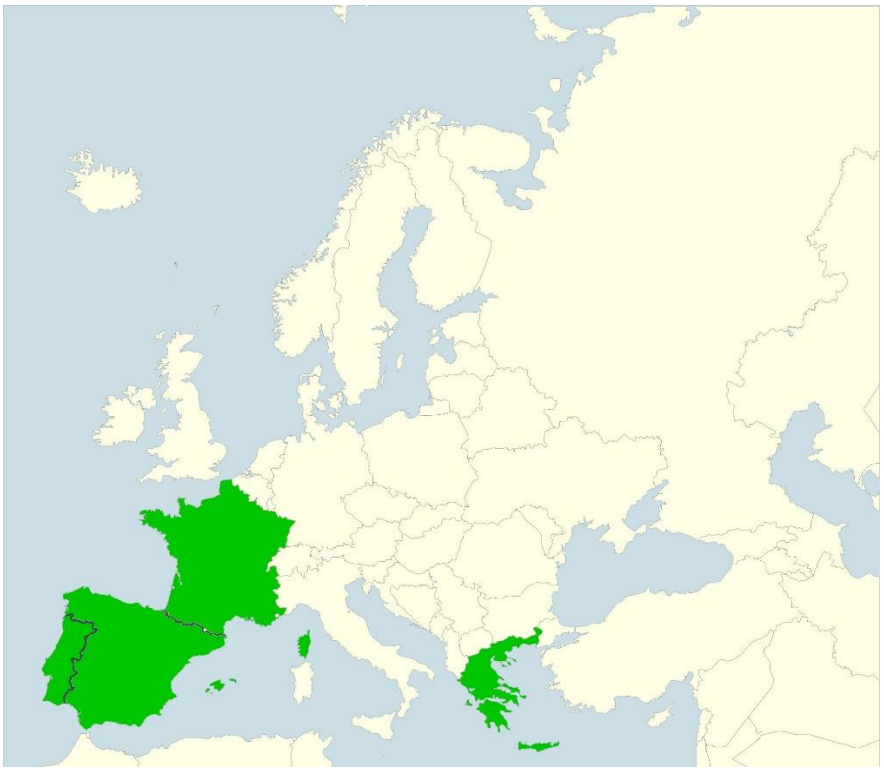
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European Countryside MENDELU

DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES IN RURAL EUROPE AND CASES OF RESILIENCE BASED ON CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES INNER REGIONS

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Abstract: The project Cultrural+ (an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project in the field of Adult Education) is funding research and education to deal with major demographic challenges in some regions of the participant countries (Extremadura in Spain, Tràs-os-Montes in Portugal, Central Massif in France, Thessaly in Greece and province of Latina in Italy). The paper will discuss the particular problems that European depopulated areas are facing and how cultural heritage and cultural tourism could act as resilience factors. Research is showing that though the different countries' regions face similar demographic challenges, strategies and planned actions are different. The levels and indicators to measure and understand depopulation processes are also diverse, as are the levels of actualization of the data in each country. International comparative interdisciplinary research allows transfer of best practices cases and models as the "learning territories" and to deepen in the analysis and prospection of the socio-cultural major changes that are affecting the European countryside. This paper analyses the criteria that can help evaluate and acknowledge best practices.

Keywords: Depopulation, Cultural Heritage, Resilience, European case studies, Countryside, Rural territories

1. Introduction

Cultrural+ is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in the field of Adult Education, funding research and education to deal with major demographic challenges in some regions of the participant countries (Spain, Portugal, France, Greece and Italy). Different in geopolitical dimension, all studied regions face common and specific demographic challenges and strategies. Cultrural+ focuses on cultural heritage as an opportunity to develop resilience and create entrepreneurship opportunities for rural development. Cultural tourism is a fundamental factor in this process.

Cultrural+ research focuses in the partners' case study regions studying villages and thinking in creative links as "learning territories" (Delgado Barrios, 2017) and cultural roadmaps that can really expand the municipalities' social networks and their possibilities for resilience in context of demographic imbalances. Cultrural+ searches cases and models of good practices to transfer and inspire mediators and entrepreneurs, that is, stakeholders, or all relevant agents commonly building the governance of European rural areas. In this article, we present an interdisciplinary[7], international comparative analysis of rural areas and case studies. Cases, models and principles of good practices may be transferred to different contexts.

As Cirillo (2016) highlights, most cities and small towns have based their strategies for economic regeneration on cultural planning. Cultural tourism is a new key sector of the rural strategies through new attractions and cultural events. The Council of Europe has thus defined a common strategy to enhance cultural heritage and promote territorial development[8].

On the basis of the first applied research carried out in several European Mediterranean countries and the identification of some cultural initiatives, we would like to return specifically in this article to the complex relations between demographic challenges, identification and then valorisation of cultural heritage, and tourism development. These interactions are difficult to study because if the notions of cultural tourism and cultural heritage enhancement to increase the "resistance" of depopulated rural areas overlap, they can also be antagonistic, for example, when the success of the former is measured only in terms of the increasing number of visitors, which can lead to unsustainable management of heritage and increasing social inequalities in demographically difficult areas.

[7] The research has involved experts in tourism, geographers, social anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists from Portugal, Spain, France and Greece.

[8] "European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century": https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/strategy-21

We therefore propose to explore further the nature of these relationships and the conditions under which heritage management and the development of cultural tourism contribute to the resilience of depopulated rural areas. Are cultural heritage and cultural tourism really "integrated" for the benefit of local rural development? How do enhancement initiatives emerge? Who participates in these innovations – is local civil society really involved? – and how is the diversity of audiences taken into account? What are its effects on the dynamics of territorial development and on the socio-cultural structures of villages?

More than a quantitative assessment of these interrelated and complex dynamics, which can help to mitigate the effects of depopulation, we would rather like to propose a concrete reading grid of the integration processes and a comparative and multi-criteria approach based on case studies.

2. Context and theoretical background

Depopulation and "rural renaissance"

The depopulation and the consequent *desertification* of Europe's rural areas is an increasing problem. Common factors accelerating rural depopulation tend to be circular: lack of employment opportunities and affordable housing pushes young people to the cities. This usually leads to the closure of schools, to an ageing and increasingly dependent population and to deterioration of health, transport and other services[9]. This situation offers an easy and common excuse to governments not to undertake infrastructure and social support works in rural areas, which only leads to a vicious circle of abandonment.

In general, people tend to move to wherever there are jobs, career opportunities, good life conditions and favorable economic and social perspectives, including access to higher and continuous education. In particular, certain rural areas that in the last decades suffer from a decrease in the number of inhabitants and loss of social capital, may enter into a 'vicious circle of decline', as more people will leave in search of better job prospects and provision of services.

In addition, some of these areas may face issues of inadequate health coverage, as public health provision tends to decline, and private health service practitioners find operations in these areas unprofitable. Areas suffering from depopulation normally also have seen a decrease in transport services and a closure of public services (schools, theaters/cinema, post offices, police stations, etc), forcing therefore also some elders who can afford it to move closer to city centres where health services and access to goods and transportation are better. Demographic ageing has been an important issue in the rural regions of some EU member states, for example Spain, Greece, Portugal and France, where rural populations have a higher proportion of people over 65 years. In Greece, Spain and Portugal, the share of the rural population at risk of poverty or social exclusion is higher than the share recorded for the urban population and is situated within the range of 30.0–40.0% (Eurostat – Statistics on rural areas in the EU[10]).

The ageing of the rural and farm population and the need to accommodate or reduce the flow of young people out of the countryside has been a serious challenge to the generational renewal and the sustainability of the European rural regions. In Europe, among the 273 level 2 NUTS regions, we find a larger number of them with a projected decrease (202) in population numbers due to natural changes than with a projected increase in the number of inhabitants (67) (Eurostat regional yearbook, 2016).

[9] In 2019, about 100 primary schools and kindergartens as well as 23 schools in the broader region of Attica (mainly in its rural regions) closed down due to lack of pupils. https://www.ethnos.gr/ellada/78885_kleinei-sholeia-se-oli-ti-hora-i-ypogennitikotita-sos-apo-toys-ekpaideytikoys (in Greek).

