Contents

Abstract 1.1 Governance of e-Health in Baltic States: similarities and differences

Daiga Behmane, Latvia, PhD. In Economics, Head of the Health Management Lecturers group, Riga Stradins University, Latvia

Context. Digital technologies are an essential component and an enabler of sustainable health systems. Despite the fact that the Baltic states started moving towards e-health at the same time (early 2000s), today we see significant differences in the level of digitization of the health sector.

The Estonian health system has been already very digitalized: 99% of prescriptions are digital, citizens have access to online health e-services, their medical records, doctor visits and current prescriptions.

The Latvian e-health system is mainly vertical project oriented, successful in e-prescriptions and e-sick leaves and recent COVID vaccination certification system. Each institution maintains its own patient database, interoperability is still a challenge. Digital Health strategy 2022 - 2027 is under development to establish more detailed guidelines and activities for e-health investments.

The Lithuanian e-health excels in providing online medical records. The Electronic IS of Health Services currently hosts 100% of Lithuanian healthcare providers, as well as pharmacies. All national healthcare subjects are required to use the system when providing health-related services.

The aim of the study was to compare the basic principles of eHealth governance in 3 Baltic states by applying the governance framework including the elements: *Responsible institutions, Stakeholder involvement, Operating principles, Task distribution and Funding sources.*

Study method: descriptive research using interpretive and comparative policy analysis.

Study results show that all 3 Baltic states use a centralized state e-Health governance model, the main funding sources being state budget and European structural funds. The main factors playing a decisive role in the success of health sector digitization are: a common eHealth policy for the public and private sectors and synergies in social, health sectors (EST; LT), the country's common digitization strategy and shared technologies (EST) and attention to early stakeholder and primary care practitioners' involvement (EST). Weak coordination, lack of standardization and disjoined

digital initiatives lead to increasing standalone ICT solutions with a major threat to the creation of a comprehensive EHR system in future(LV).

Abstract 1.2 How eHealth could support managing integrated healthcare programs in rural areas? – Insights from Poland
Iga Rudawska, University of Szczecin, Poland

There is a growing evidence that eHealth offers support for healthcare management, but the added value of existing IT solutions for integrated healthcare programs is still underestimated. The purpose of this work is to explore the potential benefits for ICT-based tools for managing integrated care delivery, especially in rural areas. The case study approach has been applied to map ICT-based processes to assist the management of the selected coordinated care program, targeted patients from rural areas. The cross-case analysis followed a variables-oriented strategy of eHealth impact on seven eCCM components, assessed from the perspective of three segments of healthcare stakeholders (patients, providers and payers). The research results provide fresh insights into the range of eHealth solutions and their impact on managing integrated healthcare programs in Poland. Nevertheless, more research is needed to demonstrate the benefits of ICT-based solutions that could support managing healthcare programs in rural areas.

Abstract 1.3 Emergency care in rural Norway

Professor Guttorm Brattebø, Haukeland University Hospital, University of Bergen, Norway

Norwegian is a 2,500 km long and sparsely inhabited country with a population of 5,5 mill. More than half of the population is located in the south-eastern region near the capital Oslo. The geographical and meteorological conditions are challenging, with fjords and mountains separating the rather few urban areas and many rural settlements. There are 38 somatic hospitals, including four trauma centres located at the university hospitals in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø. Hence, providing emergency care for the entire population is challenging and expensive for the society.

The emergency medical system (EMS) is based on a two-tiered system where a primary care physician will see patients most often before being admitted to hospital. Therefore, every of the 356 municipality must have a system in place for providing emergency medical care for their residents (incl. visitors and tourists). They are also responsible for providing out-of-hours services in the approx. 180 local casualty clinics. The four regional health authorities are responsible for the specialised health care services, including the 16 emergency medical communication centres (EMCC), ambulance services, and hospitals. In the EMCC, calls are categorized (acute, urgent, or non-urgent) based on a national criteria-based decision tool. Responses and resources are dispatched accordingly.

