier-lasting lease agreements committing farmers for an organic, small-scale and peasant farming. Local food supply is part of this vision. Terre de Liens has become one of the largest farmland owners in France, by taking control of 3 000 ha (0,1 % of the French total). Relying on limited financial means, it nevertheless entered an institutionalisation process, affecting how the purchase and renting projects are led. Moreover, it is not the only vehicle promoting the access to the land of alternatives farmers.

So far, the land-related solutions Terre de Liens is endorsing for the local food supply have not been much studied (Pibou, 2016). In a setting marked by the growing studies about the commons (Le Roy, 2014), we focus on projects featuring land as a collective resource for food sovereignty. To understand what is at stake in the use of a renewed form of property in favour of a specific agri-food model, we use the "bundle of rights" framework, based on the seminal work of Schlager & Ostrom (1992), and applied to the farmland issue by (among others) the "anthropology of law" research community (Eberhard, 2008).

To what extent has Terre de Liens become a driver of access to the land for farmers not from a farming background? Does Terre de Liens play the same role in different regions, where land issues are not dealt the same way by the mainstream agricultural sector? By initiating new citizen-farmers financial links and by renewing the vision of land property, does Terre de Liens participate to frame a new style of managing access to the land?

To answer these questions, we undertook a fieldwork in three areas of France, chosen for having different land tenure and property traditions and agri-food models. Each one includes a city and its countryside: Saint-Affrique (8 000 inhabitants), in Mediterranean mountains marked by the sheep breeding; Amiens (160 000 inhabitants), in the middle of a high productive cereal crop region and Lyon (1,6 millions inhabitants), bordered by a cereal plain and hills with a varied agriculture. We examined every farm purchase made by Terre de Liens in the three areas, to piece together again the way six projects succeeded. We carried out thirty semi-structured interviews with farmers, farmers' unions, employees of Terre de Liens, of local authorities, of Agriculture Chamber and of SAFER – a semi-public rural land company. We also analysed lease agreements, planning documents and reports. Then, we surveyed by questionnaire neighboring farms involved in local food supply chains, to examine the effective impact of Terre de Liens on access to the land.

We first highlight in which extent Terre de Liens's acquisitions can be understood as a renewed form of collective property, differing (among others) from the traditional commons. Then, we bring out the tools broadly used by Terre de Liens to take control of farmlands and to let them be farmed. Together with the repartition of land rights and the relationships

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Abstract – continued

The impact of the Terre de Liens civil society land trust on the access to the land of alternative farmers. A land-related tool to support food relocalisation in France

developed by Terre de Liens with rural stakeholders, they participate to define an original farmland management style. Finally, we show that during its short history, the priorities of the movement evolved from looking for legitimacy to managing a large estate. The type of projects and people supported changed along these lines. Moreover, from a region to another, the role of the acquisitions differs: they can be the only way to become farmers for people not from agricultural background or merely solutions to secure the tenure of already existing alternative farms.

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Abstract

Markets of singularities. Socio-cultural and religious networks in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania

In public discourses about Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, negative connotations such as an aging population, high unemployment, emigration of younger people and abandoned rural areas prevail. This view does not take into consideration that there might be new opportunities involving innovative developments in the socio-cultural realm. The field of culture, "belief systems" and religions is especially noteworthy in this context.

Drawing on results of the preceding project entitled „Religious Hybrids" (Berger/Hock/Klie 2013, 2014; http://www.wiwi.uni-rostock.de/religionshybride/), the new DFG-funded project "Markets of Singularities. Hybrid Religious Networks in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania" (http://www.wiwi.uni-rostock.de/maerkte-des-besonderen/) now aims at reconstructing the cultural and "larger religious field" (Bourdieu 2011). Hence, three crucial areas ("cure and spiritual healing", "ecology and spirituality", "handicraft and spiritual craftsmanship") are attributed to this broader socio-cultural and religious field. It is constituted and organised as a social practice by means of network-like and market-shaped forms of "Vergemeinschaftung" and "Vergesellschaftung" within the mentioned "markets of singularities". These markets and agencies of validation and confidence-building can likewise establish, stabilise or strengthen innovative cultural, as well as renewed religious communication. Within the framework of this project, "religious-hybrid", cultural services and symbolically significant artifacts are "traded" as marketable "singular" products that require external validation. As standardisation and comparability cannot be taken for granted, processes of exchange involve fundamental imponderabilities. Therefore, "faith" and "trust" must provide reliability and the prospect of continued exchange.

These specific (market-)mechanisms are rooted in symbolic systems that connect cultural and/or religious knowledge with systems of belief. As agencies of validation and confidence-building, networks, experts and professions represent the social and cultural conditions for the existence of those "markets of singularities". In this respect, the project draws heavily on recent concepts from economic sociology, especially the perspective of Lucien Karpik (2011). Due to this approach, constraints caused by (neo)classical economic concepts of markets are transformed and resolved. In addition to questions about "external" conditions of structure and stability considering agencies of validation and confidence-building, questions about the internal structure of this larger socio-cultural and "religious-hybrid" field will be investigated. Methods of network analysis as well as guided interviews and participant observation will be utilised.

The presentation we would like to offer will present an overview of the fundamental theoretical concepts underlying this project. Moreover, preliminary results of our empirical investigations shall be discussed. Special attention will be given not only to innovative cultural and/or religious content, but especially to (new) forms of network-building between the various actors in the examined areas.

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Abstract

Exo Village, Peri Urb, and Meta Town: TOPOI of settlement types in the METAPOLIS.

Understanding and designing urban-rural linkages offers the possibility for devising new tools and strategies for more sustainable development. However, concepts for understanding the interrelation between rural and urban settlements in planning are largely absent, or building on a 19th century understanding of settlements developing prior to or alongside the industrialising world: these comprise concepts and planning parameters such as “village”, “town” or “city” and are still in use today.

However, In 1969 Henri Lefebvre brought forward the thesis, that with few geographic exceptions, a process of urbanisation had seized the entire globe; and hence, reality would no longer be graspable with categories of ‘town’ and ‘countryside’ (Lefebvre 1969/2006). Instead the physical world had to be understood using the vocabulary of an “urban society” – a society resulting from industrialisation.

Lefebvre understood processes of urbanisation and industrialisation as closely interrelated. With the onset of industrialisation a long lasting migration from the country to the cities and the physical expansion of urban territories had begun. On the other hand, urbanisation was a process disintegrating the agrarian society, taking from it elements characteristic of peasant life, such as certain forms of trade, crafts and small local centres. Villages as the typical physical representation of rural communities and rural life lost their role and characteristics, as the urban fabric began to cover the territory.

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However, with the term ‘urban fabric’ Lefebvre did not narrowly describe the form, density, or degree of the built-up land, but the entirety of all manifestations evoked by the dominance of the city over the country. This would include such practices as holding second residences, highways stretching across landscapes, golf courses or large supermarkets, as well as media consumption, leisure time facilities or the adoption of fashions. As such, urbanisation would entail not only physical change, but a fundamental transformation of ‘everydayness’ with far reaching implications. Far spun and more or less dense, the urban fabric would include smaller or larger islands of ruralness, hamlets and villages within the urban fabric.

Furthermore, the global process of urbanisation also fundamentally transformed the cities. From the reverse perspective, the phenomenon of urbanisation manifests itself in a vast expansion of urban networks and agglomerations, today – large cities ‘exploding’ leaving numerous urban fragments in their vicinity – small and medium size towns, and villages becoming dependent on large urban centres.

The research project TOPOI builds and expands on Lefebvre’s concept of urbanisation. TOPOI is embedded in the research project of METAPOLIS – an inter- and transdisciplinary platform for sustainable development of urban-rural linkages in Lower Saxony (http://metapolis.wi2.phil.tu-bs.de). It offers approaches for identifying new settlement types in the context of mutual urban-rural linkages, based in a quantification and scientific analysis of physical form in relation to everyday practise in the exchange of goods, resources, information, ecosystem services, and transportation.

The notion of TOPOI thereby conceptualises various settlement types – by relating physical characteristics of the build and un-build realm to cultural, social, and economic practices – embedded within the landscape

Abstract – continued

Exo Village, Peri Urb, and Meta Town: TOPOI of settlement types in the METAPOLIS.

matrix, connected via networks of traffic, goods, people, data, and everyday actions.

Examples as Exo Village, Peri Urb, and Meta Town describe new categories of settlement types beyond standard planning types by linking design thinking and scenario planning from architecture/urban planning with systems analysis of natural sciences and integrate methods from the fields of engineering, economics, and political science in correlating physical forms, proximities, practices or the accessibility to resources, information etc.

Thereby TOPOI as part of the larger METAPOLIS-project adds to a widened understanding of parameters that may be adjusted to suit the aspects of sustainable development. As a result, strategies and tools for a sustainable development of cities, small towns and villages set in a rural landscape matrix will be demonstrated.

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Notes:

Abstract

Entrepreneurship and activism in rural Czech Republic: educational visitor programmes on family farms

The paper draws on data from ethnographic research on livelihood-production, everyday-arrangements and identity in a peripheralised rural region of Western Czech Republic. Taking the example of two female farmers who run educational visitor programmes on their recently established family farms, the paper explores how the agency of activism-driven female entrepreneurs is shaped by the complex interrelation of residential context, their gender, their class and their social status as rural migrants. Whereas the motive to engage for social change influenced the women's motivation to migrate to the countryside, the self-efficacy experienced in the specific context of their new homes, further fostered their activist subjectivity. With the farms as a resource, they could not only create themselves income opportunities in a region with limited opportunities for well-educated women with small children, they could also perceive themselves as part of a moral rural elite. However, their agency was also highly challenged – not only in terms of conflicts within the local communities, but also within the families itself.

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Abstract

Rural gentrification in France, a critical approach

The topic of rural gentrification, thoroughly studied in the United Kingdom and the English-speaking area (Phillips, 1993 ; Smith & Phillips, 2001 ; Ghose, 2004 ; Guimond & Simard, 2008 ; Richard, 2009 ; Stockdale, 2010), has been extended to French rural geography in order to describe the demographic revival of most rural areas in the country (Raymond, 2007 ; Pistre, 2012 ; Tommasi, 2014). However, the concept of gentrification implies some theoretical discussion, since it might contain a critical point of view, as stated in the debate within urban areas where gentrification has been used to point out eviction processes for the working class, expelled from city centres by the higher prices of housing (Smith & Williams, 1986; Ley, 1986).

A first international comparison, conducted by the Limoges University and the University of Leicester (Richard et al., 2014) has produced a rather positive and non-critical assessment of the process in France, however based on broad criteria and an important visual dimension, leaving in the background class considerations and land prices differentials.

Our question is thus to examine whether a more critical approach can be validated for rural areas, since the mechanism of gentrification does not necessarily relies on similar actors and principles than in urban areas (Rose, 1984; Lees, 2000). If yes, is there a similar exclusion process, or other forms of socio-spatial segregation in the renewed countryside of France?

Our study consists (a) in a statistical analysis of the evolution of land values, as registered by fiscal administration, at municipal level (36500 LAU2 units) in order to identify rural areas with positive migration balance and a speculative raise of land prices; and (b) local interviews in the Haute-Loire department (Massif Central), in order to check on the field which exclusion processes, if any, can be observed in rural areas, as sociological descriptions have already shown it sometimes (Helle, 1997; Perrenoud, 2008 et 2012).

This paper will demonstrate that rural gentrification, in France, should be cautiously used if one wants to keep the critical dimension of the concept. Very few situations will actually produce real evictions or a “class substitution”; there are rather “intra-class conflicts” (Clocke & Thrift, 1987). The trend is rather an indirect selection among rural newcomers through land prices and housing regulations; otherwise the more positive concept of “rural rebirth” shall be preferred to explain the current demographic revival of French rural areas. A conclusive comprehensive model of the rural gentrification process will then be suggested.

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Abstract

Urban agriculture and precarity: grow for a better food safety

The Languedoc Roussillon is the second poorest region in France (INSEE, 2013). Some medium-sized cities of the region, formerly industrial, are particularly affected by the lack of economic activities within a context of strong demographic appeal. Economic and social vulnerability of some populations seem to increase. Evidenced by the INSEE figures of unemployment and poverty in medium and small towns of Languedoc, such Ales, Bédarieux, Ganges, Le Viganor Lodève, consistently above 20 % for both indicators , well above the national and regional averages (INSEE 2012). In these cities, agricultural initiatives are emerging, driven by diverse populations in the urban spaces (Laurens, 2014). Around these cities, suburban areas accommodate a growing number of new farmers and garden enthusiasts production, developing market gardening or livestock production on a very small scale (Rejeb & Soulard, 2016). Do agricultural forms developed by these practitioners have some links?

The literature usually divides the literature on urban agriculture, urban and unprofessional, and that one in peri-urban area, professional and few facing urban centers (Mundler et al., 2014). Our communication will aim to characterise these different public of practitioners and explore their potential links between their paths connecting the city to agriculture. We will especially appreciate the food issues according to their production units (small plot, gardens, small farms ...), by analysing what plots are engaged in a self-production for various reasons, crop function to feed and the economic function which generate an income. Our hypothesis is these groups form a continuum of situations ranging from simple gardening activity to a real productive activity to sustain the household. We will also examine the development models taken by these forms of agriculture, through the access to networks, knowledge and other resources required for production activities.

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Our communication will be based on cases of study in Ales and its peri-urban area. Ales is a city with an important industrial past, including mining. This city is also located at the foot of the Cevennes, a rural area which hosted neo-rural for decades, and is now concerned by the demographic dynamism linked to residential migration. In this city, plots are made available in the public housing neighborhoods, allowing poor people to access to a garden and to practice agriculture. Are these plots, cultivated intensively, engaged in a daily struggle against food insecurity (Bentaya, 2014)? Do these gardens allow low-income people to access to fresh and quality produce (Mougeot, 2013), to diversify their sources of supply (Van Venhuizenn, 2007) but also to cultivate ethnic products based on cultural preferences (Paddeu, 2012)? Near Ales, we can see the arrival of neo-farmers who develop agricultural activities in small or very small scale, often with precarious status: are these strategies a part of a project to fight, not only against food insecurity, but also against insecurity of employment? Are there links between the phenomenon of urban gardens in poor neighborhoods and those precarious vegetables facilities? To answer to these questions, we analyse the motivations of the urban poor people to practice gardening in town. We will focus on strategies to accessing agricultural land in the town or around the town (formally or informally). Beyond the urban gardens, we also hypothesise that some citizens will access to plots in rural areas through arrangements between actors (Lascaux, 2016), enabling them to undertake in agriculture. We will analyse the agricultural practices and the productive functions of gardens and small farms. We will also identify the collective forms supporting these

Abstract – continued

Urban agriculture and precarity: grow for a better food safety

agricultural practitioners, public and/or private. Finally, we seek to understand how these different forms of agriculture combine agriculture and urban area, autonomy and employment.

The results of this communication will help to identify trends on the sustainability of agricultural forms in cities and the suburban area, often considered like marginal activities and often practiced on small areas, by taking the approach of people in precarious situations.

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Notes:

Abstract

The perceived importance of facilities for rural citizens in Fryslân, the Netherlands

Many rural regions in Europe are confronted with population decline and concomitantly a decline in facilities such as shops, banks and post offices, as well as basic services such as education, health care and public transport. In this paper we discuss the situation in the province of Fryslân, in the North of the Netherlands, as an example of how changes in the number of facilities matter for rural inhabitants, even in the rural areas of a densely populated and highly urbanised country. This paper starts with examining changes in the availability and accessibility of facilities. We then explore which facilities are perceived as important to maintain in the village, and how villagers expect to react to their disappearance. The results show the impact of rural facility decline differs across space and population groups, and needs to be understood "in context" – the context of everyday life, including varying levels of mobility.

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Notes:

Abstract

Living in an energised countryside: public discourses and narratives to the self in village England

This paper explores energy subjectivites and place identities in rural communities in three regions of England: Lincolnshire, the central East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) and West Berkshire. Rural areas have long been landscapes of energy production and consumption, but the significance of energy has often been poorly recognised in rural studies. This paper begins by highlighting how rural areas in the UK and Europe have seen significant changes over the last decade linked to transformation in energy production, as well as emphasising the significance of energy consumption to the pursuit of contemporary rural life and the widespread presence of protests about rural energy developments. The protests are clearly evidenced in public discourses in the three study regions, with a range of new energy developments being the focus of protests. Attention is paid to how conceptions of rurality are frequently drawn into articulations of public resistance, before attention is paid to more personal interpretations of energy landscapes expressed in letters to planning authorities and elicited through interviews with rural residents. It is argued that notions of rurality there are often significant in the personalised interpretations, but that these narratives often diverge significantly different from public discourses. It is argued that complex personalised 'narratives to the self' (Phillips and Dickie, 2014, 2015) are being created about energy landscapes, both in relation to the value of new energy developments and connections and divergences between expressed values and personal behaviour. The continuing energy and carbon dependency of life in rural communities in the three case study regions is highlighted, before attention is paid to the construction of narrative to the self related to energy transitions. In line with the work of Stoll-Kleemann et al. (2001) and Norgaard (2011), we emphasise the need to move analysis beyond the acceptance/denial dualism, identifying a series of distinct narratives of stasis and transition. The significance of particular representations of rurality to the narratives to the self are emphasised, as well as their often highly affective character. The paper concludes by considering the relationship between these narratives to the self and the energy dependencies of everyday lives in their rural landscapes.

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Abstract

Politics of the idyll

In my lecture, I will take a closer look at ideas of the rural idyll and ask about their relation to 'the political'. Although these two aspects, idyll and politics, are generally regarded as antagonisms I will show how ideas of a former, present, or future idyll can exceed great political power.

The idyll resembles a Kippfigur, which oscillates constantly between two different meanings: on the one hand it is something special and therefore deserves our attention. On the other hand, it is characterised by its natural self-evidence. The idyll represents an authentic living world in the state of pre-reflexivity. This means, however, that in the very moment that I take notice of it I will annihilate or destroy its authenticity. For this reason, public incantations of the idyll not only are perceived as irrational or misleading. Moreover, they are almost obscene, because they draw something into the public light, which is actually incompatible with public attention.

In the political theory of Hannah Arendt, the idyll, like love or pain, would count as an explicitly private and therefore un-political aspect of our lives. However, public debates about the boundary and the legitimacy of the private are politically relevant. Imaginations of the idyll, its loss or recovery, play an important role in political debates, be it e.g. the local resistance against LULUs (Locally Unwanted Land Uses), or the utopia of an alternative land communes. But also the idea of the false idyll forms an important argumentative background, e.g. when representatives of conventional agriculture attack the "idyllic" ideas of the Green Party. The idyll is political, to the extent that people have very different ideas about where its place in the world is or should be.

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Abstract

Recognising opportunities? Rural place marketing and lifestyle movers in Northern Sweden

Similar to other northern peripheries, Northern Swedish sparsely populated areas (SPAs) are dealing with unbalanced decreasing populations and economic stagnation. This has become even more prominent since the national government abandoned the Swedish welfare model in the 1970s and forced local governments to more actively engage in strategies of attracting and retaining population. This paper studies rural place-marketing efforts in low- and high-amenity villages in the Åsele and Storuman municipalities in the northern Swedish interior. The aim is to discuss different transient populations in relation to various types of rural place-marketing strategies in these municipalities, by considering how they engage in rural place-marketing efforts, what target groups they envisage, and what results they expect and experience. Transient populations are understood as groups and individuals residing in the area for an unspecified duration. Their mobilities are often lifestyle-oriented, ranging from short-term mobility such as tourism (including second-home tourism) to long-term mobility such as migration. The paper presents results from field observations and workshops with municipality officials, migrants and other stakeholders. Åsele houses temporary berry-picking populations, capitalises on a popular area for dog-sledding entrepreneurs and tourists around a dog-sledding trail, and participates in Europe's largest emigration exhibition to actively attract new residents from abroad. Storuman houses a large group of Norwegian second-home owners in its amenity-rich western part, accommodates unexpected groups of international lifestyle movers living in its low-amenity areas, and is developing strategies to attract returning young adults in the family-building stage of their life course. For planned and spontaneous new populations alike, production and performance aspects are considered crucial when post-migration reality is compared with the expectations raised during marketing campaigns. Personal contacts, initiatives and networks are the most important factors for attracting and retaining future transient populations.

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Notes:

Abstract

Olive groves in Portugal: a challenge to actors of rural change

Although olive trees grow easily in any kind of soils, the climatic conditions in Portugal determine that the areas along the border with Spain are the most adequate for its production, due to less humidity and extreme temperatures in winter and in summer, which reduce the emergence of pests. It is important to stress that in Portugal 88 % of total olive groves are located in disadvantaged zones presenting few alternatives to this crop, which can contribute to preventing soil degradation, keeping biodiversity and maintaining traditional landscapes.

The recent plantation of intensive and super-intensive olive groves, with high yield varieties and irrigation, contributed so that the initial predictions of growth till 2020, which foresee for Portugal a production of 100 000 tonnes of olives, has given rise to an expected crop between 120 000 and 130 000 tonnes already in the next four years. In 2015 the production of olive oil in Portugal increased 75 % compared to the previous year and this increase tends to be more accentuated in the future since many olive groves are still young.

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But large investments on intensive and super-intensive plantations are often source of conflict because large productions tend to squeeze the prices and may put at risk the carrying capacity of the ecosystems. Besides the economic crisis in countries such as Angola and Brazil, traditional “emotional” markets for the Portuguese products, namely olive oil, may affect the exports if new markets are not found.

The analysis of literature and interview with stakeholders (farmers, olive oil producers, technicians and other representatives of the sector) show, that there are two predominant trends in the olive oil sector. One in favour of the mass production, based on intensive and super-intensive olive groves, adopting high yield varieties, indifferent to Denomination of Origins, that their promotors argue have no interest abroad, since their foreign clients do not distinguish olive oils from different regions. They supply mainly the large enterprises abroad, mainly in Italy, since Italian do not produce enough to satisfy their demand and they look for a quality product that can be sold at a low price. Another group of producers look for traditional varieties, which are less productive and sometimes more sensitive but offer a larger pallet of flavors and textures. Some of them are certified as organic farmers, thus contributing to positive effects on ecological, productive, economic and social sustainability, as several authors recognise (for instance Metzidakis, 2006). In spite of lower yields, authors such as Sgroi (2015) conclude that organic olive-growing can contribute to increase profitability of enterprises. Organic farmers are usually more concerned with cultural and traditional heritage values, maintaining landscapes and investing in tourism (Olive Routes with visits to ancient olive water mills).

Today Geographical Indication products (GI) are praised for contributing to protect the environment and improving economic and social conditions in areas where olive oil production occurs, since they feed niche markets where specific quality characteristics are acknowledged and rewarded, as defended by Belletti et al (2015) reducing the risk of abandonment of the rural areas and preventing the loss of biodiversity. The increase in the number of registered olive oil geographical indications GI’s in the European Union, accounting for 107 in 2011 (10 % of which are Portuguese) shows that the consumers’ preferences are changing towards “greener” products.

Abstract – continued

Olive groves in Portugal: a challenge to actors of rural change

Finally some of the environmental impacts related to the olive processing, such as the organic residues, due to technological improvements may today contribute to a sustainable development in the framework of a circular economy, by producing different byproducts (biogas for instance) through the co-digestion of organic leftovers (olive mill wastewaters and olive pomace) as explained by Seoma et al, 2016.

Olive groves have been an important element in the Portuguese culture, gastronomy, economy and landscape and they still are. A growing demand for healthy products and sustainable modes of production, boosted by the recent recognition by UNESCO of the traditional Mediterranean Diet as an immaterial World Heritage, where olive oil plays an important role, may be positive. However the choice of high yield varieties and investment in intensive and super-intensive olive groves may compromise the sector in the future, due to the fragility of some ecosystems and eventual shortage of water, bearing in mind the climatic changes foreseen for Portugal, mainly in South, where most of the production is concentrated. Therefore less intensive modes of production, respectful of the environment and offering a large variety of differentiated olive oils, and investment in innovation in products with added value are considered to be more sustainable in the long run.

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Notes:

Abstract

Relational configurations in innovation processes: insights from businesses in peripheral regions in Estonia and Saxony

Within an increasingly knowledge-based economy, innovation activities are regarded central mechanisms to ensure long-term competitiveness of firms and regions. Strategies that enable and stimulate innovation, by providing the business sphere with suitable framework conditions, are priorities of policy maker's agendas to promote economic and regional development. The concept of innovation has been, and still is, frequently utilised within disciplines such as economic geography. Yet despite, or perhaps because of its popularity, the definition of the concept itself is vague, highly context related and subject to normative positions. However, knowledge foundation and interactivity are widely acknowledged characteristics of innovation processes and represent a consensual understanding within the diverse innovation-related literature.

(Tacit) knowledge is considered a highly localised resource with only limited mobility (e.g. Howells, 2002). Based on this argument, geographical proximity and localised networks are considered to effectively facilitate knowledge generation and learning. It is further argued that localities providing for both actor density and heterogeneity are equipped with pre-conditions most conducive for stimulating knowledge generation and learning. Actors in such environments might benefit from diverse agglomeration advantages. Within economic geography, these perspectives have resulted in a distinct regional bias towards urban and highly dynamic settings. Additionally, many studies focus on high-tech industries, which predominantly reside in such agglomerated localities. Innovation related research outside urban settings and high-tech industries remains largely underrepresented. However, emerging scholarship illustrates that innovation emerges from regions with seemingly unfavourable preconditions. These indications somewhat play down the role of spatial proximity and draw attention to the functions diverse relational actor configurations take on in facilitating innovation.

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Geographical outside locations are often exposed to multi-layered peripheralisation processes, resulting for instance in demographic shrinkage and economic stagnation. Lacking innovation is considered a central driver of socio-economic peripheralisation (Kühn, 2015). However, the reverse argument to this proposition implies, that innovation also constitutes a central mechanism for actors and regions to stabilise development paths and to counteract ongoing peripheralisation. Therefore, exploring actor practices, mechanisms and factors that shape innovation activities emerging from peripheralised contexts deserve further attention. Focussing on businesses located in peripheralised settings in Estonia and Saxony, this contribution explores innovation related practices and sheds light on the overall mechanisms that support innovation.

Inspired by the actor-centred and micro-level 'innovation biographies' approach (Butzin and Widmaier, 2015), firm's development projects constitute the central analytical unit and are explored through combining narrative interviews and subsequent network analysis. The micro-level focus on projects/processes allows incorporating time-variant perspectives and provides detailed insights into the relational and spatial dynamics of innovation activities, and respectively the mechanisms and factors that drive network formation and evolution.

First indications emerging from the Estonian case point towards a number of preliminary observations: Social, trusted relations have a substantial function in

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Relational configurations in innovation processes: insights from businesses in peripheral regions in Estonia and Saxony

facilitating and shaping development processes. They take on diverse forms and the extent to which they are used differ. Family and friendship ties are activated to access resources and expertise, existing links to acquaintances and partners from previous collaborations are continued. Besides previously known actors, relations to new actors also play a role. The Estonian case points towards the significance of events such as trade fairs and markets for establishing links to new partners, but also to create overall visibility for new developments. Participation in events that allow for temporary co-presence between diverse actors, appears as a potential strategy for businesses to bridge geographically remote locations and overall to facilitate development projects.

The contribution expands emerging literature on innovation in peripheral localities by providing a distinct actor-centred and micro-level perspective. It therefore allows gaining understanding on mechanisms and factors driving and shaping innovation in peripheral localities.

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Abstract

Conflicts as catalysts of change in rural areas

Multifunctional rural areas are suitable and attractive for many, often conflicting, uses. Our research focuses on Izola – a coastal municipality (16 000 inhabitants, 28 km^2) in southwest Slovenia. Its rural areas serve many functions: residential, agricultural (vineyards, olives, orchards), cultural and natural (protected cultural terraces, cultural and natural heritage areas, old parts of villages are protected as settlement heritage), and recreational (visitors, second home owners). A recent analysis of newspaper articles about conflicts in rural areas of Izola municipality, published in 2008 – 2014, has shown that different and overlapping interests among various users of the same rural area can create a conflict. Conflicts were initiated by a variety of stakeholders. In the mentioned period these were mainly farmers, investors, Motorway Company of the Republic of Slovenia and the municipality, while the reasons for conflicts were illegal buildings, infrastructure construction, change of the spatial planning acts, and the placement of new activities/objects in the landscape (Guštin, Potočnik, 2015). Conflicts are usually perceived as something bad and negative, especially in the media. On the other hand, sociologist Dahrendorf (1959) characterised them as good and desirable and as a cause for creativity, innovation and development of society and of the individual. Conflicts in multifunctional rural areas can, therefore, have an added value: they generate new ideas, solutions and opportunities. To investigate how involved actor perceived and reacted to conflict situation, in-depth interviews were undertaken among relevant stakeholders in the surveyed areas. Interviews were analysed with qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti to underline the most influential interactions between actors that had lead towards conflicts.