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU

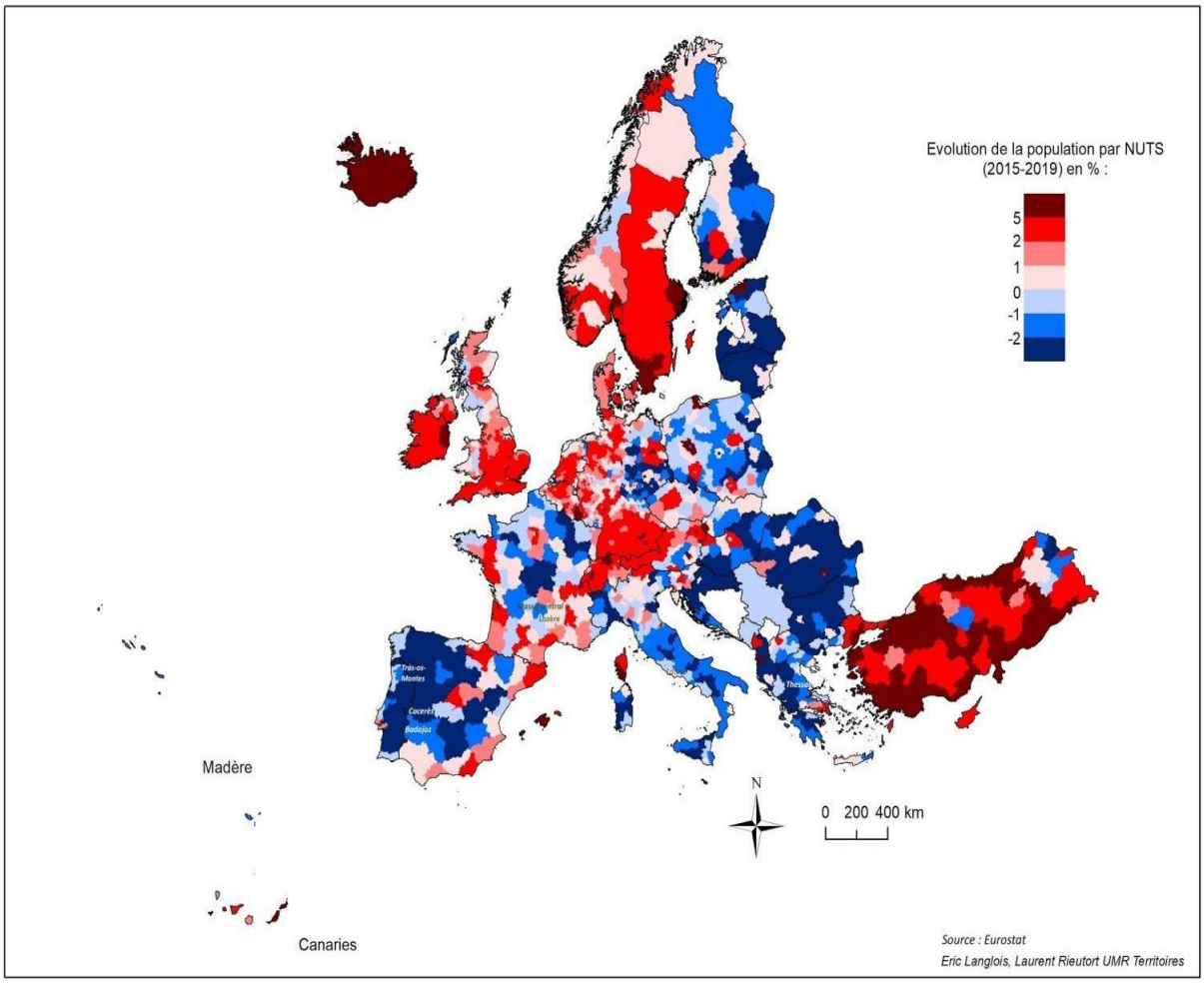


Fig 1. Percentage change in population (2015–2019). Source: Eurostat. Study areas are indicated

However, field observations and mapping show the reversibility of marginalization phenomena. In many depopulated rural areas, local strategies have enabled demographic renewal, the development of economic initiatives and the installation of project leaders, with or without the support of public policies. Numerous studies have thus shown the arrival of new populations from cities with diverse characteristics (pensioners, young households with children, project leaders and new farmers, people in precarious situations, foreign residents). Thus, "rooted" rural dwellers and newcomers, rural poverty and a form of social “gentrification” intersect.

Low birth rates make attracting young people indispensable to revitalize these regions. Depopulated areas need entrepreneurs to stimulate the local economy. A good example is the promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of these regions leading to an increase in tourism and added value to local products and events. Cultural tourism and, so-called peasant tourism or rural tourism (Fairstein, 2013)[11], can be one of the major factors for resilience and revitalization[12]. There is an increasing search from visitors looking for authentic local experiences and unspoiled landscapes that only rural areas can offer. Other effects of tourism are also tested in different rural regions. In Iran´s region of Dasht-e-Lut:

> Tourism triggered a switch from accelerating decline of rural villages, with closing schools and abandoned buildings and farmland, to accelerating recovery and reinvigoration, with new ecolodges and adventure tours employing household members and other local residents.

[11] In Spanish, this specific style of rural tourism that interact with the cultural and social life of local inhabitants of rural areas has been denominated either “turismo paisano” or “turismo campesino”.

[12] Other factors relay on the decrease of quality of life and the augmentation of health risks (due to pollution, stress, pandemies,...) in cities.

> The switch was assisted by low-interest ecotourism loans. It has also generated new economic opportunities for women specifically, and these have created much greater social freedom and self-determination, now also accepted by men. (Buckley, et al., 2020)

Resilience, "territorial resources" and social innovations

Historically, rural territories have often been able to adapt to difficult socio-economic conditions by seeking to diversify their resources or by engaging in collective action to improve their quality of life and resilience (Maino & *al*. 2018).

The concept of resilience comes from the physics of materials, but also from ecology to describe the transformation and/or adaptation of a material or an ecosystem in the face of disturbances (Holling, 1973 and 1997). More recently, the concept of resilience has been introduced in the social sciences and applied, for example, to describe socio-ecological systems, integrating man in their management (Carpenter et al. 2001; Anderies et al., 2004; Folke, 2006). It should be recalled, however, that researchers have shown different forms of resilience, from the simple capacity to absorb shocks to the capacity to radically transform the territorial system, including changes to adapt the system and make it more resilient. The systems are then considered to be "learners" and the idea is no longer so much that of returning to the initial state after a disturbance as that of the ability to adapt while remaining consistent with objectives, projects, as well as the stakeholders' vision of future developments (Walker et al. 2002).

The central hypothesis of our proposal is based on the idea that anchoring to the territory based on the management of cultural heritage, specific local resources, and on cultural tourism generates, under certain conditions, adaptive capacities and a form of resilience in depopulated rural areas. Among all approaches to cultural heritage and cultural tourism management, there are some that fail and others that succeed in these objectives. Cultrural+ project aims to agree on a series of factors that some projects develop to be considered good practices cases.

The analytical framework provided by the approach in terms of anchoring and of "territorial resources" (Gumuchian, Pecqueur 2007) makes it possible to address the analysis of cultural heritage and its impact on the development and resilience of territories. According to this analysis, it is considered that the development of local and heritage resources is favorable to economic activities. The development trajectory is based on the promotion of the only thing that cannot be “relocated”, that is to say the rural territory itself, its amenities (living environment, tangible and intangible heritage, etc.) and its distinctive resources. We can benefit then from consumer demand for products (alimentary or other) and so-called "specific" services allowing to generate added value especially if complementarities exist between them (idea of the "basket of goods and services”) by taking advantage of the key role of tourism, which makes it possible to create the link between resources; a positive virtuous circle takes place in which skills reinforce each other, while the image of a quality territory contributes to the economic "overvaluation" of its products. The rural area can then develop sustainably if the actors get in touch, coordinate and become part of a dynamic collective by activating social relationships, potential for innovation and by organizing its "territorial resources" in the framework of a project (Campagne and Pecqueur, 2014). It must be said that, in this theoretical grid, rural areas present indisputable opportunities for development by standing on proximity and geographic and socio-cultural links between local actors always so that new forms of cooperation/coordination emerge with the support of communities, sometimes university laboratories and especially a multitude of local cultural associations and SMEs[13].

While other forms of communitarianism and social networks as the parish are increasingly dissolving, these associations and SMEs, normally in collaboration with local administrations, serve today to continue some major functions of the community, the safeguard and

[13] For the role of cultural associations and agents and the optimization of the results of their cultural events’ and cultural heritage enhancement project, see the resources and training material of the Erasmus+ project DEN CuPID (Digital Educational Network for Cultural Projects’ Implementation and Direction) in http://den-cupid.eu/en/

enhancement of cultural heritage, the interface between people and place and the mediation with outsiders (tourists, migrants, new rurals, fellows, voluntaries, ...).

