

Looking for the good life. Productions of Rurality in the German Uckermark.

Julia Rössel

Department of Geography
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
Johann-Joachim-Becher-Weg 21
D-55099 Mainz
j.roessel@geo.uni-mainz.de
<http://www.geo.uni-mainz.de/roessel/>

In the Uckermark, a region in north eastern Germany, rural living is coming into vogue. Whereas this region is strongly affected by emigration new groups are moving in, old buildings are renovated and lived-in again. People who prefer living in communes seem to feel attracted by rural living, also people working in organic fields and arts. Hence, there are many studios and galleries, which in turn attracted new residents who are working in the same field. „The emigration creates a vacuum, which offers space for other ways of living“, said an interviewee. Taking the German Uckermark as case study this paper deals with the question why people decide consciously to live there, although this area is highly concerned by emigration and there are financial drawbacks for the new residents in many cases. What images of rurality do they have and what are they looking for? Based on qualitative interviews conducted in the Uckermark I would like to show that these people are looking for the good life (NUSSEBAUM). In my talk I will explain how rurality is imagined and produced as a space of good life and as a consequence how the region is influenced. This postmodern consideration of different rural spaces and imaginations can hardly be found in German geography so that there is a need for change of perspectives.