

New Rurality? Reflection on Territoriality and Rural Life (Style)

by Prof. Claudia Neu
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In postwar Germany, processes of social and territorial integration were driven above all by the country's increasingly strong labor market with full-time employment, but also by the expansion of infrastructure. In the golden age of the welfare state, a fruitful symbiosis emerged between economic growth, high-quality public services (expansion of educational systems and medical care), and large-scale consumption. In the years that followed, social and territorial inequality declined: urban and rural lifestyles got closer together. Rurality and the rural lifestyle seemed to disappear.

We know the golden age of the welfare state is over: Structural changes in the economy and demographic change are placing major burdens on remote rural areas and urban agglomeration. The result we see before us is a society that is becoming ever more socially and territorially polarized that is deeply insecure despite positive economic forecasts and a consistently high standard of living. On the one hand more and more private households are moving back to the countryside - not just as a critique of globalization and mass consumption but also as a coping strategy in case of the high rents in the city. On the other hand, urban gardening and the rural lifestyle are en vogue. What does rurality mean in a digitalized world? Will co-working spaces be a chance for a new rural lifestyle?

The lecture will focus on the current discussions about the concept of "rural", "rurality" or "rurbanity". New research on special inequality will be presented, too.



All interested students and faculty are welcome to attend!!

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14:00 – 15:30
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