This process of enhancing cultural heritage and specific territorial resources is often combined with new strategies that can be described as “social innovations”. In response to social needs, they imply a common appropriation, cooperation networks, a collective approach and the mobilization of a diversity of knowledge and skills in order to become anchored in the territory.

In this theoretical context, this article will propose a reading grid of the effects of the management of cultural heritage -seen as a specific territorial resource- and its valorisation by tourism, on the socio-economic levels. What are the conditions for the deployment of cultural tourism in terms of social innovations, networks of actors (local and exogenous) and learning?

What is considered “cultural tourism”?

Cultural tourism has been linked since its first definitions with cultural heritage as "a trip (of at least one night) with the main motivation to broaden one's horizons, to seek knowledge and emotions through the discovery of a heritage and its territory" (Origet du Cluzeau, 1998). Therefore, to understand, this tourism can take various forms: discovery of the material cultural heritage (be it sites or monuments labeled nationally or internationally - for example, listed as World Heritage by UNESCO), or rural "small heritage" of proximity but also immaterial cultural heritage as lifestyles, tangible and intangible practices (language, religion, etc.) and local know-how (craft, agricultural or gastronomic), visits to museums and places of memory or archaeological evidence, attendance at a festival, a folklore event, an exhibition or a concert. This tourism whose engine is often linked to the identity of a place, to historical, artistic (aesthetic) or symbolic values, is practiced by often specific social categories and which can be limited, but it generates a significant growing tourist flow and, if it is not synonymous with “gated-communities”, it allows a locality to promote a positive image in terms of socio-cultural openness and residential attractiveness (Talandier & al., 2019).

However, the scientific literature discusses the effects of this "tourism of memory" on rural development, highlighting the contradictions between precisely this tourist and residential attractiveness, a guarantee of demographic and economic growth, and the preservation of environmental and cultural resources. Moreover, two challenges seem to us to be major in these depopulated localities:

- First is individualism as the contemporary ethos that attempt against communitarianism and citizenship as active civil participation, something much more important in villages than in cities ;
- Second is integration/diversity of local inhabitants (holders of authenticity that gives being born in a village or a descendant of people from the village) and newcomers, neo rurals, urban commuters, migrants.

3. Methodology

Methodological research for this work relays in international comparative analysis through a set of qualitative methodologies (literature and media review, semi structured interviews with different actors, participant observation) and statistical analysis.

Virtual mapping of social indicators as a collective effort makes it possible to find differences between villages under the same region and distance to middle cities. For measuring depopulation and resilience potential, statistics and maps vary in detail, level of update and type of indicators. In addition to the commonly used by the European Union density of inhabitants by square kilometer, we analyze other demographic indicators such as municipalities with no births in the last year, migratory balance, ageing index or dependency tax. There are other available statistics about enterprise creation and distance to main services (schools, health centers, gas stations, ATMs). In the time of smart cities and smart territories, we can surely think about other more dynamic and continuous indicators as water and electricity consumption, but normally data

is within the hands of private (or public) companies and not always easy to obtain, as they are rarely publicized.

Semi-directive in-depth interviews were carried out with the main project leaders – the number varies between 5 and 10 for each "small territory" – of heritage management and/or tourism development; mayors and local development leaders also met; the interview guides targeted in particular the processes of activity creation, the types of actors mobilised and the multiple measurable and/or observable effects. More precise surveys were carried out among visitors and inhabitants (at least thirty interviews in each zone) to measure attendance and the perception of the heritage dynamics in progress, although the scientific protocols were adapted to each context. Within the framework of the Cultrural+ project, the participants – researchers but also tourism development actors or association leaders – were also able to benefit from their own participating observations, sometimes over a long period of time, which made it possible to constitute a real "observatory of change" in social and heritage practices, based in particular on the organisation of multiple meetings, visit reports and training course reports. Finally, this method was deployed in different sectors chosen and the results were cross-referenced using a common analysis grid.

To similar demographic and isolation conditions, places in different studied regions show different tourist trends and resistance to lose population or enterprises. The cases studied were selected on the basis of an initial statistical approach revealing forms of demographic or socio-economic "resilience" and a mapping of experiences (good practices) of heritage management and innovations in the field of cultural tourism. Other criteria were also selected:

- Added value to the territory (attractiveness, job creation, positive impact on the environment, learning and social dynamics, participation of the inhabitants) and innovative, interdisciplinary, multi-scale and multi-actors approach;
- Creation of networks of actors linking different organizations and municipalities in the region and facilitating new identity links;
- Recognition of procedures through forms of certification;
- Dissemination of practices, including different languages and by mobilizing interactive multimedia web.

4. Results: case studies

Portugal. Land of Tras-os-Montes

The intermunicipal community of Terras de Trás-os-Montes consists of 9 municipalities: Alfândega da Fé, Bragança, Macedo de Cavaleiros, Miranda do Douro, Mirandela, Mogadouro, Vila Flor, Vimioso e Vinhais (Table 1); 195 parishes, with a population of 107,860. About 50% of this population live in 533 small villages, and the rest in cities and municipalities. In the last 8 years (since 2011), the NUTSII Terras de Trás-os-Montes lost 8,853 of its inhabitants (about 8%).

In 2016, the agro-food sector employed more than 12,000 people in Terras de Trás-os-Montes, being responsible for about 47% of the available job offer in the region. This is a predominantly rural area, highly dependent on agriculture, namely fruit (almonds, chestnuts, cherries), olive and animal production (cattle, pigs and small ruminants). In this region, there are 24 EU-protected origin denomination products (D.O.P) and protected geographical indication (P.G.I.) among meat, honey, fruit, olive oil and cheeses. The emphasis on DOP and IGP products is relevant and reveals a high potential for internationalization, with an added value easily justified due to their close relation to the territory and to the maintenance of ancient cultural and traditional practices, presenting a perfect match between the agro-food and the touristic components, allowing the commercialization of differentiated products, exclusive of the region.

National tourists represent the main tourists visiting the region (81.4% in 2016), followed by Spanish (8.4%) and French (3.6%) tourists.

With a clear investment on the local and unique potential of cultural landscapes, cultural and historical heritage, and gastronomic and wine products, the region has developed several touristic itineraries/activities.

Nature-based Tourism and enotourism in the Lands of Trás-os-Montes are well developed, with attractions of great relevance in the national and Iberian panorama, such as the UNESCO world heritage Douro International Natural Park, the Vale do Tua Regional Park, the Montesinho Natural Park, the Protected Landscape of Albufeira do Azibo and the Meseta Ibérica Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. Visits to the wineries and vines landscape are also possible. It is a segment that can be enjoyed mainly in its soft aspects (e.g., walks, excursions, walking routes, tastings, observation of fauna and flora, etc.) and hard aspects (e.g., rafting, hiking, climbing, etc.).

In addition to the existing endogenous reference products and the places of excellence where it is possible to taste them, in this subregion, there is a set of relevant cultural events that generate large flows where these products are celebrated and disseminated. Among them are the Feira do Fumeiro (Vinhais), the Feira da Alheira (Mirandela), the Feira da Caça e Turismo (Macedo de Cavaleiros) or the Expo Trás-os-Montes (Bragança and Porto). In all of these events, the local producers of wine are present (this region belongs to DOC region Vinhos de Trás-os-Montes Demarcated Region).

In the region of Sendim and Miranda do Douro, there have been innovative and creative projects as that from the Association for the Study and Protection of Donkey Cattle -AEPGA- (https://www.aepga.pt/), combining the defense and safeguard of the donkey with the defense and safeguard of the cultural heritage and rural development. A single association, with headquarters in very little villages (Sendim, Atenor), developing a very dynamic agenda since 2001, organizing several yearly events, hosting dozens of international voluntaries and young fellows[14] at the same time that building social local networks.

Macedo de Cavaleiros is located in the northern plateau 181 km from Porto and 505 km from Lisbon. It has a current population of 14,550 inhabitants (INE, 2019), corresponding to a population density of 20.9 inhabitants/km2 (INE, 2019). In general, the demographic dynamics of the region follows the general trend of the Trás-os-Montes Subregion and is the opposite to the trend for the Northern Region, demonstrating the persistence of the migration of resident population towards the littoral areas. The tourist lodgings have increased in the last 10 years from 2 (2010) to 14 (2018).