Observed conflicts in Slovenian multifunctional rural areas have many dimensions. They can be of different duration (short-, mid-, long term) and have a different frequency of occurrence (once, twice, several times, continuous, periodical). Their occurrence is possible at different spatial levels (local, regional, national, international) and in many different shapes (points, lines, areas) and sizes (individual versus group conflicts). They might involve individuals, a group of people, public or private institution. They might create different economic outcomes (compensations, settlement, annuity, mediation). By focusing on conflicts from a different angle, this paper contributes new knowledge about governance of conflicts in rural areas also by connecting our findings with the theory of local community´s life-cycle (Rösch, 1998). We will be looking for the indicators of value-added, i. e. formation of local initiative, setting-up innovative ideas and projects, introduction of new institutions, local cohesion via increased participation in events, elements of learning region, wider public acceptance of positive approaches, general improvement of quality of life, etc.

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Abstract

From stayers to staying: young adult stayers in depopulating rural areas

With many European rural areas experiencing ageing and declining populations, young adult stayers are increasingly important for maintaining healthy, liveable rural communities. However, research to date has mainly focused on youth outmigration and newcomer in-migration. This paper explores the motives and experiences of the relatively under-researched group of young adults (18 – 30 years old) who actually have stayed in their rural home region. Twenty-two interviews are conducted with young adult rural stayers in two case study regions: Oost-Groningen in the north of the Netherlands and the Clogher Valley area of County Tyrone in the west of Northern Ireland. Both are remote rural areas in their national contexts and have a history of youth out-migration. Young adult stayers were recruited via various means: appeals in local newspapers and on social media, contacts with local community groups (churches and sports groups), posters inviting 'volunteers' displayed in local shops, authors' personal contacts in each area, and snowballing where initial interviewees 'recruited' a friend to participate.

In contrast to previous studies which report the decision to stay as either still (choice) or stuck (no choice), this paper identifies six stayer categories differentiated by reason for staying and degree of choice evident in the decision-making process. Multiple influences and considerations are observed. These display a strong life course dimension with the decision to stay or leave re-negotiated as the individual/ couple transcends life stages. As such, stayers may move between stayer categories and occupy more than one category at a time. Staying rather than being once made and static is, therefore, a process in a state of flux. Given the explorative character of our paper, we call for further investigation of this under-researched area in population studies.

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Abstract

Loving the rural: superficial banality or topophiliac connection?

Popular expressions of 'loving the countryside' are commonplace within everyday culture but remain largely unexamined within academic research. This may reflect both the 'ordinariness' of the sentiment and the relative historical neglect of everyday emotions and feelings within 'serious' social scientific research. Yet, in line with an ongoing post-millennial focus on the everyday, these expressions merit greater consideration. On the one hand, they may be seen as rather superficial and ultimately rather insignificant statements that simply ally the utterer with predominant cultural norms. Such statements may also be underpinned by equally superficial ideas of what comprises the supposedly loved 'rural'. On the other hand, however, at least some statements of emotional feeling and attachment can be taken, initially, at face value, as expressing serious statements of affection and connection. To begin to explore this second potential reading further, the paper first engages with the changing idea, practice and focus of love, as expressed by scholars such as Anthony Giddens. It then examines the extent to which what the rural both represents and asserts today provides potential for providing some greater existential 'fullness' within 21st Century lives that may consequently help make it loved. Topophilia, in short, is revived in this paper as potentially of more significance than as a metaphorical badge of normative cultural respectability.

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Abstract

Are rural community energy companies more inclusive than their urban counterparts? Rural-urban differences in the German community energy sector

Recent literature highlights the spatial dimension of energy transitions. The construction of renewable energy power plants and grid extension are mainly a rural phenomenon. On the contrary, the energy transition in urban areas mainly centers on small-scale generation, energy efficiency and savings in residential and industrial buildings and transportation. There are many visions for future sustainable energy cities: smart living, green neighborhoods, etc. The visions for rural areas seem to be less clear and pronounced. Political measures to address problems of social acceptance focus on public participation using different formats such as formal hearings and informal participation, dialogues, or forums. Community (and municipal) ownership is another such type of participation which is said to enhance social acceptance and that is therefore supported politically.

Analyses of member compositions of community energy companies show that it is mostly older well-educated (upper) middle to upper class men who invest money into community energy projects (Holstenkamp et al., forthc.). However, there are marked differences between the cases. Previous research suggests that community energy leads to processes of regional identification and development in rural areas and that there is a relationship between identification, inclusiveness, and public acceptance of renewable energy projects (Hauser et al., 2015).

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Against this background, the question arises if there are major differences with regard to inclusiveness and perceptions between rural and urban community energy companies. We present data from three different surveys: two surveys among members of community energy companies in general and one survey among members of two energy cooperatives that hold shares of municipal utilities. In a first step, we summarise findings from descriptive statistics of rural community energy companies. In a second step, we test differences between rural and urban cooperatives using a chi^2 test. We control for conceptual error with regard to the definition of the rural/urban variable by using several classifications.

Statistical data analysis is still ongoing. Preliminary results from descriptive statistics of two samples show the following tendencies:

- Social composition of community energy membership seems to be more balanced in rural areas, even if there are marked differences between the cases.
- The percentage of members with increased positive attitudes towards renewable energies since the time of investment is higher in rural compared with urban areas. However, the same seems to be true for critical attitudes. These findings point at the importance to look closer into social processes activated by community energy projects.
- Acceptance of disturbances by power plants is higher in rural compared with urban areas. However, further differentiations regarding spatial categorisations seems to be necessary here.

Differences between urban and rural areas will be explored in more detail using chi^2 tests and complementary analyses of the other sample.

Overall, community energy seems to be more inclusive than in urban areas. However, there are huge within-group differences making generalisations difficult. Therefore, including additional explaining variables and exploring social mechanisms behind the identified

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Are rural community energy companies more inclusive than their urban counterparts? Rural-urban differences in the German community energy sector

tendencies through complementary case study research appears advisable. Some preliminary hints from respective literatures will be given in the paper.

Insights into mechanisms on the local level in rural areas are still a desideratum for research. Comparative research is virtually non-existent. Knowledge of social groups or social environments (milieus) in local rural and urban areas, of relevant actors, and especially of interplays between the levels is scarce. Complementing our findings with those from case studies may enhance the understanding of underlying processes. Energy transitions, mechanisation, and digitisation tend to bear the risk to contribute to social divide and to thwart the state target of equal living conditions (Art. 72 para. 2 German constitution; Sec. 1 para. 1, 2 Regional Planning Act). Whether this is exacerbated or abated by financial participation in the form of community ownership is an open question. Our findings tend to point in the latter direction.

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Abstract

Who frequents village shops? Studies in rural German areas

The discourse on foodstuff produced regionally, in healthy ways or fairly has increased dramatically in the last few years and can be found in all media types. At the same time, it is becoming ever more difficult to obtain these kinds of goods in local neighbourhoods since more and more smaller stores are closing and the distances to non-descript supermarkets and discount stores tend to become farther and farther. Areas with above-average coverage stand opposite depleted places in which providing for groceries requires having a car and imposes additional commuting expenses. Do these developments in turn mean that areas depleted of a supply infrastructure are being created which then lead to considerable cuts in the quality of life? Today this development can mainly be detected in rural areas, where one lately can also find various types of village shops, which can be understood as efforts to counteract those real and perceived supply gaps.

Despite the effort to close the supply gaps, many village shops are not successful, which leads to the question whether the supply gap is actually perceived by the consumers and, if so, whether the gap is perceived as a problem or whether it is merely relevant in the political, planning-related discourse. Are village shops, in a sense, prescribed top-down while there is no actual demand for them? Which customer type is prone to “alternative” offers outside the supermarket and discount store world and which type is drawn to dominant discount stores? In order to find answers to those questions in 2015 and 2016 we conducted empirical studies by employing standardised questionnaires (2015: N = 532; 2016: N = 289) in Germany’s northern most Land, Schleswig-Holstein, where about a quarter of the population lives in communities that do not even have one store. With 40 items, the main focus was on the interviewees self-assessing their behaviour as foodstuff consumers and having them state how often they actually frequent the local offers. Our goal was to analyse a) if, and if so, how perception and practice in regards to village shops complement or contradict one and other; b) which improvement potentials can be inferred from those findings in order to better the village shop concepts; c) which customer type is open to the idea of village shops; d) which customer groups perceive supply gaps and therefore can be deemed “vulnerable”. In order to obtain the best possible allocation of the different customer types, we conducted cluster and discriminant analysis. We also carried out qualitative group discussions in order to obtain information on reasons that lay beyond the obvious for (not) frequenting village shops and that cannot be obtained through quantitative methods alone.

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Notes:

Abstract

Do the agricultural structures and economic conditions of rural spaces influence the forms of organisation in the biogas sector?

Following the approach of social geography this presentation seeks at analysing the spatial dimension of social changes and it uneven distribution regarding the renewable energies in rural areas. Recent research findings show that these energies lead to a diversification in the energy sector and the apparition of new kinds of ownership in renewable power plants. However a growing concentration is now to be observed. For this reason studies about the forms of organisation and ownership are helpful in order to understand the social dimension of energy transition (Moss and al., 2014). Agriculture and rural spaces are facing with the emergence of globalised agricultural firms, which are controlling the agricultural production chain. On the other hand, the links between farms and the surrounding population tend to be reinforced through locally based (food or heating) supply chains.

The first aim of this presentation is to show that the biogas sector contributes, in an ambivalent way, to these changes. It leads on one side to the integration into the industrial sector and to an increasing dependency of the farm from large-scale investors. This trend appears to be stronger when the power plants are owned and managed by external firms and not by farmers. However, biogas production enables on the other side the construction of short heating supply chain (small heating networks through cogeneration). This could increase the benefits of the energy transition for the concerned regions and also reinforce the ties between farmers and inhabitants of rural areas. Secondly, we would like to show that this ambivalent contribution of energy transition to rural changes may differ from one rural space to another. Thereupon agricultural structure and socio-economic conditions of the population could be important factors. Some rural spaces face with structural weakness due to their integration in the current globalised economic system. These spaces suffer from economic vulnerability, out-migration and a restrained access to infrastructures. With regard to the agricultural and biogas sector this trend could be linked with the growing dependency from globalised agricultural firms. The profits generated by this activity would only slightly benefit to the concerned regions. Moreover, the socio-economic weakness of the population could hamper the construction of local heating networks and the initiatives for their implementation.

In this respect, our research is focusing on the German rural spaces and agriculture. They form an interesting case study, first because the construction of biogas power plants thanks to the introduction of feed-in-tariff was very strong until their limitation in 2014. Secondly, mostly farmers invested in these power plants and finally because the agricultural structures differ strongly from one region to another in Germany. In the North as in the East, the farms are much larger than in the South, where the majority of the farms are small-scale family businesses. Moreover, some regions, especially in northeast Germany, are severely affected by the phenomenon of peripheralisation. We will compare four German regions (Lüchow-Dannenberg, Salzwedel, Jena-Saale-Holzland and finally Schwarzwald-Baar and Konstanz), where the agricultural as well as the socio-economic situations are different. The data come first from local databases created by local districts about the distribution of the biogas power plants concerning their technical aspects and the investors. Based on these databases we led interviews with farmers and investors in order to have a clearer idea of the influences of these selected factors.

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Do the agricultural structures and economic conditions of rural spaces influence the forms of organisation in the biogas sector?

As a result of our analysis, we suggest that external investors (firms, and financial institutions) in the biogas power plants are more important in the region of northeast Germany than in the other regions that we analysed. This could be related to the degree of concentration of the agricultural structures. A bigger farm could be a better opportunity for large-scale investments in the biogas sector. Moreover, these regions where the process of peripheralisation is the strongest were the less concerned by the construction of the local heating networks and initiatives supporting their construction. This process could limit the benefit for the concerned regions and hamper the possibility for the local inhabitants to be involved in such projects.

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Notes:

Abstract

Going global – re-inventing the local: the quality turn in wine production and regional restructuring in South Tyrol

Through the formation of global agro-food networks, rural regions all over the world become increasingly connected to each other (Goodman 2003; Woods 2007). Wine regions are particularly affected by this change, being the wine industry characterised through particularly high levels of international capital investment and globalised consumer demand (e.g. Overton et al. 2012).

Also traditional wine regions with a high degree of locally embedded viticulture like South Tyrol are integrated into these global market dynamics. In order to be able to compete with emerging wine regions from the "New World" that are increasing their market share, long-lasting structures have to be profoundly transformed. In South Tyrol the 'quality problem' that viticulture faced became particularly evident in the 1980s with the poor reputation of the Kalterer See (Vernatsch grape which at that time occupied approximately two-third of South Tyrolean wine growing areas) being the most emblematic example. Today South Tyrol has a presence on the global wine market; wine tourism and cellar door sales play an important role and particularly in an Italian context South Tyrol has gained reputation as a quality white wine region. Against this background, in this paper we propose to answer two questions: 1) how did the South Tyrolean wine industry manage to re-invent the region and (re-) position it on a national, European and global wine market; 2) how did this re-positioning impact on agrarian structures and the network organisation in wine production. Empirical field work included mainly qualitative semi-structured interviews with leading actors in winegrower cooperatives, wine cellars and "free winemakers" as important connectors between local production and supra-regional trends in wine making, marketing and commercialisation. In addition, statistical data was analysed and completed with expert interviews in institutions with high relevance for viticulture within the region.

South Tyrol is an alpine region with intensive wine growing along the suitable slope and valley locations. Traditionally, very small family farm structures with an average of one hectare organised in local cooperatives that generally compounded neighbouring growers from the same municipality are characteristic for the practice of wine production. The foundation of some of these cooperatives dates back to the 19th century and many wine growing families have worked in the business for lots of generations, in many cases combining viticulture with fruit farming. Particularly in the New World countries, that have increased their market share in the last decades, the agrarian as well as the production structure are profoundly different. Globally operating wineries, much larger individual vineyard areas, and stronger focus on export are key features in many of these wine regions (see for example Gwynne 2006; Overton et al. 2012). Compared to these wine regions, the preconditions in what concerns agrarian structures and production environment in South Tyrol did not seem to favour a rapid re-orientation of the industry in relatively short periods.

Nevertheless, South Tyrol managed to (re)affirm its position as a wine region on a regional, national and global scale. DOC-Wine production plays a major role, the grape varieties changed and new sales markets have been accessed. At the same time, the importance of the regional market has been consolidated with approximately half of the wine produced in South Tyrol being sold within the region. Interestingly, while a profound transformation of the industry and new networks are clearly observable, the main characteristics

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Going global – re-inventing the local: the quality turn in wine production and regional restructuring in South Tyrol

of the agrarian structure such as the important role of cooperatives, family farming and local ownership of land did not change. The emergence of new philosophies of winemaking is influenced by international experiences of specific innovative actors from region, that know the particularities of South Tyrolean wine making since their childhood but have spend much time abroad travelling, studying and working in other wine regions. Preliminary results suggest that these actors have played a key role in the wine regions' restructuring process.

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Notes:

Abstract

Is rural poverty something special? A case study in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

Poverty is often regarded as a phenomenon that concerns societies of the global south, Asia or Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. In western industrialised countries poverty more often is conceived of as a social problem that is mainly restricted to cities or urban areas and not so much widespread in rural areas. Especially, in the German discourse poverty in rural areas is regarded as a historical phenomenon that worsened in the 19th and early 20th century as a result of modernisation and industrialisation processes and led to migration into the cities and abroad. Yet, with the golden age of welfare capitalism a new equilibrium between the agricultural and the industrial sector seemed to be reached and the rural areas stabilized. Accordingly, government reports show that poverty is much more widespread in urban than in rural areas of Germany.

Nevertheless, there are persons who live below the poverty line of 60 per cent of the median income in rural areas and there are regions in Germany where poverty rates are relatively high in urban as well as rural areas. This leads us to the question whether the consequences of being poor are the same in a city and a small village or if there are differences that can be traced to the special living conditions, different infrastructures and socio-cultural contexts in the respective spatial settings.

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In our explorative case study we look at Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV), a federal state in the north-east of Germany, which is sparsely populated and has large rural and agricultural areas. MV was severely hit by the economic crisis that came after the fall of the Berlin Wall. MV also underwent an enormous demographic change within the last 30 years: it was one of the regions in Eastern and Western Germany with the youngest and a growing population, but today this reversed and its population is shrinking and MV turned out to be one of the states with the highest share of elderly people. Fertility rates in MV were declining since 1990 and especially in the rural areas there is a selective migration of young and qualified persons, especially women, towards Rostock, the biggest city of the state, or to other regions in Germany. MV is also one of the federal states in Germany with the highest poverty rates: 21.7 per cent of the total population had less than 60 per cent of the median income of the respective comparison group in 2015. In Bavaria, also a federal state with a large rural population, the rate was only 11.6 per cent. Looking more closely at the regional level in MV, we can see that the poverty rate in the city of Rostock and the surrounding region is 19.4 per cent, while e.g. in the peripheral rural region of Vorpommern it is 24.4 per cent.

Our research aims at comparing the specific situation of poor people in the rural areas of MV with those living in the city of Rostock and we ask how different spatial contexts are enabling or restricting opportunities for individual agency and coping with poverty. Arguing from a social network perspective which holds that individual agency is embedded in structures of social relations we put a special focus on social support by family, friends, acquaintances as well as welfare and other institutions.

In order to understand individuals' logic of actions and the ways how socio-spatial contexts influence agency and coping we are mainly applying qualitative research methods which are giving priority to the participant's perspective and their reasoning. We are drawing on about 60 in-depth interviews with persons living below the poverty line in urban and rural areas of MV. The

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Is rural poverty something special? A case study in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

interviews followed a guideline which covered topics such as daily live, consumption, health, social contacts and social support. Embedded within the interview was a systematic, quantitative collection of data on the personal networks of our respondents with the software Vennmaker. This mixed-method approach allows us to analyse structures of social embeddedness and the stories that give meaning to those structures. The interviews lasted 60 to 240 minutes.

We analyse our data in a combination of coding procedures of the Grounded Theory for the qualitative interviews and by using quantitative methods of social network analysis for the personal networks of the respondents.

In our presentation we will explore how socio-spatial differences in infrastructures and living conditions in urban and rural areas contribute to differences in daily problems, coping strategies and the mechanisms of reproduction of poverty and we will also explore the role of personal social networks in the different settings, e.g. their capacity to provide support or processes of stigmatisation taking place in these networks.

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Abstract

Invisible population as powerful protagonists in rural areas? Local implications of US-soldiers in rural Germany

Since many decades, US military maintains training areas in Germany, which are mostly located in rural areas. Grafenwoehr in northern Bavaria, where currently up to 35 000 persons live partly inside the camp and partly in housing areas in the surroundings, is termed the largest training area outside the US. Due to specific legislations, foreign contending forces are not obliged to pursue the general notification requirement (§3, Streitkräfteaufenthaltsgesetz) and subsequently do not appear in any statistics. Accordingly, those temporary migrants can be addressed as invisible population. However, they have certain implications on local economy, the community life and politics.

Aiming at discussing implications of US soldiers on a rural small town, a case study was conducted in Grafenwoehr and its surroundings in 2016. Regarding official statistics (Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik 2015), the population of 6 534 persons is characterised as ageing and shrinking due to natural decrease, while migration balances are lightly positive (+51). In terms of categorisation, I firstly contend that US soldiers in Germany can be termed privileged in various realms.

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They are, for instance, equipped with certain rights, e.g. the right of free moving and have specific benefits in Germany, especially with regard to taxing (cf. Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014). Secondly, I draw parallels to investigations about other groups of temporarily limited presence, i.e., second home owners. Müller (2011) considers those people, who are mostly not grasped in any statistics as “invisible population” which stands out because of a high purchasing power and specific consumer behaviour. According to the local newspaper, it is expected that more than 500 million euro are spent in wages of civil servants, maintenance, rents and private consumption in the studied region yearly. On municipal level, however, infrastructures have to be provided without any allocation of funds (which is partly based on numerable population).

This paper intends to raise attention to local implications of invisible population and point out their role as actors of change. In particular, it is asked:

- How did the coexistence of local population and US soldiers developed in the small town of Grafenwoehr?
- What patterns of demand can be identified with regard to consumption expenditures, services and housing? What role does the temporary limitation of US soldier’s presence play?
- What institutionalised forms of coexistence were / are established (groups, associations) and what is their intention? What civil engagement do US soldiers pursue in local associations?

Due to the long-lasting presence of US soldiers in Grafenwoehr, local experiences with temporary migrants are valuable for capturing diverse implications. Therefore, expert interviews with representatives from various realms of society (e.g. local economy, politics and social affairs) and a mapping of manifestations of transnational lifeworlds at public places were conducted in Grafenwoehr. Moreover, biographical-narrative interviews with German long-time residents were undertaken in order to illustrate the development of interactions over a longer period of time.

Since data collection is still running, results cannot be presented in this abstract yet. The example of US soldiers in rural Bavaria shows that especially various stakeholders in rural areas with demographic and structural challenges consider these people as

Abstract – continued

Invisible population as powerful protagonists in rural areas? Local implications of US-soldiers in rural Germany

powerful, but also important actors, mostly in terms of economy and community life. However, only certain economies generate benefit, while others are excluded. Specific experiences of rural populations with US soldiers in community life are considered as valuable for other cases of temporary, international migrants, bearing in mind that temporary migration and resulting invisible population will increase in light of globalisation and increasing mobilities.

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Notes:

Abstract

Quality of life in rural areas in Germany: work-family balance as a component of quality of life

Empirical data on patterns of subjective well-being across space is mixed and inconclusive. There is a lack of nuanced measures to capture meaningful differences within areas classed as rural. And there is a long and undetermined debate about the definition or the conceptual foundation of well-being or quality of life (QoL) and how to operationalise QoL (Gilbert et al).

We use the capability approach (CA) as a conceptual framework. "The core claim of the CA-approach is that assessments of the well-being or quality of life of a person … should … primarily focus … on the effective opportunities that people have to lead the lives they have reason to value." (Robeyns). In a quantitative survey it is impossible to get the broad perception of a person about how he/she wants to live. Thus we concentrated on work-family-balance and especially on families with care responsibilities for children less than 13 years.

We address our CA-perception and how we specified the CA for our research. Following research questions related to the survey will be discussed:

- Comparison of the four different types of rural areas: are there unequal distributions concerning
- perceptions about work-family balance?
- capabilities to balance work and family?
- Which factors constrain the freedom of a person to live according his/her perception of work-family balance?

The four types of rural areas comprise 90 percent of the German territory and 50 percent of its population. Type 1: very rural, moderately good socio-economic conditions; Type 2: very rural, good socio-economic conditions; Type 3: fairly rural, good socio-economic conditions; Type 4: fairly rural, moderately good socio-economic conditions. The survey had been realised only in communities with less than 50 thousand inhabitants. It wasn't conducted in non-rural areas.

To get a further instrument for meaningful differences within rural areas we employed the self-assessment of the area around the main residence as rural or urbanised.

The perceptions of a good life concerning work-family balance is measured by gender-role attitudes and the place of socialisation – former German Democratic Republic (GDR) or Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)– because of the differentiations of gender ideologies: more conservative gender role attitudes in the FRG and more liberal attitudes in the GDR (Dirksmeier). The gender-role battery comprises 5 items which are also part of a bigger gender-role battery of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The interviewees are also asked for their external perception of their partner's position on these items.

In the survey we apply factors relating to work-family balance like hours of work – actual number and favoured –; specific conditions at the workplace like the possibility to have a short-term leave because of the sickness of a child; if an interviewee or his/her partner works part time or is not employed the interviewee is asked for the reasons why: e.g. because of the time needed for childcare or the lack of childcare services.

We also prove factors with a possible influence on the freedom of a person to live according his/her perception of work-family balance like the persons scope of the social network, its education and occupation, employment status, health status and income. As of October 2016, no results can be presented yet as the empirical research is still ongoing.

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Abstract

The relationship between the municipal authorities and the local community after the closure of a small primary school – some evidence from Austria

The closure of a local village school cuts deep into the social life of the local population: the interactions between the villagers around daily school life, the interactions between villagers and persons from outside who come to the school for teaching or to engage in other activities, the celebration of festivities in the course of the school year, the socialisation of the population in 'their' school – everything stops if the village school closes. In this respect it is quite understandable that communities very often react with anger and protest when the closure of the local school is at stake.

Comparatively little scientific research has been carried out on how community life is affected by the closure of a small school. This is primarily caused by the different designs and methods used in the investigations. While quantitative research often focuses on the long-term consequences of school closures, qualitative research studies concentrate on the immediate impact during or after the closure. The former reported hardly any effects, while the latter revealed e.g. the different resources parents used to deal with the situation, the decline of contacts between the community's inhabitants, but also, in some cases, the fostering of a stronger sense of community (for an overview see Kroismayr et al. 2016)

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Most studies focus on the local situation and very rarely is a broader perspective included. At least in Austria, school closures very often happened in villages which are part of a municipality. In conceptualising the connections between the local population and the municipal authorities, the theoretical framework of Marcel Mauss's concept of "system of total services" was applied, as elaborated in his famous book "The Gift". This enables us to focus on collectives, on exchanges as acts of politeness which implicate not only material but also immaterial objects, and on the obligatory nature of these exchanges.

Data on the number of school closures were gathered from the education departments of the different federal states in Austria. All in all, 194 municipalities were affected by school closures between 2001 and 2014. A sample of 30 municipalities was chosen, and interviews were conducted with the mayors there. The selection process was made by taking into account the circumstances surrounding the closures, such as the number of pupils attending the school at the time, the year of closure, the distance to the next school, the number of remaining schools in the community and also the size of community. The findings presented in this paper are based on qualitative interviews with 24 mayors who experienced the closure of a small village school (in the other six cases the last school of the municipality was closed).

This paper aims to investigate how the closure of a local village school affects the relationship between the local population and the municipal authorities.

The interviews revealed that during the closing process and afterwards, the municipal authorities and the local population were engaged in intensive and sometimes conflict-ridden negotiations. In this situation, the municipal authorities more or less tend to offer some compensation for the loss of the school. And in this context, the use of the former school building plays an important role and often, efforts were made to retain the school building's character as a community centre. Also, most interestingly, the possibility to continue celebrating certain events was often the subject of negotiations – events such as school or church festivities. One unintended 'side-effect' was also reported:

Abstract – continued

The relationship between the municipal authorities and the local community after the closure of a small primary school – some evidence from Austria

that the village children attending school with other children of the municipality can also trigger a stronger sense of community spirit.

The paper concludes with an evaluation of the benefits and shortcomings of the concept of “total services”, and where there is a need for an expanded interpretation of the concept.

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Abstract

Culture-led practices for renewal of society in rural areas of Latvia

Renewal of society is a pivotal point in Latvia due to depopulation, spatial polarisation and shrinking processes taking place during recent years. Rural and peripheral areas are marked by emptying, ageing and selective outmigration of young people. New appreciation for the role of local people has become one of the directions in development; it is seen as an untapped resource for creative innovative actions.

The impact of culture-led practices on the balanced territorial development has been studied in Latvia to a limited extension. The research of cultural environment as a potential for the renewal of society of Latvia is a novelty as a part of National Research Programme EKOSOC LV 5.2. (2014-2017).

Conceptual approach is based on researchers' findings that cultural development is an essential factor in the progress of territories/places. The advancement of culture-led direction, they create the conditions for more public involvement, initiative in economic activities and re-building of social and economic structures, which results in the renewal of society.

The study uses qualitative and quantitative research methods – semi-structured interviews (70) with representatives of local municipalities and rural NGOs, entrepreneurs, farmers, and survey (n = 480) of local people. Data was collected in 8 rural localities during 2015-2016. Study gives a deeper insight into culture-led development practices to contribute to a better living environment and sustainability in rural areas of Latvia.

The most typical culture-led practices are: 1) rural inhabitants are active as consumers and participants of cultural events in rural territories; 2) rural inhabitants are active participants in local amateur art groups, various leisure activities – dancing groups, choirs, theatre, crafts etc.; 3) characteristic strategy in rural territories of Latvia is using local culture as product in order to attract tourists and create place branding.

The results of research also show diverse culture-led activities in the studied territories – cleaning of the area, preservation of natural and cultural heritage and promotion of new economic activities by creating new products, using natural resources, creating new tourism services, new fests or rebuilding the previous ones etc. The culture-led practices vary from one person's activities to collective practices.

