

DEPOPULATION OF SMALL URBAN CENTERS

Cultural landscape as resource for local communities

Maria Teresa Campisi

section

ARCHITECTURE

typology

ESSAYS & VIEWPOINT

DOI

10.19229/978-88-5509-096-4/322020

ABSTRACT

Depopulation of small urban centers and inner areas is a widespread issue in Europe and extra-European areas, with growing increases in territorial, social, productive imbalance and obsolescence of values of local identity. The abandonment of inner lands leads to their degradation due to lack of maintenance practices, causing, especially in Italy, the potential loss of cultural landscape identity (small villages, rural landscapes, agro-food traditions). The issue had become so critical at European level that it led to defining specific programs to contrast it. This essay aims to show the cause of this issue, the strategies for the solution and the experiments done, through a multifunctional and multi-relational approach, where the Cultural landscape assumes a significant role.

KEYWORDS

cohesion policy, inner areas, integrated conservation, sustainable development, shrinking cities

Maria Teresa Campisi, Architect and PhD, is a Researcher on Architectural Restoration at Enna Kore University, Engineering and Architecture Faculty; she conducts research mainly in the field of cultural heritage on knowledge of historical materials and settlement (historical defence systems, urban historic centers). Mob. +39 339/77.40.528 | E-mail: teresa.campisi@unikore.it

Depopulation of small urban centers is a phenomenon that has affected and affects many parts of the continents. Many systematic studies have analyzed the issue of shrinking cities. The earlier ones have been carried out in the USA, the next ones in East Germany, after the fall of the socialist system. They are now focusing on many European areas (Fig. 1). In Europe this issue initially arose around the second half of the 19th century, intensifying from the second half of the 20th century especially in Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Scotland. It mainly involved the rural inner areas in Spain, Portugal, and Italy and the northern lands in Sweden, Finland and Scotland (Martinez-Fernandez et alii, 2012; Pallagst, Wiechmann and Martinez-Fernandez, 2014; Raugze et alii, 2017). Population's decline causes reduction of main public services, due to their greater costs about to the number of users because of youth emigration and the consequent percentage increase of the older population. The survey of mobility within regional areas shows even more phenomena of over-concentration into larger cities and depopulation of inner areas, characterized by consequent congestion of the first and abandonment of smaller settlements with degradation and 'return to nature' of the cultural landscape.

Processes that lead to phenomena of social unsustainability both in inner and urban areas. The process started, indeed, in almost all the European countries already in the middle of the 19th century with the beginning of industrial production. This had already heavily affected the productive activities mainly dedicated to silver-agro-pastoral and artisan economies of the inner lands, as demonstrated by numerous studies of demographic statistics in numerous countries (Pinilla, Ayuda, and Sáez, 2008; Recaño, 2017; Pinilla and Sáez, 2017). The smaller cost and the greater value of industrial production compared to the agricultural and artisan ones, caused the migration from less profitable inner rural areas to the new industrial agglomerations, often placed near to the new transportation nodes on the coasts.

Thus, the initial connection between urban and inner areas has been transformed, modifying the relationship of dependence in the production of goods, services and employment opportunities (Bevilacqua, 1996; Dematteis, 2015). This process, as highlighted in current studies in southern European areas (Spain, Italy, Portugal) will ratify the definitive transition from an economy directly connected to natural raw matter into the abstract structure of the economic commodification of time and product of labour, exactly predictable and independent from natural factors (Bevilacqua, 1996, 2018). The current processes of globalization, with the relocation of production to countries with lower labour costs, the concentration of transportation centers and large-scale distribution in a few areas within the entire territory, have further sharpened the phenomenon, deterritorializing of production.