The feast of "entrudo chocalheiro" is a festive cultural event based on one of the few winter masked rituals that are still preserved in inner areas of Portugal and Spain, that takes place annually in the days of Carnival in the village of Podence in Trás-os-Montes, in the municipality of Macedo de Cavaleiros. The “Caretos” the protagonists of “entrudo chocalheiro” feast, meet a range of action that goes way beyond the village of Podence and Carnival time (Costa, L., 2015). This winter celebration with masks became extinct in most North Portuguese and Leonese towns and Podence was a rare exception to that. The relationship between visitors, the villagers and the cultural heritage establishes Podence as a tourist destination. All the promotional activities of the Carnival of Podence undertaken both by individual initiatives and by the Group of Caretos Association have been implemented to generate community development, strengthening the village’s economic and social tissue through the enhancement of its intangible cultural heritage. As a result, it has achieved great popularity, attracting a large number of visitors and involving a large number of residents and their descendants in its enactment. It nowadays generates important social and economic dynamics, not only for the village (where it really helps to reinforce identitarian links of inhabitants and migrants) but also for the city and for the entire Northeast region of the country.

[14] The AEPGA organizes cultural events since 2004–2005 attracting cultural tourists and impacting on the lodgements and shops of the region. Walks on donkey through the little villages as “Por Tierras d l Rei” or “L Burro i L Gueiteiro” -that ends in the town of Sendim when the Interceltic Music Festival of Sendim starts - and festivals as Sons e Ruralidades specially focused on revitalization of the most depopulated areas as Vimioso.

The village of Podence, with a total of 180 inhabitants, gets invaded by 10 to 12 thousand visitors that come from several countries. In 2019, there was a total of 30,000 visitors during the 4 days festival of “Entrudo chocalheiro” in Podence. In 2020, more visitors are expected due to the recent elevation of Caretos and the festival as UNESCO intangible world cultural heritage.

Spain. Extremadura. Western province of Cáceres

Depopulation of rural areas is at present a hot subject in Spanish agenda and mass media. Lack of employment and market opportunities are expelling the youth, dynamiting the little hope for survival of hundreds of villages all over rural inner Spain (especially the provinces of Zamora, Orense, Teruel, Cáceres). Two indicators picture well this demographic crisis, the percentage of elders (older than 65) and municipalities without births in the last year.

In the Western autonomous community of Extremadura, there are significant differences between its two provinces, Badajoz and Cáceres, showing the Northern part of the region with much higher levels of depopulation, ageing, migration and fragility. (See figures 2 and 3)

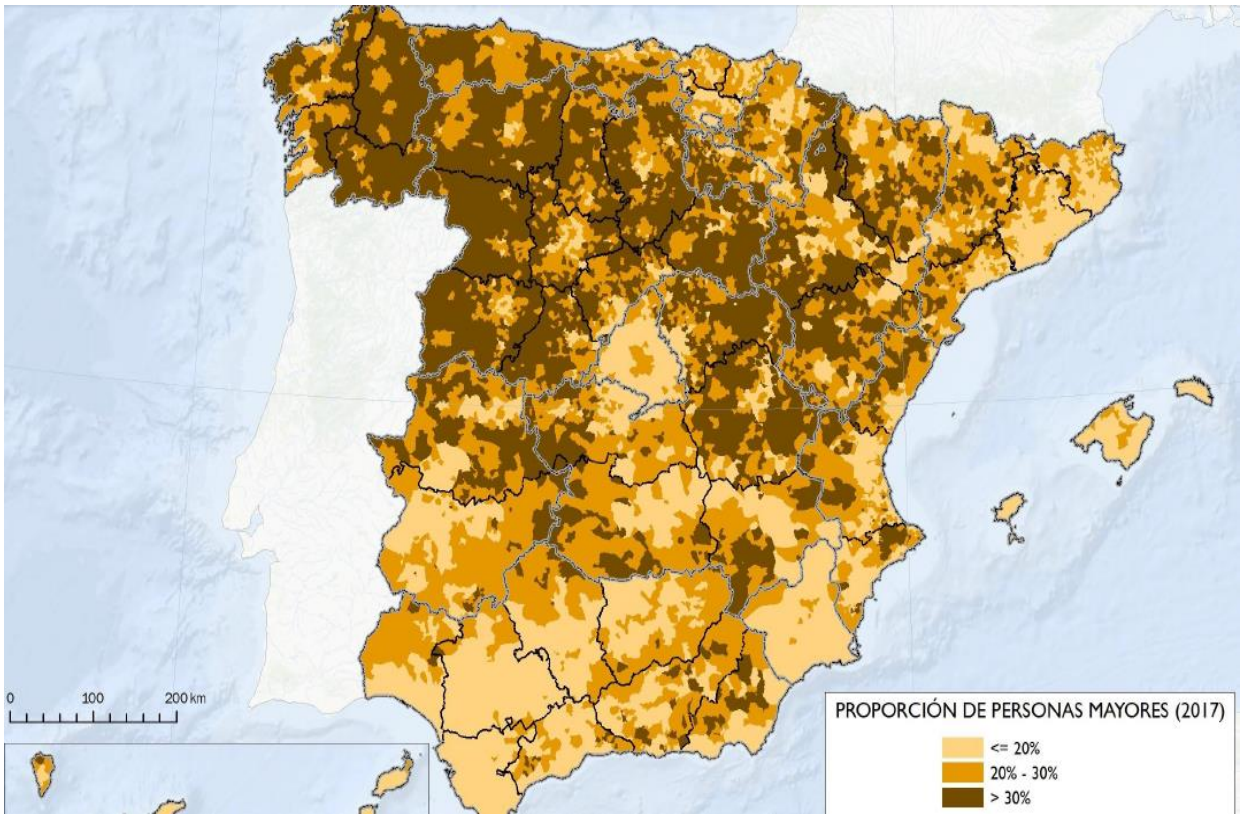


Fig 2. Spain. Percentage of elders. 2019. Source:”La España Vacía”

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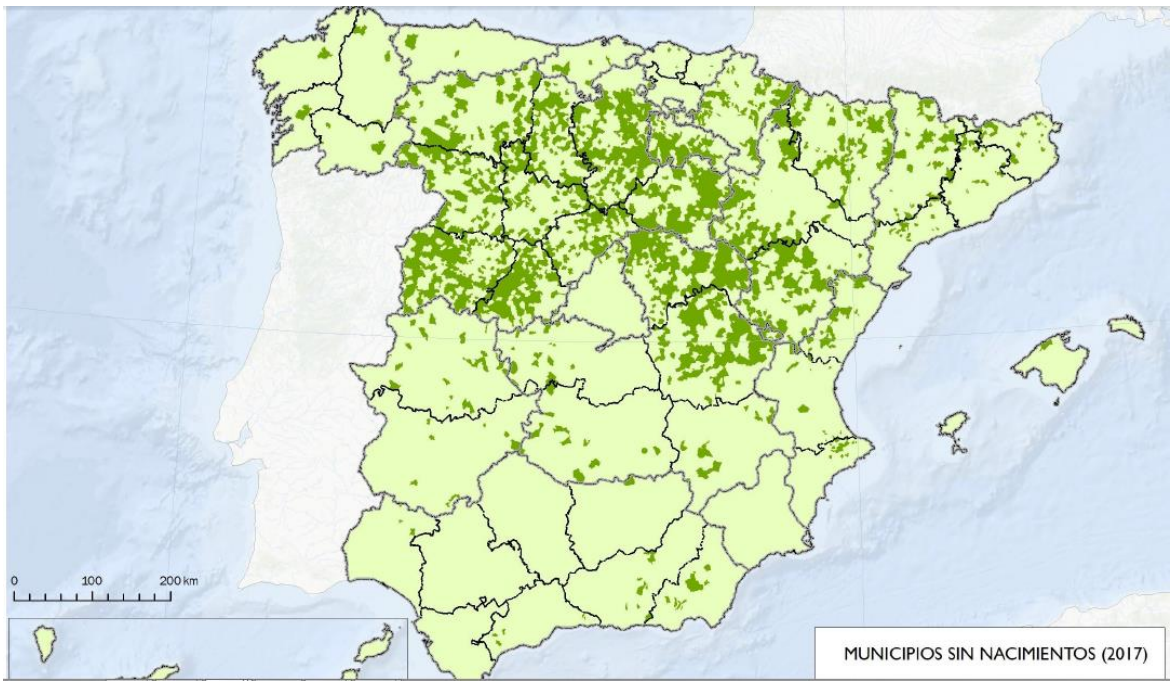


Fig 3. Spain. Municipalities without births. 2019. Source: "La España Vacía"

https://geogeeks.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MinimalGallery/index.html?appid=d857f9639e664fffa9d17ce0f732490c# RETROUVER SOURCE INITTIALE. Powered by ESRI

European funds, mainly from programme LEADER, have helped to mitigate, but did not succeed in stopping depopulation in little villages, though experts and mayors agree that the only solution is to create conditions to attract migrants, for return of the emigrants rarely happens beyond the summer holidays stages and some other counted visits in the year.