In spite of insufficient state support for rural territories, rural inhabitants have developed their own ways of renewal of society – small business niches, informal exchange of goods and services, economic and social innovations. These activities are one of ways of surviving for rural population and contain certain potential for economic development of local rural territories. Current culture-led practices are quite new and fragile and could be recognised and appreciated by decision makers of different levels. It has special significance for the areas where economic activities have diminished

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Abstract

Decision making processes in rural regeneration partnerships: participation and influences of new and weak actors

Rural regeneration partnerships have been spread all over Europe as a bottom-up approach. The LEADER initiative is a well-known example (Pollermann, Raue, Schnaut 2014). Such partnerships have been introduced with the aim to integrate different sectors, include ideas and commitment of citizens and actors from the third sector, use additional resources from private economy as well as provoke innovations by combining capabilities from different societal spheres and impulses of new actors involved. However, empirical evidence show that for instance LEADER is elitist, involves actors already engaged, is dominated by public actors, and thus reproduces existing policies (Etzioni-Halevy 2003; Falkowski 2013; Thuesen 2010). Theoretical explanations for this out-come built on micro-politics and resource theory (McAreavey 2009). Time, knowledge, networks, institutional power, and finances are needed to participate. In addition, communicative and power structures are used to exclude or marginalise new and weak actors in decision making processes.

Geographical distance has however not got much attention yet as a causal factor. The relevance of this issue has increased particularly in Germany because many rural districts were merged and rural partnerships often work on district level. As a hypothesis, we suggest that the smaller the spatial scale of the partnership, the more likely new actors from private economy as well as weak actors from third sector and citizens are involved. We argue on the one hand that resources needed to attend to board meetings decreases the smaller the size of the respective region, and therefore the distance to cover is lower, and weak actors tend to have at least local network re-sources too. On the other hand, the commitment for the region increases if the citizens are immediately affected which is more likely if issues dealt with are closer to ones-own home. As a consequence, the more new and weak actors are involved and have a real influence on decision-making, the more likely innovative policies and solutions are developed.

Against this background, our research questions are:

- How different types of actors do participate in rural development boards and what influence do they have?
- How resource base, micro-politics and geographical space do affect the participation and influence of these actors?
- How different participation and power constellation do affect policy outputs in terms of innovation, regional adaptation, resource efficiency, and achievements of regional objectives?

To answer our research questions, we rely on empirical evidence from 13 rural regeneration partnerships in Germany. The 13 partnerships take part in a pilot programme the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture has initiated in 2014. This programme “Rural up-turn” Land(auf)Schwung) aims at fostering innovative strategies for rural areas affected by demographic and economic shrinkage. The ministry therefore prompted the partnerships to involve new actors from civil society and private entrepreneurs. We researched these partnerships using documentary analysis of bidding documents and further regional strategy documents, open non-participatory observations in board meetings, and group interviews with key actors. Furthermore, a survey with a standardised questionnaire is planned to analyse the resource base and professional background of board members. Finally, we will interview selected members of the decision-making boards in the largest and smallest

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Decision making processes in rural regeneration partnerships: participation and influences of new and weak actors

regions in order to investigate the motives for participation, their perception of their influence on decisions and constraints to their participation and influence.

Preliminary results indicate that many partnerships in the pilot programme use existing decision-making bodies for rural development such as Local Action Groups from LEADER. Therefore, most members are not newly activated but had already been engaged with rural development before. Moreover, the majority of board members attend the meeting in their working time, because they are professionals. New actors were not appointed for the committees because they are often regarded as less trustworthy and experienced. As a result, the partnerships' strategies are mostly less innovative. By now, we cannot confirm the hypothesis that the spatial size of the respective region matters. Nevertheless our first findings suggest that rurality affects civic engagement. Volunteers in rural areas often serve in multiple functions, so that additional tasks like being a board member may overcharge volunteers and restrain them from participating. This is particularly the case for parents with small children or employees with long commuting distances or flexible working times.

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Abstract

Delimitation and typology of rural areas in Germany

Since at least the 1980s, attempts to delimitate rural areas has been criticised because of the enormous heterogeneity within these areas and missing distinctions from urban areas (Hoggart 1990). As constructivist approaches have become dominant in rural geography, delimiting rural areas seems outdated because rurality refers only to what is discursively constructed and definitions differ between groups of the population and political actors. If rural areas are to analyse with data from official statistics or a certain policy is to address these areas, a delimitation based on administrative borders is however needed. Beyond scientific discourses about rural areas and the rural, many definitions therefore exist in different countries, as well as from the EU and OECD. Those delimitations and classifications often rely on few indicators and rather arbitrary thresholds.

Against this background, we address the following research questions:

- How rural areas in Germany can be delimitated and typologised?
- How does our methodology differ from other existing approaches?
- What is the analytical significance of our delimitation and typology?

In order to answer our research question, we survey existing methodological approaches and review the literature on rurality on the one hand, and on socio-economic classifications on the other. From this review, we derive indicators for two dimensions for our classification: rurality and socio-economic condition. Using principal component analysis (PCA), we built two indices on the county level in order to delimit rural areas and classify them in four types by means of the two dimensions. Then, the variance of the indicators is calculated for all types to check whether the typology reduces the variance within the data. Finally, we use one way independent ANOVA or the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis-test to demonstrate that our typology contributes significantly to the explanation of diverse social and economic structures and processes.

Our definition of rurality relies on a continuum model from peripheral, sparsely populated rural areas to highly dense metropolitan centres. The rural involves low density of settlements, an open built environment, a landscape dominated by agriculture and forestry, few inhabitants in the catchment areas and a long distance to large centres. The second dimension (socio-economic conditions) is built on literature about territorial inequalities, deprivation, and quality of life. Here, we distill the fields income, employment, health, housing and education as particularly important.

We built an index for rurality which explains more than 80 % of the initial variance of the five underlying indicators. Searching for breaks in the distribution, we are able to identify 306 from the German 402 counties as rural. Here, we can differentiate further in rather rural and very rural areas. The second dimension is operationalised with nine indicators, of which the resulting index explains more than 60 % of the initial variance. This dimension separates rural counties with good socio-economic conditions from those with less good conditions.

Our typology consists of four rural types apart from the non-rural type. Thus, our approach considers the heterogeneity of rural areas more sophisticated than simple urban-rural dichotomies or one-dimensional approaches. We are able to include different indicators

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Delimitation and typology of rural areas in Germany

without weighting problems, because the indices are built on the communalities of these indicators. Furthermore, PCA allows for using causally interrelated indicators without counting them twice (Eckey et al. 2009). Finally, using breaks in the distribution leads to more reasonable thresholds for classification than for instance 150 inhabitants per square kilometer.

In respect to the input variables, the typology almost always leads to lower variances in the four rural types compared to the overall variance (53 out of 56 comparisons) as well as to the variance in the rural areas (48 out of 56 comparisons). Moreover, the indices of both dimensions correlate only on a very low level (tau = 0.163, $p < 0.001$) confirming our assumption that rurality does not mean per se socio-economic problems. To conclude, we argue, that rurality is not connected to nature which contradicts the image of rural idyll and what Somerville et al. (2013) have recently suggested. The share of (semi-)natural areas correlates at best low with rurality whereas the share of areas for recreation even correlates strongly negative with rurality.

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Abstract

Highly-skilled migrants in peripheral areas: a potential for small and medium-sized enterprises?

International labour migration represents a major potential for rural areas within Europe facing negative natural population growth and massive outmigration of native population. Demographically, international migration flows might contribute to population increase and economically, international workers could compensate an ageing workforce and plug labour shortages.

International migration to rural areas has become only recently a common topic on the research agenda. Hugo and Morén-Alegret (2008) pointed out that researchers and policy makers should focus attention on the settlement of immigrants in non-metropolitan areas not only because of its increasing scale. Furthermore, international migration to peripheral areas in high-income nations brings a new dynamic against decline and depopulation, it is a neglected dimension of the counterurbanisation phenomenon, and migrants to rural areas are experiencing substantially different settlement and integration processes from the migrants settling in large urban areas.

So far, research on international labour migration to rural areas in Europe has focused on settlement experience and integration processes for immigrants into small towns and rural areas. Special emphasis has been placed on migrants´ integration in "traditional" rural economic activities such as agriculture or forestry (e.g. Fonseca 2008, Kasimis et al. 2010, Rogaly 2008), on the migrants´ satisfaction concerning the working situation in the region (e.g. Nienaber and Fyrs 2012), and on the linkages between working situation and willingness to stay in the rural area of immigration (e.g. Nadler 2012). Hedberger et al. (2012), in their analysis of international migration in rural Swedish labour markets, focused on the possible dynamics that migrants bring to rural areas. International migrants act as "transnational agents", by carrying with them transnational networks they create new opportunities for rural areas, which are able to increase their international contacts through these networks. They contribute to the global up-scaling of rural space (Hedberger et al. 2012).

This project aims at investigating the underexamined potential gains that peripheral regions might obtain from migration flows. We focus explicitly on highly-skilled migrants, which represent a basic resource for the exchange of knowledge and skills. These international workers in focus of our study are employees of small and medium-sized enterprises located in peripheral areas. The overall research question which focuses on the translocal advantages of international labour migrants on rural labour markets, is specified into three different aspects:

- What are the changes being brought in the demographic structure of rural areas by the flow of international migrants, and what are their implications?
- What internal dynamics, do international migrants create within the firm? Does cultural diversity increase economic performance, e.g. productivity and innovation?
- What external dynamics, do international migrants create for the firm? Does the firm gain e.g. transnational contacts?

Object of our investigation is the region Thuringia in Eastern Germany, where according to forecasts the demographic change in the next two decades will lead to a skill shortage with important medium- and long-term challenges. The forecasted labour shortage

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Highly-skilled migrants in peripheral areas: a potential for small and medium-sized enterprises?

should concern also some of the top Thuringian fields, i.e. optics, optoelectronics, automotive, mechanical engineering and life science, which are particularly characterised by the need for highly-skilled labour. Up to now, policies have very often focused on activating endogenous potentials while largely neglecting exogenous potentials, in particular highly-skilled international workers. Our dataset contains a sample of 1 000 standardised interviews with Thuringian Small and medium-sized enterprises on their experiences with international workers.

This study is conducted within the project "HiTh – Highly-skilled. International. Thuringia." founded by the European Social Fund and pursues a twofold aim. One the one hand, the lack of research on international high-skilled migrants in rural areas seriously hampers the positive effects that immigration can have on rural areas. On the other hand, the insights gained in the Thuringian situation should enable a targeted adaptation of the policy-measures to improve the receptivity Thuringian firms to take on and commit themselves to highly-skilled migrants.

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Abstract

Social innovation in LEADER approach in Puglia (Italy) and Andalusia (Spain) in 2007 – 2013 cycle programming

Social innovation is a key factor in the LEADER approach but in the last programming period and currently, it hasn´t been adequately considered, being rural development policy in decline. In this approach, innovation is seen in social and cultural terms rather than as a technological issue. But a general difficulty on the part of LAGs emerges, in which innovation is too complex to implement and usually reduced to banal business-as-usual techniques.

For Moulaert (2009) factors of social innovation are the organisation of groups and communities, the building of communication channels between privileged and disfavoured inhabitants, the creation of a people´s democracy at the local level, and the creation of "bottom-up" institutions for participation and decision-making. On the other hand, Bock (2016) argues that social innovation may help to fight rural marginalisation. Others authors as Neumeier (2012) note that although often innovation is recognised as a key element of the 2007 – 2013 programming cycle and of the next one, it is little discussed at the local level. And finally, and taking into consideration our investigation about LEADER implementation, Dargan and Shucksmith (2008), argued that in the practical experience of LEADER, innovation is more understood in terms of social innovation (encouraging local linkages and collective learning cultures). But, these authors detected too several problems in this approach to create innovation: bureaucratic inefficiencies, delayed payments, poor participation, lack of trust in collective action and top-down controls over LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs).

How is innovation defined in the LEADER approach? How is it implemented at the local level? How innovation is understood by LAGs and their practices, especially considering their projects during 2007-2013 cycle programming?

The study, starting from an analysis of the literature about innovation, aims primarily to understand its interpretation and implementation at the local level through the projects by the LAGs in the 2007 – 2013 programming cycle. The different meanings of this concept made by different authors have been put in front of the implementation of social innovation in projects implemented by the LAGs of Puglia (Italy) and Andalusia (Spain). Promoters of innovative projects were directly involved by using a questionnaire. In this, analysis focused on the qualitative study: initial ideas, actors involved, strengths, weakness, difficulties, critical issues unsolved, impacts and learning lessons.

In the analysis, just a few readings of social innovation, improving the human ("professional training") and social capital (partnerships, collaborative and participative projects, several beneficiaries in one project, new types of beneficiaries), or the cooperation among territories, have been found. Most of them, showed a low sophistication and a high individualism (isolated entrepreneurs), and were mainly "classical" innovations in the sense of product, process or technical. Promoters note the high importance of the LAGs in social innovation. In the case of public projects, promoters were accompanied for several institutions (local and regional governments, …) creating a network of actors. But private projects, the absence of private stakeholders and public support is very important. Even they noted the high number of obstacles, inconveniences and regulations imposed by the various administrations.

In the presence of innovative projects in rural development, LAGs play an important role. But, although

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Social innovation in LEADER approach in Puglia (Italy) and Andalusia (Spain) in 2007 – 2013 cycle programming

of it, predominant interpretations of innovation were referred to "something new to the area", so an "easy" level of innovation. One of the causes could be that the regional governments have become a barrier to innovation (excessive bureaucracy). Definitely, a better promotion of innovative cooperation projects is needed, highlighting the benefits of social innovation, exchanges of experiences in these rural areas, ways of rewarding innovation, more flexibility in Regional Rural Development Programmes, and finally, even, recover the original philosophy of LEADER.

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Notes:

Abstract

An axiological exploration of farmland from focus groups in Western France

In Western Europe, the countryside faces urbanisation under three modalities: spatial artificialization by growing urban developments, urbanisation of people through back-to-the-land and exurbanisation movements, and moreover urbanisation of minds because of a century of the hegemony of urban values in the media, at school and in the cultural production. Nevertheless, the countryside and specifically agriculture remain in some ways difficult to understand for city-dwellers and more generally for urban-minded people. This paper, exploring what makes the values of farmed land for both farmers and non-farmers, aims to balance the urban axiology and the rural axiology that are performing the contemporary countryside.

Our research, arguing that "town and the country" has been of huge concern for European rural geographies, points out a gap in the widespread conception of the "urban". Our perspective is not to oppose the rural (and therefore the farming industry, land and people) and the urban as two different worlds but to investigate the hybridation of values that people assign to the agricultural land. Obviously, an axiology of farmland cannot be established out of people's experience, on one hand because we don't study land values as part of a cultural background but as levers enabling stakeholders to act, and on the other hand because practices are giving us a large part of empirical valuation evidence.

The research question has been to know what, in both social and cultural perspectives, was giving a value to agricultural land for different local stakeholders in Western France.

To investigate an axiological hybridation between urban and rural, investigated places have been chosen that are not definitely urban part, as could have been green belts or periurban areas, nor remote rural areas. We selected three areas defined as "rural in transition" by French planning agency (DATAR). That are rural areas that were recently impacted by urban concerns, one in Poitou-Charentes under urban sprawl, one in Britanny after the opening of a motorway shortening the distance to the regional capital, the last in Normandy between costal attractiveness and the periurbanisation of a 10 000 inhabitants town. On each area, 4 to 5 double session focus groups were organised, involving 5 to 6 people each in semi-structured collective interviews: male farmers, farm-women, landowners, local councilors, other inhabitants. The paper proposes an in-depth investigation of the contents in the 51 hours of transcribed verbatim.

The experiences and the representations of agricultural land, landscapes, work and functions, as they can be extracted from the 13 focus groups, have been organised around six main topics: nature, food, landscape, sociability, work and property (including private vs public space). On each topic, axiological anchors and trends are pointed out and associated to some of the following criteria of differentiation: the 3 study areas; the 12 focus groups; the 58 surveyed people; the 8 explicit questions we asked about agricultural land; the "discussion rounds" (that is an uninterrupted exchange between participants of a group).

That analytical process enables us to show that even if stakeholders have to disagree about other's attitudes, some consensus appears supporting respect due to nature, to farmers work and to private property. Urban and rural values differ much more on landscape design, on access-to-the-land-ownership processes

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An axiological exploration of farmland from focus groups in Western France

and on some agricultural (spread of chemicals) or rural (hunting) practices. Two topics are constructed both as strong arguments for valuation of farming and as factors of uncertainty in the local community: food supply and local sociability.

Investigating what makes farmland value for different kind of people living in the changing countryside is a challenge we took up by focus groups. The participants give evidence of a wide range of uses and of representations according to the six main topics. We can conclude that agricultural land nowadays became both a high-valuated shared space and a disputed issue between urban and rural definitions of what it should be. Some topics offer good opportunities for trade-off but some others are lightening the gaps exiting between men and women, farmers and non-farmers, citizens and councillors, inhabitants and landowners.

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Abstract

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as an EU instrument to promote cooperation in rural cross-border areas

In Europe rural development comprises a wide variety of different areas with unique characteristics and a unique territorial capital, which consists of intangible and tangible assets (TA 2020 2011). Cooperation is an important cornerstone to identify common challenges and opportunities, develop and implement corresponding strategies and approaches. It can take place within a single rural area (intra-regional), between rural areas in a single Member State (inter-regional), or between rural areas from different Member States (cross-border) (ENRD 2010).

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is a legal instrument that aims to facilitate and promote territorial cooperation across national borders between bodies governed by public law. Although it does not focus on rural areas in particular but on territorial cooperation per se, many public bodies in border areas make use of the instrument to address and foster rural development (Zillmer et al. 2015). The EGTC instrument has an own legal personality and, hence, allows its members to act together in the name of one organisation. Depending on its implementation, the EGTC instrument can create several advantages, such as a joint integrated and strategic policy framework, sustainable and visible structures, continuity of activities, binding decisions and long-term commitment, more efficient use of public money and easier access to EU programmes as single beneficiary (Zillmer and Lüer 2016; Janssen 2012).

Against this background, the paper aims to illustrate different examples highlighting how the EGTC instrument is used to address rural development in Europe. The large majority of the 64 EGTCs established until September 2016 includes (at least partly) predominantly rural areas. A comparison of three EGTCs focusing primarily on rural development shows the diversity of potential uses:

- provision of services of general interest by the Hospital de la Cerdanya in the Pyrenees
- preservation of the natural and cultural heritage in the French-Italian European Alpine-Maritime nature park
- promotion of cohesion in the European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino.

The comparison of these EGTCs does not only include the variety of thematic perspectives covered by these institutions but focuses on a critical reflection of the different governance structures applied. The examples highlight how the EGTC instrument can bring together public bodies from different territorial levels and sectors. It is therefore a suitable instrument to promote a cross-cutting and multi-level governance approach and supports public bodies to institutionalise and consolidate their cooperation beyond national borders. It can lead to new ways of conceiving, developing and implementing policies for and in rural areas and can thus support the establishment of a “new rural paradigm” (OECD 2006).

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Abstract

Can civic engagement effectively support social inclusion? A spatially explicit model

In the last decade, perceived inefficiency in public administration and increasing problems with social system financing have increased efforts to encourage and support civic engagement and voluntary activity. Social wellbeing and inclusion of all but specifically of resource deprived citizens is expected to rise with a rising level of civic engagement that in this general perspective includes altruistic social and self-help activities as well as leisure-time oriented activities.

Nevertheless, payed work and sufficient income is of fundamental importance for social inclusion in modern western societies and is not easily compensated for (Promberger, 2008). It has been observed that specifically the jobless show a lower degree of civic engagement than economically better integrated people and that the degree of civic organisation is lower in regions with low income (Franzen and Botzen, 2011). The paper takes this as a motivation for the question where and under what circumstances civic engagement can be expected to effectively support social inclusion.

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In order to address this question from a theoretical perspective, a spatially explicit model with endogenous agglomeration and neighbourhood effects (Durlauf, 2004) is formulated that describes agents' civic engagement as rational decision that competes with income generating professional activities for human resources. From the model, hypotheses are derived that can be tested empirically with aggregated data.

In our model, human capital endowment or skill level X_i is for now an exogenously determined characteristic associated with individual i, while ε_i in our model captures agents' random preference for job-related activities; the preference for non-job activities then is $1- \varepsilon_i$. Agents' decision concerning job related activities depends on their human capital endowment and possibly on ε_i, but also on their neighbours' job related activities. Agents with high skill levels have the option to choose high-productivity jobs in the business service sector, Agents with medium skill level may choose medium-income jobs in production, and unskilled agents only have the option to become employed in the low-productivity household service sector. High-productivity workers and workers from simple production tend to co-locate due to localisation effects, while household related services co-locate with high-productivity workers due to urbanisation or income effects.

Non-job engagement depends on under-utilisation of human resources in professional activities; the analysis contrasts and compares differences in non-job preferences or in agents' spatial mobility as possible reasons. In the model, individuals make decisions $\overline{\omega_{-i}}$ concerning their engagement in non-job activities, which is influenced by their preferences and their skill endowment, but also by locally available household services, by neighbours' jobs and mean decision concerning non-job activities ω_{-i} This neighbourhood effect can be explained by the demand for similar preferences in non-cooperative coordination for civic engagement and by initial set-up costs of civic organisations.

The model's results depend on the assumptions. If preferences drive agents' decisions, agents with preferences for non-job activities tend to co-locate independently from their skill level. Social inclusion of low-skill agents with non-job preferences could be supported effectively while their economic integration might be hampered by their preference induced immobility. If mobility drives agents' decisions in the first place, no sorting according to non-job activity

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Can civic engagement effectively support social inclusion? A spatially explicit model

preferences occurs: The job-related urbanisation and localisation effects are higher, but neighbourhood effects supporting civic engagement are lower, while at the same time agents' immobility creates under-utilisation of skills. Whether unemployed low-skill agents' social inclusion is effectively served by civic engagement in the peripheries then depends on the relationship between skill level and mobility. These findings from the model will be operationalised and tested empirically.

According to the results, civic engagement cannot generally be expected to serve social integration effectively. Specifically in the centres, where social segregation is high, civic engagement does not develop spontaneously. In the peripheries it initially depends on the human capital endowment and mobility of people. Once civic engagement has been initialised, it has the potential to also reach economically disintegrated people with low human capital endowment.

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Notes:

Abstract

From co-production to co-discipline: emergent agri-environmental governance in the Republic of Ireland

Analyses of the political processes that surround resource governance have generated a significant body of scholarship. Much of this literature has drawn upon theories of Governmentality to make assertions on how the circulation of certain knowledges works to buttress resource governance regimes. However, recent critiques have drawn attention to a tendency to ignore the role of citizens in reifying the authority of those same knowledges (e.g. Forsyth & Walker, 2014).

This paper contributes to these endeavours by examining the evolution of agri-environmental schemes in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) through a lens of co-production. These schemes are implemented as part of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which provides remuneration to farmers through an array of programmes that are devised and implemented at national level. Agri-environment schemes provide payments for implementing environmentally beneficial or benign farming practices. However, the Green Low Carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) – the most recent version of the scheme in the ROI – has ignited heated political debate and large-scale farmer mobilisation. The ways in which collectively owned and environmentally valuable upland areas, known as commonage, are being dealt with through GLAS have been particularly contentious. The argument that the introduction of an official collective responsibility element will restrict access to GLAS for this already-marginalised group of farmers has been at the epicentre of these contentions. This is in spite of the remit of GLAS to support the farming livelihoods, rural economy, and the public environmental goods that are interwoven with these spaces.

This paper examines the knowledges and policy processes that introduce this collective element to GLAS as a means of organising commonage spaces. This involves a targeted analysis of government policy documents and reports; interdepartmental exchanges; parliamentary testimonies; and media reports of political mobilisation relating to commonage management. This analysis provides a basis for conceiving of GLAS as a tool that aims to assimilate commonage spaces into a pan-European governance regime that is increasingly aligned with the logics of global trade agreements. However, this conception is enhanced by responding to calls from the governmentality of resources literature to refocus on how authoritative knowledge is made, and how the process of political dialogue legitimates that knowledge, while excluding alternatives. Co-production offers a conceptual framing by focusing on the hidden alliances, contributions, and productive capacity of a multitude of actors both within and outside official state institutions. Accordingly, this paper illustrates how the political process of devising the collectivised element of GLAS opens a space in which particular knowledges become prominent and alliances are formed and recalibrated between farmers, agricultural consultants, and government officials.

This paper makes novel assertions however, in highlighting how this process gives rise to co-disciplinary practices whereby these actors appropriate policy frameworks and multi-layered governance structures of the European Union. Drawing on Walker (quoted in Forsyth & Walker, 2014, p. 410), we may observe that through these practices sources of power are folded into "relationships of productive exchange". In this way, commonage spaces are abstracted in one sense into transnational discourses of environmental conservation and globalised agricultural trade. However, the political efforts of localised actors, such as farmers, also attempt to represent agricultural spaces in

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Abstract – continued

From co-production to co-discipline: emergent agri-environmental governance in the Republic of Ireland

ways that render them valuable to those same transnational discourses. While these actors participate in the project of rule, they do so in ways that cannot be easily construed as simply resistance or compliance. Rather, there is a dynamic set of relationships in which multiple sets of actors are attempting to steer the policy process through particular strategies and particular knowledge claims. The paper concludes that this process leads, in this case, to a regime that positions certain expert actors to collate and produce new knowledges and representations about commonage spaces in ways that nonetheless work towards the overarching policy goals of the CAP, thus further legitimating the governing logics of the CAP. However, this process opens a space where government and non-government actors engage in strategic knowledge alliances and, in some cases, strategic disciplinary practices by appropriating elements of the governance structure in which they operate.

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Abstract

Demographic change in the Wadden Sea Region – situation analysis, stakeholder involvement and development strategies in tourism municipalities

The four Wadden Sea municipalities, which cooperate in a new project, are on the one hand, tourist hotspots and on the other hand, they are located at the fringe of the national park, biosphere reserve and UNESCO World Heritage "Wadden Sea" and are protected for their unique natural beauty. But there are additional challenges, which the municipalities have to face. Evident in the tourism municipalities is the problem of ensuring the supply of skilled workers, which is particularly intensified on the islands by the housing shortage. In addition, an increasing number of holiday apartments is bought by individuals as secondary homes and are not available on the real estate market. This "sale" of the islands has immediate negative economic consequences, but also changes massively and lastingly the social structures of the municipalities. Securing public services and welfare and the sustainable protection of infrastructure is particularly challenging under the extremely time-varying utilisation. With more than 5.3 Million overnight stays, the German East Frisian North Sea coast is the main tourist destination of Lower Saxony. However when the holiday season is over the number of local population is low and will presumably even decline in future. These challenges (e.g. Grabski-Kieron et al., 2016) need holistic, new and innovative approaches and solutions, and a sound analysis of the current state of the art.

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The complex situation in these tourism municipalities is described in the literature with the term "wicked problems"; These are problems for which there is often little common problem understanding among the involved actors and often these actors pursue their own interests, and thus also there is often no clarity as to how such problems can be effectively addressed (Levin et al., 2012). The project therefore used different conceptual approaches: on the one hand, a 3-layer-approach, focusing on the islands, then on the mainland municipalities and then trying to apply results to other tourism municipalities, on the other hand, focusing on new participation, involvement and governance approaches using the promising Living Lab approach.

This paper shows preliminary results of a new project financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through a funding measure called "Kommunen innovativ". Central research questions at this stage are:

- How is the study area affected by demographic change?
- How is tourism changing in times of demographic change?
- What are the common strategies for the coming years?
- How can citizens and relevant stakeholders be involved in long-term participatory procedures in such complex problems? How has an appropriate solution instrument to be designed?

Several methods have been and will be used in the project such as data analysis of demographic and tourism data, stakeholder analysis, analysis of programmes, activities, initiatives, and expert interviews. However, the main methodological approach, which will be used in the course of the project, is the Living Lab approach (Schäfer & Scheele, 2014).

The municipalities are affected differently by demographic change. According to the current projections, the city of Norden will be able to largely keep its population by 2030, while the municipality of Wangerland will be declining. Juist with about 1 600 inhabitants

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Demographic change in the Wadden Sea Region – situation analysis, stakeholder involvement and development strategies in tourism municipalities

and Spiekeroog with fewer than 800, are among the very small municipalities. All municipalities must maintain and finance a comprehensive infrastructure for a limited period of the year, which is hardly used in the pre- and post-season. The involvement of different actors and the generation of innovative ideas and approaches to deal with these problems are crucial for the future development of the communities and the region at large.

To involve affected people and knowledge holders through different means such as information and communication technology offer new possibilities. The Living Lab methodology can enable the engagement of the people concerned and connect science and practice, and thus provide the ability to strengthen the governance of and in the area; this will be tested in the continuing project.

