

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Authors: Karl BENEDIKTSSON

Title: Conflicting imaginaries in the energy transition? Nature and renewable energy in Iceland.

pp. 88–100

Abstract: An improved understanding of the geographical unevenness of the global energy transition is important. The concept of 'sociotechnical imaginaries' has been used extensively for understanding how desired technology futures are envisioned and differentially articulated in various contexts. Supplementing this, the concept of 'nature imaginaries' is proposed in this article, to specifically address collective moral visions of human/nature relations that underwrite discourses and actions by various actors. Nature plays an active role in both types of imaginaries. Their complex interactions play a part in how energy transitions unfold. The article uses this framework for a description of the energy situation in Iceland, and its largely successful transition towards renewable energy through the development of hydropower and geothermal resources. Particular sociotechnical and nature imaginaries, sometimes opposed to each other, are discernible. The article argues that the analysis of conflicting imaginaries at work in specific energy transitions might help in identifying leverage points from where it is possible to work in a small way towards a global transition.

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Authors: Marcin MAZUR, Maria BEDNAREK-SZCZEPAŃSKA, Jerzy BAŃSKI, Damian MAZUREK

Title: Measuring environmental and landscape-related potential for tourism development in rural areas and assessment of its co-occurrence with tourist movement: The case of Poland.

pp. 101–112

Abstract: The assessment of assets regarding their potential for tourism development is a well-recognised aspect of quantitative geographic research. This paper confines such matters to environmental and landscape-related attributes. The methodological objective is to propose a synthetic index for holistic measurement of a complex system of assets at the local level for Poland's rural areas, followed by its empirical verification. The natural and landscape-related potential of a given area is perceived broadly, as the aspects involved are diverse and complementary: the quality of the landscape, the value of the environment, forest cover, relief, accessibility to surface waters and local bioclimate. The cognitive advantage of this research project is attained by confronting this index against a measure of tourist movement, as well as classifying rural areas by means of combining both dimensions. A considerable number of communes in Poland are characterised by relatively high potential, albeit they are not being exploited for tourism development to a correspondingly large degree.

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Authors: Liliana POPESCU, Cristiana VÎLCEA

Title: General population perceptions of risk in the Covid-19 pandemic: A Romanian case study.

pp. 113–124

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has created complex socio-political situations, as the health crisis was paralleled by the reshaping of lifestyle patterns and induced severe economic changes. By means of an online survey, this study aims to investigate the population perceptions of risk in Romania: it examines important psychological and social factors related to risk perception and behaviours, as well as attitudes toward quarantine and physical distancing. By means of statistical analysis, the data were analysed and a GIS environment was used to visualise data distributions. Our findings indicate that if the perceived risk associated to the epidemic is high, people will change their normal behaviours, adopt preventative measures, adhere to strict hygiene practices and are willing to self-isolate for the benefit of their peers, which they tend to see as running a greater risk than themselves. Women and people with higher educational status tend to be more worried about the current situation, but regarding the severity, almost all men believe they would risk a severe state if infected. In conclusion, the perception of high risk associated with COVID-19 can lead not only to positive behavioural changes (mainly physical distancing and improved hygiene), but also to a rapid mobilisation and active involvement of communities, which are vital for stopping transmission of the virus.

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Authors: Cătălin BERESCU, Filip ALEXANDRESCU, Ionuț Marian ANGHEL

Title: Vulnerable Roma communities in times of the Covid-19 negative quarantine.

pp. 125–136

Abstract: In contrast to other countries in East Central Europe, Romania stands out because of a high number of small and segregated Roma settlements. As an ethnic minority, the Roma are overrepresented in marginalised and impoverished settlements and, given the basic recommendations to contain the pandemic – wash hands, keep the distance and work from home, their situation was disproportionately exacerbated by the imposition of lockdown measures. We use secondary data to interpret the deprivation features that puts them at greater epidemic risk. In addition, the Covid-19 crisis led to a sudden return of the Romanian Roma living in Western Europe. The slums and ghettos were more strictly quarantined than regular areas, suggesting a form of negative quarantine. Quarantine was – next to its medical purpose – used as a rhetoric and disciplinary device. Roma were portrayed as infection spreaders, and racism was channelled mainly through the media. While the spread of the disease placed them at risk, the lockdown itself induced major survival challenges. By using media and social media analysis, we show how the discourse of negative quarantine unfolded. The latter was diluted in the general relaxation of containment measures, but its legacy as a practice raises questions for the future governance of areas inhabited by the Roma.

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Author: Hynek BÖHM

Title: The influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on Czech-Polish cross-border cooperation: From debordering to re-bordering?

pp. 137–148

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic brought many changes to social behaviours in Europe. One of its major consequences was the temporary closure of borders, which was introduced as a measure to prevent the uncontrolled pandemic spreading and involved internal Schengen borders. This has had a major impact in the way in which cross-border cooperation has been conducted in Europe, including the Czech-Polish borderland, as it dramatically restrained all flows across borders. In this paper, we evaluate the impact of the pandemic on five roles of cross-border cooperation: 1) as a multi-level governance form; 2) as a regional development tool; 3) as a para-diplomacy form; 4) as a post-conflict reconciliation tool; and 5) as Europe-building. We argue that the impacts of the pandemic complicated regional development and the Europe-building role of cross-border cooperation in the Czech-Polish borderland. The article envisages re-bordering processes also in the Czech-Polish borderland, but with important exceptions in the regions with a high level of cross-border integration, mainly in the Euroregion Těšínské Slezsko/Śląsk Cieszyński. The paper also calls for the elaboration of the guidelines for possible repeated (Schengen) border closures and proposes modifications of the INTERREG microprojects schemes, to keep them attractive also in times of expected cuts in public finances.

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Authors: Robert SZMYTKIE

Title: Suburbanisation processes within and outside the city: The development of intra-urban suburbs in Wrocław, Poland.

pp. 149–165

Abstract: The scale and the specificity of intra-urban suburbanisation is subject to evaluation in this article, based on a case study of Wrocław city (SW Poland), using data on population changes at an intra-urban scale and on the level of construction activity in the city. Intra-urban suburbanisation is characterised by intensive construction activity and population growth in the peripheral districts of the city, while depopulation takes place in the central part of the city and in large panel block estates from the socialist period. The main factors for the development of intra-urban suburbanisation are a reaction to the unfavourable (from the perspective of the city) suburbanisation processes (outflow of residents and tax revenue, road traffic congestion and the necessity to service populations residing de facto outside the city). The existence of extensive non-urbanised areas within the larger cities of Central and Eastern Europe (identified as potential areas for investment) results from the specific nature of their territorial development in the 20th century, including incorporation processes connected with planned urbanisation.

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