The project Cultour+ -another Erasmus+ key action (KA203)- has highlighted the importance of cultural routes (specially pilgrimage and other "walking" cultural routes) for some rural regions of Spain. Focusing in the "Silver Way" to Santiago (Vía de la Plata), it has analyzed governance processes, stakeholders network fragility, and evolution processes of the route (Kamara et al., 2017; Pereiro and Gómez-Ullate, 2019; Gómez-Ullate, M., & Corcho-Sánchez, P. 2019). Research has proved that while having a great impact and enormous potential for cultural tourism and being a great opportunity specially for little villages, the complexity of stakeholders networks (see figure 4) and the need of inter-regional and cross-national coordination make their governance a complex and fragile equilibrium.

- Pilgrims, tourists, tourgrims
- Residents, locals
- Other tourists
- Tourism & Hospitality professionals
    - Lodging
        - Conventional hotels and Rural houses (Bed &Breadfast)
        - Private hostels (normally licitations of public hostels)
        - Rooms in private homes (Airbnb, agreed upon with city government)
        - Restaurants
    - Restaurants
    - Guides
        - Personal
        - Editorials (paper guides, Internet guides, apps)
- Transport companies and other professionals (as National Mailbox with the rushpack Pack)
- Souvenir shops
- Museums
- Centres of interpretation
- Hospitalier (Hospitaleros)
- Other services (i.e., food shops, pharmacies, etc.)
- Public agencies
    - Municipal (City governments)
    - Regional (Xacobeo, public-private mixed consortium, Local Action and Rural Development Groups)
    - National
    - International (St James Way Federation, Institute of European Cultural Routes)
- Catholic church
- Researchers (i.e., archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, cultural management, sport sciences, health science)
- Friends of the Way Associations
- Writers, celebrities, journalists, film makers

Fig 4. Stakeholders and actors in the Silver Way to Santiago. Source: Authors

Cultural routes as the Silver way therefore have an enormous potential as the Mozarabic ways emerging throughout all Andalusia and all passing through Extremadura allow us to think. But any gap in the route (for example, no hostels or water points throughout too many kilometers, as it happens in the stage Casar de Cáceres-Cañaveral) may endanger the whole route as pilgrims and walkers design their trips parting from the arrival in Santiago and they would rather choose a more friendly way.

Cultural routes are one of the best practices model to increase tourism opportunities in little peripheral villages. After their design, it is fundamental to foster their use and continuous surveillance, by creating associations, artistic projects, involving schools, inter-municipal projects, etc.

In Extremadura, there are some good practice cases based on music festivals and artistic interventions that through the activation of cultural tourism, powerful flows have a deep impact on the towns where they are organised. In the province of Cáceres, little villages as Carbajo (200 inhabs.), Pescueza (148 inhabs.) or Villanueva de la Vera (2021 inhabs.) organize annual music/cultural festivals that have major economic, social and cultural benefits to their populations. These festivals are promoted by associations that join local residents, newcomers and migrants together to creatively work on the cultural and natural heritage of these villages.

Even though they do not make the population grow, they influence it in several ways:

- Avoiding businesses closure;
- Avoiding families' migration;
- Empowering social network, community and civil associations;
- Fostering public-private collaborations;
- Building on placemark and international image.

During the festival days, the villages receive visitors varying in numbers (20,000 in *El Festivalino*, 2,500 in *El Magusto* and 1,500 in Guitarvera aprox.), but as environmental issues are in the priorities of organizers, they have an impact as well on the local landscape as reforestation campaigns are fostered[15], trekking roads are cleaned and open to tourism, conferences are speaking about environmental local issues.

Although it is the one attracting a more reduced number of visitors, we have considered the Guitarvera Festival in Villanueva de la Vera as a good practice case, since it has relevant cultural impact beyond the economics (Gómez-Ullate & al., 2019). A complete "fête de la musique", the cultural encounter as it is labeled by its founders, develops ethnography in traditional music and in local cultural heritage, foster the creation of music groups and other folk festivals as the "Toñá Piornalega". A community-focused festival, as the Boyle Arts Festival in Western Ireland (Mahon, M & Hyyrylainen, T, 2019), it values the role of the elders and devote important moments to them, and serves to fuel the transmission chain of tradition and culture.

All this is possible due to the altruism of the organizers who put all their nonprofit effort just "for the love of their village". The organizing committee formed by 10-15 independent persons from the village define themselves as "assemblearians in the way they work[16]".

Another very interesting case in cultural tourism and resilience is Romángordo. A little village of 259 censed inhabitants in the influence area of the National Park and Biosphere reserve of Monfragüe. It had never benefited too much from the influence of the park, but in 2016, an artistic intervention started with a movement that has painted more than a hundred "trompe-l'oeil" in the houses' walls and garages' doors and have made visitors to grow from 1,500 aprox. in 2015 to 22,000 in 2019.

Romangordo really has a chance for culture to develop, since it has created a cultural cluster in the last years composed by an ecomuseum based on traditional architecture (Ecomuseo Casa del Tío Cáscoles), a museum of scents, an interpretation centre of the route of English -referring to the English army that fired the Bonaparte occupant armies from the region -, a social participative archaeology project with summer camps.

Studying the trends in the 14 municipalities under the influence area of the park of Monfrague, Reginfo and Sánchez Martín (2019) stated that "the declaration of Monfragüe as National Park raised obvious expectations among public and private agents in the area that have not been reflected in the population fixation. Similarly, except in the rural accommodation modality, there has also been no progress in the capacity of different types of existing tourist accommodation in the area that, in any case, has been inferior to the one experienced, those of Extremadura."

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[15] Thousands of trees have been planted by assistants to El Festivalino in Pescueza (Cáceres), see https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/668871/0/

[16] Informant: (Marcelino, in interview 03/011/2019)

In clear contrast, these are the words of the mayor of Romangordo in an interview celebrated the impact of tourism in the town: “A bar that was about to close is still open, and the old bar of the municipal swimming pool is now a restaurant. A multi-shop and a bank office have opened.”

These little successes are great steps towards resilience and light some hope in the endangered villages of inner rural Spain.

France. Massif Central. Mont Lozére

In France, the vast Massif Central is also a good example of a demographic crisis. The density is almost everywhere less than 40 hab./km², with vast areas having barely 10, even 5 hab./km² as on the Mediterranean hinterland. The areas of higher densities are reduced to the urban and peri-urban rays. This demographic poverty remains the main handicap of the Massif Central, especially as these “quantitative” problems are compounded by qualitative imbalances: a fall in the fertility of young households, strengthening of celibacy or of couples without children, accelerated aging of the population. Over most of the territory, there are now as many elders (> 60 years) as young people under 20 years of age and in a large number of cantons, more than a quarter of the population has exceeded 65 years. These constants lead to worsening demographic dynamics. As the situation stabilizes or is revived in the other French mountains which "are reborn", the Massif Central continues overall to be depopulated. There are, however, some areas of sustained migratory growth, especially on the eastern, southern or south-western borders of the Massif. Peri-urbanization mixes with a real dynamism of attractiveness on the southern fringes. On the other hand, the areas with negative migratory balance largely refer to the highlands of Cantal, northern Lozère, central Limousin or certain massifs far from the southern part. Since 2008, migratory growth appears more selective and the economic crisis is also reflected in a decline in their attraction potential.