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Abstract

On the doorstep. Refugee experiences of solidarity in the rural region South Westphalia, Germany

This article deals with the question how refugees living in the rural region South Westphalia have experienced the support of volunteers, on the one hand, and of institutional help, on the other. This question will be answered on the basis of semi-structured interviews with 20 refugees. As regards the theoretical perspective of this research, solidarity has been conceptualised as a microlevel phenomena, that means as „prosocial behaviour“ that comprises „helping and supporting in situations of need, doing one´s share in situations of cooperation“ or „fairness in situations of distributions goods“ (Laitinen and Pessi 2015:4). Bierhoff (2002:9) defines prosocial behaviour as an action that is „intended to improve the situation of the help-recipient, the actor is not motivated by the fulfilment of professional obligations, and the recipient is a person not an organisation“. However, from the perspective of the recipient, it is not always clear what the intentions and motivations of the helper are. Here, the intention of the research is not clarifying the reasoning of the helpers, but to discover the varied aspects of which the experience of solidarity consists.

Firstly, this paper asserts, that refugees are not only passive recipients of support but wish to give ´something back´ or, at least, feel the need to stand their own living costs as soon as possible.

Secondly, in German rural areas, the percentage of people who work as volunteers is higher than in the big cities (Simonson et.al. 2016). Moreover, personality of local figures is crucial for the change of informal strategies within the rural communities (Micksch & Schwier 2000, Hanhörster & Weck 2011). The article discusses the hypothesis that the experience of solidarity in rural regions is closely related to the cooperation between the local government and the scope and kind of voluntary work (Bayertz 1999, Baumgart and Uttke 2005, Alisch and May 2011).

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Abstract

The integration of refugees: a chance for rural areas? Case studies in Germany

After 2010, and particularly in 2015, Germany saw an increased inflow of refugees from different countries particularly from the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Northern Africa. Not only the metropolises and cities were facing enormous challenges with regard to housing and fulfilling the basic needs of the newcomers, but also many rural areas and smaller towns. About one year later and due to the decrease in numbers of newly arriving refugees the most pressing issue of housing has passed and now in many regions the process for local integration has begun. A new feature about refugee integration in the German discussion by politicians, scientists and practitioners is the explicit spatial dimension which emphasises the potential of integration abilities of peripheral and rural areas (e.g. empirica 2015): According to these arguments, empty residential buildings, vacancies in nursery schools and schools, easier contact with the local residents, labour demand, e.g., would present a win-win situation for both shrinking regions and for the refugees settled there. Following this argumentation to bring increasing numbers of refugees into rural regions, one tends to overlook the heterogeneity, and thus the diverse realities, of the rural areas, as well as the complex starting situation and the integration needs of the refugees.

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Against this background, the research and PhD project "Integration of refugees in rural areas" explicitly addresses the differences, and thus the heterogeneous integration potentials of rural areas. With regard to the German situation, a huge research gap is to be addressed, as earlier investigations were mostly limited to migration in the (large) cities (with the exception of the studies of the Schader Stiftung, 2011 and 2014). The qualitative research project focuses on integration potentials of different rural districts. Building on the monitoring of rural areas recently established by the Thünen Institute, in which all districts in Germany are classified with regard to rurality, on the one hand, and their socio-economic situation, on the other, the research project focuses on very diverse exemplary regions varying in terms of rurality and their socio-economic situation. In the project five German rural districts will be analysed with regard to their integration potentials as well as integration activities of the administration, politics and practitioners. To show the diverse approach of refugee integration on the regional level two different local administrations in each district will be analysed in more detail. Methodologically, the research is mainly based upon semi-structured interviews with public authorities, representatives of important associations and churches, welfare associations, migrant organisations, social workers and volunteers.

From late 2015 onwards, the Thünen Institute already carried out a pilot study upon which the current research will build on. The – still ongoing – pilot study in Wolfenbüttel (Lower Saxony) explores a district which can be considered as average with regard to the dimensions of its rurality and socio-economic situation. In addition to the district administration level, all seven, quite heterogeneous, municipalities in the district were analysed in terms of their integration potentials and their activities to date. Based on an indicator-supported analysis of the integration potential, relevant actors of the administrations (district and municipalities), welfare associations and volunteers were interviewed. Additionally, refugees who are accommodated in the research areas will be asked to talk about their perspective to the chances of remaining. In the study, which will be completed shortly, a heterogeneous picture of the possibilities of local and

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The integration of refugees: a chance for rural areas? Case studies in Germany

regional integration policy or rather integration potential becomes obvious. Within the federal spectrum the tasks of the municipalities range between mandatory obligations, own legal obligations and voluntary activities, and there is a great variety to be seen in housing and in linking refugee integration with a local integration policy. The reasons for this are manifold: they can be found in the various structural conditions in the regions (e.g. distance to economic centres and capacity of housing, labour supply), in legal regulations of the national scale like the "domicile requirement" (Wohnsitzauflage) as well as in variations of the integration policy, like organisation of volunteers and language courses.

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Abstract

Regional disparities in territorial dynamics across official categorisation of urban and rural areas (Occitanie, France)

Rural areas are primarily defined as non-urban areas in official classifications. Since WWII, the social and economic changes in rural area (rurbanisation) and the spatial urban extension (periurbanisation) have blurred the specificities and the limits between the two, with a consecutive shrinking of the areas considered as rural. To remediate this, new classifications consist in assessing the diversity of territorial dynamics, according to a variety of criteria, with or without postulates on the spatial pattern involved.

The recent fusion of Regions in France makes difficult to find existing typologies at that scale. For these reasons we engaged in the construction of a typology of territorial dynamics at the scale of the new Occitanie Region in France (more than 70 000 sq. km, almost 6 million inhabitants). This typology will be used to question the repartition of farming activities in the regional disparity of territorial dynamics.

The notion of a rural-urban continuum is built on a centre-periphery model fueled by a predominance and attraction of the cities on their hinterlands. Several contemporary trends might nevertheless complicate such pattern. According to Levy, urban areas differentiate from non-urban areas by their density of population and by their inner diversity in terms of populations, activities etc. Recent trends complicate such dichotomy permitting to consider diversity in rural areas. The low density of population and the large presence of open (non-built) areas favour not only productive activities, but also other finalities as environmental protection and recreational activities (Perrier-Cornet). On another hand, urbanisation englobed persisting farming zones to the point that almost half the farms and the farm lands are now located in areas considered as urban in France.

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Our main research questions are related to the farming dynamics in the Region. Does the high urbanisation rate in several areas exclude or coexist with farming? Can we identify different farming models according to their infra-regional location? At this stage of the research, our first questions focus on the diversity of territorial dynamics in the Region studied, including farming.

To build such typology, we engaged in a quantitative approach employing multivariate analysis. This method to build typology of territorial dynamics at regional or national levels is current in the literature. In several cases (Hillal, Salvati), it results from the aggregation of sub-typologies by domains. We chose a simpler methodology, effectuating only one principal components analysis (PCA) on 23 variables from different thematic domains. We identified five thematic domains constituent of the territorial dynamics: population, residence, economic activities, open and natural space extension and protection and territorial connectivity. We chose the municipality as the unit of analysis. It resulted in difficulty to build some of the variables, especially fluxes, for the relative lack of data at this level, but allowed to limit smoothing between different dynamics which occur with larger unit, as with cantons which may gather small cities and rural municipalities. Clustering technics were applied on the first three components to produce the typology of municipalities. Its interpretation was done using v-tests to compare the profile of each of the 23 variables in the resulting cluster from the profile in all the municipalities.

Our main result is a typology of the Occitanie municipalities depicting differences between municipalities. The infra-regional patterns drawn by this typology

Abstract – continued

Regional disparities in territorial dynamics across official categorisation of urban and rural areas (Occitanie, France)

show the incidence of urbanisation around the main cities, but it also suggests differences between municipalities in peri-urban areas and between large areas considered as rural. To assess such differences, we compare this typology to the “zonage en aire urbaine” which allow assessing the diversity of dynamics behind official classification in urban, periurban and rural municipalities and the complexity of urban-rural linkages beyond the center-periphery model.

This communication presents a typology of municipalities according to five domains related to territorial dynamics. It shows the complexity of the spatial patterns at regional level due to the inner diversity of urban and rural dynamics.

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Abstract

Facing rural gentrification in protected areas of England: the community land trusts as actors of rural change

Rural gentrification in England has been well documented since the end of the 70's (Cloke, 1979, 1983; Phillips, 1993). However, the links with protected areas has not been explored yet and present a lot of interesting aspects including the rise of new actors who aim to grant access for local people to National Parks or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Protected areas in England are special compared to other protected areas through Europe. Indeed, United Kingdom was one of the first countries which have taken into account his agricultural past when they chose to create National Parks and later AONB. Those protected areas are not strongly coercive; they are widely spread and well populated. The aim was to combine the protection of Nature, rural activities and landscapes (Depraz, 2009).

Studying rural gentrification in protected areas of England is relevant since it is a small country; intensively densified (Richard, 2009) so the most natural areas have been highly desired as settlement places for upper and middle classes who seek for environmental amenities. Studies have shown that the legal protections given to the most beautiful places of England have increased this passion (Marsden et al., 1994).

Local people have always been identified in the rural gentrification process as those who suffer the most of it. For instance, some individuals try to get rid of local people exclusion's from these beautiful living places. They create Community land trusts to secure houses for those who may not be able to afford it in protected areas of England. A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a community-controlled organisation set up to own and manages land and other assets for the benefit of the community. CLT's are officially defined in section 79 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It consists of Trustees and Members who recognise the importance of the issues and work with the local authorities to address them. It works at grassroots level with people in intermediate housing need; i.e. those not qualifying for social housing but not earning enough to buy their first home either. They can also be considered as actors of rural change since they encourage and act as a vehicle to address other land based concerns, such as allotments and workshop spaces. We will try to focus in this paper on the issues facing by Community Land Trusts, their successes and their failures. Furthermore, as the legal restrictions are not the same in a National park (which is the planning authority) and in an AONB, trusts have to deal with different restrictions which can hinder or make easier their action.

This paper will be based on examples from field researches undertaken in Dartmoor National Park and the Cotswolds AONB during April and June 2016. 59 interviews with local people as well as with members of trusts will be used for this paper to illustrate how trusts can be actors of rural change. The originality of this paper will be the link between English rural areas which have been designated by law as protected areas and the Community land trusts which act to tackle drawbacks of the rural gentrification process in a legal perspective.

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Abstract

"You don't want to raise your kids in Berlin": hard and soft location factors for attracting general practitioners to rural regions

Many rural regions in Germany are threatened by a shortage of general practitioners. During the next years a large amount of currently practicing doctors will got into retirement, whilst a much smaller number of new blood physicians will find their way into these areas. Whereas the supply of medical services is decreasing, demand for them is increasing. Especially peripheral rural spaces are shaped by an ageing population, whereby geriatric needs become more numerous and more intense. Hence, politicians, scientists and regionals planners as well as actors from the health care system are broadly thinking about strategies and measures for securing rural medical supply and for attracting young practitioners to peripheral regions. Commonly, their debates are relying to the assumption that a new generation of doctors emerged, making novel claims for their professional as well as for their private lives. Thereby, the argumentation is linked to a broader discourse on retaining skilled personnel and developing adequate location factors in rural areas. Against that background a large body of literature investigated the future orientations of medicine students and training assistants, showing widespread scepticisms against general medicine, rural locations and office based practice. In contrast, studies focussing the location decisions and everyday experiences of already settled general practitioners are rare. The empirical work to present should fill that gap, asking the following questions:

How can hard and soft location factors help to attract young general practitioners to peripheral rural regions and to keep them there? What are the implications for regional development strategies, aiming to secure primary health care?

The investigation is primarily based on qualitative interviews, conducted with recently established general practitioners from two regions, one in the western and one in the eastern part of Germany. Additional interviews were undertaken with regional experts and policy makers from the fields of primary health care and location development. Secondary analysis of documents and statistics give a picture of the current and future medical supply as well as of the issue-related policy programmes and measures.

Findings show, that most of the participants were connected to their regions for a long time, many of them were already born there. However, the concrete decisions to take over or join a surgery are often based on quite unpredictable opportunities, which could open up at different life and career stages. Nearly all interviewees have smaller children and stress the importance of family friendly living conditions and of the compatibility of work and family life. Giving priority to professional and family issues, further soft location factors, especially those related to distinctive 'urban' lifestyles, play a minor role for the participants' contentment. Thus, most of the general practitioners, interviewed in the two rural regions under study are grouped together by similar priorities in professional and in private life. In reverse, doctors and doctoral families with diverging demands and lifestyles seem to decide for other types of location. Even though the narratives are marked by those similarities, significant differences in biographies, living conditions and personal resp. familiar priorities became observable: between the two regions in Eastern and Western Germany as well between those interviewees living in the regional centres and those living outside of them.

Hence, strategies to attract general practitioners should focus on those, who are generally interested in

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Abstract – continued

"You don't want to raise your kids in Berlin": hard and soft location factors for attracting general practitioners to rural regions

working and living in a rural environment: Doctors with family and kids. A set of measures can be implemented to meet their professional and private demands. Such an approach would differ from common location development strategies, focused on high-qualified and distinctive milieus. That opens up the question, to what extent the results presented are conferrable to other high skilled groups, working and living in rural regions.

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Abstract

Political struggles in German spatial planning about the empty signifier ‘equivalence of living conditions’

The goal of ‘equivalence of living conditions’ is considered to be one of the most important spatial planning postulates and is an essential reference point for the permanent maintenance of public services in rural areas. In the current scientific discussion, the suitability of the concept is queried because of the increasing heterogeneity of spatial patterns, scarcity of resources and demographic change – or at least a revision of the term´s definition is demanded. Mostly the critics of the concept argue that ‘equivalence of living conditions’ in earlier times is equated with equalisation.

In the presentation the spatial planning discourse of the Federal Republic of Germany will be analysed by using Critical Discourse Analysis. First, it is shown that the concept did not exist in the spatial planning discourse of the early beginning of the Federal Republic. Thus, for example, the terminology was not used in the first Spatial Planning Law (1965).

For this reason, the presentation will, as a second point, address the question of how the term ‘equivalence of living conditions’ could become such a prominent concept in the discourse. The reason for this is that the goal of ‘equivalence of living conditions’ has not had a clear definition since the establishment of spatial planning in the Federal Republic of Germany and can therefore be described as an empty signifier. The goal of ‘equivalence of living conditions’ was added to the federal spatial planning programme (so-called ‘Bundesraumordnungsprogramm’) in 1975 as a political compromise term, which has since been used to legitimise a wide range of spatial planning interests and to combine different political positions. For this reason, the empty signifier ‘equivalence of living conditions’ became the hegemonic empty signifier in the spatial planning discourse of the 1970s – the term could hold this hegemonic position until the 1990s. It was only with the reform of the Spatial Planning Law in 1998 that the term lost this hegemonic position in favour of sustainability. Since the disparities between West and East Germany could not be decisively reduced by the end of the 1990s, a new discussion about the meaning of the empty signifier began. Against the background of these arguments, the recent discourse, in which even the meaningfulness and expediency of ‘equivalence of living conditions’ have been queried, is interpreted as a further bout of discursive disputes about the empty signifier.

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Abstract

Sustainability, governance and tourism in English national parks – what can we learn from the Peak Park case?

The last decades have shown protected areas (PA) gaining increasing importance all across Europe, with further areas being designated and new concepts being applied (e.g. Hammer et al. 2016). Among the many national traditions, Great Britain is well known as a pioneer in Europe and is often regarded as having the most comprehensive system of nature protection (Evans 1992). Unlike most National Parks around the world, which can be characterszed as protected wildernesses, the UK's National Parks are understood as working landscapes with mainly rural characteristics. They are major tourist destinations because of their outstanding natural beauty and wildlife, but also because of the wide range of leisure activities they offer. However, with increasing numbers of visitors, problems of mass tourism have emerged, such as threats to biodiversity, landscape, and infrastructure. In light of the challenges resolving from these problems, the UK government has adopted new initiatives to promote the sustainable development of tourism in the country´s National Parks. The Peak District National Park (Peak Park) is surrounded by large cities such as Manchester and Sheffield and therefore also easily reachable for day-trippers and thus requires special policies and new approaches.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the road to sustainable park management using the example of the Peak Park by sketching and analysing strategies and programmes that have been developed to promote sustainable tourism in rural areas so far. Not much known is about experiences with English National Parks outside the UK yet. We, therefore, contribute to addressing the existing gap in literature and help to increase awareness for some of the typical challenges PAs in rural upland areas are facing today.

This paper is based on research conducted since 2010 until recent providing a longitudinal study over several years. The general design of our research follows a qualitative approach, using interviews with experts to obtain general information as well as to identify "typical views" of important actors in the region. Thus no form of representativeness was intended. The main corpus of data comprises a series of 13 semi-structured of 2010, in-depth interviews with different actors, such as representatives of the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), local conservation agencies, and the tourism marketing organisation. Further interviews taken since 2012 with representatives of the PDNPA were conducted to verify and update the data and to answer new, emerging questions.

Finally, an additional study undertaken in 2013 intended to determine the motivations and experiences of accommodation businesses that are members of the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (PDEQM) by interviewing 29 current award holders.

Besides the interview series a document analysis of current literature, plans and drafts, and several site visits to the National Park region were also carried out and provided basis for the ensuing explanations.

Various partnerships have been created to challenge the various problems connected with tourism in the Peak Park. As a means of support, financial incentives are on offer, especially through the establishment of a Sustainable Development Fund, eligible both for private and public stakeholders, with the aim to foster ´models´ for sustainable tourism. The recently launched PDEQM stands as a promising example for this attempt.

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Abstract – continued

Sustainability, governance and tourism in English national parks – What can we learn from the Peak Park case?

Against the background of our studies we conclude that important steps have been made to make the Peak Park more sustainable and to mitigate the threats of tourism. To counteract these threats, governance structures have been developed which provide a suitable framework for joint action. This observation is certainly in line with Thompson (2005) who underlined the relevance of governance structures as a tool for problem solving in National Parks. While various actors seem to adopt the offered incentives very willingly, others still tend to stand back. Thus we conclude that national policies in the UK since the early 2000´s have recognised the important role which National Parks play in addressing future issues of tourism and sustainability. Although Parks such as the Peak Park apparently have adopted these incentives and worked out specific strategies, it remains to be seen whether initiatives taken in the Peak Park can be sustained and therefor regarded as models towards further sustainability across Europe or not.

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Abstract

The elephant in the room. On the relation of demographic change, public services and civic engagement

Demographic change leads to a massive territorial redistribution of the population and brings forth new patterns of regional disparities, counteracting political aims of territorial cohesion. In the case of Germany, large urban agglomerations form “islands of growth”, surrounded by rural places that age and shrink rapidly. Growth is a phenomenon for which planners have a set of tested planning tools. By contrast, shrinkage and ageing, as witnessed in many rural places, contradict dominant concepts of spatial planning and thus represents an unintended development path “at the periphery”. Using the discussion on the provision of public services in Germany as a case, this paper takes a critical look at the dialectic relation of growth as an intended core concept of spatial planning and shrinkage as a perceived problem at the periphery. Planners’ and politicians’ reaction to demographic change in rural Germany mainly consists in problematizing shrinkage and, following a neoliberal political agenda, arguing for a reduction in public service provision in shrinking regions. At the same time, politicians and planners try to mobilize civic engagement as a substitute for public service provision by the state.

However, a major question remains: Is this substitution strategy realistic? Using empirical research from a case study in the shrinking rural town of Weißwasser, I will critically reflect on this standard standpoint of planners in Germany. The mainstream substitution strategy can be understood as a reproduction of power relations supporting an increasing concentration of public spending on urban agglomerations and cores of growth. This leads to a reproduction of peripheries, which is driven by state actors from the core. Just like an elephant in the room, the problem of exclusion of stakeholders from the shrinking regions in decision taking over public budget distribution is not openly discussed. In addition, I will show that substitution strategies from actors in the core are unrealistic, as they do not respect local actors’ needs and capacities. I will therefore argue that peripheral perspectives and standpoints have to be given more power in deciding on public budget spending (e.g. on how to maintain public services in shrinking regions).

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Notes:

Abstract

The intricate relationship between energy transitions and regional marginalisation – insights from wind farm developments in rural Germany and Denmark

Rural areas play a major role in the local realisation of a successful energy transition, as this is where most renewable energy infrastructures are being established. In particular, the large-scale construction of wind farms is increasingly changing many rural areas. The development of wind farms has not only resulted in the emergence of wind energy landscapes in terms of their physical-material and aesthetic appearance, but also altered the economic foundation and geography of rural areas. Therefore, wind farms as increasingly mature renewable energy facilities have become an important issue in many rural areas, especially in countries with an advanced wind energy sector, such as Denmark and Germany. Despite being forerunners in wind energy deployment, local initiatives are on the rise in both countries and numerous protest groups are increasingly campaigning against wind power developments.

In this paper we seek to illuminate structural problems of rural regions as a particular facet of local protests against the establishment of wind energy plants, and discuss how energy transitions and their contestation are embedded in general features of rural development.

Whilst uneven geographies of development have put rural areas under constant pressure resulting in economic decline, infrastructural deficits and outmigration, the development of wind farms is meant to have the potential to 'repower' areas in which they are sited through channelling voluntary benefit-sharing and a redistribution of revenues from electricity and heat generation to local communities. However, a fruitful embedding of wind farms in a local rural economic setting and regional development efforts have only been achieved to a limited extent (Munday et al. 2011; Ejdemo & Söderholm 2015). In this paper we intend to show how energy transition, based on the siting of wind turbines, is being realised in marginalised rural areas in North Eastern Germany and Western Denmark and argue that there is a mismatch between the claimed regional development potential and its practical implementation.

This research draws on case studies from both Germany and Denmark and builds on a number of qualitative research methods, such as interviews with wind farm developers, municipal planners, opposition groups and energy initiatives as well as observations at public hearings and workshops.

Instead of addressing uneven development (Harvey 2005), current wind farm development practices and regulatory benefit schemes tend to result in manifestations of a rural-urban divide, a regional 'colonialisation' between sites of energy production and sites of energy consumption, and tensions between local beneficiaries and those bearing the costs. By drawing on notions of distributional and procedural energy justice (Sovacool & Dworkin 2015; Jenkins et al. 2016), we will show that this mismatch is a significant source of protests against wind energy infrastructures in the rural context. While short-sighted NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) rationales are still prevalent in the narratives of developers and planners, we show how counter-rationales of local protests go beyond pejorative NIMBY accusations and rather scrutinise the disconnection between wind farm projects and rural development efforts and reflect contrasting imaginaries of rurality.

We conclude that the contestation surrounding the planning and development of wind farms in rural areas illustrates the infrastructural dimension of spatial justice as well as questions of energy justice at a regional scale.

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Abstract

Resurgence of open air food markets: symbol or mirror of the rurality?

Over the last decades in Europe, a renewed consumers' interest in origins and quality of food contributes to the resurgence of open air food markets – the most traditional commerce activity which declined around the 1980 in the meantime with the development of large-scale distribution [Lemarchand, 2008; Delfosse, 2011]. Places where historically peasants and sellers brought goods to feed urban populations, open air food markets represent now a very small portion of household expenditures. However, they still occupy an important part in the common representations of rurality and this not only because sometime they seem to come from another century. Open air food markets are generally characterised by precarious situation: ambulant sellers are exposed to weather conditions, they don't own the place where they sell, they have to unpack and repack goods each day.

New markets, like farmers' markets, are organised in the center of the city. In the strategy of public management, those events are used to demonstrate their involvement for green city, farmers of proximity and quality of life. Open air food markets are often considered like some "village in the city", where the atmosphere is nice and friendly. They are places of "mise en scène", where some market sellers try to seem more rural, more farmers, to satisfy consumer expectations. Stalls, clothes and products are combined to recall a nostalgic idea of countryside, the time of peasants.

Beyond representations, open air markets allow to observe the city attractiveness to nearby countryside, mobility practices of ambulant vendors (social and geographical) and why some of them chose to work in rural open air markets.

This communication will present some results of a Phd research in Geography, defended on November 2015. The study relies on semi-structured interviews with 250 actors of open air food markets. The fieldwork was conducted in France (Rhône-Alpes region): a big city (Lyon), a rural in post-industrial crisis (Pays roannais) and a remote but during the summertime very touristic countryside (Ardèche méridionale).

The main results of this research show the role of the open air food markets in the self-narrative presentation of social places. By closely studying actors, representations and practice, we will show that this form of commerce is put on move by public management and how it lives daily by market sellers and consumers. Open air food markets represent a symbol, a kaleidoscope of the regeneration of spaces and of the co-construction of local places.

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Notes:

Abstract

The lack of rural development initiatives for deep rural areas. The case of the LEADER approach in Andalusian region (Spain) in the 2007 – 2013 period

One of the main aims of the rural development policy and of the LEADER approach is the territorial approach, and within this, one objective is the territorial balance, to ensure that especially poor populations or territory located in declining areas also benefit from development opportunities. But, what was in practise the territorial distribution of LEADER investments in rural areas of Andalusia?, did the crisis reinforce the unequal territorial distribution favouring to the most developed rural areas and not taking into consideration the deep rural areas?: Recent studies that seek to explain the factors that make rural areas more resilient, highlighting neo-endogenous rural development practices (Cheshire, Esparcia and Shucksmith 2015), including the public-private partnerships established as LAGs, effective management of the funds for rural development, institutional capacity and good governance. Our research is also timely given that we are now entering a new programming period, in which the European Commission may reconsider various aspects of regional development and in particular its rural development policy. To this end, Article 35 of Law 1303/2013 identifies as one of the three priority challenges for Local Development Strategies in the next LEADER initiative for the period 2015-2020, "improving public services and the quality of life, to help mitigate the shortage of opportunities in rural areas as compared with urban areas, paying particular attention to the disadvantaged and people at risk of exclusion". This implicitly covers the problems of marginal rural areas. Other researchers are recommending the inclusion of market towns within LEADER areas and projects, due to the great interdependence between these towns and their surrounding rural catchment areas (Bosworth et al. 2015), and finally, that development programmes should reconsider the disparities and diversities within rural areas (Saraceno 2013).

We used three main sources of information. Firstly, the criteria applied by each Andalusian LAG in selecting projects. This enabled us to find out whether when assessing the projects the territorial distribution of investment was considered an important factor in trying to reduce socioeconomic intra-territorial imbalances. Our second source of information was the projects implemented during the period 2007 – 2015, for which data was provided by the regional administration of Andalusia, at a territorialised scale for each LAG and municipality. Our third source was statistical information from various public administrations, which we used to produce key indicators and correlations.

LEADER investments and projects have reinforced the pre-existing spatial inequalities of rural areas, being forgotten the needs of the less developed areas. Definitely, the territorial distribution of LEADER investments is unequal, reinforcing existing disparities in favour of the most developed and dynamic subregional and territorial centres, which already have established successful businesses, at the expense of more remote, deep rural and mountain municipalities, often the most marginal places in the region. Even, in this period, the economic crisis has reinforced this phenomenon. The biggest investments have been concentrated in the towns with the highest population, per capita income and number of companies, while in municipalities with lower populations, income per capita and business presence, investment levels have proved insufficient to redress the balance. One could therefore argue that far from correcting territorial inequalities, these initiatives have in fact had the opposite effect, making imbalances more pronounced, by strengthening the more dynamic, more developed rural territories to the detriment of their poorer counterparts.

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The lack of rural development initiatives for deep rural areas. The case of the LEADER approach in Andalusian region (Spain) in the 2007 – 2013 period

The correction of territorial inequalities is very difficult when the inhabitants of the poorest areas are aging and have only limited professional training and/or qualifications. For future LEADER programmes to be more successful, it is vital to address this problem. Involving the inhabitants of the area in designing the strategies to be carried out in these programmes is essential. This means real effective participation that goes beyond mere public hearings. These proposals seem logical in theory, but are very complicated to introduce in areas with low development and small population.

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Abstract

Why can street petrol station shops not be an alternative to a missing local food supplier? Contribution to the German discourse on 'Daseinsvorsorge'

It is believed that in Germany, the accessibility of services of general interest (SGI) is becoming worse, especially in rural areas, as demographic trends that affect demand (e.g., population decline) cause economic pressure on service providers, leading in turn to a spatial concentration of services and a downward spiral of the territorial capitals. However, little is known about the dimensions of this concentration process. But, against the background of the objectives of the political goal of providing comparable living conditions in all regions of Germany, such knowledge is important in forming an objective impression of the current situation, which can function as input for policy action and interventions, and in identifying regions that lack adequate provision of SGI. One way to obtain such data is to analyse the accessibility of selected SGI. One subject area, especially important for the population, where a spatial concentration can be observed is retail food sales. Interestingly, the petrol-sector claims that in rural regions, petrol station shops (PSS) might replace a missing local food retailer. In this regard, it will be discussed whether PSS have the potential to replace a local food retailer and if so, where and why.

