

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Title: Industrial clusters in a post-socialist country: The case of the wine industry in Slovakia

pp. 62-78

Authors: Jana NOVOTNÁ, Ladislav NOVOTNÝ

Abstract: Research on clusters, unlike cluster initiatives, has not been comprehensively addressed in European post-socialist countries. The aim of this paper is to explore and to analyse quantitatively the spatial organisation of economic activities in the wine industry in Slovakia, and to assess it in terms of the concept of an industrial cluster. The wine industry is considered as a production sector in which location is determined by geographical factors. The research is based on a case study of a wine region located north-east of Bratislava, Slovakia. The primary identification of the cluster potential is based on the assessment of geographic conditions and statistical analyses focused on the spatial concentration of the industry within the defined area. An extensive questionnaire survey provided data for assessing the spatial organisation of economic activities and their impact on regional competitive advantage. Despite the spatial distribution of economic activities and relations among business entities affected by socialist industrialisation and post-socialist transformation, the results show that the industrial cluster was formed in the wine industry and its performance converges with the wine clusters in traditional Western European wine regions.

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Title: On the spatial differentiation of energy transitions: Exploring determinants of uneven wind energy developments in the Czech Republic

pp. 79-91

Authors: Bohumil FRANTÁL, Eva NOVÁKOVÁ

Abstract: Wind energy research is dominated by studies of local acceptance (or not) of wind farms and comparative studies at a national level. Research on the spatial differentiation of wind energy developments at the regional level is still insufficient, however. This study provides new empirical evidence for the extent to which regional differences in the deployment of wind energy are related to specific environmental and socioeconomic factors, by a statistical analysis of data for districts in the Czech Republic. Unlike previous studies, we found that the installed capacity of wind energy cannot be well predicted by wind potential, land area and population density in an area. In the Czech Republic, wind farms more likely have been implemented in more urbanised, environmentally deprived coal-mining areas that are affected by economic depression. It seems that in environmentally deprived areas, wind energy is more positively accepted as an alternative source to coal, and the economic motivation (financial benefits for municipalities) can have a greater effect on local acceptance, while public opposition is less efficient due to lower social capital and involvement in political matters. Based on these results, some implications for the planning and spatial targeting of new wind farms are discussed

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Title: How distance influences dislike: Responses to proposed fracking in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

Authors: Kerrie CRAIG, Darrick EVENSEN, Dan VAN DER HORST
pp. 92-107

Abstract: Despite extensive social science research into public perceptions and social responses to fracking, scholars have only begun to examine the relationship between distance to development and support or opposition for it. Importantly, the emerging studies are exclusively from the United States, and focus on communities and regions in which fracking already exists – in contrast to areas where it is proposed and still going through planning approvals. This paper reports public responses to proposed fracking in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom. A total of 120 people participated in an in-person survey with a qualitative follow-up in four locations: the village right next to the development site, two other villages just inside and just outside the wider fracking concession area, and in the capital city of Belfast, 150 km away. A clear spatial pattern of opinion was found, from almost universal opposition to fracking next to the site, to an even three-way split between proponents, opponents and ‘neutrals’ to fracking in general, in Belfast. Results show that some risks are perceived to be more local than others, whilst perceived (economic) benefits are recognised mainly at the national level. Content analysis of local and national newspapers revealed a very clear and similar pattern. Connections to Fermanagh, through visits or long-term residence, were also clear predictors of opposition to fracking. The spatial pattern of support for fracking in Northern Ireland differs substantially from each of the contrasting patterns observed in the United States. We discuss likely reasons for this and implications for both research and policy.

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Title: The countryside in the city? Rural-urban dynamics in Brno, Czech Republic

Authors: Lucie SOVOVÁ, Radoslava KRYLOVÁ
pp. 108-121

Abstract: The position of urban allotments in the rural-urban spectrum is evaluated in this paper, which contributes to literatures on urban gardening, as well as contemporary rural-urban dynamics. Historically, European allotments can be seen as a product of urbanisation. At the same time, they embody a number of “non-urban” characteristics that create the impression of “the countryside in the city”. This research project investigates how the urban and the rural are materialised, represented and practised in five allotment sites in Brno, Czech Republic. We follow three main lines of enquiry where the urban and the rural seem to meet: the physical environment of the allotments; the social life of these spaces; and food production as one of their core functions. Critical reflection of the rural-urban perspective advances our understanding of urban gardens, while, at the same time, allotments offer an example of hybrid spaces, which, in turn, contribute to discussions on current cities and country-sides. Overcoming the urban-rural dichotomy could facilitate the inclusion of urban gardening in contemporary cities.

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Title: Capturing cross-border continuity: The case of the Czech-Polish borderland

Authors: Vít PÁSZTO, Karel MACKŮ, Jaroslav BURIAN, Jiří PÁNEK, Pavel TUČEK
pp. 122-138

Abstract: The differences in welfare amongst European countries are especially evident in border regions, and this affects cross-border cooperation and relationships. Due to

the historical development of Central and Eastern European countries over the last century, the affected countries are unique “laboratories” for geographical research. This study assesses disparities in socio-economic indicators representing socio-economic phenomena the Czech-Polish border region, through the analysis of cross-border (spatial) continuity, using quantitative methods (multivariate statistics and socio-economic profiling), GIS analysis and cartographic visualisation. It is demonstrated how such a combination of methods is useful for the comparison and evaluation of the complex socio-economic situations in neighbouring countries. This research project identifies the most suitable common indicators for a proper evaluation of cross-border (spatial) continuity, and it reveals the spatial patterns as reflected by a cluster analysis. The greatest cross-border (spatial) continuity is apparent in the easternmost part of the borderlands, while significant differences on both sides of the border are evident in the very central part of the areas under study. The paper also describes methodological aspects of the research in order to provide a quantitative approach to borderland studies.

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