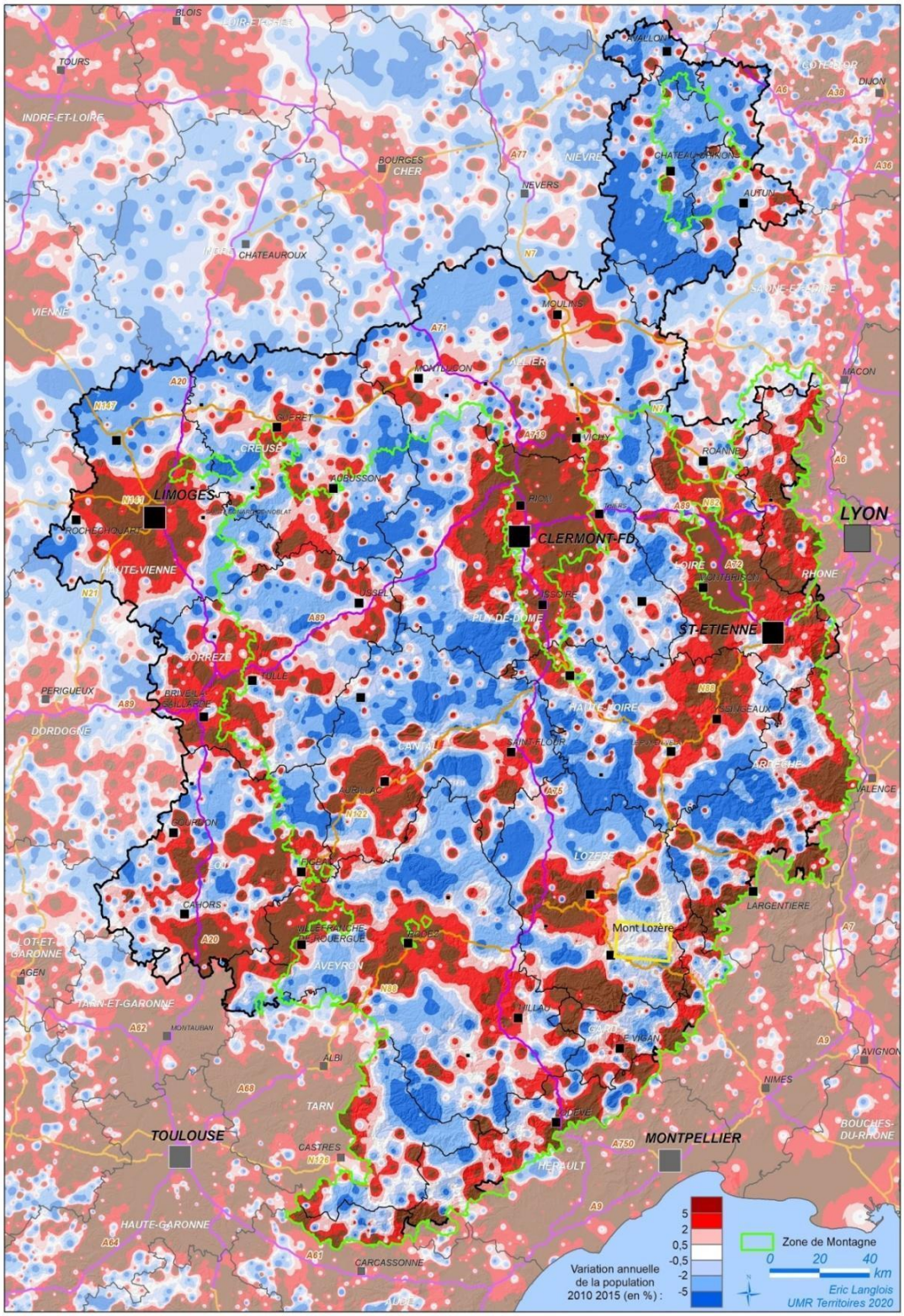


Fig 5. Massif central. Variation of populations and localization of Mont Lozere. Source: INSEE

Mont Lozère is difficult to access and poorly identified even if it is fully included in the perimeter of the Cévennes National Park. The geographical limits hardly coincide with the borders of the communes or the old parishes. The mountainous harshness and the current low densities should not conceal an intense historical settlement at altitude: on the southern slope of this mountainous block, the limit of crops and fields stands on average at 1250 m and a hamlet, L'Hôpital, peaks at almost 1400 m". Some of the most living villages today are also the highest: Finiels (1220 m), La Brousse (1215 m), Les Laubies (1280 m).

The demographic decline is homogeneous: the massif lost almost two thirds of its population between 1886 and 1954 (from 7,500 inhabitants in 1851 to less than 3,000 in 1954, densities falling from 16 inhabitants to km2 to 6), with an accentuation after 1946 and in the 1960s. Isolation does little to encourage young people to stay in the country and the demographic consequences are disastrous, with ageing populations and a negative spiral which is settling down durably; only a little community of just over 2,000 remains. However, since the 1980s, a certain recovery has been observed thanks to the installation of new populations and a positive migratory balance, especially on its Mediterranean side.

Let us add that Mont Lozère remained for a long time away from the concerns of professionals of heritage action, even if some local scholars and travelers of the 19th century discovered these spaces early (we think of Stevenson). Lozère also benefited from the literary works of a Jean-Pierre Chabrol, but it is especially the establishment in 1970 of the Cévennes National Park, the only permanently inhabited in France, which favored the patrimonial and tourist policies.

The Massif included in the Cévennes National Park area (with the seat of an ecomuseum, enhancement of built heritage, agro-pastoral -with drailles, transhumance paths-, boundary markers for the Order of the Hospitalers and Templar Knights or religious monuments) and in the perimeter of the property listed as World Heritage by UNESCO "The Causses and the Cevennes, cultural landscape of Mediterranean agro-pastoralism"; more recently, the Park has been certified by the IDA (International Dark-Sky Association) among the very rare "international starry sky reserves" (IDSR), preserved against light pollution.

The Path "In the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson", certified "Cultural route of the Council of Europe" in 2015, traces the route taken in 1878 by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), with a donkey named Modestine as his only companion. As part of the centenary of the journey, in 1978, the trail was rehabilitated and promoted by a major regional association, the Club Cévenol. In 1994, it was the subject of markup, signage and a guidebook, while the association "On the way of Robert Louis Stevenson" offers "a tourist product by enhancing the image of writer-traveler and donkey" (Bonniot, 2016). This long-distance path crosses Mont Lozère and has helped support the economy (estimate of more than 50,000 overnight stays), encourage the creation of accommodation and local businesses often supported by new arrivals (Fournier, 2015).

The Path “In the Footsteps of the Huguenots from the Cévennes”; another Council of Europe cultural route certified in 2013; on the territory: "Chemin Camisard", which is a 137 km loop passing through Le Pont-de-Montvert and run by the association "Drailles et Chemins Camisards en Cévennes", which also promotes hikes with a donkey.

Handicraft know-how is also developed. Forged cutlery, textile accessories have led to the creation since 2006 of an "Association of Crafts in Cévennes" at Pont de Montvert, organizer of the festival of arts and crafts, with the project of creating a "path of art in South Lozère".

All these cases show the importance of a form of tourism based on specific resources and on the roaming model with adaptation of traders and services to the demand, consumption of local products (hostels and tables d'hôtes).

What is the impact of this cultural and tourism development strategy? On a qualitative level, we observed a recomposition of the dynamics of actors, private and public, associations and local authorities, rooted and newcomers, which facilitates collective mobilization around projects; longer-term effects may also play on the image of the territory as "open" and welcoming, which could give rise to projects for the creation of new activities or "neo-rural" installations.

On a more quantitative level, demographic trends are timid. In the 7 municipalities of the massif, the population decreases from 2,659 inhabitants in 2006 to 2,632 in 2016 due to a negative natural balance (-1.06%) but the migratory balance is clearly positive (+ 0.84%); in the only municipality of Pont-de-Montvert, which hosts the greatest number of cultural activities, the population increases from 569 people to 594 between 2006 and 2016. In addition, the number of dwellings has greatly increased, passing from 3,734 in 2006 to 4,017 in 2016. Tourism statistics also show an increase in the frequentation of campsites and hotels; according

to INSEE, + 36% for campsites between 2005 and 2012 and another + 20% between 2014 and 2016; for hotels, the increase reached + 8% between 2014 and 2016. At last, the diversification of the economic activity can be identified with the creation of 49 companies, including services, between 2009 and 2018 in the municipality of Pont-de-Montvert (source: INSEE).



Fig 6. The Pont-de-Montvert. Photo: L. Rieutort

Greece. Trikala and Farkadona region in Thessaly

Despite the fact that Greece is dispersed with archaeological sites and museums, the amount of visitors are still rather low and so is the income generated by cultural tourism. According to the report by the National Statistic Authority[17], in the first trimester of 2019 there was a significant increase in the numbers of visitors to the state museums and archaeological sites all over the country (roughly 15%) and to the state revenues from tickets (roughly 18%). However, actual sums from visitors' tickets remain rather low, to our opinion (about 10,000,000€ a year) and the largest part of that goes into the funds of the Ministry of Culture, without much contribution to local communities. The most common feature of Greek Archaeological sites and museums in rural areas is that visitors stay in the nearest city and visit the sites on a daily tour basis. Exceptions to this rule are sites located at a large distance from any city, such as the archaeological site and museum of ancient Olympia, or located within already touristically developed areas (such as the Medieval city and castle of Rhodes).

