

**SURAP-CONFERENCE: "SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL AREAS IN PRACTICE"**

Session 1, part 2: New approaches to revitalization of rural economy and rural communities

**Title:** Theories and practices of 'territorialisation' – new insights in rural development and cultural sustainability

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**Abstract:**

Regions all over the globe are subject to dynamic change processes that involve political, economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects as well as the complex interrelation between them. Taking this into account, this presentation discusses the concept of 'territorialisation' - a process of co-construction and co-evolution between human society and environment in which both have agency – and describes its three dimensions: a symbolic dimension, a reification dimension and an institutional dimension. Territorialisation is further conceptualised as combined processes of neo-endogenous development and co-production. In territorialisation, culture acts as a mediator between society and the environment, as it mediates practices, relations and patterns of behaviour such as farming styles or consumption patterns. The key-elements of the conceptual framework will be illustrated with cases from Belgium (agriculture in the Rural-Urban Fringe) and Morocco (saffron cultivation in the local-global squeeze).

The theoretical as well as empirical content of the paper is partly inspired by the recently published book 'Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development. Theories and practices of territorialisation' (edited by J. Dessein, E. Battaglini and L. Horlings, Routledge, 2016).

**Keywords:** territorialisation, cultural sustainability, regional development