We also have a national air ambulance system with 14 helicopters and 10 fixed-wing planes around the country. Yearly, the air ambulance has 16.000 missions, while the approx. 650 ambulances perform over 700.000 missions, of which approx. 30% are acute, 40% urgent, and 30% non-urgent missions

Abstract 1.4 Bridging the Baltic: Insights into innovation and e-health trends in the Baltic Sea Region

Nils Hansson, University of Düsseldorf, Germany

This talk presents results of an e-health (history) project within the 'Bridging the Baltic network' (funded by the German Research Foundation), an interdisciplinary group of scholars in northern Europe with a prime interest in the transfer of knowledge in the Baltic Sea region.
It is divided in two parts. First, I will highlight current research on innovation in medicine in northern Europe. Second, I wish to outline a new course about e-health in the Baltic Sea region for medical students, taught by e-health experts from Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Sweden.

Abstract 3.1 Stability and Acceptance of the Democratic System in Rural Areas

Andreas Klärner, Larissa Deppisch, Thünen Institute of Rural Studies, Braunschweig, Germany

There is a broad and ongoing discussion about the influence of peripheralization processes and other socio-spatial factors on the emergence and success of right-wing populist parties and movements as well as the stability and acceptance of the democratic system in rural areas. In our presentation we initially focus on the popular media discourse in Germany which commonly portrays regional economic and infrastructural structural weaknesses of rural areas being 'left behind' as causes of crisis experiences among the population. The prevailing narrative is that people in these areas vote for the right-wing populist party 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) because they feel that their rural region is neglected by national state and urban political elites. Based on this analysis we ask whether this narrative is consistent with the lived experience, the perceptions, assessments and interpretations of the population in rural areas?

We explore this question empirically by analyzing qualitative group discussions with a total of 68 people in ten case regions. In these group discussions we trace collective spatial perceptions, crisis narratives and political interpretations of the populations of rural areas. We look at regions that are commonly described as 'left behind' and where the AfD received a high share of votes but we also examine peripheralized regions in which the AfD had no electoral success. How are socio-spatial challenges perceived here? To what extent are they rationalized or managed differently? Furthermore, we contrast group discussions in structurally strong rural areas, where at first glance there seems to be no reason for crisis and protest at the ballot box, but where the AfD was nevertheless able to gain support. In doing so, we show which rationalities are used to deal with peripheralization and how this affects the relationship to politics.

Furthermore, we put a special focus on the German state Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania as part of the Baltic Sea Region and show what distinguishes this case from other cases in our study. For instance, we address the socio-spatial conditions that are relevant for the settlement of the far-right movement Völkischer Siedler there and the emanating danger to democracy. By understanding the socio-spatial conditions for anti-democratic social movements and support, our findings aim to provide a basis for democracy promoting policies that consider socio-spatial contexts.

Abstract 3.3 Farm Crime Victimisation and Prevention Decision Making: Insights from England and Wales

Kreseda Smith

Farms in England and Wales continue to have low levels of crime prevention measures in use despite the increasing threat, and what is used is often ineffective. Farm crime in England and Wales is becoming increasingly organised in its nature, as such farmers are having to deal with both the ever-present threat of opportunistic thefts, but also the broadening impact of Organised Criminal Groups in the rural space.

As a result of this change, farmers are very much being left on the back foot in being able to protect themselves adequately. They are no longer just facing traditional thefts, but other crime types that are now significantly challenging traditional crime prevention theories such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) often favoured by police forces in England and Wales. Such crimes include hare coursing as a sport, agrochemical theft and counterfeiting, and forced labour within the agricultural sector.

As a direct result of this, farmers are finding themselves under much more significant pressure from criminality in the rural space. Crime is increasingly challenging farmer ontological security, and thus their ability to make effective decisions both around crime prevention, but also general business decision-making. This coupled with an inability to protect their farm using traditional crime prevention methods, may potentially have a negative impact on farmer mental health, and this should be discussed among rural crime researchers and practitioners to ensure that the wider impact is clearly understood.

This position seen within England and Wales will be briefly reviewed and compared in relation to the experiences noted in the academic research being conducted across the Baltic Sea region to establish any potential similarities in patterns, and whether any learning can be taken from the situation being experienced in England and Wales.

