

Happiness and Population Decline

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The Uckermark in north eastern Germany is one of the regions with the lowest population density in Germany. It is a peripheral region which was part of the German Democratic Republic and was mainly characterized by agriculture use. Since the Fall of the Wall in 1990 the Uckermark is strongly affected by a population decline with the well-known vicious circle of ageing of the population, unemployment, vacancy and so forth. These negative aspects are connected with emotions like dissatisfaction, isolation or unhappiness. However this paper attempts to change the point of view in order to focus on people, who in-migrate because they understand the empty region as a place, where they can find a good life. They feel confident and happy since they have lived there.

Based on qualitative interviews this paper shows how the new inhabitants produce spaces of good life in the Uckermark. Following LEFEBVRE and philosophical theories of good life I am going to present the modes of production and the influence of different social groups. The personal feelings of happiness and satisfaction are elements of this production process. But negative emotions caused by problems and conflicts are also considered.