In a more international context such aspects of food access are analysed against the background of the food desert discourse. Interestingly, in Germany this is not the case as such aspects are mainly analysed through the lens of Daseinsvorsorge (provision of SGI). To begin with, both concepts will be introduced followed by considerations why the food desert discourse is not prominent in Germany. It will be shown that while in the international discourse, the analysis of food accessibility can build on an established poverty discourse, the German discourse on poverty and nutrition is comparatively new. That is, within the Daseinsvorsorge discourse, inequality is also addressed, not on an individual, household or neighborhood level as in the social inequality discourse but from a territorial point of view aimed at guaranteeing the goal of providing equal living conditions in all regions of Germany.

Following, based on a raster-based GIS-accessibility approach, it will be examined whether PSS can take over the function as local food supplier. That is, Germany is overlaid by a grid of 250m² polygons. The centroids of the grid cells are the start-points of the analysis, meaning that from every centroid, the shortest street distance to the next PSS/supermarket/discounter, is determined. The resulting value is attributed to the grid cell representing its distance. So, the analysis is based on the assumption that from every start-point, the next target is chosen according to the street distance.

The results, together with considerations on the merchandise assortment of PSS allow the following conclusions: In Germany, PSS serve mainly frequency and impulse shopping needs. At best, a limited assortment of mostly packet staple foods is available. So, PSS do not offer a merchandise assortment comparable to that offered by food retailers or one that meets daily consumer needs.

In most rural areas with no supermarket/discounter accessible by foot, PSS are also not accessible by foot. So, rural people are dependent on the car as a means of transport to reach either a PSS or a supermarket/discounter.

Within 15 minutes – a time generally accepted as maximum to reach basic services – the results suggest that generally, the next supermarket/discounter can be reached just as well by car as a potential PSS. The few regions where a potential PSS can be better

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Why can street petrol station shops not be an alternative to a missing local food supplier? Contribution to the German discourse on 'Daseinsvorsorge'

reached just as well by car as a potential PSS. The few regions where a potential PSS can be better reached than a supermarket/discounter hold only a small share of the German population. If, as the results suggest, a majority of the rural population can likewise reach a potential PSS or supermarket/discounter by car in 15 minutes, the next supermarket/discounter will be the first choice because of the limited assortment and higher prices of PSS. This pattern might also hold true for urbanised areas.

It can be concluded that it is currently questionable whether petrol stations can function as a replacement for a missing local retail trade in rural areas.

Nevertheless, at present, the analysis indicates that in the majority of the cells of the analysis grid neither supermarkets/discounters nor PSS are accessible by foot within 15 minutes. So, people are dependent on a car to reach a food shopping location, especially in rural areas. Thus, it is the less mobile people living in rural areas for whom the next local food retailer is difficult to access. Other studies suggest, that this are mainly retirees and young adults as members of these groups most often do not have a car available.

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Abstract

The legacy of LEADER and perceptions of rural development in Ireland

EU-wide evaluations of LEADER, such as those undertaken by RuDi (across fourteen countries and under the aegis of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University) and the European Court of Auditors (2010), among others, frequently cited the Irish approach to LEADER and the model of LAG in Ireland as offering clear manifestations of best practice. European Commission and European Parliament deliberations, reports and pronouncements also propagated a favourable perception of LEADER in Ireland. While Brussels and other external actors tended to advocate the Irish model of LEADER, their view was generally not shared in Dublin. The RuDi evaluation had noted the increasing levels of bureaucratisation that were adversely affecting the administration of the Irish LEADER Programme (Maye et al., 2010). A government-sponsored report by a Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA), published in 2014, while acknowledging the success of LEADER, railed against civil society, and in favour of local authority-led structures, as its preferred delivery conduit for LEADER 2014 – 2020. While the supranational (EU) and the national (Irish State) have articulated their divergent perspectives on the trajectory and future orientation of LEADER, it is also necessary, and arguably more important, to garner the views of citizens in rural territories. This paper presents findings from two such surveys.

Using a conceptual framework that operationalises notions of devolved and delegated power, this paper notes how the Irish government was content to transfer responsibilities to local communities during the years when LEADER provided a mechanism for attracting EU funds. However, the financial crisis (since 2008) and the subsequent rash of austerity policies, along with a change of government combined to create the conditions in which the centre was emboldened to claw back from the local the responsibilities it had reluctantly transferred over the previous fifteen years. Thus, events of the past eight years demonstrate that powers had not in fact been devolved at all; they had been reluctantly delegated for expedient purposes.

This paper presents clear empirical data on the perceptions of power relations between the local and the centre with respect to rural development. As well as articulating the views of actors in central and local government and in LAGs (based on one-to-one interviews), together with those involved in campaigns and protests (based on participant observation and interviews), the paper also presents results from surveys of citizens in two rural territories. The surveys, which involve in excess of 1 500 rural citizens, represent the most comprehensive and objective dataset of public attitudes to rural development policy and practice in Ireland. These empirical and mainly quantitative data deal specifically with the performance of LAGs, the operation of LEADER and the trajectory and orientation of rural development policy.

The fieldwork results show a clear desire on the part of central government officials to standardise the approach to rural development across the State. Officials are also motivated to find new roles for county councils en lieu of their loss of particular traditional responsibilities. Consequently, rural development has been caught up in centralising trends within the Irish State, with local government being displaced downwards to duplicate and usurp roles traditionally performed by civil society in leading Local Action Groups. Among local government stakeholders, there is considerable apprehension that the LEADER structures, as envisaged by government, are genuinely endogenous and workable, but most in local

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The legacy of LEADER and perceptions of rural development in Ireland

government are inclined to 'go along with' government policy. Among rural citizens however, and among those directly involved in LAGs, there is trenchant opposition to the displacement of civil society and the perceived institutionalisation and bureaucratisation of LEADER. While opposition to government moves, and support for Community-Led Local Development are dominant across rural Ireland, action in the form of public protest, has been more concerted in Western and peripheral areas.

The survey findings show that civil society leaders in particular, and growing numbers of rural citizens regard Brussels, rather than Dublin as being more in tune with the needs and development potential of rural Ireland. Anger at Dublin's attempts to dismantle LEADER, as many citizens perceive it, has contributed to the election of independents to the national parliament (in February 2016), and has placed the rural more firmly on the national policy agenda. However, rather than engage with government in a spirit of collaboration and partnership, civil society and the emerging local activists, while tired from campaigning, are more wily and more radical than the previous generation of community leaders.

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Notes:

Abstract

Potentials for a sustainability transition in the tourism industry on the island of Rügen, Germany

Rügen, the biggest island of Germany, is influenced by the characteristics of mass tourism. In the year of 2014 alone, 6.02 guest nights were registered and tourists travelled to Rügen to enjoy the island's nature and landscapes including beaches, bays, cliffs and forests. However, the tourism itself threads to spoil the beauty and uniqueness of the island. Therefore, especially since the beginning of the 1990s, a number of policies have been implemented to reduce the impact of mass tourism.

Numerous studies have analysed the conflicts between development initiatives in the tourism industry and the state's conservation regulations (e.g. Theel 2002). However, so far not much attention has been paid to self-commitments of tourism companies relating to establishing and promoting modes of more sustainable tourism. Therefore, this paper seeks to analyse the niche of sustainable tourism on Rügen as well as its potentials to play a role in a sustainability transition. In this context, also the relevance of protected areas as a regionalised niche is discussed.

The paper bases on the transition studies approach which developed since the early 1990 in order to better understand the complexity of bigger social transformations (e.g. Coenen & Truffer 2012). The authors concentrate on technology-induced transformations and analyse how these develop along pathways. The transition studies literature formulates a hierarchical multi-level approach in which niches play a vital role. Niches are isolated from normal market selection processes which enable economic actors to initiate learning processes and establish social networks in a protected environment. This may lead to innovations which – once they are established – can be further developed to regimes that are accepted by a wider context (Geels 2002, Wagner 2012). This paper analyses whether protected areas like the biosphere reserve Südost-Rügen can function as a regional niche to promote and up-scale modes of more sustainble tourism on the island of Rügen.

In order to do that the development of the tourism industry as well as the development of nature conservation on the island are re-constructed. On the basis of this, the paper conducts an analysis of the development of sustainable tourism initiatives on Rügen, especially the partner initiative of the biosphere reserve Südost-Rügen by analysing official documents of the partner initiative's working process as well as 20 interviews that were realised with members of the partner initiative and the initiative's coordinator.

The preliminary results show that sustainable tourism on Rügen is rather an exception than normality. However, in the partner initiative of the biosphere reserve Südost-Rügen 28 companies cooperate in order to work towards more sustainable modes of tourism. They seek to develop unique selling propositions on the basis of sustainable entrepreneurship. Under the leadership of the administration of the biosphere reserve Südost-Rügen a certification system for sustainable companies has been developed and public events like the Sustainability Week have been established. Thereby a sustainability spirit could be provoked. Nevertheless, scepticism needs to be put forward: Since its formation in 2011, the partner

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Potentials for a sustainability transition in the tourism industry on the island of Rügen, Germany

initiative aimed at gaining a high number of members rather than putting emphasis on the partners' sustainability qualities. Also, most of the network's work is initiated by the partner initiative's coordinator who is employed by the biosphere reserve's administration. Still, if more suitable modes of governance can be erected, the partner initiative of the biosphere reserve Südost-Rügen has the potential to become a sustainability network that can be taken seriously. However, it is rather unlikely that it has the power to change the whole tourism industry on Rügen towards more sustainable modes of development.

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Abstract

Romanian rural settlements at crossroads: to be or not to be a town?

Rural settlements have become extremely prudent in evolving to an urban status. Theoretically, any rural locality targets to become a town. The financing policy and the accessibility to financial resources are very different from a period to another, sometimes in the favour of the rural status.

Urbanisation continuously challenges the national territories as part of the development process. Romania remains the most ruralised large country in the European Union, 46 % of its population living in rural areas. The urbanisation process in Romania changed after the communist period, from a centralised stage of planned economy to a decentralised decision-making based on the market economy and democracy (Otiman, 2005). After 1990, the studies on rural dynamics are numerous (Dona and Florian, 2010). The socialist period meant massive state investments in the rural areas leading to new towns through directed development and industrialisation; in conformity to that planning, 500 – 600 rural communities have been developed as agro-industrial towns (Ianoș et al., 1989). After 1990, the lack of an adequate urban planning legislation slowed down the urbanisation process, rural settlements becoming towns based on certain criteria: minimum number of inhabitants, structure of active population, infrastructure, and territorial influence. The Law on urban and spatial planning (2001) ended the transition period from the industrialisation-based urbanisation with an urbanisation boom based on political decision and demagogy. Increased life satisfaction expected by crossing from the rural to the urban status was not confirmed, leading to important inquires on the urban-rural differentiation (Sørensen, 2014). Currently, rural settlements in Romania deal with a paradigm change in their post-EU accession development – the structure of the European funding supports mostly the developed big urban areas. Or, for the new towns coming from a rural background, there are important negative effects (no access to the European funds for rural development while no funding for urban issues).

Why has the Romanian village become very prudent, accepting (frequently) the demagogic proposals of the parliamentarians? Is the urbanisation process in Romania a real one? How many of the new towns achieve the urban development criteria? How many of the large rural settlements should have been already declared towns? Which policies are to be taken to manage a natural and sustainable urbanisation process in Romania?

The urbanisation process in Romania was investigated from a diachronic perspective in order to evidence the stages and factors of rural settlements transformation into towns. The assessment included further a statistical analysis of the new towns looking at: the population number, the active population structure, demographic tendencies and number of component villages. The current urbanisation patterns and the biases faced by the rural settlements in the decision process of changing their status were detailed based on interviews with specialists and local representatives of five case studies.

The analysis of new small towns evidenced: the ruralisation process of small towns of the socialist period; and the insatisfaction of the new towns inhabitants. The territorial distribution of the input data shows an unbalanced adaptation of the small towns to the market economy. After the 1990 deindustrialisation, the inefficacy of the land reform lead to a de-agriculturisation process, which transformed the former socialist

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Romanian rural settlements at crossroads: to be or not to be a town?

agriculture oriented to the centralised market to a subsistence one. In this context, some of the most developed rural communities believed that having a town status will bring them better development. When they learned that there are no legal procedures to come back to their previous rural status. Based on referendums and politicians' arguments, during 2004 – 2005, about 50 rural communities became towns. But, after the EU accession, most of them wanted to get back their previous rural status (without success, as the law does not allow that). This wave of new towns was an important lesson for the other rural communities, which understood that the urbanisation process is not a play and they became more prudent.

The urbanisation process in Romania requires a more sustainable framework of considering the real urban development of rural settlements, based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Rural settlements in Romania need support and encouragement to continue their development and, based on their growth, to accept their natural evolution to an urban area, without rushing or delaying the urbanisation process.

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Abstract

Quantifying the effect of labour market size on learning externalities

There is extensive empirical evidence that labour productivity, as reflected in regional wages, is significantly lower in small rural local labour markets than labour productivity in large urban local labour markets. For Germany the elasticity of the regional wage level with respect to the size of the local labour market in terms of total regional employment amounts to about 0.08, meaning that wages in the largest local labour markets are on average 40 per cent higher than in the smallest ones. The literature typically distinguishes three reasons as to why workers are more productive in urban than in rural labour markets: 1) sorting of more able workers into cities, arguing that higher wages in cities reflect higher abilities of its workers, 2) static agglomeration economies based on sharing gains from variety and individual specialisation and/or based on matching advantages, 3) dynamic agglomeration economies reflecting in faster productivity growth due to dynamic matching and/or learning externalities.

Most empirical studies analyse the overall impact of local characteristics on some local out-come rather than the importance of the different mechanisms behind agglomeration economies. In particular the role of learning in cities is still an open question and further work is needed to fully understand the impact of this underlying mechanism. In order to assess the significance of dynamic agglomeration economies in general, and learning externalities in particular, this study uses German micro data from the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) on transitions to employment within the period 2005 to 2011 and individual employment biographies from 1975 onwards. It analyses to which extent the wages associated with more than 500 000 newly established employment relationships depend on the size of the labour market in which the corresponding worker acquired previous work experience. More precisely, this study goes a step further as previous papers in order to obtain more general results and estimates the elasticity of wage with respect to the size of the labour market in which experience was acquired. According to the learning hypothesis a worker's wage, reflecting his or her productivity should be higher the larger the labour markets were in which the person was working previously since the more human capital was accumulated. Since dynamic agglomeration benefits accumulate over time, the estimated elasticity is expected to increase with the level of individual work experience.

The identified dynamic agglomeration benefit should be strongly related to learning externalities. I control for sorting of more able workers into large labour markets and static agglomeration benefits by means of individual as well as region fixed effects. Furthermore, I include the number of previous employers in order to control for dynamic matching. Time varying individual characteristics and the individual labour market biographies of the workers are considered, as well as time varying characteristics of the local industry and the local labour market.

The results of this paper suggest that dynamic agglomeration economies in general, and learning externalities in particular, play an important role in explaining individual labour productivity. Workers receive ceteris paribus a significantly higher wage after acquiring experience in urban than in rural labour markets. Doubling local employment in all labour markets in which experience was acquired, increases the productivity of a worker with two years of work experience by more than 0.7 per cent. After 10 years of experience the corresponding gain amounts to about three per cent, after 30 years to about four to five per cent. The

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A key factor seems to be that large urban labour markets are typically characterised by a larger share of high-skilled labour which are the workers one presumably learns from the most. Furthermore, the results are in line with previous findings showing that the value of experience is predominately determined by the size of the labour market in which experience was acquired rather than by the labour market in which the experience is used.

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Notes:

Abstract

Ageing in rural areas: the case of the Czech Republic

Our research project "Rural ageing: unanswered questions in environmental gerontology (Czech Science Foundation/GA16–20873S)" is focused on the challenges faced by older people in different rural environments and the (dis)advantages of rural ageing from the perspective of residents in the Czech context. My presentation is based on a survey of respondents aged 60+ years living in rural settlements (n = 1 235). Only the non-institutionalised population was involved. The sample was selected using quotas for age, sex, education, region (NUT3), and rurality type. The rurality typology employed is based on the following five indicators: the proportion of occupied flats in family houses on all flats; density of inhabitants on built-up areas; share of jobs in typical city economic areas (e.g. ICT); share of jobs on one economic active person and the number of selected amenities in the municipality (e.g. schools, health care providers, post office, etc.). On the basis of these indicators, a typology of the various settlements in rural contexts was proposed. In our research, we followed: 1) towns with under 5 000 inhabitants (5 %); 2) transitional municipalities with significant urban features (11 %); 3) other t. m. (15 %); 4) category I. rural municipalities (45 %); 5) category II. r. m. (significantly rural; 22 %); and 6) category III. r. m. (extremely rural; 1 %). Although, these six types of settlements represent more than 95 % of all Czech municipalities, only 38 % of the entire Czech population live there.

We are interested in the subjective perception of older people and focus on the perceived changes in their living environments and the patterns of their everyday outdoor mobility and activities as a function of the type of rurality. The majority of older people have perceived considerable change in their neighbourhoods over the years. They are aware of the building of new houses and infrastructure, the expansion of tourism, but also the decline of past agricultural cooperatives, industrial facilities, and historical buildings as well as a rise in unemployment. In contrast, respondents report little or only moderate change with respect to neighbours remaining in the same area. The concerns of older people arise mainly from increasing levels of traffic, decreasing numbers of public and private services, and declining levels of public transport. On the other hand, the majority asses shops and services to be generally easily accessible. The ways older people adjust to such changes are investigated, the types of change differing according to the type of rurality and geographical location of the settlement. Overall, older people living in rural areas asses their living environments positively and appreciate the reconstruction of buildings, roads and public areas. The second thread of our research is directed at different types of activities (obligatory as well as discretionary) and how they are influenced by the nature of the surrounding environment and access to services. Patterns of mobility are analysed in terms of the environment, on the one hand, and the possession among older people of various forms and levels of cultural, social and economic capital, on the other. The main advantages and disadvantages of the defined types of ruralities for older people are identified.

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Notes:

Abstract

Revisiting Pahl's countryside: an examination of transformations in gentrification of rural Hertfordshire

This paper explores theorisations of rural gentrification and transformations in its processes and forms. It focuses its initial attention of the work of the sociologist Ray Pahl, who visited villages in Hertfordshire, England, in the early 1960s (e.g see Pahl, 1965a; Pahl, 1965b). This work has been widely viewed as an early illustration of processes of rural transformation that from the early 1980s came to be described using the concept of rural gentrification, although Pahl himself never used this concept. Since this time a range of different theorisations of rural gentrification have emerged (Phillips, 2009), along with claims that the nature of gentrification has itself changed, such that a range of different forms of gentrification and types of gentrifiers have come to emerge (Phillips, 2005). This paper seeks to explore these arguments by revisiting the rural villages that formed the focus of Pahl's original study. Pahl's studies are re-examined to highlight connections to debates over the concept of rural gentrification, along with an analysis of his original questionnaires. Attention then focuses on how the villages studied by Pahl have come to be transformed, making use of Census and planning data, and new interviews conducted with residents in villages studied by Pahl. The paper reveals that whilst there are significant continuities in the lifestyle practices and the social character of rural residents, and in their cultural representations of rurality, or what Pahl described as the village or communities 'in the mind' (Pahl, 1965a, 1966), there are also important differences. Transformations in contemporary class structures, along with the expansion of gentrified new build developments and expansions in personal mobilities are highlighted, along with the significance of affectual dimensions of rural living. The paper concludes by reviewing Pahl's work in the context of a broader scale analysis of rural gentrification in the England Wales and a comparative research project examining rural gentrification in the UK, USA and France.

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Abstract

The social construction of renewable energy projects: local development trajectories and localised social relations

In 2014, the French call for projects on “positive energy territories for green growth” has distinguished hundreds of local territories, including “MAUGES” territory. These policies are based on the territorialized application of energy-climate-GHG issues and on the identification of specific rural resources, often held by farmers (roofs of agricultural buildings for photovoltaic, land, biomass), including the specific social capital of farmers given their collective organisational capacities. We hypothesise that “local ´territories’s renewable energy projects are the emerging part of a long history of the local development” (Nadaï, Labussière et al., 2015), which belongs to inheritances inscribed in trajectories (Maurel, 2009) specific to each case. The orientations taken locally by the energy transition depend on the sociotechnical collectives of local stakeholders (which are themselves inherited constructions) who introduce them (Christen, 2014: 118), of their mode of emergence and on their objectives. So, the theoretical approach is based on the notion of “located social spaces”, in reference to Gilles Laferté (2014) which recommends studying rural environments by considering the social classes entrenched in the historical context of the region. The social relations are considered in their regional base, taking into account the local peculiarities. This reflexion focuses an approach “from below”, on energy projects (Cacciari et al., 2014), through regionalised social relations. In this case, the territory is considered as a constituent of social relations rather than as an administrative context for public policies. This paper comes from the research programme CODESOL (2014-2016) 1 on the development of various forms of cooperation in western France, including renewable energy projects. We intend to report on the social construction of these local projects through 25 in-depth interviews with the stakeholders (10 farmers, local elected officials, association leaders), informative interviews made with development officers and also the participation in reflexion group for local planning and in the inauguration of a participatory wind energy park.

The involvement of regional stakeholders, notably the farmers, their ability to interconnect social and professional networks through the social capital due to their local origins can be an explanation to the social acceptance of these projects, even for the plantation of wind farms, a sensitive subject in France. Other broader explanations emerge: the legacy of strategies and of the local history of development (industrial, productive and technical/technological), the common objective to diversifying the economy and avoiding industrial relocations as well as the capture of local resources by foreign investors from the territory constitute unifying factors. However, it is necessary to distinguish between territorialisation of energy production and of the energy governance. Do these projects not bring inequalities between the inhabitants and could this aspect question about the nature of the social acceptance?

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Abstract

Olive cultivation in the Douro Region (NE Portugal), where tradition and innovation combine

A privileged area, the Douro Demarcated Region (DDR) stands out not only for its exceptional landscape, reflecting a history of over 250 years, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001, but also for its distinctive cultural and social character. Nevertheless, the obstacles to its development are manifold. To overcome these obstacles, especially since the 1990s, this landscape has come to be seen from a multifunctional perspective, conjugating the production of Douro wines, with particular emphasis on Port, with marketing and tourism, without neglecting complementary but impressive crops such as the olive. Still, farms have been progressively abandoned, particularly in areas that are less favourable to winegrowing. Depopulation is also escalating, directly linked to the structural ageing of the resident population, and residual migratory flows to the metropolitan areas on the Portuguese coast, or abroad.

This troubling setting is further aggravated beyond the boundaries of the DDR and as we rise in altitude, above 500 meters. Here, especially in the transitional spaces between the DDR and the surrounding plateau, protected from the harsher climate, olive groves multiply, extending those of winegrowing region, especially in the Douro Superior (Upper Douro), where groves are planted preferably between 450 and 700 meters. However, despite clear improvements in access routes, the local framework is in decline, and the rate of abandonment is severe. In this paper, we will analyse the development of the Douro olive cultivation, based on extensive documental research and fieldwork, which included surveys and semi-structured interviews with bodies in charge of local and sectoral development, as well as associations and olive growers. We further explore the impact of olive growing and its main problems, as well as the great territorial disparities.

Although olive growing is traditionally important for food and lighting, as well as religious rituals, medicinal uses and cosmetics, or even as a household lubricant, it is not found homogenously throughout the region. In the Baixo Corgo (Lower Corgo), the westernmost sub-region of the DDR, it has always been considered a secondary crop, grown only to delimit the vineyards and farm buildings (for example, in Mesão Frio, municipality of Vila Real, although 76.5 % of farms grow olive trees, they occupy less than 1 hectare, and in 41.2 %, they do not even occupy 0.5 ha – Agricultural Census 2009, INE). In contrast, in the Douro Superior, the easternmost sub-region, afflicted by water problems that hinder the expansion of vineyards, the olive rivals the almond tree, and continuous olive grove fill the landscape. Thus, in Alfândega da Fé, 61.1 % of the olive groves are more than 5 hectares in area, of which 25.6 % exceed 20 hectares. Going beyond the boundaries of the DDR and entering areas of Trás-os-Montes, the transition between the DDR and & "Terras Frias" ("cold lands"), the olive grove dominates the landscape. This is the case of Mirandela where, in 2009 (RAC 2009, INE), 27.7 % of the olive groves already exceeded 20 hectares, of which 6% were over 100 hectares, producing biological or traditional olive oil of the highest quality, which have been awarded multiple prices.

However, although the centuries-old olive grove persists, there are many projects subsidised by EU funds vested in the renewal of the old groves, low in productivity, but of excellent quality, whose trunks are authentic works of sculptures, a heritage to preserve and enhance. The renewed groves are now prepared for full mechanisation. In this context, innovations proliferate, supported or not by the established cooperatives (e.g., the Murça Agricultural Cooperative of Olive

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Abstract – continued

Olive cultivation in the Douro Region (NE Portugal), where tradition and innovation combine

Growers of Murça, CRL, founded in 1956 and renewed in 2004), or by recent associations that gather growers with less than 2 hectares. They invest in innovation, as well as environmental protection, recycling and reuse of waste by-products. Indeed, it is not only winegrowing that kindles innovative projects in DDR. The olive tree also does so, taking advantage of olive by-products such as the pips and other solid residues, which were expensive to remove from the olive press. Today, however, they are reused, in the production of bioenergy and "briquettes"; for use in fireplaces, odourless and almost smokeless, with a high heat value. Slowly a new future is being prepared for the DDR and surrounding areas, where tradition and innovation come together but in a sustainable and ecological framework. This is also how complementarity between these two areas can be fostered, conjugating in this dynamic not only viticulture but also olive cultivation.

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Abstract

Results of the LEADER-approach: findings from evaluation of LEADER-regions in Germany

As one axis of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD 2007 – 2013), the participatory LEADER-approach is one possibility to bring forward rural development. It is used in all member states of European Union so there is a high interest about the results of this approach. It is implemented by around 2 600 Local Action Groups (LAGs), covering over 54 % of the rural population in the EU.

Those LAGs collaborate on the basis of an integrated local development strategy for their rural area. Organisational structures with own budgets are established in every LEADER-region. Therefore different stakeholders come together in a Local Action Group as a kind of a public-private partnership and make decisions about the financial support for projects. These collaborations deal mainly with tourism, diversification of rural economy, agriculture, environmental matters, demographic change and quality of life.

In the 2014 – 2020 programming period, the LEADER method has been extended under the broader term Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) to additional EU Funds (especially the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF)). So to question the implementation and the results of this participatory approach, it is important to shape and improve future policy designs in a European multilevel-governance system.

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The European Commission's assesses this approach positive, because it can facilitate the implementation of multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral interventions. Consequently, a coherent set of measures can be applied. A general assumption about LEADER is that there is an added value because of a better identification of local needs and solutions, more commitment of stakeholders and a greater scope for innovation. Further benefits could be pooling endogenous resources, networking to allow mutual learning and an integrated acting to address complex economic and social issues. The capacity-building process is a key element in the implementation of LEADER.

But the European Court of Auditors claims in a special report (5/2010) about the "Implementation of the LEADER approach for rural development" that member states cannot entirely demonstrate the added value achieved by implementing LEADER and have not evaluated the additional costs and risks involved. The report admonishes to prove the added value achieved. Furthermore the court claims that LAGs have implemented the LEADER approach in ways that limit the potential for added value. In the special report there was found a need to improve the quality of local development strategies and their implementation through better LAG level monitoring and evaluation.

Does the intervention logic of the LEADER-approach works in the intended way and what are the results for rural development? Is the so called "added value" of the LEADER-approach traceable? And if yes, through which ways of implementation it could be optimised?

The findings of the evaluation of Rural Development Programs (RDPs) in six federal states in Germany with around 100 LEADER-Regions are used to examine the added value of the LEADER-approach. The judgements are based on a reflection of the implementation of EU-LEADER-principles at local level and on an assessment of results of different variations of implementation.

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Results of the LEADER-approach: findings from evaluation of LEADER-regions in Germany

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods has been used and the main instruments are:

I) More than 100 face-to-face interviews with project initiators, LAG managers, LAG members, government employees at different levels of responsibility; II) four surveys using written questionnaires: two for members of the LAG's decision bodies (in the years 2009 and 2013), one for LAG managers (2010) and another one for project beneficiaries (2012); III) standardised annual requests of activities and organisational structures in the LEADER areas and IV) an analysis of funding documents and funding data.

To show results of the LEADER-approach we will present analyses of the different surveys (also using analyses based on a connection of data from different surveys). To discuss the added value in the sense of a higher mobilisation of endogenous resources (looking in particular at the engagement of volunteers and other contributions from local actors) the presentation will focus on a comparison from LEADER-projects with similar non-LEADER-projects.

Altogether the LEADER approach was well implemented in the examined LEADER-regions and in general the LEADER-interventions logic works. But it is difficult to judge to which extend these results support rural development in context of further influential factors. At least an "added value" of the LEADER-approach was visible in different fields like better cooperation networks, integrative working together or in the mobilisation of activities of local actors.