Abstract 3.4 Local safety and security in local communities in Slovenia – rural perspectives: An overview of research activities

Gorazd Meško

This presentation is about an ongoing research project on local safety and security – rural perspectives in Slovenia (2019-2024). Research goals are related to a literature review of rural crime, security and safety publications, crime analysis, analysis of public disorder, victimisation (rural and farm victimisation survey) and fear of crime (feelings of safety), security challenges in rural settings due to the Schengen border (the entire Slovenian Schengen border till 31 December 2022 was in rural communities bordering with Croatia), security challenges due to marginal social groups (migrants, Roma people) and the improvement of policing regarding work with these social groups, provision of safety and security and security partnerships in local communities based on the contemporary policing and local self-government legislation, and a study on perception of safety and security in 24 municipalities by residents and police officers serving in the same local communities (urban, semi-urban and rural). Also, the relationships and institutional capacity of state institutions operating locally in rural communities are being studied. Finally, the use of the internet and cyberspace risks are matters of study because of the development of cyberinfrastructure in rural areas that is in some rural settings much better than in the cities (perspectives of daily use of the internet – purchasing and subscribing to services and also cybercrime and cyber victimisation). The project also includes annual national local safety and security conferences co-organised by the national police and the Association of local municipalities. Hosts of national conferences are local municipalities. So far, we have had eight national conferences because the first project on local safety and security started in 2015 and continued in 2019, focusing on rural perspectives of safety and security. Before every national conference, peer-reviewed conference proceedings are published by the University of Maribor Press. Researchers of this project have joined international groups of researchers in rural criminology.

Keywords: rural, criminology, safety, security, research, Slovenia

Abstract 4.1 Potential for bottom-up, grassroots activities for an energy transition in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)

Farid Karimi, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

An energy transition aims to decarbonise the energy system by shifting from fossil fuels and secure the energy supply to ensure sustainable development and mitigate climate change. Such transitions entail a significant set of changes to the patterns of a society's energy use. The challenges of an energy transition were long attributed to a lack of innovative technology and adequate funding. These are gradually being addressed; however, public participation continues to be highly relevant to the energy transition. Without public support, acceptance and participation, any societal change, including an energy transition, is doomed to failure in democratic societies.

Mainstream discussions for an energy transition tend to focus on large-scale centralised energy systems and on top-down strategies. Nevertheless, promising potential exists for smaller-scale energy generators. Bottom-up, grassroots activities (e.g., initiatives by civil society, individuals and communities) for energy production are an opportunity to further democratise a central area of the economy and as an alternative to energy dependency, particularly for smaller countries in the BSR. Furthermore, small-scale energy generation empowers civil society to directly affect their own lives and wellbeing.

People can be activated at different levels to contribute to an energy transition. To motivate consumers to become active in the energy transition, it is crucial to make the process as financially attractive, as transparent, and as simple as possible. Citizens need adequate and precise information regarding the opportunities available to them to participate in an energy transition.

Keywords: energy transition, Baltic Sea Region, grassroots, community

Abstract 4.3 Mapping the Rural-Urban Divide in Europe: The role of socio-political clusters for issue polarization and vote choice

Antonia Lang & Sigrid Roßteutscher, Goethe University Frankfurt/Main, RUDE project

In recent debates, the rise of right-wing populism and political conflict is often related to the (re-) emergence of a divide between the "left-behinds" in rural areas and the educational elite in metropolitan areas. Based upon the concept of a political cleavage we contend that a cleavage is present when certain social groups share common values and attitudes and when these are mobilized by particular parties. We argue that shared social characteristics amplify potential geographic divides. If people in certain types of places are socially similar to each other and very different from people in other types of places, we expect greater in-group homogeneity and larger out-group heterogeneity in issue preferences and value orientations. Such a bi-polarity based on geography and the related similarity in social characteristics can fuel issue polarization and, subsequently, differences in voting behaviour. Using the last wave of the European Social Survey (ESS 2018), we apply cluster analyses and multilevel regression techniques to examine i) how place of living is linked to similarity in social attributes and ii) how this place based social similarity contributes to issue polarization and vote choice.

