



4th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Emotional Geographies 1-3 July 2013 at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Session Summary	
Session Title	Determinants and Emotional Experiences of the Consequences of Depopulation (Session 1)
Session Abstract	<p>Depopulation is a complex phenomenon observed at both national and regional levels. While the process of population decline at national level is a relatively recent phenomenon, rural depopulation in some countries dates back to early 20th century. The depopulation process is predominantly determined by negative natural increase, negative net migration and regional economic decline. Among the main consequences of depopulation are population ageing, increased unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, disrupted infrastructure, abandonment of the physical environment, and rupture of social networks. In addition, a large body of research has shown that the consequences of the depopulation process are manifested in feelings and emotions such as being deprived, abandoned, trapped, dissatisfied, isolated, lonely, bored and socially excluded.</p> <p>This session on 'Determinants and Emotional Experiences of the Consequences of Depopulation' aims at providing floor for a discussion on findings related to the factors influencing the process of depopulation, as well as on the emotions that come to front when experiencing the consequences of depopulation. We welcome papers on the impact of migration on depopulation, how inhabitants of depopulating regions experience and value their daily lives, emotional reactions on closures of facilities and services, how people feel about surpluses of vacant houses in their neighbourhood, or on the way some groups may feel 'stuck' into the region of depopulation, etcetera. Work-in-progress as well as finalised research projects addressing different regions and levels of depopulation are welcome.</p>
Keywords	Depopulation, determinants, consequences, migration, lived experiences

Presentations		
#	Title	Author Name
1	Opening	Tialda Haartsen
2	Happiness and Population Decline	Julia Rössel
3	Migration to less-popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations	Rixt Bijker
4	Solids; a method to support and speedup social bonding in a shrinking community	Peter Kiers

Session Convenors and Chair	
Session Convenor Name	Affiliation
Tialda Haartsen	University of Groningen
Nina Conkova	Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute
Session Chair name	Affiliation
Nina Conkova	Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute

Session presentation details**Presentation 1**

Title	Opening
Author name	Author affiliation
Tialda Haartsen	University of Groningen

Presentation 1

Title	Happiness and Population Decline
Abstract	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Author name	Author affiliation
Julia Rössel	Institute of Geography, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Presentation 2

Title	Migration to less-popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations
Abstract	<p>Migration into rural areas is often explained in terms of the rural idyll, the attraction of the countryside with its less hurried way of life in a quiet, spacious and green environment. However, this migration phenomenon has mostly been researched in attractive, amenity-rich, popular rural areas. This paper investigates the characteristics and motivations of migrants to less-popular rural areas using survey data (N = 664) for four municipalities in the North of the Netherlands. Our study shows a young group of in-migrants with relatively low incomes, but also a large proportion of working people and a considerable number of highly educated movers. Separating the motivations for choosing to live in a rural area in general from the motivations for choosing this specific rural area reveals that the pull of the rural idyll is mainly an important motivation for moving to a rural area in general. The reasons for choosing the specific rural area are a mixture of housing characteristics, referring in most cases to the availability of a specific house (i.e. 'this house appealed to us'), the physical qualities of the environment, personal reasons and the low house prices in the area. Combining the motivations with the characteristics of the movers reveals the diversity within the movers group. Our analysis shows a group of movers motivated by the feeling wanting to live close to family and friends, consisting of return migrants, singles, the youngest and oldest age groups and also the lowest income group. The physical qualities experienced in the area, for instance 'beautiful surroundings' and 'panoramic views', attract a group of highly educated movers, people with high incomes and people aged between 35 and 64. The motivation of housing characteristics is mentioned by a wide range of movers, but in particular by people moving from urban areas.</p>
Author name	Author affiliation
Rixt Bijker	Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen

Presentation 3

Title	Solids; a method to support and speedup social bonding in a shrinking community
Abstract	<p>The municipality of De Marne in Groningen Area in the Netherlands is looking for new ways of supporting and speeding up social bonding in the region, with the aim to facilitate and stimulate citizen entrepreneurship. In the past decennia the society was government-based where the local municipality had an important role in planning and facilitating the social structure. Now we are heading to a more Civil Society-based De Marne. The aim for a municipality like De Marne is to stay relevant in this Civil Society. In other words: what is the role of the municipality in this changing context? Furthermore, citizen entrepreneurship is needed as an incentive to start up new activities that support the social and economical attractiveness of the community in a time of demographic changes, budget cuts and economical up scaling. In a shrinking community, where the traditional meeting points are disappearing, the social connections are important in maintaining the quality of life.</p> <p>In this change process, De Marne is experimenting in different ways. One of these experiments is working together with artists. In collaboration with DAADkracht, an entrepreneurs movement that initiates and support practical exploration of spatial related social issues, ArtEZ , Academy of Arts, 40 students did a practical research for one week on the effect of the use of images to advance the effectiveness of the dialogue between citizens. The approach is related to the method of appreciative inquiry, but broadened from an organisation context to use within a society.</p> <p>The results are promising. Following the method based on appreciate inquiry, a learning circle is introduced which helped to get a focus on the essentials of what is really important and helped to determine what is needed to make a progressive step.</p>
Author name	Author affiliation
Peter Kiers	DAADkracht

Short biographical notes of session organisers and presenters

Rixt Bijker	Rixt Bijker holds an Msc in Sociology and an Msc in Cultural Geography from the University of Groningen. In January 2013 she successfully defended her PhD thesis 'Migration to less popular rural areas: The characteristics, motivations and search process of migrants'. She conducted her PhD research at the department of Cultural Geography, Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen.
Tialda Haartsen	Tialda Haartsen is assistant professor at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, Department of Cultural Geography at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Her research focusses on rural areas. Tialda has done research into representations of the rural, rural in-migration, rural youth culture(s), and senses of identity and belonging in rural coastal regions. Currently, she is specifically interested in population decline and how people 'who stay' experience living in depopulating areas and how they (re)organize village life. http://www.rug.nl/staff/t.haartsen/index
Peter Kiers	Peter Kiers is advisor on sustainable area development and sustainable building. He also is one of the founding fathers of DAADkracht, an entrepreneurial movement on spatial and social innovations. The partners of DAADkracht work together on personal title. They redefine, redesign and reconstruct their daily work aiming for sustainable solutions related to spatial-, economical- and social issues. They initiate projects to explore new solutions for the social issues and aim on building bridges between governments, ngo's, entrepreneurs and local people by bringing together personal entrepreneurship and social needs.
Julia Rössel	Julia Rössel is a teaching assistant and PhD student in the fourth year at the Department of Geography at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz. In her dissertation project she explores the process of in-migration to the Uckermark, a peripheral rural area in north-eastern Germany. For the analysis she combines a theoretical perspective of the good life with the ideas of the production of space by Henri Lefebvre and develops a concept of the production of spaces of good life.