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Abstract

The interdependence between local institutional settings and governance arrangements in LEADER

In recent decades rural development policy made a substantial shift from a sectoral top-down approach to a territorial and integrated approach, which aims to include a variety of sectors relevant for rural development and a variety of government levels and stakeholders. This was also expressed in the so called new rural paradigm formulated by OECD in 2006. One central element of this change is the emphasis given to bottom-up approaches and integrated network-like approaches at local level because such approaches are supposed to contribute more to a highly complex task like influencing rural development than approaches focussed solely on single sectors.

The LEADER approach was devised as one possibility to bring forward rural development.

LEADER started in 1991 (reissued up to now five times) and is now also offered to the structural funds as Community Led Local development (CLLD). LEADER is usually classified as a bottom-up oriented, participatory approach where a so called Local Action Group (LAG) composed of stakeholders from local government, civil society and economy steers the implementation of their local development strategy inter alia by deciding about funding of projects. LEADER is supposed to improve local governance and thus promote local development.

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The literature on the implementation of the LEADER is reasonably vast (see for example Granberg, Andersson und Kovách, 2015). Nevertheless studies focusing on the international geographical comparisons trying to understand the interaction between local actors and the surrounding institutional structures are hard to find. Examples are for instance Kull (Kull, 2014), who has investigated the multi-level governance in the LEADER+ programme in Germany and Finland and Rizzo (2013), who has carried out a geo-institutional comparison between LEADER implementation of two regions in Finnland and Italy. Thus little attention has been given up to now in the context of LEADER to the interdependency between government and governance.

As a conceptual frame, we developed an analysis-model of multi-level governance, which allows for an integrated perspective on governance arrangements at local levels and regulations at European and German Federal State Level. In this model, several interacting governance systems relevant for the implementation of LEADER can be identified:

1. The funding context with the European Commission setting the global frame while the Rural Development Programmes are supposed to serve adaption to the regional conditions.
2. The public administration context with the local government, which performs tasks and competences attributed to it by the federal or national government system.
3. The specific institutional context of the local organisations from civil society and economy involved in LEADER.

The paper focuses on the question, how the setting of local administration affects the local organisation of LEADER. The study explores possible implications of differences in local public administration between Germany, France and Italy as well as between different German federal states.

As a first step based on a literature review, hypotheses are drawn on how local government structures might

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The interdependence between local institutional settings and governance arrangements in LEADER

under different conditions manifest in governance structures like LEADER-groups. The empirical analysis is based on first results of case studies conducted as part of the TRUSTEE Project (Task: Governance of policy at a local level) and findings of LEADER evaluation in five German states.

Preliminary findings are that room for manoeuvre of local government in the area of rural development differ considerably between the administrative systems analysed. These variations contribute to explain differences in LAG composition as well as differences in the impact of LEADER e.g. on intermunicipal cooperation.

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Abstract

Investigating the heartbeat of rural development – metaphors of civic engagement in a rural development discourse

In Germany the demographic change is a major topic of current political and media debates. Demographic and economic shrinkage are consistently constructed as self-reinforcing negative processes that threaten peripheral rural areas. Against this backdrop several development programs have been initiated in recent years, testing innovative approaches for action and highlighting the potentials of civic engagement to counteract the presumed and actual negative effects. The abstract concept of civic engagement is in this context specified by an excessive use of metaphors. In doing so, engagement is marked as being of great significance for successful rural development processes. However, it remains unclear how the meanings produced in development programs are actually perceived by locally engaged people, and how a specific meaning is reflected in these people´s subjective visions and actions.

Taking the perspective of discourse theory the paper develops a methodological approach for an analysis of discursive ascriptions in specific subjectivities. More precisely, Foucault´s reflections on the statement are linked to the concept of cognitive metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson. The analysis can thus focus on both, the discursive processes of meaning constitution and subjectivisation. Within this focus the structural principle of metaphors provides an orientation for the interpretative-hermeneutical elaboration of meanings, while subject positions and courses of action allow a sensitive analysis of discursive ascriptions in specific subjectivities.

The application of this method shows how the link between discursive meanings of civic engagement and the subjectivities of locally engaged people in rural areas can be investigated empirically. Using the development programme LandZukunft as an example of a current rural policy discourse it can be shown how different meanings of civic engagement are constituted through metaphors. The subject positions in the metaphors create an inner and an outer perspective on civic engagement in rural areas from which various, sometimes contradictory, courses of action can be derived. These contrasts are, however, smoothed out by the metaphorical processes of highlighting and hiding, as well as by the semantic and argumentative interconnection of metaphors. This provides a harmonious picture of civic engagement in a rural development context. Looking at the local level of civic engagement this harmony breaks up again. Based on narrative interviews with locally engaged people it can be shown how discursive meanings of the policy discourse are incorporated and expanded in the process of subjectivisation. Thereby the discursive oppositions and inconsistencies are disclosed and strengthened.

In summary, the statement-oriented analysis of metaphors reveals the extent to which discursive meanings of civic engagement influence the subjectivity of engaged people. At the same time it shows how these discursive meanings are expanded and altered performatively in the process of subjectivisation. These new insights can contribute to a better understanding of the relations between rural development programs and locally engaged people in rural areas.

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Abstract

Investors on farmland markets in East Germany: actors, implications and control options

In the wake of the 2007 – 08 food crisis, we have seen the combined development of a rapid financialisation of agriculture with the expansion of large-scale corporate farming through large-scale land deals. The rapidly growing "appetite" for agriculture among financial investors is driven by a broad variability of factors, such as mounting risks in conventional stocks, the growing demand and prices for food, and the soaring subsidies for biofuel production. Whereas farming was long considered financially uninteresting, with the new conjuncture in financial firms, a range of farmland structures are now seen as a new, promising object of finance.

The profits that can be generated with the finite land resources have attracted large (non-agricultural) investors not only to Asia, Latin America and Africa, but also to Eastern Germany. Especially in the federal state of Brandenburg agricultural companies such as Lindhorst, Odega or KTG are farming areas of 30 000 hectares and more. The conditions in Brandenburg are particularly favourable by the legacy of the GDR regime, because the large-scale structure of the GDR agriculture with its huge production cooperatives remained largely intact after the reunification and was transferred to post-socialist, market economy operating companies. These structures can be cultivated efficient and lucrative due to their large sizes and the significant funding by the EU. Today the agricultural land in Brandenburg represents an attractive investment object. Through the willingness of the large companies to pay high prices for renting or buying agricultural land, the rates are rising continuously. Between 2007 and 2014, the purchase price has been tripled in Brandenburg.

The investments of the holdings mostly have a double objective: It is, on the one hand, a question of speculating on the rising value of the agricultural land and, on the other hand, of making profit from agricultural production. Usually, companies do not make complete acquisitions, but buy only business shares from companies. It is therefore difficult to quantify the share of these large companies, which is estimated by various stakeholders to be up to 30 % on average.

These processes have many different effects. In the interviews, the following points were mentioned:

- Land ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few foreign players.
- The possibilities for creating a sustainable regional development disappear.
- There is a decoupling of agriculture from the local value chains.
- The industrially farming leads to the decline of the villages.
- Less and less employees are needed in agriculture.
- Ecologically problematic monocultures are grown on large-scale fields.
- Local farmers, entrepreneurs and ecologically oriented farmers are disadvantaged in relation to the internationally active players.
- The land management is made anonymous.
- The democratic basis is eroding because of the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of fewer people.

Research questions: The aim is, to analyse and to scrutinize these processes in East Germany.

- Which are the drivers and attracting factors for the investors?
- Who is involved in those processes?
- What consequences do our interview partners mention?

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Investors on farmland markets in East Germany: actors, implications and control options

- Which regulatory mechanisms are suited to govern this development?
- Are the processes in Brandenburg comparable to the so-called landgrabbing, which we know from Africa, Latin America and Asia?

It can be assumed that the term “land grabbing” is mainly due to an effective media coverage. But especially for the smaller farms it becomes increasingly difficult to succeed because of the increasing land concentration. What is decisive is the question of what model we want to pursue for the agricultural structure in East Germany. It is only by means of a model that we are able to judge about whether it is in our sense that fertile land is traded on the stock market or whether social justice and a small agricultural structure are our goal.

25 qualitative interviews with key persons were conducted in Brandenburg from the sector of agriculture, administration, science and politics between the 24/05 – 31/05/2015. The focus has been on topics like structural change in agriculture, land market, land allocation, actors, effects and ways of regulating the process.

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Abstract

Living at "the end of the line": exploring everyday energyscapes in rural northwest Wales

Rural areas are the site and subject of fierce debate in the energy arena, provoking controversies regarding the installation of renewable and non-renewable power generation alike. While there has been extensive academic exploration of public attitudes toward landscapes of energy production, little attention has been paid to the everyday lives of rural households and their landscapes of energy consumption. Indeed, little is known about whether their forms of dwelling, time geographies and cultural practices have any implications for the consumption of resources and energy (Cowell, 2011).

Burdened with ageing and inefficient housing stock, the retraction of local services, and the limited distribution of the gas network (Milbourne, 2011), it is perhaps not surprising that rural dwellers face a series of considerable, inter-locking challenges in the coming transition to a low-carbon society. Such challenges are not limited to structural disadvantage alone however, as personal circumstances, which vary across the life-course and that differ from household to household, also play a significant role in shaping everyday energy use in the rural sphere.

Drawing on findings from an ESRC-funded doctoral project exploring how rural energy-consuming practices are patterned through the life-course, this paper focuses on the biographical narratives of participants living beyond the reach of the mains gas network. By engaging with things that matter to them – be that through valued relationships with places, significant others or with things – we can see that the ways in which they consume are deeply connected to ideas about who to be and how to live. This has particular implications for policy interventions in the rural sphere, given that practices bound up with valued identities and ideals may prove resistant to change.

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Notes:

Abstract

Playing and participating: engaging communities in ruraldevelopment through participology

Participatory planning has become increasingly prominent in the strategic and management processes of regional and rural development. Various means have been utilised to enable people to engage in the planning process, including e-participation, special stakeholders' forums and citizens' juries. In addition, online activities, including planning-related games, have become increasingly popular as a means of encouraging public participation in the planning process, often linked closely to the development of public participatory Geographical Information Science (GIS). Whilst games usually employ computer technology to simulate reality and utilise various methods to attract participants, there are also non-computer variants involving role-play to address a particular problem. These various 'serious' games allow stakeholders to take part in participatory exercises, intended to be enjoyable and engaging, and enabling consideration of 'real' issues affecting people's lives.

This paper focuses on a specific game, Participology, first developed recently in the United Kingdom (UK) by Alister Scott and colleagues as RUFopoly (from 'Rural Urban Fringe' and 'Monopoly') originally for a project funded by the UK's Joint Research Councils (the Rural Economy and Land Use [RELU] programme) about 'Managing environmental change at the rural-urban fringe'. Participology is a participatory-learning board game enabling players to undertake a journey, originally through a fictitious rural-urban fringe landscape, answering questions and making decisions on development challenges and place-making; those answers then inform each player's vision for the area. The game can use pre-designed landscapes with question grids, or a bespoke board that represents a real geographical context. Participants can use or adapt pre-loaded questions and scenarios that others have used before, or they can create their own questions based on scenarios, challenges and opportunities related to their own situation.

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Participology has been used especially in the early stages of projects and plans, such as the pioneering Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) spatial plan. It has been applied in various situations and also for educational purposes in the UK, Belgium, Sweden, the United States and Australia. It has been used by government, European Union project groups, local authorities, business, community groups, universities and schools, exposing audiences to issues associated with the delivery and trade-offs in the planning process and environmental issues. This paper will report on experiences of using Participology in three European countries: Belgium, Sweden and the UK, primarily as a tool in rural development exercises in rural-urban fringe locations.

The paper will consider how participatory methods, such as critical games and participatory GIS, are being used to democratise planning processes. However, it will be the specific example of Participology that will take centre stage, discussing the process whereby area-specific boards have been designed and how the game is played with key stakeholders for case study areas. In Belgium it has been used by Elke Rogge and Joost Dessein as an envisioning tool for future development in Flanders, and hence its renaming there as Visionary. The Visionary board was based directly on the rural-urban fringe around Brussels, with questions framed by real problems and opportunities in the area, initially as part of the IMAGO project. In Sweden, Participology has been applied to the rural-urban hinterland of Malmo in a project led by Matthias Qvistrom. A series of ten workshops with 5 – 40

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Playing and participating: engaging communities in ruraldevelopment through participology

participants per session to develop the game involved students, farmers (specifically including representatives of the farmers' association), local planners and politicians, local entrepreneurs, and researchers from planning and agriculture.

In the UK there have been multiple uses and applications of the game, illustrative of its versatility. The paper will refer to the following applications: by Natural Resources Wales to explore the implications of the Wales Environment Bill for management of natural resources; as a planning tool to help establish the foundations for plans, policies and programs by the Lewes Neighbourhood Committee (to help plan and manage the urban edge of Lewes, East Sussex), and by the South Downs National Park to consider strategic local green infrastructure issues. Applications in the West Midlands have included Climate KIC West Midlands' exploration of sustainability and climate issues, and the GBSLEP in designing 'a game of growth' as part of their consultation process for an emerging spatial plan.

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Abstract

The dynamics of energy networks for regional innovation

Networks play a crucial role in understanding social and economic phenomena. It is not only actors, may it be individuals or organisations, but other actors' influence and their interaction that substantially shape system transitions. Social network analysis has therefore been of scholarly interest for some time now, intending to catch the characteristics of networks that might explain their different outcomes and systemic impact. Transition studies, on the other hand, have tracked pathways of change in social and technological systems. By distinguishing hierarchical system levels from niche to regime, strategic niche management, transition studies, and the multi-level perspective have successfully been applied to explain system change (see, e.g., Andersson and Ostrom, 2008; de Haan and Rotmans, 2011; Hauber and Ruppert-Winkel, 2012; Hekkert et al., 2011).

However, we still know little about how and when social networks evolve over time, just as we lack an understanding of their integration within and the interrelation with the system under transition. We argue that overall system change is significantly carried and forwarded through networks and interaction that build on knowledge and other specific resources. In this paper, we approach a framework of the conditions and pathways of networks within a system that correspond to and form system dynamics. It integrates different levels of analysis from network analysis and transition management, considering their respective success factors, and conceptualises a dynamic network perspective. As empirical studies of regional transition processes are dominantly post-hoc evaluations, our framework allows formulating hypotheses on how network dynamics shape actual outcomes of regional transition processes. Tools of network analysis provide the means to test these hypotheses and to make (preliminary) ex ante claims on the mechanisms of how social networks for regional innovation form and evolve within a dynamic social process.

Doing so, we build on a recent publication by Schaffrin and Fohr (2016) using the perspective of dynamics of energy and innovation networks as a case to study. Innovations in the context of regional energy transition processes are understood as the implementation of new ideas, technologies, or solutions to the region which enables and stimulates a substantial process of regional development. We base our conceptual framework on a literature review of network theory, the social and technical transition perspective, and studies on success factors for regional energy transition processes. In a second step, we demonstrate the usefulness and conceptual soundness of the framework using empirical evidence from an ongoing research project on regional energy transitions. The framework then allows formulating hypotheses on different network dynamics. In a final step, we propose instruments from network analysis to empirically test these hypotheses and, thus, to verify our conceptual approach. This way, we provide a substantial contribution to both strands of research, the understanding of innovation network dynamics and the application of transition theory.

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Abstract

Draw me a sheep: a pedagogical tool to discover the complexity of rural planning

Since 2007, I regularly organise workshops with graduate students in geography or planning or with local politicians aiming to a better understanding of land use and country planning. I ask groups of four to six participants to elaborate their ideal village using blocks. During forty to sixty minutes, the participants discuss the town plan and functions, position buildings, draw roads and green areas and reflect on services, mobility, conflicts of neighbourhood. After this period of construction and discussion, the groups present their ideal village to the other groups and argue why they selected different functions and locations. Then I suggest a checklist to discuss what was taken into account and what was neglected. Some of the recurring statements are about equipment of the village offering a very large range of services, cultural prevalence such as positioning a church in the central market, negligence of the relief and natural constraints, rejection of farm outside the village... Other statements refer to the decision process.

Due to the ludic aspect, strengthened by the use of children toys, this exercise is a respiration in the curriculum of students. It allows them to assess their ability to act taking into account theory and examples seen in other classes and to become aware of some of their shortcomings. Nevertheless, the task is slightly rigged by the use of the fuzzy concept of "ideal village" and of an empty paper to build this village. Participants hesitate between fantasy and a perfect sustainable village according to reasonable means. They neglect natural constraints because these constraints are not defined.

Doing the same exercise with professionals or stakeholders of public area leads to the demonstration of the diversity of ways of imagining both lives in community and in the countryside.

Beside this pedagogical target, this exercise also produces a wealth of information for the researchers who want to understand decision making in planning and collect representations and desires regarding countryside and rural village today. In an ideal village, most of administrative, health and commercial services must be present to avoid frequent travels to the city, green spaces everywhere, plenty of transport opportunities, places for recreation and some heritage that gives identity and singularity to the locality. Curiously, workplace is frequently omitted.

This paper aims to encourage colleagues to do the same kind of exercise with their students or to use this tool in action research with stakeholders. When a majority of students are no longer familiar with the countryside, this exercise may help to grasp their preconceptions to adapt and target the learning objectives. From a political point of view, it allows listing the shortcomings and may help to increase the awareness of the countryside particularities, identities and the possible evolutions. Yet, the organiser has to pay attention to the context within which the exercise is performed because it strongly affects the result.

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Abstract

The geography of manure in northern Germany

This geography of manure deals with the use of organic “animal made” and artificial “energy made” fertilisers in agriculture. It is known how the available amount of natural fertilisers in correlation to the type, way and amount of animals kept has direct influence on agricultural systems and practices, field systems etc. and therefore on the landscape. The more and more sophisticated use of organic fertilisers in historical times and the use of chemical fertilisers since the early 20th century have tremendously altered the way agriculture was done and changed the landscape. In this paper I want to direct the attention to a newer phenomenon, the regional surplus of manure in areas of intensive livestock keeping in Central Europe, especially the Netherlands, northwestern Germany and Denmark. The northwest of Lower Saxony is the center of livestock farming in Germany. Since 2004 the subsidies for renewable energies have added a very successful development of biogas production in northern Germany. Both developments result in a very high production of liquid and solid manure as well as digestate. In several districts the amount of manure exceeds twice the available agrarian land for an ecologically justifiable deployment. This has led to the establishment of an intra-regional export system that transports the surplus manure for deployment to grain and sugar beet producing farms without or very limited live-stock keeping in eastern Lower Saxony and beyond into eastern Germany, where it substitutes mineral fertiliser.

After highlighting the problems the presentation discusses how a neglected agricultural byproduct has turned into a tradable and valued commodity. It then analyses the development of the intra-regional export value chain, with its network of actors who organise and govern this emerging part of the agricultural value chains of meat and energy production. The further aim of the paper is to conceptualise the observed problems and processes as well as the results from stakeholder interviews into a framework borrowing from concepts of economic geography, especially value chain and production network approaches.

Even so the starting point for this paper is a rather regional problem, it is nevertheless an important chain link for a better understanding of the food system, in order to foster a transition of agricultural production towards greater sustainability.

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Abstract

Occupational choice from a spatial perspective: some stylised facts and a micro foundation

The discussion on disparities in regional economic development is dominated by a demand-side perspective. Models from the New Economic Geography (NEG) form prominent examples as they integrate market size effects with ideas of restricted factor mobility (Krugman, 1998). In this perspective, expansion of a regional market leads to an increase in the range of goods produced within that region. While NEG models describe a self-enforcing process, on the models' micro-level markets are still perceived as given by producers. This type of models explains the development of agglomerations and peripheries, but provides little room for an understanding of more nuanced spatial patterns of production.

We ask, in how far a supply-side oriented model allows for a better explanation of the large observed variety in spatial economic structures. In our research, we apply an evolutionary supply-side perspective that allows for the possibility that demand is not exogenously given and markets are created by producers. In this perspective, labour markets, skill development, and skill application become relevant for the explanation of divergent regional development and a multiplicity of spatial equilibria is possible. Specific skills in this perspective determine the competitiveness and value creating power of local economies. Economically relevant skills develop in education and training as well as in work practice (Altonji, Blom, and Meghir, 2012) while management skills develop in the course of entrepreneurial activity.

Against this background, we ask in how far externally conditioned occupational choice, understood as the continuing process of the choice of a profession and the choice of a specific job or of entrepreneurial activities, can explain the development of specific skill ecosystems and of related regional disparities (Banerjee and Newman, 1993). We assume that a concise and comprehensive model that explains historically conditioned or path dependent developments has to rest on the recognition that valuable human capital and skills are themselves locally specific and restricted in their mobility.

Based on these assumptions, we develop a decision model that explains individual agents' occupational choice from a spatial perspective. In this model, agents integrate specific non-tradeable capital whose value partly depends on the location as well as non-specific, tradeable capital as inputs into their decision problem. On the output-side, agents not only consider monetary income elements but also non-monetary utility enhancing factors like the possibility to acquire additional skills. The agents' decision space depends on the monetary and non-monetary resources at their disposal. The value of non-tradable resources in this model depends on environmental factors like the local industry structure and labour market situation. From our decision model we deduce expectations concerning relationships between observables that concern for example vocational choices of young people in the centres and in the peripheries. We test our expectations with different data from secondary statistics.

We want to show that a supply-side driven model that explains economic success and the competitiveness of regions by patterns of development of locally specific and tradable skills is better able to reproduce the observed real-world variety in economic development than the more wide-spread demand-side driven models. We deduce expectations concerning region-level phenomena from our micro-level decision model and test these hypotheses with data from secondary

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Occupational choice from a spatial perspective: some stylised facts and a micro foundation

statistics. We expect for example to explain spatial disparities in the share of high-school (Gymnasium) absolvents, or of young people that enter the dual system of vocational training by the regions' firm and industry structure and by present skill and income levels. Further we expect to find that specifically in the peripheries, this initial occupational choice tends to determine agents' mobility and further careers as well as their entrepreneurial activity. In our model disparities are being created by agents' heterogeneity in endowment with material and immaterial resources whose quality and value depend on the specific local environment. Therefore the process of skill accumulation and of economic development is path-dependent and self-enforcing.

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Abstract

Do disappearing infrastructure and services represent a declining provision or an increasing optimisation? The case study of Argeș County (Romania)

Current paper presents a study on the dynamics of disparities in infrastructure and service provision in rural LAU-1 of Arges County (Romania). Increasing disparities and disappearing of service provision as overall figures may be caused by both the effects of population re-arrangement due to post-socialist transformations in Romanian economy and the impact of 2008 global economic crisis. At the same time, when looking into detail, one may observe appearance of new forms and strategies in infrastructure and public service provision, as well as new needs.

Disparities has been long represented the focus of geographical research, whilst the most recent approaches come from the 'new economic geography' (Martin, Sunley, 2011). Although the relationships between public policy, spatial inequalities at regional and local level and economic development has been largely studied in the past (Dupont, Martin, 2006; Martin, 1999), there is little evidence about joint effect of post-socialist transformations and economic crisis on the efficiency of public infrastructure and service provision.

In our paper we answer three research questions: (i) What is the effect of post-socialist transformations on infrastructure and service provision in the rural area of a former socialist country? (ii) What are the new forms of local associations created to answer the challenges of post-socialist transformations and economic crisis? (iii) Are public service and infrastructure in a post-socialist country disappearing or being under optimisation.

We involve statistical analysis in order to find relationships between the indicators of infrastructure and public service development, on the one hand, and population distribution and economic performance, on the other hand. Among the used indicators one should mention: natural gas pipeline lengths and consumption, drinking water pipeline length and consumption, sewage disposal, road infrastructure development, hospital and education infrastructure development, population distribution, economic performance of local companies etc. Our data cover the period starting from 2001 and up to the newest available data. In our analysis we use descriptive and exploratory statistical methods, pair-wise comparison and multi-criteria assessments, cluster and factorial analysis etc.

Inequalities in population distribution lead towards inequalities in infrastructure and public service provision. Overall figures related to infrastructure and service has been following the declining trend. However, when looking into details, the spatial pattern of the quality of services provided is quite fragmented, with improving and worsening trends.

Among the new forms of associations, appeared as a respond to modern challenges, one should mentions Groups of Local Actions (GAL, in Romanian), which represent initiatives to create local partnerships with participation of several local public authorities, in order to have an easier access to programs of common interest. The major driving force of these association forms is represented by National Programme for Rural Development, which provides necessary assistance and even labour for GALs to operate efficiently.

In conclusion, our results highlight the impact (usually, negative) of post-socialist transformation and 2008 economic crisis on public infrastructure and service provision in rural area of Arges County (Romania) as well as the rise of new forms of local association, appeared as a local communities' respond to

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Do disappearing infrastructure and services represent a declining provision or an increasing optimisation? The case study of Argeș County (Romania)

challenges caused by the evolution of national economy. Our results can be extrapolated in order to help in understanding of the processes at the local level in Romania's countryside. At the same time, they can serve for comparison of the ways the other former socialist countries respond to modern challenges.

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Abstract

From grassroots initiatives to urban food system governance? Case studies in Montpellier and Toulouse, southern France

The scientific literature on urban food planning highlights the role of micro-initiatives in the activation of an urban food system. There is a composite landscape of conventional and alternative initiatives, informal and instituted, embedded in a global movement that is difficult to discern. In this maelstrom of initiatives and changes, it is difficult to understand these changes if we consider usual research fields, such as farms, food supply chains, urban planning, or public policies. In order to capture the reality of change, we have to mix them. One methodological track is to identify the dynamics of change which is taking place, and the type of food governance that is emerging.

Understand how an urban food system is changing invites us to look at how the new initiatives and projects are introduced, deployed or competed, and how they evolve towards an increasing institutionalisation. The aim is to describe the process of emergence of a territorial governance, based on multiple and intersected pathways between a multitude of initiatives. In this context, some scholars (Cohen & Illieva, 2014 ; Banzo et al, 2016) pose the hypothesis that their accumulation and synergies, could be the base of transitioning pathways towards sustainable urban food strategies. According Wiskerke and Viljoen (2011), the analysis of this food movement must link three spheres of action: civil society through grassroots initiatives, public action through laws and public supports; and private actors mainly structured around agri-food markets.

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It is therefore relevant to characterise the diversity of grassroots initiatives from the perspective of evaluate their contributions to the urban food system, according to: the components of the food system they activate or not; the change effects they produce; the organisational links between actors that they offer or not.

We defined an “action” as an actual or a projected realisation, using different resources (human, technical, financial), to obtain an objective. We focused on the actions in favour of the maintenance or the renewal of food production in and close to cities. Each action was classified according to its objective(s), among seven objectives defining smart agriculture in the European Taste project funding this research. To inventory such actions, we consulted existing documentation, local newspapers and websites, complemented by interviews to several local actors and organisations. We made these inventories on two case studies conducted at the scale of the metropolitan area: in Montpellier, we identified 415 initiatives and we conducted 19 interviews; in Toulouse, we identified 262 initiatives, we conducted 21 interviews.

In each case study, we observe that the largest number of initiatives is related to food supply via the direct connection between producers and consumers. The second one is related to social inclusion.

In Montpellier, in relation with the local food policy, we help the local decision makers to know the contributions of these initiatives to sustainability. We evaluate the dimensions that are combined in different kinds of initiatives, a result that help local people to design a local information system connecting these initiatives in order to share knowledge and experiences.

In Toulouse, our interviews highlight different forms of gathering between actors, and in particular between civil society and public actions contributing to an urban food policy. The Advisory Council of Toulouse Metropole gathered different NGO, chosen by

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From grassroots initiatives to urban food system governance? Case studies in Montpellier and Toulouse, southern France

cooptation, in order to propose food and urban open space policy. But NGOs play another role: they propose various resources, like technical skills, time to dedicate to the initiatives, but also networking, that help the public authorities to build and manage innovative transversal policies.

Our work in Toulouse and Montpellier highlights the emerging process of food governance at city level. Our observations corroborate scholars constatations of the role, both significant and unstable, of local micro-initiatives in food transition and their connections with the institutional food policies.

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Abstract

The impact of the renewable energies "wind energy, photovoltaic and bioenergy" on cultural landscapes – development of a new evaluation method

The article will review the impact of the use of renewable energy sources on cultural landscapes as part of the landscape change. Based on a newly developed evaluation method for the energy sources wind energy, photovoltaic and bioenergy, results of empirical studies on a number of geographical subspaces in Germany will be presented. I will show, that in practice, conflicts arising from the development of renewable energy sources could have been anticipated at the planning stage through said evaluation method.

The significantly increased utilisation of cultural landscapes in recent years has fuelled a discussion about the value of landscapes. In focus lies on the benefit of landscapes and landscape services [cf. Grunewald, K. et al. 2013]. Older theoretical approaches, like for example the approach of ecosystem services [cf. Costanza, R. et al. 1997] have regained attention, and keep developing both in content and methodology.