Abstract 5.1 Discursive Construction of Rural Areas: Policy Perspectives

Dr. Clemens Lisdat, Universität Greifswald, Institut für Geographie und Geologie, Fachbereich Humangeographie, IFZO

This presentation will explore the discursive production of rural spaces in the Baltic Sea Region and their transformative significance for fragmented regional development. It aims to answer the questions of how rural space, its opportunities and challenges are perceived and what role the concept of policy mobilities plays in this.

In the literature to date, there are hardly any works that explicitly deal with the discursive constitution of rural areas in the Baltic Sea region. Rather, rural space has so far been regarded as pre-determined (mainly by socio-economic indicators) rather than discursively constructed. In contrast, this paper following poststructuralist approaches. However, social structures and discourses as well as the resulting understanding of rural areas are always contingent on the context.

The paper aims to examine the different discourses of rural spaces in the Baltic Sea region, which are created by numerous different actors and institutions. Due to the presence of different social reference systems, there are ruptures, ambivalences and the existence of different social realities in relation to rural spaces between the respective countries. This discursive diversity between the countries highlights the fragmentation within the Baltic Sea Region. Fragmentation in this context is understood as processes of change that vary in terms of course, perception and actors.

The different discourses of rural spaces in the Baltic Sea Region will be identified and analysed by means of qualitative expert interviews and ethnographic field research.

Abstract 5.2 Forest bioeconomy discourses in Finnish peripheries

Maija Halonen, Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, University of Eastern Finland

Forest bioeconomy have been raised to a central role in the sustainability transition discourses. Political actors from the European Union (EU) to national scales take part in the processes creating the policy discourses that aim to govern the forest bioeconomy-based transition in certain directions viewed as favourable. These sustainability transition discourses are strongly felt and reproduced in regions that are rich with forest resources, and this study focuses on the process-based downscaling of those discourses.

Firstly, I present how the forest bioeconomy discourses were downscaled in the development of the forest peripheries in East and North Finland. This phase of the analysis is based on the collaborative study where we examined the ways in which the regional development actors interpret forest-related policies and reproduce or challenge associated discourse(s). In the second phase, I contrast the discourses from the first phase with the discourses produced by local public actors (municipal officers) and forest-based economic actors (representatives of forest-based manufacturing) in the case study locations. The focus is on the linkages between the macro policies, the regional development, and the local practices, uncertainties that relate to the practical implementation and realisation of the policies, and the tensions between the policies, practices, and the actors behind them.

From the macro policies, 'You can have it all (if you close your eyes)' discourse was identified as the most hegemonic discourse. From the regional scale interviews, three interlinked regional forest bioeconomy discourses were identified: 1) 'You can have it all is possible', 2) 'You can have it all is dependent on many ifs', and 3) 'You can have it all runs into conflicts'. The first discourse reproduced the hegemonic discourse of the macro policies whereas the second discourse produced an alternative discourse, and the third discourse manifested tensions between the ideological aspirations of the policies and the practical reality in the forest peripheries. The local public actors reproduced regional discourses further, yet they emphasise part of the discourses differently, and also express criticism towards transition discourses. The local interviews with forest-based actors

resonate mostly with the 'You can have it all is dependent on many ifs' discourse, and reveals the gap between some ideologies of sustainability discourses and interests of the individual group of economic actors.

Abstract 5.3 Loss, Arousal and Attunement. Ethnographic Perspectives on Kashubian Rurality

Dr. Oliwia Murawska. Universität Innsbruck, Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften und Europäische Ethnologie

In my presentation, I reflect on the rurality of Southern Kashubian landscape by looking at it through the eyes of an ethnographer. For this purpose, I first immerse in Southern Kashubia, as it existed over 110 years ago, and address the perspective that the ethnographer Izydor Gulgowski (1874–1925) took on it. After this historical introduction, I will show how an ethnographer can encounter this landscape with a posthumanistic approach today: How do phenomena that Gulgowski already registered show up in times of Anthropocene? My first thesis is that *Stimmung* (mood/attunement), which is also implicitly inscribed in the ethnographic material, determines the ethnographer's view of rurality. Then my second thesis is that an ethnographer awakens the rurality of a particular landscape through his attunement and his fear of loss: What *Stimmung* guided Gulgowski and what *Stimmung* guides me in our fieldwork conducted a century apart? What does ethnographic arousal of rural landscapes mean?

