

## Call for Papers for the Conference Rurality – New perspectives and Themes

Bamberg, Germany, 15-16th November 2013

From the backdrop of the advancing urbanisation of the global population, an interesting rural conjunction can be observed. The largest German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* describes this as a mega-trend that has come to determine, without equal, German style from home furnishings, through eating, to fashion (*Spiegel* 44/2012: 81). Examples of this boom are recognisable in the rapid success of country magazines such as *Landlust* (Country Joy), *Landidee* (Country Idea) oder *mein schönes Land* (My Beautiful Countryside).

Despite this contemporary social development, profound conceptual arguments about the status of the rural have been rare in German geography: is the rural concerned with economic, population or settlement structures of particularly typified spaces – by way of a contrast to the urban? Do semantics, ideas or discourses stand as proxies for the good, harmonious or authentic, but also oppositional themes of life? Are localised practices or lifestyles what are meant? Is the rural a selective destination for stressed city-dwellers, or a synonym for emptied regions suffering under shrinking infrastructures, poverty and the changing realities of life?

The heterogeneity and complexity of the rural lies at the centre of an international and interdisciplinary conference *Rurality – New Perspectives and Themes*, to take place at the Otto-Friedrich University in Bamberg, in cooperation with the Johannes-Gutenberg University of Mainz, the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, the Royal Geographical Society / Inst. of British Geographers and the IGU-Commission “The Cultural Approach in Geography”.

The conference has two main emphases: firstly, rurality should be conceptually observed from differentiated social space relationships. How can the term be described? What does it mean to undertake geography(ies) of rurality (and rural space)? Through which indicators can rurality be described? How does the rural reflect the dialectic of the relationship between space and society?

Secondly, empirical themes and questions relating to rural research of a social- and cultural-geographical nature emerge: where and how does rurality reveal itself as a cultural constellation, something which is communicated and practiced? What role does rurality play in the context of globalization? Which future social and political-economy processes do rural spaces enhance in order to produce a diversity of ruralities? How does the composition of rural places change? Which contributions emanate from agriculture and land speculation in creating changes to the rural?

The conference pursues the goal of promoting a scientific exchange within the framework of international rural research, and is therefore also directed at scientists working in the context of English-speaking rural studies. By reflecting on and discussing the respective research traditions and contemporary conceptual and thematic emphases, possibilities to generate new impulses and collaborations can become accessible to participants.

In addition to geographers, contributions from scientists from related disciplines are also welcome, such as sociology, literature, archival, art and media studies, economics, politics and history.

We welcome contributions from the following research spheres:

- History of rural geographical space/history of scientific engagement with rurality
- Rural theories
- Communicated rurality

- Rural practices
- Rurality as a cultural constellation
- Rurality in the global context/context of globalization
- Rurality of migrations, emigrations and isolation
- The rural as a resource and subject of speculation

As an international conference, the language of presentation is considered to be English. Nonetheless it is possible to give talks in German (please note your possibilities of presentation in terms of language in the abstract).

Please send an abstract (1 DIN-A4 page) until the 31.05.2013 to the following email: [neuelaendlichkeit@uni-mainz.de](mailto:neuelaendlichkeit@uni-mainz.de) . Each presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes in length. The time could, for example, be split into 15 minutes presentation and 15 minutes discussion or 20 minutes presentation and 10 minutes discussion.

In case of any questions or suggestions do not hesitate to contact us:

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