The article uses theses theoretical approaches of landscape services, develops an evaluation method for the renewable energy sources mentioned above, and, in order to validate it, applies it to case studies. It aims both at anticipating conflict situations at the planning stage of renewable energies, and at an environmentally compatible integration of the use of these energy sources into the cultural landscapes.

Therefore the main questions of the presentation are:

- Which services are provided by specific landscapes, specifically against the background of a change in landscape use?
- How does the use of renewable energies influence the ability of cultural landscapes to provide services?
- How sensitively do specific cultural landscapes react to the use of renewable energies?

In both the presentation and the paper, the theoretical approaches, the evaluation method, selected empirical practices and results will be illustrated.

I will associate known impacts of renewable energies with landscape services. A new evaluation method will be deduced by assessing aspects of conflicting uses, landscape individuality, variety in structure and harmony with nature. By defining operational criteria for each of these aspects this new evaluation method gains practical relevance. An integrated view of the impact of all the three energy sources, wind energy, photovoltaic and bioenergy, on cultural landscapes is therefore possible.

The evaluation method uses methodologies of geoinformatics, ecology and human geography to assess the impact on landscapes. The sensitivity of the cultural landscape in relation to the various criteria is the most relevant point of the evaluation.

Subsequently the procedure will be used on examples in several regions in North Rhine-Westphalia, in Saxony-Anhalt and in Brandenburg for all three energy sources. The empirical results will be shown as examples to validate the evaluation method. Finally I will formulate specific findings several regions and for specific landscape services.

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Notes:

Abstract

Coping capabilities and service use of the elderly: findings from rural Germany

The decline in public and private services for basic needs used to be a major concern of rural studies in the past years, particularly with regard to peripheral rural areas facing socio-economic distress, outmigration and demographic ageing (e.g. Fischer 2014). Among the groups thought to be most vulnerable to the loss of services close-by and their concentration in central places, usually the older-age generations are identified. Particularly for the social groups of the "oldest-old", participation in rural life is strongly facilitated by participating in the use of public and private services. With increasing age, limited (auto)mobility and diminishing social networks, it is argued that socio-spatial peripheralisation translates into social marginalisation or even exclusion.

Yet, open research questions emerge both theoretically and empirically. In a theoretical perspective, applying the Capability Approach (Sen 1992 and 1993) seems promising as it combines both structural and individual factors to understand the actors' capabilities which are composed of financial means as well as personal and social conversion factors (Robeyns 2006). Participation in social life certainly depends on these capabilities but whether the capability approach – that had been developed with respect to non-welfare states – adds new insights to the rural inequalities debate, is to be analysed. In an empirical perspective, comparative analyses between different types of rural areas are still missing. Thus, one might expect that also in more prosperous rural areas, exclusion from participation in service consumption might occur. One hypothesis is that it is the size and reliability of social networks and automobility (i.e. social factors) rather than the socio-economic and demographic structure of certain areas (i.e. the socio-spatial context) that explain for social exclusion. Another hypothesis is that in peripheralised areas coping capabilities are more developed on a common rather than on an individual basis due to the necessity to pool the resources available.

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The research questions that the paper wants to answer are as follows:

- How can rural studies conceptualise coping capabilities in light of the capability approach? Is it applicable to European welfare states?
- How do different groups of elderly (e.g. more or less mobile, younger and older, individuals and couples) cope with the different availability and accessibility of public and private services for basic needs in their region?
- Beyond age, which role do further factors of social stratification (economic resources, social networks, qualification) play for service participation?
- Does the older population of different types of rural areas also have different capability sets available? Which role do different degrees of rurality, on the one hand, and different socio-economic context conditions, on the other, play?

In methodological terms, the research questions will be addressed by using data from a large-scale standardised questionnaire survey taking place in autumn 2016 in four different types of rural areas in Germany. The types differ according to their degree of rurality and their socio-economic conditions. As of October 2016, no results can be presented yet as the empirical research is still ongoing.

The paper wants to add new insights both to the rural ageing debate (Wahl 2005) as well, and more crucially, to the question of the overlapping of socio-spatial

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Coping capabilities and service use of the elderly: findings from rural Germany

peripherialisation and social marginalisation in rural areas of a European welfare state.

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Abstract

Challenges of small towns in Romania – heading towards a rural future?

Even if, generally, at an international level, they are considered as transitional elements between rural and urban, it seems that in Romania many of the small towns belong mostly to the rural environment, by their morphology, structure and functionality. At present, there is a number of 225 small towns (of less than 20 000 inhabitants), that represent 70 % of the urban network, grouping together 10% of the country's population. The major part of these (75 % of the total) received the status of town before 1989, by administrative decision. After the year 1990, a number of 57 small towns were declared (the majority of them after the year 2002), in spite of the fact that many of them did not meet the minimal conditions set out in the legislation, having multiple rural characteristics (like the high numbers of population working in agriculture, poor level of infrastructure, etc.). At the same time, some of the existing towns (from before 1989), were affected by a severe decline caused by the closing down of many of the industrial units, which determined a functional and structural reconfiguration. The inappropriate economic and development policies determined their "ruralisation", becoming true "repulsive" areas for the surroundings, not able to maintain their population or to attract new population.

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In Romania, with few exceptions, most of the research focuses on case studies. Recently, the issue of small towns has started to be taken into consideration for the Spatial Planning of the National Territory and one proposal made was to introduce a new category, that of the town with rural characteristics.

- Where can small towns from a morphological and functional point of view be included: into the urban or the rural category?
- Why has the attainment of the town status not led to their development?
- What is the future of small towns with rural characteristics?
- What kind of policies/strategies can determine their development?

For the elaboration of this paper, a complex methodology was used, following several stages:

- the study of the characteristics of small towns, the calculation of a few representative indicators and the creation of some typologies;
- identification of the degree of fulfilment of the minimal indicators set out in the legislation for the status of town;
- elaboration and calculation of a synthetic index (rurality index, through the aggregation of more representative indicators) and identifying the towns with the highest degree of rurality;
- study of the development policies regarding small towns;
- presentation of case studies, focused on towns with high level of rurality, including the comparison with the adjacent rural areas.

Most of the small towns are facing countless problems, related to infrastructure (lack of a sewage system or only partial connection to the system), lack of minimal services, fragmented built-up area, demographic aging and depopulation, population affected by poverty, pollution etc. Throughout the years, the development policies at the central level have been directed mainly towards the big cities, and so the small towns were "forgotten". As a consequence of the lack of investment by the state, many of the small towns no longer meet the minimal basic conditions that define the

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Challenges of small towns in Romania – heading towards a rural future?

status of town. They feature rural characteristics, and sometimes have poorer facilities than the surrounding rural areas (that benefited from rural development funds). The results obtained by calculating the rurality index highlight the fact that the highest degree of rurality, with a few exceptions, is characteristic to the towns whose status was declared after the year 2000 or/and to those which had an agro-industrial profile.

Many of the small towns in Romania feature rural characteristics, and no longer meet the minimal conditions equivalent to the status of town. This highlights the failure of the public policies but also the fact that, especially after the year 2001, the appearance of new towns (with a few exceptions) was accomplished mainly by political will. Their future is uncertain, even more so because some of the local communities are looking for solutions to return to the status of rural localities (in order to access the European funds for rural development).

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Notes:

Abstract

Non-agricultural investors in German agricultural companies

While the purchase of agricultural land in Germany is subject to administrative approval, capital shares in agricultural companies can be bought without equivalent control. Non-agricultural investors might use this as a way to indirectly obtain property rights over farmland. Law amendments are discussed, though there is little evidence about the actual relevance of non-agricultural investors. The aim of this research is to assess the extent of non-agricultural investors' activities in agricultural companies, as well as their effects on agricultural structures and rural areas.

With the help of expert interviews, characteristics were found which are essential for the assessment as "non-agricultural" investors. For this investigation, "share ownership" was defined as capital shares in companies which are obliged to reveal their ownership structure in public registers.

In regional case studies, commercial farms which have these legal forms were examined with respect to the kind of shareholders and changes in their composition since 2007. Since then data have been registered in the Electronic Trade Register and are accessible on-line. Further research was made in the DAFNE database of commercial enterprises, by which further activities of the shareholders could be examined.

Results from the interviews show that "non-agricultural investors" are not a homogeneous group. Essential characteristics are the industrial background of the investors, their place of residence, the extent of their overall investment in the agricultural sector, and majority ratios in the share capital. With these criteria, expressed in terms of binary attributes, examined companies were classified into eight different case groups.

In a first series of five case studies it could be shown that activities of non-agricultural investors are mostly confined to the East-German, new federal states. In West Germany, if there are any agricultural legal entities at all, farmers themselves are shareholders in these companies. Consequently, a second series of more extended case studies covering eight East German administrative districts (Landkreise) was conducted.

Case study results show that the importance of investors differs between the regions. In two regions of the federal state Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 34 per cent of the agricultural area cultivated by legal entities belongs to supra-regional investors (i. e. shareholders in more than one company, living more than 50 km away from the company's place). Nearly half of these shareholders are close to agriculture (mostly farmers from other federal states), the other half are non-agricultural investors from a wide range of industrial sectors. The larger part of this area belonged to these investors before 2007, but nearly one third was taken over via share deals between 2007 and 2014. In six other regions in Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia, shares of supra-regional investors and acquisition activities in recent years were much lower.

Expert interviews revealed that external investors have both positive and negative effects. While the farms regularly gain competitiveness, their product range and job numbers are often reduced. Effects on the rural region depend much on the behaviour of the individual investor. Further research is necessary on the effects of super-regional agricultural holdings which have increased recently.

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Notes:

Abstract

A house of one's own – materialisation of the rural idyll?

What makes a living "rural" and what are the specifics of rural lifestyles? Rural studies oscillate between a structural perspective focused on aspects of distance and population density or the cultural perspective with the analysis of rurality "in mind" and in discourse as the thriving research on the "Rural Idyll" exemplifies.

Theoretical approaches within the practical turn want to overcome the inherent conflations in the dichotomy "culture vs. structure" by opening up the sociological perspective towards the culturally informed production of (material) structures and their impact. Actor-network theory for example is thriving throughout environmental and urban studies. I argue that this perspective is likewise fruitful for the analysis of rural societies because it draws attention to the influence of spatial and material structures on society and the allegedly 'specifically rural' configuration of the social.

Drawing on Bruno Latour's (2005) work I want to analyse how the Eigenheim, the house of one's own, is such a materialisation of (rural) culture, in which way it influences human action and in what way this perspective can provide a benefit beyond existing theoretical approaches.

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The paper is based on 32 semi-structured interviews with women living in four small villages throughout Germany. The interviews were analysed with the documentary method. Supplementing material from a standardised survey serves to contrast rural and urban housing patterns.

In contrast to housebuilding practices from urban regions (empirica 2014, Wagner & Mulder 2000), in the sample of this study the biographical phase of family formation and housebuilding fall together and the house is strongly connected to married family life. Oftentimes, the building of the house serves as a test-phase before marriage and is, so to say, a materialisation of a couple's conflicts, compromises and a shared orientation towards the future.

The house itself can be seen as an "actant" influencing further life course decisions, sometimes to an unforeseeable extend or direction. Especially women's employment decisions are connected to housebuilding and its economic foundation.

The women interviewed, albeit to a differing extend, use a rural-urban distinction regarding questions of belonging and identity and this also influences the practice of housebuilding and family formation.

To focus on the material components of the social, the making thereof and their influence on human action serves as a valuable broadening of an overly "discourse-oriented" approach. Although often applied to problem-oriented research, such as global warming or rural conflicts, ANT also serves to entangle the configurations of everyday life which can thus be understood more thoroughly and beyond categories like class or gender. In total, three key dimensions of praxeological approaches, practice, discourse and material can be brought together to sketch a comprehensive picture of the situation of the women interviewed.

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Abstract

Social farming (SF) in the Barcelona periurban area: a social and ecological urban agriculture alternative

The Barcelona metropolitan area (BMA) has 3 297 km^2 and 5 million inhabitants (2015), but still has major areas of abandoned agricultural land, some of which is part of protected natural areas or used for intensive farming. The peri-urban zone is an area of constant land-use conflict because of the demand for transportation and utilities infrastructure. Therefore, it was considered necessary to plan for specific "agricultural park" areas and legally protect them from urbanisation (Parc Agrari del Baix Llobregat, 47.08 km^2; Parc Agrícola de Sabadell, 5.87 km^2 or Consorci Agrari de Gallecs, 7.34 km^2, among others). This protection has facilitated that third social sector (TSS) has promoted social farming (SF) projects, with direct or indirect public support, mostly local governments. These projects are geared to providing employment for people at risk of social exclusion and engaging them in agricultural production using agroecological principles and targeting the locally-sourced market. We could define SF as a set of experiences that use local, agricultural and/or natural resources to promote health, employment and the empowerment of groups at risk of exclusion and in need of therapeutic or rehabilitation processes. These groups would include prisoners and former prisoners, people living with poverty, drug addiction, domestic or gender violence, and other socially vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities, immigrants or the homeless. In addition, the presence of these SF activities has contributed to innovation, multifunctional agriculture and the emergence of new local development strategies. This study describes the overall process of SF development in the BMA and in Catalonia, as well as various specific experiences selected from the database of 150 cases that was created using qualitative and quantitative methodology. "Business Model Canvas" (BMC) and "Social Return on Investment" (SROI) are currently being applied to analyse the merits of economic and social investments in each SF project.

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Notes:

Abstract

Heritage protection, tourism and rural development in the Alpujarra: initiatives and challenges in a mediterranean mountain area (Sierra Nevada, Spain)

In many regions of Southern Europe, especially in Mediterranean mountain areas, processes of rural change have occurred relatively late but recently show quite dynamic and diverse responses to changing socioeconomic contexts. The long-lasting isolation favoured the conservation of a rich natural and cultural heritage that is increasingly discovered as an important resource for rural development. Remote mountain valleys of difficult access and hard living conditions are threatened by a continuing loss of population. Traditional land use systems, that survived the industrialisation of agriculture, are confronted with demographic decline and top-down processes of nature protection. Emigration and abandonment of agricultural land, as well as the arrival of visitors and new residents and the declaration of protected areas, are reflected in current processes of landscape change.

Sierra Nevada, the highest part of the Cordillera Bética in Andalusia, has attracted the attention of scientists from different disciplines to study processes of rural change over several decades, with a focus shifting from mountain agriculture to tourism and the protection of nature, architecture and historic elements of the cultural landscape. The territory of Sierra Nevada is split up into two provinces and several districts, official tourism destinations and categories of protected areas. On the southern slopes, between more than 3 000 m high mountains and the Mediterranean coast, about 60 small municipalities form the Alpujarra, belonging to the provinces of Granada and Almería and two Local Action Groups of the European Leader programme. The change of the Alpujarra's image from a backward rural area to an attractive mountain countryside favours further initiatives to promote tourism. Even those municipalities that previously did not consider themselves being part of the Alpujarra have gained interest in participating and receive new impulses.

The objective of this paper is to present and discuss the results of own empirical research work about the interrelationship between processes of heritage protection, tourism promotion and landscape change in the Alpujarra on the background of recent scientific publications about rural development, conflicts and challenges in Sierra Nevada and Mediterranean mountain areas in general. From 2014 to 2016, three visitor surveys and a great number of interviews with local actors were carried out in the Alpujarra to find out more about the recent evolution, structures, problems and trends of rural tourism, with a special focus on the interaction with traditional economic activities and protection initiatives. In order to compare the results with former studies, the municipalities of the upper Alpujarra of Granada were chosen for the empirical research work. The findings are also compared with own studies in other parts of the Alpujarra in 2016.

Processes of heritage valorisation and the rise of rural tourism in the Alpujarra stimulate each other. Some municipalities of the western Alpujarras have received more socioeconomic dynamism by the growth of tourism and have preserved best their traditional architecture, but at the same time, they are the most affected by the decline of the traditional agricultural system. A well-preserved natural and cultural heritage also attracts neo-rural residents and second-home owners, triggering processes of naturbanisation. Surveys of travelers in the Alpujarra show the importance of landscape as the main factor of attraction, but different visitor groups have different preferences and perceptions of the landscape.

Notes:

Abstract – continued

Heritage protection, tourism and rural development in the Alpujarra: initiatives and challenges in a mediterranean mountain area (Sierra Nevada, Spain)

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The focus of scientific research on rural development in the Alpujarra is highly concentrated on just a few villages, and local differences are not taken into account sufficiently. The saturation of some places contrasts with the absence of tourism in large part of the Alpujarra. A comparative analysis of the municipalities shows considerable regional disparities and local singularities within the Alpujarra. The processes of local specialisation and diversification are going on. Many scientific studies on rural development and tourism, and also most touristic guide books, neglect the eastern part of the Alpujarra, which recently is promoted as the “Unknown Alpujarra”.

Restrictions and opportunities given by different forms of protecting natural and cultural heritage are important items of public debate in the area. The thematic focus, the evolution in time and the spatial overlapping and superposition of different initiatives to protect natural and cultural heritage in the Alpujarra are very complex, and approaches lead up to a recent proposal to declare the landscape of the upper part of the Alpujarra as UNESCO World Heritage.

Notes:

Abstract

Revitalising Ireland's rural economy: challenges and opportunities

Ireland remains one of the most rural countries in western Europe with extensive areas characterised by comparatively very low population densities and weak economic structures. Nevertheless, the aggregate rural population has increased in recent decades, though unevenly, due to the interaction of a complex array of factors.

Sectoral adjustments in the national economy resulting in different employment patterns, social changes contributing to considerably increased female participation rates in the workforce outside the home and lower fertility rates, and widespread car ownership have collectively contributed to increased urbanisation, expansion of commuter hinterlands especially around the largest urban centres, some counter-urbanisation and rural repopulation, but also continuing population decline in extensive parts of the west and northwest. These changes are accompanied by increasing differentiation between areas with more youthful populations, less traditional household compositions, higher education attainment levels, and greater integration into the knowledge based economy, and on the other hand sparsely settled rural areas with ageing populations often living alone, where provision of public and private services and employment opportunities are contracting.

The geography of population changes between 2002 and 2011 in the Republic of Ireland was very uneven with the most rapid increases in the peri-urban and longer distance commuter zones while decline continued in sparsely settled and remote western coastal areas and also in some inland districts in the southwest and midlands. Increases were also evident in towns located adjacent to the principal national roads and in coastal rural areas in the southeast and also in distinctive landscapes along the west coast. The demographic and employment trends will be updated in Q3 2017 following the release of data from the 2016 Census of Population.

In September 2012 the government established a Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA). The primary task given to CEDRA was to identify strategic initiatives to enable rural areas to contribute sustainable national economic growth and development in the future. The processes of consultation, analysis, deliberation and formulation of recommendations that CEDRA employed will be examined. Particular attention will be given to the conceptual and practical issues that arose in defining the geographical extent and sectoral scope of the rural economy, the challenge of identifying functional rural areas beyond the hinterland of the main cities and large towns, and the administrative constraints that impede the implementation of an integrated approach to rural economic development.

The paper will address what progress has been achieved in addressing key institutional issues concerning governance and oversight of multiple strategies to support rural areas. It will also review progress on the implementation of the relatively novel spatial concept (in the Irish context) of rural economic development zones (REDZs), and also the challenges encountered in the provision of broadband as a key enabling resource.

The economic development of rural Ireland will be considered again in 2017 in the context of a Rural Employment Action Plan and a new National Planning Framework. The content, implementation and implications of these most recent in initiatives will be considered in the concluding part of the paper.

Notes:

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Abstract

Energy transition and upheaval – the impact of grid extension and wind turbine plants in rural Germany

The promotion of renewably sourced energy has for some years played a significant role in Germany's social and spatial development, and the accelerated phasing-out of nuclear power plants in the wake of the Fukushima reactor disaster of March 2011 has lent the process added urgency. Today it is a key political issue on both national and local level.

The growth in the number of photovoltaic and wind-turbine plants has brought the further challenge of transporting the power they produce. The existing grid is insufficient for this task, especially with regard to bringing electricity generated in windy northern Germany to the energy hungry south. Rural areas are particularly affected by the new power plants, as well as by the transport systems they require. These are welcomed by certain groups, both as investment opportunities in the shape of civic wind-turbine parks, energy development associations etc., and as direct sources of income – e.g. for farmers and landowners, or (in the case of wind parks) as tourist attractions. And although high voltage grid corridors offer no such individual economic incentives, their essential contribution to power provision is widely accepted. On the other hand, both new wind parks and new grid corridors excite massive protest, above all from rural civic associations concerned about the 'destruction of the home environment', 'undermining of village life' and 'disfigurement of the countryside' they see as arising from these projects, as well as about their (negative) impact on tourism and the natural environment. Existing tasks and functions – and hence, too, their representatives – are caught up in this turmoil, which is additionally fuelled by fears of losing the safe haven of local values and traditions in an increasingly globalised world. The transformational processes of the German energy transition are, then, by no means free from conflict.

Taking a discourse theory research perspective, the presentation will look at processes of change in rural Germany brought about by the energy transition, with particular reference to grid extension and wind-generated power. What patterns of argument are adduced for and against these developments? What demands do civic initiatives make? Where is resistance strongest? What (spatial) ideas and ideals dominate the debate?

Notes:

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Abstract

Learning rural areas: refugees as drivers of economic and social change in Lower Bavaria, Germany

In light of civil war and political persecution in the Middle East and on the African continent, a huge number of asylum seekers arrived in Germany in the last five years. According to a specific dispersal scheme, they are distributed all over the country in both urban and rural areas. Within the latter regions, they contribute to various processes of change on local and regional level. While consequences of immigration of asylum seekers on receiving societies as topic of interest was formerly addressed in case studies mainly carried out in the urban context (Sim & Bowes 2007), studies in rural contexts constitute an exception (cf. Stenbacka 2013 or Radford 2016).

Aiming at shedding light on consequences of immigration of asylum seekers on rural societies, a case study was carried out in rural Southern Germany in 2016, i.e., the Bavarian forest in Lower Bavaria. The region was chosen as a site of study as it has comparatively less experiences with immigration – apart from ethnic German immigrants (after WW2) and a few Eastern European migrants after EU enlargement (since the end of 2000s). In demographic terms, the study region is challenged by demographic change and age-selective out-migration of younger cohorts in particular, while economic restructuring resulted in a strong dependency on tourism. Inspired by the concepts of "everyday multiculturalism" (Radford 2016) and "regional learning processes" (Stenbacka 2013), the paper aims to illustrate how refugees act as drivers for change in economic and social terms.

Empirical data were collected by means of expert interviews with representatives from various realms of society (e.g. local politics and actors involved in social affairs) as well as a quantitative survey with recognised refugees. Depicting structural drivers that encouraged refugees to stay in rural areas, this survey identified their role on local and regional development in this certain region.

Results indicate that refugees encourage change in various realms:

Firstly, they become active stakeholders on rural housing markets and landlords are able to let those flats to recognised refugees (and their families), which could not be let beforehand. Furthermore, it is also possible to reactivate vacant hotels and boarding houses, which dropped out of the market because of investment bottlenecks or lacking successors. It is also worth to note that local politicians engage in housing affairs and provide flat databases or appoint persons within administration responsible for caring for acquisition of flats in order to facilitate refugees' access to the housing market.

Secondly, refugees alter local economic structures. They do not only spend money deriving from public welfare in the community (especially in discount grocery stores and low budget clothing stores), but also demand for specific foodstuff. As a consequence, new shops specialized in, for instance, Arabic groceries are established. Furthermore, some existing shops adapted to refugees' demands.

Thirdly, refugees counteract consequences of demographic change. Due to the immigration of young children required to attend public schools, the number of pupils increased and local educational establishments do not have to be closed down. The same is true for local clubs and associations that benefit from new members, which helps keeping local cultural activities alive. Furthermore, refugees encourage the activation of

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Abstract – continued

Learning rural areas: refugees as drivers of economic and social change in Lower Bavaria, Germany

volunteers, especially retirees, who have a huge amount of allocatable free time. The volunteers form new associations or alter the orientation of existing ones.

Fourthly, refugees ignite a debate about diversity and intercultural capacity building in rural areas. Local elites get increasingly involved in issues such as intercultural understanding and intercultural encounters. Politicians appoint Commissioners for integration on local and regional level as well as network managers to pool knowledge and information about refugees for volunteers. Even municipalities, which did not receive refugees yet, prepare for the accommodation by forming helping circles.

To conclude, immigration of refugees to rural areas and the potential benefits for the region cannot be understood without revealing local peculiarities (e.g. the housing market, former and current experiences with regard to diversity, the attitude of local elites) and interdependencies with wider societal and economic transformation processes, i.e., globalisation, structural change in tourism or demographic change.

Notes:

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Abstract

"Baukultur" (management of cultural/architecture heritage) in the revitalisation of areas in small and medium-sized rural towns with declining populations

In integrated urban areas, revitalisation projects involving changes in a town's development and a functional realignment are part of both the (physical) townscape and the town's development process. For this reason, they provide good examples of the built environment and the way it is handled – and thus of local "Baukultur". From the point of view of applied geography this normative concept com-prises various dimensions of design and process quality. Its relevance from both a planning and a political point of view can be derived from the current renaissance in discussions on building culture at national, regional and municipal levels.

In shrinking small and medium-sized towns, which have not so far been systematically researched as regards the connection between "Baukultur" and revitalisation projects, the potential for space and for re-utilisation will continue to increase. Also, specif-ic attributes are being assigned to them, as regards urban structure and design and planning culture, which (may) lead to a specific local "Baukultur". Building structures in town centres are places where local history and local or regional "Baukultur" can be recognised. Thus they are seen as an important ele-ment of urban development.

At the same time, and because of demographic decline, the overall conditions for municipalities to shape their future are changing. This is resulting in new challenges for urban and project development which, in view of the importance of small and medi-um-sized towns for rural areas, are becoming more pronounced.

The research project ties in with spatial and planning science-related discussions on "Baukultur" which is comprehend as a factor of local and regional devel-opment. It finds a basis in cultural landscape manage-ment as an area of research in human geography: On one hand it takes up the subject of "Baukultur" with analytical and methodical approaches to making an inventory and an appraisal of the elements and struc-tures of cultural landscapes; and, on the other hand, it makes use of reflexive and constructivist approach-es. The subject relates to planning science from both angles. Regarding the small and medium-sized towns it is so far also anchored in rural spatial research.

The research project was guided by the following ques-tions:

- Which implicit and explicit influences on "Baukultur" arise during project development?
- How can revitalisation projects contribute to good municipal building culture, as one compo-nent in urban development, under conditions of decline?

In three German case studies, a mix of methods forms the basis for the empirical work: analytical and evaluative mapping, guided interviews and document analysis.

The conclusion shown is that on one hand a stronger concretization of terms regarding "Baukultur", and, on the other hand, a stronger focus on objectives and overall conditions of urban and project development are beneficial for discussions. This concerns both theo-retical and practical work.

The municipality's own strategic positioning by setting its own aims paves the way for implementing and comprehend them as potentials in both local and – through spillover effects – regional development. This

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Abstract – continued

"Baukultur" (management of cultural/architecture heritage) in the revitalisation of areas in small and medium-sized rural towns with declining populations

also opens up more extensive options for action and design against a background of decline and a dependence on third-party or private funding.

Even though the feedback from the actors involved in the study predominantly shows a high level of satisfaction with the brownfield redevelopment in each case, a professional appraisal shows room for improvement in the sense of a "good Baukultur". Shortcomings result from insufficient discussion on design features or from a dilution of defined aims during the planning and implementation processes. The demographic context has the effect here of a possible stimulus for functional and design-related requirements, but only rarely as a factor explicitly influencing "Baukultur".

In the context of rural development, which includes transformation processes in small and medium-sized towns under conditions of decline, "Baukultur" takes strong influence on town's potential and thus demands differentiated requirements for action in urban planning and architecture. Simultaneously it fosters the demand on participation and decision-making processes in everyday planning work. Models for action, in the sense of policy consultation, are presented which, in the sense of an empowerment of the central groups of actors (administrators, politicians, planners, house-builders/owners), aim at a long-term integration of the subject of "Baukultur" into processes relating to the municipal development and urban planning.

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Notes:

Abstract

Digitisation – a chance for women in agriculture?

In recent years, the working world has been digitised which led and is still leading to crucial social changes. This development has reached rural areas and influences rural societies and the rural working world. One major driver of digitisation is agriculture. Modern plant production as well as animal husbandry rely on IT-supported and automated production. Nowadays, GPS-steering mechanisms, lane keeping assists, nitrogen sensors and so on are basic standards in up-to-date plant production machinery. Automated feeding systems are common in modern animal husbandry. Furthermore, more and more dairy farms use milking robots. In particular, animal husbandry is regarded as very unattractive since it is very labour-intensive and physically demanding. Milkers usually work in shifts – even on weekends and on holidays. All in all, these factors do not enable a work-life-balance and are not really family-friendly. These disadvantages could be changed by using milking robots and further mechanisation. There might be no need for milkers to spend every day in stables anymore. Thus, a better work-life-balance might be possible.