Abstract 5.4 From Space to Life. How Nature determines Culture

Giovanna Caruso, University of Greifswald

In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger presents the human way of life as one's own reflexive process of self-realization. The human life realizes 'in-the-world' in the original sense, that the human being has to consciously perform its own life. On the basis of the structure of 'Care', Heidegger illustrates that human life is fundamentally connected to things: thoughts, actions, interests and even moods unfold in dealing with things. And this presupposes a special spatiality of existence. This is particularly evident in the essay *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, in which Heidegger emphasizes the special role of space in the relationship between human being and nature. It is particularly important that this relationship is established by specific things: buildings. Starting from Heidegger's analysis of buildings and the relationship between things and the human being, I would like to explain in my talk the role of the spatiality for the reciprocal relationship between culture and nature. In this sense, on the one hand, this analysis will make clear that buildings fundamentally shape and change nature. On the other hand, a special focus on rural areas will show that nature determines culture.

Abstract for Think Rural in the Baltic Sea Region, 23-25 March 2023

Abstract 6.1 Spatio-temporal patterns of demographic change in the Baltic Sea Region

Paula Prenzel, Universität Greifswald

The Baltic Sea Region, just like the rest of Europe, has been experiencing profound demographic changes in the last decades (e.g., Stiller & Wedemeier, 2011; VASAB, 2016). Falling and continuously low fertility rates, trends of urbanisation and suburbanisation as well as changing migratory patterns accompanying economic and societal transformations shape the geographic distribution and composition of population. At the same time, these processes are spatially uneven, leading to parallel and differentiated trends of growth and shrinkage at a regional level. Although rural regions, especially due to smallness and peripherality, are likely to be particularly affected by changes in demographic structure, quantitative empirical literature (e.g., in spatial planning or economic geography) currently often focuses on the phenomenon of shrinking cities. However, in order to understand regional-level consequences of demographic change and identify potential trends of polarization or convergence (e.g., in population ageing (Kashnitsky et al., 2020)) in the Baltic Sea Region, both urban and rural areas need to be considered jointly and comparatively.

This paper aims to quantitatively describe the patterns of demographic change in the Baltic Sea Region, focusing specifically on the role of migration in driving and preventing population shrinkage in urban versus rural regions as well as consequences for ageing and population diversity. Using data on NUTS-3 regions with substantial coverage of the Baltic Sea Region, spatio-temporal patterns in demographic change are analysed with respect to differences in settlement structure as well as socio-economic characteristics.

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Kashnitsky, I., de Beer, J., & van Wissen, L. (2021). Unequally ageing regions of Europe:

Exploring the role of urbanization. *Population Studies*, *75*(2), 221-237.

Abstract 6.2 Infrastructure matters; challenge or possibility in municipalities with shrinking populations

Ida Grundel, Department of Technology and social change (TEMA T), Linköping University

Previous work on shrinking cities has mainly addressed shrinkage and its effects in large and former industrial cities and not in more rural areas. Even so, most European rural regions are shrinking in terms of population. In this paper, the focus is on Sweden, where almost half of the country's 290 municipalities have shrinking populations (SCB, 2021). As a result, many municipalities are struggling with scarce economic resources that must cover costs for schools, healthcare, infrastructure development and social welfare. Also, several studies show how differences both within and between Swedish regions are increasing in terms of income, education, health, labour markets and service over the last 40 years (e.g. Enflo, 2016; Björling & Fredriksson, 2018). To some extent this can be explained by the ongoing urbanisation process starting in the beginning of the 1950s. This has also led to important services moving to and concentrating in more metropolitan areas and city regions, which in turn has led to increased unevenness between cities and rural areas. This presentation will focus on critical infrastructure challenges in Swedish municipalities together with their responsibilities and growth strategies. It will be argued that there is a tension between the responsibilities connected to the municipal operations and infrastructure challenges posed by being a shrinking municipality on the one hand, and the ways the municipalities are planning for growth on the other hand. Investments in infrastructure are many times directed towards the establishment of specific industries such as the tourism or mining industry with the belief of attracting new inhabitants, visitors, firms and industry. In addition, many of the municipalities lack the capacity and jurisdiction needed to manage the infrastructure development in some areas such as fibre optics, district heating, and electricity grids leading to increasing geographical differences between cities and rural areas.