The museum network of the Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Bank is the second largest museum network of the country, apart from that of the Ministry of Culture. This is a network of museums explicitly located in rural areas and aiming at enhancing aspects of rural or other productive (and traditional) activities. This network matches high standards of museological and

[17] Greece National Statistics Institute. http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/547df5c8-ef31-74a6-e7d9-a76d9c1438c5

ethnographic work with a more flexible scheme of saleables and other activities aiming at the participation of the public. Notable among the museums of the network are the Museum of Hydraulic Movement in Dimitsana, central Peloponnese, the Museum of Industrialized Oil production in Aghia Paraskevi, Lesvos island, the Museum of sericulture in Soufli, the Museum of marble working in Tinos, the Museum of Mastic raisin in Chios, etc. According to the statistics published by the Bank for 2018, the museum network attracts some 330,000 visitors a year, of whom, however, the majority visit on free entrance (i.e., they are school kids or elders) and only 45,000 of them are foreign tourists. Compared to the roughly 2,000,000 visitors a year to all national museums and archaeological sites, the number of visitors of the Piraeus Bank network is rather high, yet it still presents a rather low percentage of tourists, which indicates that it has not managed to contribute much to the local economy, as initially intended. This shows that the museums of the network have not yet managed to establish the close ties to local economies that they were supposed to despite the fact that they are considered as the "best practice" case by Greek standards.



Fig 7. Museum of Industrial Oil production, Lesvos (PIOP)



Fig 8. Museum of Environment, Stymfalia (PIOP). Source: https://www.piop.gr/el/diktuo-mouseiwn/Mouseio-Periballontos-Stymfalias/to-mouseio.aspx

Thessaly NUTS 3/ EL611, which constitutes the focus of our research for Greece within Cult-Rural+ project is a region covering the municipalities of Trikala, Kalambaka, Farkadona and Pyli with roughly 145 settlements, of which only 4 (Farkadona, Pyli, Kalambaka, Trikala) exceed 3,000 inhabitants. Trikala is the only big city in the region, with a population of about 60,000 people. The area is heavily depending on agriculture and animal husbandry as a source of income. Most villages show a demographic decline from a peak period (roughly end of 19th-beginning of 20th century) Elati presents an exception, as it seems that it has lost only a 10–20% of its population throughout the years. The reason is, apparently, that it is located very close to the ski resort of Pertouli.

The data statistics offered above prove that cultural heritage management in rural areas is still completely underdeveloped as a source of income and factor for the increase of jobs and well-being in most rural regions. This is due to the fact that it is maintained within an "elitist" frame of function, either run by the state or by larger networks. Local initiatives remain few and far between, usually focusing on the creation of little "museums" - rather sheltered collections -, most of which focus on ethnography and folk culture or on ecclesiastic material. The entire region of Thessaly, for example, which forms the core part of our Greek study, has more than 15 Ethnographic Museums (Laografika mouseia). Most of them are supported by local cultural associations or by local municipalities. Furthermore, it has at least ten more "theme museums" (Museum of Natural History and Mushrooms and Museum of Greek Education in Kalambaka, Centre for the Digital Enhancement of Meteora region also in Kalambaka, Byzantine Museum of Makrinitsa, Radio Museum of Lafkos, The Vassilis Tsitsanis Museum and Research Centre in Trikala, Museum of Brickworks in Volos, run by the Piraeus Bank Cultural Foundation as part of the aforementioned network, Entomological Museum in Volos, Museum of Geological Formations in Kastraki, Military Museum of the Veterinary Service of the Army in Larisa and some others). Some of these museums rely on a network of volunteers, therefore they do not contribute to the creation of new jobs. Most of them also do not have any saleable items, hence scarcely generate income beyond the ticket collection.

Tourism is mostly centered around specific places and activities: Winter vacations in Elati and Pertouli (combination of snow and skiing facilities, natural beauty and traditional architecture), religious tourism in Meteora and Kalambaka (often visited in the course of tours modelled after the cultural route “footsteps of St. Paul”, but also by foreign tourists from Slavic countries) and the extremely successful “Mill of the Elves” Christmas Theme Park in Trikala city. Nation- or region-wide events attracting people on specific times of the year include the following:

- Gastronomy-related: Gournochara (festival based on the consumption of pork meat) in Sotira Trikalon, Onion Festival in Palaiomonastiro Pylis Trikalon, Meteorisimo (street food festival in Trikala based on local tastes);
- Folklore and local culture-related: Karagunian wedding (Megala Kalyvia, Trikala), Annual gathering of the Sarakatsani (Pertouli). Both events are closely related to local intangible heritage, as they combine traditional music and dances by groups clad in traditional costumes, consumption of traditional food and revival of customs
- Itineraries and routes: Vlachostrata (the route used by Vlachs for the transhumance of their flocks), Villages of Mt. Koziakas (network);
- Religion-related: Various religious festivals throughout the year, particularly in late spring-early autumn period and the all-season visiting of the Meteora monasteries.

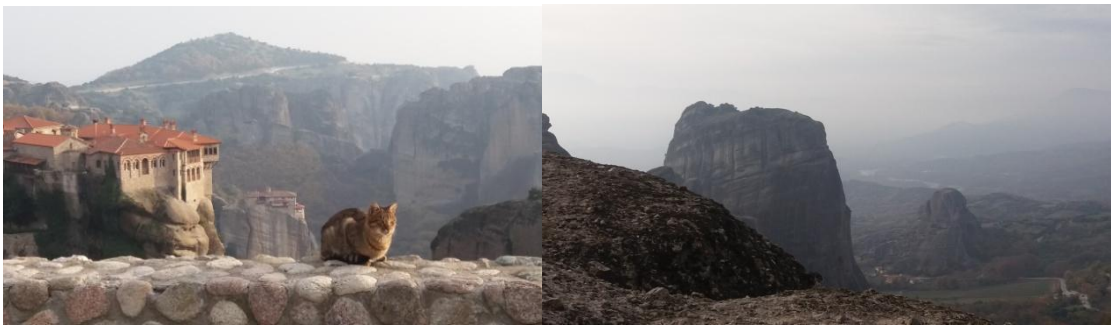


Fig 9. Meteora rocky formations and monasteries attract thousands of visitors every year. Photo: Time Heritage photo archive

Among the best practices discovered so far through our research in the region are the following:

- The Mill of the Elves is by far a best-case throughout the country, as it vivified a medium-sized city, such as Trikala (about 60,000 inhabitants) by combining a Christmas amusement park in a historic mill setting with several cultural activities (concerts, movies etc) [http://www.milosxotikon.gr/home/the-mill-of-elves/]. The mill has been the theme of the Greek case-study within the Erasmus+ project “DEN-CuPID” (Digital Educational Network for Cultural Projects’ Implementation and Direction) since it managed to combine heritage management (restoration and valorization of a heritage asset, such as Matsopoulos’ Mill) with the CCI industries in order to attract to the city a vast number of tourists (exceeding 1,000,000 visitors in 2019). One has to stress, however, that the impact on the local population would not have been so huge (as the Mill is a seasonal affair) had it not been for a series of structural improvements in daily life in the city of Trikala (officially one of the “smart” cities throughout the country) and a thorough project of cultural valorisation and restoration of historic buildings (Ottoman Mosque, old prisons in the hammam area and creation of the Tsitsanis museum) and the proximity to the Meteora region which offer a variety of tourist sites and experiences.
- Farkadona, our core case study within Cultrural+ and a partner to the project, is also investing on the “smart” technologies and on the improvement of daily life with the aid of technology;[18] it also aims at investing on a very extensive animal-breeding park, where free-range cattle will be raised in order to meet the requirements of “Place of Origin”. The region can combine cultural and natural activities within the concept of agrotourism

[18] *One of the most important achievements is its inclusion in the URBACT network for healthy cities: https://urbact.eu/urbact-in-greyece-cprus*

or alternative tourism. The castle of Grizano, in particular, can become the setting of festivals and targeted gastronomy events whereas the “Vlachostrata” can be further enhanced in order to provide an experiential revival of the life of the nomad Vlachs, mostly shepherds. In this sense, there are opportunities to develop workshops for cheese-making, processing of wool, natural dyes and tent building and even special tours with staying in tent facilities and cooking traditional dishes.

- The region has a few agritourism businesses to rely upon for mentoring, such as Agromenelais (www.agromenelais.gr), a farm producing super-foods and other agricultural products and offering consultancy on developing one’s own organic farm, the Vasilakos farm (http://sokratisvasilakos.gr/), the Wooden Village (xilino horio) and Madania hostels, offering activities in nature and two more consultancy agencies, namely the GiSeMi Hub in Trikala and the NGO OikoSphere in nearby Karditsa. An outstanding example is also the agrotouristic and eco-friendly hotel Montanema, in Mouzaki, between Karditsa and Pyli (http://www.montanema.gr/en/)
- Out of the aforementioned list of museums, the Natural History Museum of Meteora and Mushrooms’ museum (https://meteoramuseum.gr/en/) is actually functioning based on modern museological standards and also as a hub for ecology and local production, as it organizes mushroom-picking tours attracting visitors from all over Greece and has an updated shop (and e-shop) with products made locally using mushrooms as primary material.