We analyse the influence of digitisation on gender roles and their impacts on rural societies by the example of agriculture. What do women who work in agriculture think of the development of digitisation? Could daily farming routines be improved and be better scheduled by using machines, sensors, and robots? Are women in agriculture now able to split their work? Thus, could they find a better balance between family and farming commitments by digitisation? Besides, could agriculture as a working field become more attractive (again) for highly educated women? Could the prestige of female farmers change? Regarding role perception, what do women who work in agriculture think of themselves? Might there be a shift in traditional gender roles by digitisation? Moreover, how do women regard digitisation? Do women regard digitisation either as an opportunity and value the chances and benefits it offers or as a threat, because traditional fields of work might be abolished? Finally, what chances does digitisation offer rural areas? Could digitisation attract people to stay in rural areas or even to come back?

We offer first answers to the above mentioned questions. Our research is part of the collaborative research project “The influence of digitisation on the labour situation of women in rural areas” which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Since the project started in 2016, we are able to present first results. From June 2016 until January 2017, we interviewed and are going to interview experts, managers, and eventually women who actually work in agriculture. These women are either family employees or hired workers. The interviews are mainly qualitative. The regions we focus on are in Rhineland-Palatinate in South-West Germany and Mecklenburg Western Pomerania in North-East Germany. Thus, we include various agricultural structures (farms with wage work, small family farms, vintners, producers of vegetables and fruit). Likewise, we analyse factors which influence the utilisation of digitisation, i.e. age, gender, qualifications, business organization, technological characters (i.e. inventors, leaders, followers, sceptical people), regional factors, and so on. Hence, we are able to describe the process of digitisation in different German regions. What needs to be done to improve the process of digitisation? Are there any solutions which could be adapted in different regions? Finally, our aim is to offer solutions which should be implemented in policy to improve female participation.

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Notes:

Abstract

Precarious rural cosmopolitanism and neoliberal globalisation in Irish small towns

The intensification of global mobility has introduced international migration to rural areas and small towns with little or no significant recent history of immigration, transforming the populations of these host communities and producing new dynamics of social relations. A developing body of work in rural geography and related fields has borrowed from the concept of 'cosmopolitanism', commonly associated with cities, to propose the emergence of a new 'rural cosmopolitanism' in such localities (Popke 2011; Schech 2013; Torres et al 2006). This paper examines the evidence for rural cosmopolitanism though case studies of two rural small towns in Ireland – Gort, which was home to over 1 000 Brazilian migrants in a population of less than 3 000 in the late 2000s; and Ballyhaunis, Ireland's most diverse town with 42 different nationalities in a population of around 2 300. Analysis of the dynamics and relationships that have brought migrants to these towns and shaped their engagement with long-term residents reveals an emergent 'rural cosmopolitanism' in the cultural hybridisation of artefacts and practices of everyday life, the accommodations reached between locals and migrants, and the ethos of the communities. However, the paper also contends that this emergent cosmopolitanism is defined by precarity, experienced at different scales from the individual to the community, and informed by broader economic and political trends. The paper argues that the rural context of the towns can serve both to facilitate cosmopolitan relations and to extenuate the precarity of this emerging cosmopolitanism.

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Notes:

Round table debate

Thursday, 15 June, 11:30 – 12:30

Subsequent to Luís Chaves' keynote on Community-Led Local Development three panellists will continue debating about EU rural policies.

The guiding topic:

"Shaping rural areas with EU policies: LEADER's achievements, impediments and the role of science"

will launch a discussion on LEADER as a specific instrument of EU rural policies to shape rural spaces. In the debate we will focus on three guiding questions:

1. How important is LEADER within policies on rural development in different national contexts?
2. Who is involved in the implementation of LEADER in the different national contexts? Are crucial actors missing?
3. Which role does science play as an actor in LEADER implementation? Which role is science supposed to play?

The three participants of the round table debate represent both practitioners and scientists from different European countries with a particular expertise on rural development policies and their implementation:

Luís Chaves (MINHA TERRA, Portugal)

Sabine Weizenegger (Regional development agency Oberallgäu, Bavaria, Germany)

Petra Raue (Thünen Institute of Rural Studies, Germany)

Notes:

Posters

Resilience of villages as social ecological systems

Alistair Adam Hernández
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Castille and Leon: the deep rural and the new ruralities

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Later life in the village. Services for the elderly on farms

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Demographic risk assessment of sustainability in rural heritage sites in Turkey: key evidences from valley settlements in middle Anatolian region in Turkey

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Heritage mining landscapes as rural capital: the case of two heavy metals mining wastelands in Wallonia

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Vincent Vanderheyden
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Serge Schmitz
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The production of structured coherences through energy transition

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Rural development by village renewal programs: evidence from Germany (2007 – 2013)

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International and internal migrations of immigrants as a key indicator of rural change in France: first statistical results

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When eaters fund farming: crowdfunding on the rise in agricultural development

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UNESCO's vineyard cultural landscapes and its outstanding universal value: approach to cultural heritage criteria

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Marta Martínez
Eugenio Barraja

Posters – continued

Neglected rural economies

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The potential of return migration to Transylvania, Romania: implications for regional development?

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Ribera del Duero, 2 500 years of wine and culture

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Participative development of rural regions. Everyday cultural negotiations of the European Union's LEADER-programme

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Food systems, sustainability, and experiential educational tourism in Tuscany, Italy: interrogating rural/urban metabolisms on the edge

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University of British Columbia-Okanagan
Caterina de Renzis Sonnino
Castello Sonnino

Monitoring of rural areas in Germany: introduction to the online mapping tool

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Bonding factors for young people in rural areas

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Services of general interest in citizens' hand? Ensuring equivalence in peripheral rural areas

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METAPOLIS – an inter- and transdisciplinary platform for a sustainable development of the rural-urban-relationships in Lower Saxony, Germany

Michael W. Strohbach, Dirk Neumann, Maycon Sedrez, Andreas Dahlkamp, Anneke Döring, Laura Grunwald, Ann-Kristin Mühlbach, Kim S. Pollak, Boris Schröder-Esselbach, Vanessa Miriam Carlow
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Re-shaping the rural under the pressure of large cities. A case study of the Bucharest metropolitan area

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Drawing the fringe – GIS-supported mapping of the rural-urban fringe in the city of Zagreb

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Posters – continued

Life scenarios for women in Spanish rural areas

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Rural realities versus virtual concepts: The case of bobby calves

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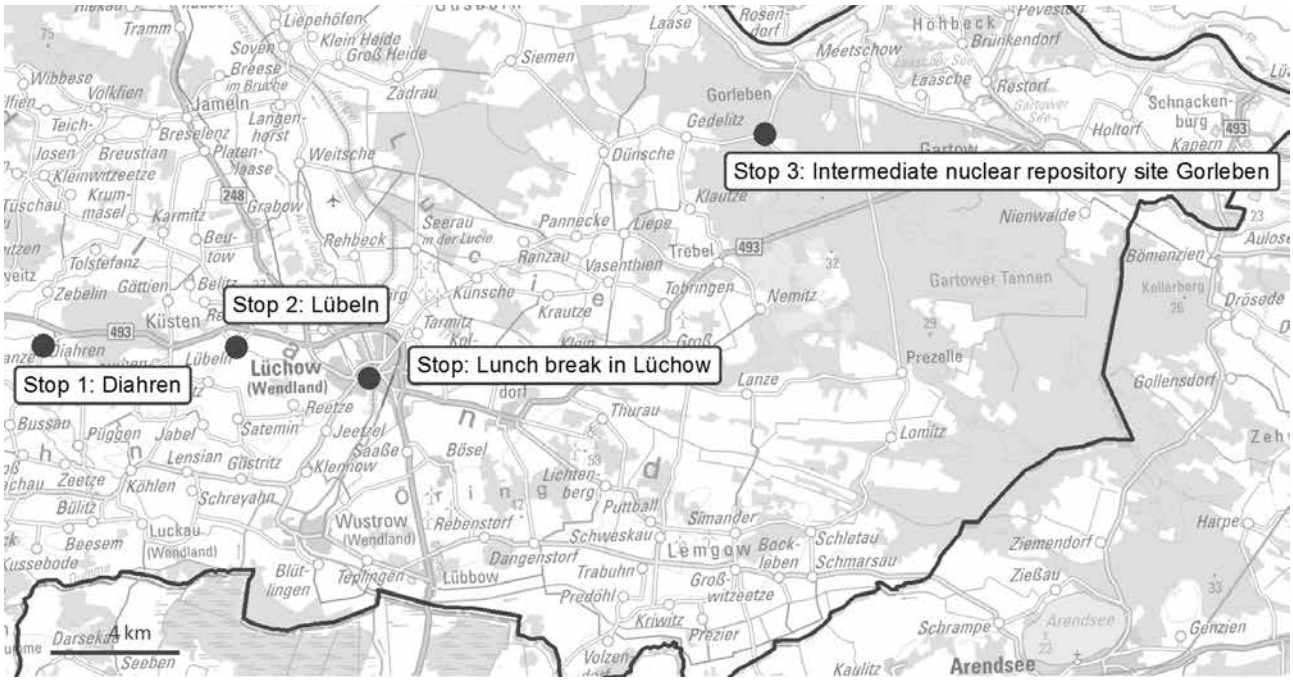
Field trips

Field trips

Wendland: "Peripherality revisited"



Sources: Thünen-Institut 2017 based on GeoBasis-DE/BKG 2017

The Wendland is one of Germany's most sparsely populated regions (41 people/km²), facing typical challenges of peripheralised areas: demographic change like long-term ageing and a general population decline along with a deficient infrastructure lead to an overall negative assessment of the Wendland's in economic and socio-demographic terms. Spatial characteristics are drawn upon to mark the Wendland as a "periphery" – a space that faces severe problems in regard to its welfare and service provision. However, this negative perspective inherent to "peripheralisation" misses out other processes that opt for a positive assessment of the affected areas.

The field trip draws upon a critical consideration of "peripheralisation" as a discursive phenomenon that might powerfully reproduce spatial-structural weaknesses by overemphasising a region's apparent economic restraints. The dominant location-focussed discourse neglects, for example, the opportunities of globalisation to virtually integrate into economic networks, even in remote areas. Further it does not sufficiently consider the services remote areas provide for society as whole; the Wendland suggests with its energy supply of nearly 100 per cent from renewable energies that it might serve as an ecological compensation area. Finally, endogenous potentials "out of sight" of metropolitan developments might be relevant. In the Wendland, this holds true, for example, for cultural events attracting many visitors from outside the region.

The peripheralisation of the Wendland through spatial and functional determinisms does hence not sufficiently explain the socio-economic characteristics of the region. On the field trip we want to ask

- to which extent the continuing narratives of the periphery influence the image of the Wendland and
- which consequences this has for different actors in the Wendland.

It is to be doubted that the locational, functional and demographic "faults" are so overarching that they are the only characteristics to determine the Wendland's potential for its future. That is why we also want to ask

- which de-peripheralisation processes take place and
- which forms they assume.

Indeed, the region attracts an interest beyond its socio-economic structures. Established as a site of long-standing protest against the atomic repository in Gorleben in the late 1970s, the Wendland developed a remarkable scene that fosters a strong ecological awareness, creativity and arts as well as projects of alternative and more sustainable ways of living. In that

Field trips

Wendland: "Peripherality revisited" – continued

The Rundling village Lübeln (photo: A. Steinführer)

The Wendland's symbol of anti-nuclear protest: the yellow X (photo: A. Steinführer)

regard it even attracts newcomers who settle to live a more "peaceful" and sustainable life, remote from urban centres.

The Wendland therewith exhibits rather unconventional trajectories of development. It seems a path dependency that nowadays the creative industry is considered an important source for regional development, which even manages to attract labour force to the Wendland.

On the field trip, we will critically focus on the juxtaposition of both peripheralisation and de-peripheralisation processes and their relationship in the Wendland.

Field trip route

Stop 1: Diahren

A village, which had been nearly abandoned by the end of the 1990s, experienced a revival through in-migration by mainly families from outside the Wendland. They decidedly moved to this small Rundling village. In meeting inhabitants of Diahren, we will have the opportunity to learn whether and how the "structural weakness" of the Wendland can be regarded positively as a locational advantage.

Stop 2: Lübeln

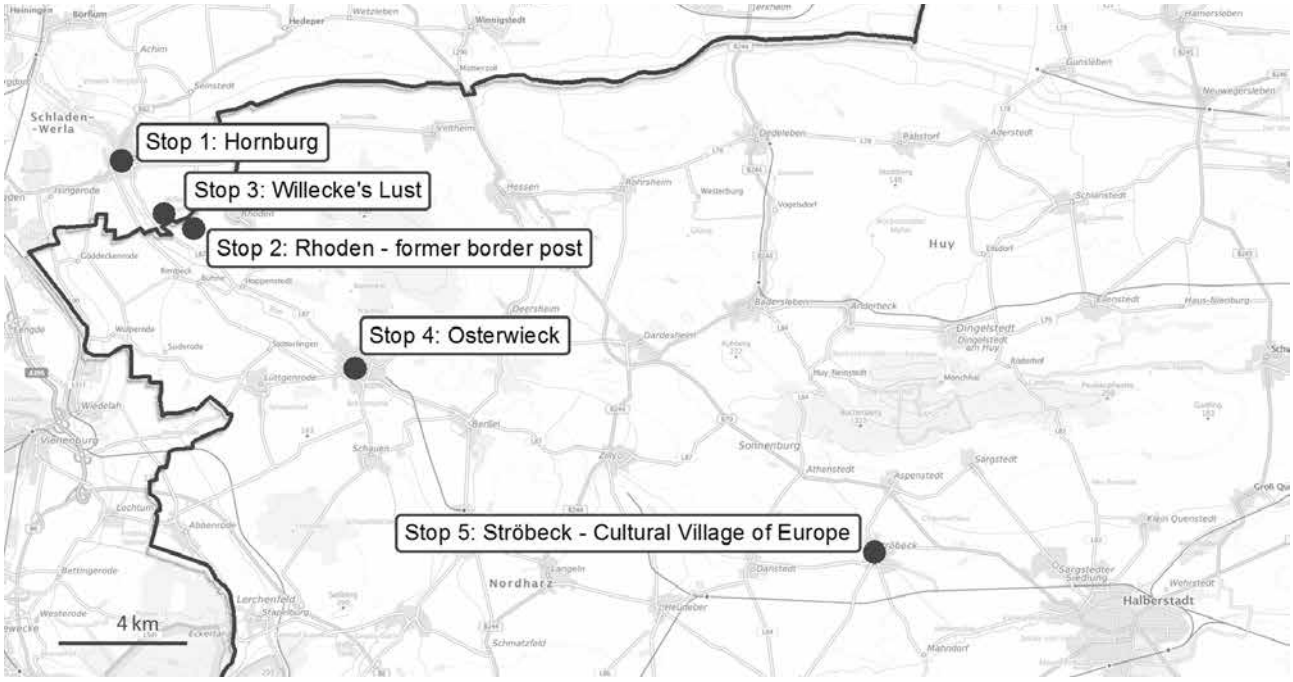
The Wendland is famous for its Rundling villages, a particular historical settlement type that survived from the 12th century: The houses of the villages are arranged in a circular pattern, so that every door faces the central square in the middle of the village. The Rundling Association (Rundlingsverein) relates the outstanding preservation of the Rundling villages in the Wendland in particular to the region's peripherality. According to this argument, the Wendland's location in geographical terms caused a slow change of settlement structures and thereby supported the preservation of old settlement types. We will explore the Rundling villages and their history in the Rundling Museum in Lübeln, asking in detail about the significance of the peripheral location for their preservation.

Stop 3: Gorleben

We will meet activists of the anti-nuclear movement and managers of regional development who will take us to the site of the intermediate and possibly final nuclear repository near Gorleben. We want to ask about trajectories of regional development that the events around the nuclear repository and the anti-nuclear campaign suggest – and how they are related to de-peripheralisation processes.

Field trips

Vorharz: "The former inner German border – a ‘phantom border’ "?



Sources: Thünen-Institut 2017 based on GeoBasis-DE/BKG 2017

This field trip will take us into the Vorharz, a rural area adjacent to the Harz Mountains, which had been divided by the inner German border until 1990. We will explore trajectories of regional development and possible long-term effects of the former border.

For a long time the Vorharz had been closely integrated. With the sudden geopolitical division of this region into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, the Vorharz ended up divided in two different states. The eastern and the western parts of the Vorharz now lacked profound economic networks and infrastructural ties with their neighbouring regions.

Under most different political systems the Vorharz regions set off to quite different paths of development. From 1954 onwards and institutionalised in 1965 and 1971, respectively, the western Vorharz received a zonal border area funding (Zonenrandförderung) to compensate for its structural disadvantages, while the eastern Vorharz was rather neglected under socialist planning practice which did not pay much attention to rural areas.

After the reunification in 1990 the regional development strategies of the western and eastern Vorharz were not harmonised. Rather, the federal government instantly terminated the zonal border area funding for the western Vorharz and instead introduced a remarkable support for the integration of the eastern parts of the reunified country into the western economic structures, although the former zonal border areas were not much better developed than their eastern neighbours.

Drawing on the concept of “phantom borders” by Béatrice von Hirschhausen et al. (2015), the field trip wants to explore to which extent the former inner German border is nowadays still prevalent in regional development. We will aim to assessing the symbolic power of the “phantom inner German border” and if it still reproduces the differentiation between the East and West, almost 27 years after the reunification. We will pay attention to how this might hamper, or in contrast, maybe foster regional development in the rural Vorharz.

The field trip will explore the phenomenon of the “phantom border” in the rural towns of Hornburg and Osterwieck close to the border of their states (Bundesland) – Hornburg in Lower Saxony bordering Sachsen-Anhalt, Osterwieck in Sachsen-Anhalt bordering Lower Saxony. Both towns used to be structurally integrated before the inner German division cut off their ties.

Field trips

Vorharz: "The former inner German border – a ‘phantom border’ "? – continued

Field trip route

Stop 1: Hornburg

Hornburg’s history is that of a border town – from the 16th century until the late 20th century the town was subject to bordering and de-bordering processes that significantly influenced its development. Until the 16th century Hornburg prospered as a farming town due to its successful hop cultivation, bringing along richly ornamented half-timbered houses of which many are preserved until today. On the field trip we will explore the history of Hornburg as a border town and the border’s effects on local development.

Various border signs between Hornburg and Osterwieck (photo: S. Neumeier)

Stop 2: Former border post Rhoden

With the inner German division and the development of the GDR as an oppressive regime in the early 1950s, many East Germans started fleeing into the Western Federal Republic. As a reaction, the hitherto permeable inner German border was successively closed from 1952 on to cut off all relations between Hornburg and Osterwieck. We will visit a former border post between Hornburg and Osterwieck, where a tour guide will explain the GDR’s and FRG’s border regimes and introduce us to local stories of the inner German division in the Vorharz.

Stop 3: Willecke’s Lust

The German border soon became an attraction for many people not only from western Germany, but also the western European states as a visible manifestation of the Iron Curtain. In the course, many touristic facilities were developed to host western border tourists. In particular the restaurant “Willecke’s Lust”, located directly next to the border and a so-called “border observation point”, benefited from this type of tourism and the small border traffic in the proximity of Hornburg. Following the reunification, the restaurant consequently lost a high proportion of customers and had to close before it was reopened in the 2010s. We will take our lunch break at this restaurant and will learn more about the border tourism phenomenon and its implications for local development.

Half-timered building in Osterwieck (photo: S. Neumeier)

Stop 4: Osterwieck

Just like Hornburg, Osterwieck is similarly rich in half-timbered houses that are nowadays kept under monument protection. Osterwieck is still working to restore many of its historical buildings, since under GDR planning practice, historic building structures and rural towns in general were neglected in favour of industrial urban areas. In Osterwieck we will examine more closely the history of the town’s settlement structure. Further we will ask about contingencies of local development in regard to the (former) inner German border.

Stop 5: “European cultural village” Ströbeck

The reunification of both Germanies was not an isolated phenomenon – rather, the whole block confrontation ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. The reunification allowed for a European-wide networking that seemed impossible before to regions of the GDR. Ströbeck in Saxony-Anhalt, close to the former inner German border, became part of an international network of “European cultural villages”. Founded in 1999, this network of 11 villages in Europe aims to promote the merits of rural settlements in Europe and calls for particular attention for villages and their development. In Ströbeck we will have the opportunity to learn about the self-conception of an East German village in the enlarged Europe. We will further ask about the motivation and needs to proclaim “cultural villages of Europe” and how this is related to regional development.

Conference documentation

You will be able to access information on the conference as well as its documentation on the website *www.ruralgeo2017.de* even after the conclusion of the conference. We will provide impressions from the conference, summarise the sessions and the round-table debate. We will further document the most important research needs in the field of rural studies that became apparent in the course of the conference.

We will further provide information on the conference subsequent to "New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies" in the European rural geographies conference series, which will hopefully take place in 2019 or 2020.

Photo disclaimer

Participants of the conference "New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies" 2017 (RuralGeo 2017) understand that publicity photographs may be taken during the event and their image may appear in photographs taken during RuralGeo 2017. By registering for RuralGeo 2017, you hereby give permission that photos containing your image may be used for publicity or general information purposes including publication on the RuralGeo2017 and organiser websites or within other publicity which may be seen by the general public. The conference organisers will not seek any further permission nor provide any notification before using such photos. Should you wish to not have your image appear in publicity photographs, please inform the organisers via e-mail (ruralgeo2017@thuenen.de).

Please note: Due to space restrictions we did not add the full references provided in the original abstracts. If you are interested in a reference, please contact the abstract's author(s) individually.

Braunschweig: what you need to know

Inhabitants: 250 000 (Dec 2016)
City territory: 192 km²
Population density: 1 306 inhab./km²
Elevation above sea level: 72 m

Braunschweig – in the Anglo-Saxon context better known as "Brunswick" – is among the cities with the highest employment rates in research and development in Germany. With 7.3 per cent (2013) the city also ranks among the regions with the highest share of its gross domestic product spent on research and development (R&D) on the European scale. The city counts 20 000 students in two universities and 15 000 employees in R&D. Besides the Thünen Institute there are 26 other research institutes such as a branch of the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), the National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB) which hosts four of the atomic clocks responsible for regulating the world time as well as Fraunhofer, Helmholtz and Leibniz research institutes. Thus, Brunswick also calls itself "City of Science".

To improve the dialogue between science and the public, the city opened the "Haus der Wissenschaft" (House of Science) on the main campus of the Technical University (TU Braunschweig). There is a restaurant on the rooftop of the 42 meter high building allowing for a panoramic view of the city.

For those seeking to see Braunschweig from above, there is also the opportunity to climb the south tower of the St. Andreas Church which is the highest in the city (93 meters). And luckily, thanks to sponsoring, climbing the 389 steps is for free in 2017.

Domplatz with Lion (photo: Stadtarchiv Braunschweig)

Besides the medieval Lion sculpture on the Domplatz (with the original from around 1166 being exhibited in the nearby Museum Burg Dankwarderode), there are some beautiful buildings from the Hanseatic League when Brunswick was an independent city; namely the Alte Waage, the Gewandhaus and the Altstadtrathaus which is also the venue of the conference reception on Thursday. There are two bowers (*Kemenaten*; from Latin *caminus*), the oldest mundane buildings of the city (13th century) open for visit.

In the Magniviertel, the city's pub district, many half-timbered houses from farmers and artisans were preserved, with the oldest being built in 1432. Today many small shops and bars are settled in the Magniviertel and bring about a romantic ambience especially on warm summer nights. These can also be spent in one of the different parks surrounding the Oker, a small river encompassing the city centre. One can also take a boat and paddle along the river.

Further information

From Gauss to Galileo:
http://www.braunschweig.de/wirtschaft_wissenschaft/wissenschaftsportal/from-Gaus-to-Galileo_brochure_2011_en.pdf

Map of Braunschweig as city of science:
http://www.braunschweig.de/wirtschaft_wissenschaft/wissenschaftsportal/Wissenschaftsstadtplan_BS1.pdf

Haus der Wissenschaft
http://www.hausderwissenschaft.org/hdw_eng/index.html

St. Andreas Tower:
http://www.standreas.de/startseite.htm (open Wed to Sat 3 – 5 pm)

Braunschweig by boat:
www.okertour.de (daily 10 am – 8 pm)
http://okercabana.de/floss-boot-sup/ (daily 11 am – 8 pm)
http://www.okerabenteuer.de/bootsverleih-okercabana/ (daily 11 am – 8 pm)

The Bowers (Kemenaten):
http://www.kemenaten-braunschweig.de/
(open Mon to Sat 11 am – 5 pm, Sun 12 am – 5 pm)

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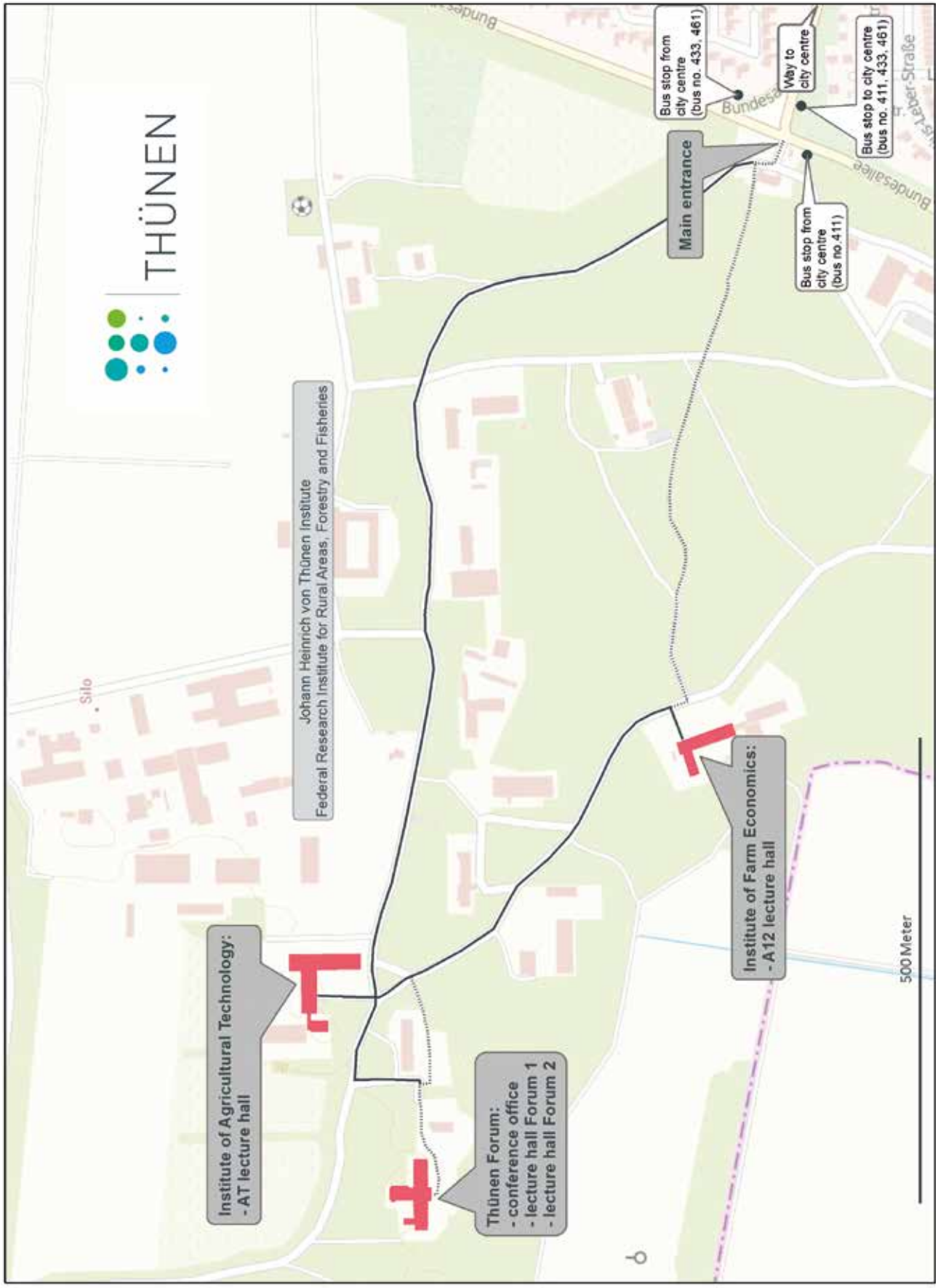
Thünen Campus map



Source: Thünen Institute 2017 based onGeoBasis-DE/BKG 2017

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