Abstract 6.3 Social security of rural areas - areas of exclusion in the perspective of social assistance activities on the example of Poland

Urszula Kaczmarek, Faculty of Human Geography and Planning, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Safety is one of the basic, next to physiological, human needs, identified with a sense of stability, order, justice, equality, or elimination of threats. The concept of security in the postmodern era has expanded, which is associated with general uncertainty and a high level of social threats; global and regional in the so-called civilization of catastrophes (U. Beck 2002). Ensuring social security, understood as creating conditions for people to persist, survive and develop, is the task of the state. Actions implemented by social policy programs in European countries are supported by EU social policy. One of the components of social security is social security, supported by a social welfare institution. Social assistance benefits are addressed to groups with the greatest problems with achieving a state of social security, at risk of social exclusion. The article aims to identify social threats/risks in terms of social assistance in Poland by showing the differences between these phenomena between the city and the countryside. The paper poses the question of whether social exclusion is of a structural nature and is related to the place of residence in the countryside. Many theories of socio-economic development use the dichotomous urban-rural approach, which emphasizes the division (core-peripheral - Krugman, 1991) into cities, especially large ones, forming core centers and rural areas constituting peripheries. In Poland, the differences between the city and the countryside concern almost every sphere of social and economic life. The distance between the city and the countryside in Poland is still clear, although recent years have brought an improvement in the situation in the countryside in terms of those social and economic phenomena, the development of which is determined by endogenous, local factors. The level of social risks in rural areas is also regionally differentiated, as a result of the mechanisms of cumulative causation (Myrdal, 1957). Identification of areas of social deprivation is essential to ensure social inclusion and a sense of security for sustainable development.

Abstract 7.1 Contemporary transformations and the future of rural areas in Poland

Anna Kołodziejczak, Faculty of Human Geography and Planning, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

The evolution of the functions of agriculture and rural areas in Poland accelerated with the incorporation of agricultural policy into rural policy in 1994, aiming at the multifunctionality of these areas. The increasing multifunctionality of Polish rural areas has enabled their more significant support from public funds, especially from the EU. Currently, it is focused on the competitiveness of regions based on local resources and more excellent joint activity of residents, entrepreneurs and representatives of local administration.

The presentation aims to present the changes that have taken place in rural areas in Poland over the last 30 years, including political and economic changes. The main drivers of these changes are the development of a market economy, economic globalization processes, restoration of local government, international and internal migrations, and EU and national policies aimed at rural areas. Rural areas are subject to various functional and spatial processes, the most important of which are depopulation, deagrarization and multifunctional development.

According to the administrative criterion, Poland's rural areas include all areas outside cities. They constitute about 93% of the country's area and were inhabited in 2002 by 38.2% of the total population of Poland and in 2019 by 40%. Rural areas are as many as 290.2 thousand. Km of Poland, where 43,000 are located village. Their morphology, appearance and people living in them have been and still are undergoing changes resulting from changes in the economic and social environment. These changes took place quickly in the command-and-distribution economy and resulted from mutually penetrating forced industrialization and rapid urbanization. Two processes were visible at that time: the first is related to the deagrarization of the countryside (semi-urbanization or, in other words, its urbanization) and concerns farms, households and the villagers themselves; it resulted from the increased sense of material and cultural independence, a certain kind of liberation, e.g. from the forces of nature. The second process is the rustication of cities – the rapid migration from the countryside to the city caused the unextinguished patterns of behaviour of the rural population living in cities. From 1990 until now, these processes are no

longer so intense, but their impact has been modified by the return to the market economy and the related behaviour of the state and European Union policy towards agriculture and rural areas.