The most important challenge revolves around the effort to discern factors, which might reinforce cultural and touristic entrepreneurship in the predominantly rural areas of Farkadona and Pyli, in order to retain some of the touristic fluxes from the nearby Kalambaka and Trikala regions, particularly in winter. Another desideratum would be the successful training on the issue of development of innovative products to fuel both the local market (the shopping areas of the Mill of the Elves and the market developed around Meteora) as well as a more enlarged market on a national or even international (via e-commerce) market. Finally, the participation of the municipality of Farkadona is crucial for investigating ways in which the public sector can induce and foster rural transformation to match goals for sustainability as suggested in international literature (Habiyaremye, Kruss & Booyens, 2019).

Comparative study will eventually highlight trends for mobilizing resources in low-density rural areas, such as the regions of Farkadona and Pyli, matching efforts undertaken in other areas of Europe, in order to possibly awaken innovative forces that will make rural areas less dependent on cities and on state policies alike (Galliano et al., 2017).

5. General evaluation and discussion

The selected case studies show many cultural and tourism initiatives in depopulated rural areas (cultural routes, festivals, artistic interventions based on heritage, museums, promotion of local products and know-how). There are basically three ways to slow the depopulation of small villages all depending on external factors and linked to the cities as a source of opportunities:

- Through tourism
- Through products and services market
- Through attraction of residents and positive migration balances

All three are however linked, that is, tourism – obviously, we can only refer to rural tourism and cultural tourism – is closely related to the products and services market and to the effective installation of newcomers.

Comparison of the cases allows us to identify common features:

- the strategic role of tourism in association with other functions and activities of the territories, as a model of sustainable development; thematization and storytelling as successful ways to enhance and add value to cultural heritage; interventions based on cultural heritage, as the revitalization of winter masked rites and feasts as the Caretos in Portugal that have led to the creation of the museum “Casa dos Caretos”, the Pero Palo

in Villanueva de la Vera that also has a centre of interpretation, or the open air exhibition of paintings of traditional arts and crafts of the village of Romangordo, have a powerful effect on identity and serve as the “repository of the memory”, as well as fostering among the local inhabitants the role of tour guides of this “painted” collective memory. The feasts and their exotic characters transcend the ritual time and space to become symbols and icons of the territory and advertising marks in national and international tourism fairs.

- the need for a local "anchoring" of these projects in order to create a fertile environment and lay the foundations for other projects;
- the importance (but also, the complexity) of the synergy between actors and resources that are both endogenous and exogenous; a critical mass of cultural supply exponentially powers the impact of each single initiative and help to extend the visitor’s experience
- the importance of ICT in all these processes, allowing audiovisual initiatives and on line distance education on arts & crafts that impact tourism
- and finally, the role of social innovations that produce new knowledge and can be considered as having transformative capacities in the sense that they develop at the same time as they participate in the development and resilience of the territory. They represent genuine innovations and productions of new knowledge and can have positive indirect effects on the reduction of the demographic recession.

At the same time, the case studies highlighted common challenges: the difficulty of measuring impacts; the complex relationships between newcomers and "entrenched" rural communities; and resistance to change and innovation. Above all, our research shows the difficulty of measuring the effects in several European rural areas despite the real place of tourist activity in these territories; in addition to the difficult comparison of the statistical bases, it is necessary to take into account the residential migrations linked to the amenity of these territories, even if they are supported by the positive image of these villages because of their tourist frequentation. Statistics fail to accurately measure some resilience phenomena, like in the case of Romangordo (Extremadura, Spain) that due to an artistic intervention, have progressively multiplied its number of visitors passing in a short period of time from 1,500 visitors to 20,000. Even when hotel places have not been created (Reginfo, 2019), cultural tourism have helped avoid closure of businesses and foster the creation of new ones. In the complex task of identifying indicators to assess the effects of cultural tourism in depopulated rural areas, three axes are considered:

- The evolution of tourist visits: but the data are diverse (overnight stays, frequentation of sites, variation in hotel beds, etc.) and scarce and demand that the territories and the actors of tourism have defined a strategy for monitoring tourist frequentation in a general context of lack of technical and human resources in these depopulated areas. Difficulty also in taking into account the diffuse tourist clientele and those practicing local leisure activities;
- Analysis of the evolution of the population: hypothesis that the development of cultural tourism is correlated with the demographic dynamics of the territory. But there are many interpretation biases because the socio-economic factors that can explain the evolution of the population are numerous. However, there are important indicators as the foreign migration balance is more linked with the attraction potential of the place;
- The diversification of the economic activity of the territories and the entrepreneurial dynamic: example of the evolution of the number of companies created in the territory; however, it is difficult to measure the socio-economic effects associated with tourism dynamics and those external to it.

The case studies, presented in a synthetic manner, are spaces for conceptual and methodological exploration that allow the formulation of new research questions. Beyond monographic approaches, the comparative analysis of the relationships between heritage management, development of cultural tourism and resilience of depopulated rural areas can be studied from three analytical perspectives:

- An analysis in terms of the **integration of the processes** of heritage and cultural enhancement over time allows us to grasp territorial trajectories that condition the nature of the resilience issues, the variety of associated actors and the more or less strong potential for territorial development. This approach also makes it possible to read these trajectories through the construction of territorial, material and symbolic resources, internal or external to the institutions involved, the role of creators of activities – often part of social innovation practices – and of pivotal actors (municipalities, associations, researchers, etc.) in the integration of issues and associated spaces;

- The analysis in terms of **integration of scales** highlights the incessant process of interactions between local, national or even international scales, or between levels of organization that structure and give consistency to heritage management projects. The territorialisation of these strategies reveals specific differentiations for each territory, and consequently for the modalities of association of local actors – in their diversity – and external actors (newcomers, visitors and tourists). This calls into question the differential capacity of certain spaces to grasp cultural dynamics.

- Analysis in terms of the **integration of the diversity of the actors** in the cultural heritage enhancement systems allows us to question the specificity of tourism development processes at the territorial level. Above all, it allows us to question the effects of these projects on the resilience of rural areas at several scales of action and the modalities of this adaptation/transformation. Integration depends on the capacity of the projects to renew the relationships between public, private and civil society actors. Taking a critical approach to these processes also makes it possible to re-examine the distribution of resources, the reproduction of inequalities between actors and between spaces, and the power relationships often veiled in these new practices.

6. Conclusion

The enhancement of heritage and the development of cultural tourism are currently recomposing certain European rural areas, "*by challenging traditional dynamics, reconfiguring social practices, stimulating a revision of traditions and enhancing a set of values, from those embedded in the local culture to the ones emerging in the global citizenship*" (Gretter & *al.*, 2019). The cases studied show that cultural tourism increases the capacities and resilience (i.e., social learning and transformation) in rural communities with a renewal of actors (concerned citizens, local leadership, tourism operators, associations, diaspora ...) and the emergence of new socio-economic trajectories. Even if we often observe small projects with modest effects, cultural tourism is a means, a resource, to stop the material and symbolic marginalization of the depopulated areas, mainly for little villages with less than 1000 inhabitants. This resilience process is anchored in the territories, in a social history and it often values a heritage prior to demographic destabilization. Cultural tourism also makes it possible to integrate local players into international networks, in particular associations.

The presence of networks of actors facilitates the networking of places, as in the case of cultural routes, in a climate of trust and reciprocity (Zanon, 2018). The peripheral situation may be weakened by the socio-cultural and organizational proximity that is increasingly supported by digital uses and the mobilization of social networks; the low financial resources of marginal areas may be overwhelmed by the capacity of networks – including those of diasporas – to build territorial resources in an integrated project to enhance the value of one's territory of origin. Finally, in an urban world, the size or location of the rural commune is less important than its membership of a wider community, integrating social networks, diasporas and cities (Goussios, Rieutort, 2017).

Rather than a strict statistical evaluation of these complex cultural dynamics, we have proposed in this article a multi-criteria approach (evolution of tourist visits, evolution of the population, diversification of the economic activity and the entrepreneurial dynamic) and an analytical reading of the integration processes: integration of sustainable development issues over time,

integration of spatial scales and integration of actors (civil society, socio-cultural structures of villages, etc.).

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