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Urban in the countryside: Flows, knowledge and transformation in rural Europe

The proposed session invites exploration of the growing urban-to-rural migration trends across Europe, shaped by recent changes such as the climate crisis, the COVID pandemic, the safety risks of war and migration, economic instability, and an increasing demand for more sustainable, eco-conscious lifestyles. Unlike the long-standing urbanisation trends, which drew people from rural areas into cities (and to the surroundings during the process of suburbanisation), in the last decades urban-to-rural mobility of urban people, culture, values, and practices became a visible social phenomenon. Scholars have examined this phenomenon through concepts like counter-urbanisation (Halfacree, 2012), amenity migration (Gosnell & Abrams, 2009), rural gentrification (Phillips, 1993; 2010; Phillips et. al. 2021), geoarbitrage (Hayes, 2018) and increasingly, ruralisation (Chigbu 2014). The session's basic question is: what is the impact of these flows of different urban social groups, values, attitudes, and practices on rural areas? How could they contribute to the livelihoods and sustainability of rural communities? While urban-to-rural migration brings new knowledge, values, and financial capital to the countryside, the influx of urban populations from diverse social and cultural backgrounds inevitably leads to tensions and conflicts. Differences in worldviews, objectives, and uses of rural space between newcomers and long-established rural residents can create competition over resources, as well as social friction (Nemes & Tomay, 2022). However, alongside these challenges lies the potential for positive cross-fertilisation. The diverse skills, knowledge, social capital, and financial resources brought by urban migrants can complement those of the local population, leading to innovation, resilience, and transformation in rural communities. Sustainable farming practices, ecological knowledge, and alternative lifestyle approaches introduced by urban migrants may blend with traditional rural practices, creating new opportunities for rural development. We invite both theoretical and empirical contributions that explore the tensions, conflicts, and potential synergies created by urban-to-rural migration. We are particularly interested in papers that address how different forms of capital—knowledge, social, and financial—are exchanged and integrated within rural

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communities. We welcome any theoretical background including but not limited to counter-urbanisation, rural gentrification, amenity migration, geoarbitrage, rural and second-home tourism, ruralisation and the transfer of knowledge and capital in sustainable and ecological farming. We also encourage contributions that rethinking rural spaces as dynamic, diverse, and shaped by complex interconnections between newcomers and long-established residents.

Catégorie

Conference session

Date de début

Mon, 09/08/2025 - 09:00 - Thu, 09/11/2025 - 17:00

Ville

Vienna

Lieu (salle, adresse)

Austrian Academy of Sciences Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2 1010 Vienna

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