In the traditional sense, the Polish countryside was perceived for a long time as a monofunctional area, with the structure of the economy inextricably linked to agriculture. This resulted from the delay in the development of domestic agriculture, which was and still is noticeable in the form of, e.g. excessively fragmented agrarian structure. The introduction of the market system in Poland in 1990 showed significant delays in the development of agriculture compared with most European countries. The fragmented agrarian structure, and excessive employment in agriculture, estimated at that time at about 1.5 million people, inhibited modernization processes but made it possible to store the excess labour force on farms, somewhat mitigating the "market shock" (shock absorber). It was only in 1992 that the gradual transformation of Polish agricultural policy towards state intervention led to the incorporation of the hitherto state interventionism implemented as part of farm policy into the broadly understood rural policy. Since then, the process of transforming rural areas towards multifunctionality, i.e. a new strategy for their development, is based on economics based on the need to change the development paradigm of rural areas, in which the active use of available resources (endo- and exogenous) located in rural. Research indicates deepening differences in the level of socio-economic development between and within regions, in municipalities and between them. The spatial distribution of the population in rural areas is changing. The regularity is that the population in suburban areas is increasing, and areas away from larger cities are depopulating. There is a long-term process of depopulation there. The main factor determining the direction of migration is the level of socio-economic development of the target area, guaranteeing better living and working conditions. This weakens the development potential of villages, especially in areas far from development centres and on the outskirts. The depopulation and decline of rural settlements also lead to the decline of agriculture in these areas.

Abstract 7.2 Socio-spatial fixes and their role in EU Bioeconomy Development

Moritz Albrecht, Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, University of Eastern Finland

The EU bioeconomy spans a vast policy sphere and is reproduced by a heterogenous and partially contradictory assembly of policy strategies, visions, and sectoral practices. By its unifying rhetoric it is framed as an economic policy following a sustainability transitions logic. Aiming for a socio-economically beneficial greening of various bio-based production and value chain systems it is often paired with vast potentials for rural rejuvenation. The current development of bioeconomy policy and much of its practices however have been criticized to much degree and leave doubts on whether the bioeconomy and its vast array of subordinate sectors currently entail even the capacities to be an enabling part for a just and sustainable transition. These doubts are amplified by the bioresource and biotech heavy tendencies in much of bioeconomy policies, their sectoral narratives and bioeconomy research that tend to flatten out the socio-spatial complexities and potential multiplicities of bioeconomy trajectories and practices. Based on this criticism, the paper displays and engages with the dominant socio-spatial practices and imaginaries at play in a series of multisectoral bioeconomy cases in Northern and Central Europe. It evaluates the (re)territorialization and (re)coding processes of bioeconomy governance assemblages and the expressive elements that guide their development trajectories. Focusing on these dominant spatial imaginaries the paper highlights a particular socio-spatial fix in bioeconomy related imaginaries that marginalize alternative spatial imaginaries of development such as socially inclusive, locally oriented and small-scale approaches. This generic socio-spatial fix employed in bioeconomy development nonetheless entails varying nuances in the different sectors and cases studied and contributes thereby to a more variegated picture on the inherent capacities to rescale bioeconomies for just and sustainable transition.

Abstract 7.3 Collectives of ecosystem revitalization: Negotiating (dis)connectedness in agricultural stream restoration experiments

Helena Valve, Finnish Environment Institute

Climate change is known to increase the likelihood of extreme weather conditions, such as draughts, driving rains and flooding. In many parts of the Baltic Sea Region, more efforts are needed to support sustainable drainage of farmlands. The call is for collective action to restore an agricultural stream to generate conditions for channelling of excess drainage waters. However, drainage is no longer conceived merely as a water management measure, but increasingly as means to revitalise ecosystems. Conventional drainage is even acknowledged as environmentally risky, apt to disturb material cycles and water flow and to impoverish riverine habitats. This means that those farmers who possess flood-sensitive fields, and who still remember the intensive digging carried out decades ago, are to reset their expectations regarding the measures that need to be taken to restore a stream. In my presentation I will draw from actor-network-theory to propose an understanding of the shaping of small-scale restoration collectives. I use the approach to analyse how action-enabling relations evolved in three restoration experiments carried out in Finland. The findings unpack the efforts and negotiations that were needed to make restoration possible. Restoration, and the connectedness it demands, actualises along simultaneous disconnections. The experiments also point to rural diversity and the means that help to negotiate coexistence—potentially also with ecosystem revitalisation.