Studies on depopulation in Southern Europe have indeed shown that the initial phase of this process occurred precisely in the indicated time, becoming stable in the first half of the 20th century. and going to new increases in the second half, following the destruction due to the second world war in Europe, with huge phenomena of both

Population change in predominantly rural regions, 2001 - 2011

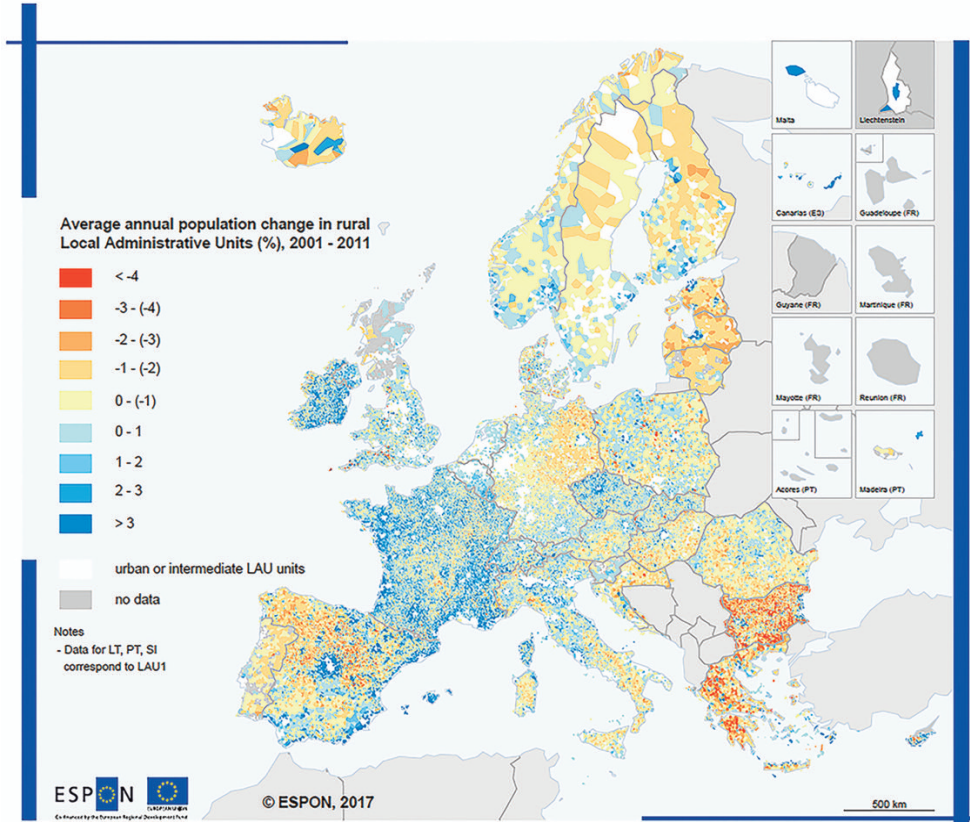


Fig. 1 | Europe: Depopulation process (credit: www.espon.eu/rural-shrinking, 2017).

internal emigration, from declining rural areas to more greater industrial cities – in Spain, for the region of Aragon, towards the Basque countries and the Barcelona region, with general depopulation around 50%, making up 40% of the entire territory and a population equal to 3.1% of the total – and to other countries (Fig. 2-4). Similar processes have been highlighted in Portugal. The depopulation is greater in inner areas and small towns mainly in the mountains zones.

In Italy, the decline of the population mainly affects the southern regions and the islands, the Alpine and Apennine municipalities, confirming also, in this case, a greater fragility of mountain centers starting from the same time. In Italy, these areas represent 60% of the entire territory, with a corresponding population of 23% (Fig. 5). However, the extreme congestion of large urban centers, the high cost of housing in the metropolitan zones, the poor housing quality of the peripheries and the consequent search for a better quality of life have produced, in the final part of the 20th century,

conurbations from capital cities or from the largest urban centers to small towns close to the first ones. This has partly generated modifications of the former land use, with the transformation of the economy from agricultural to the service sector (residence services, fruit, and vegetable crops, small industrial and /or artisanal activities).

In Italy and Portugal, the conurbation has also taken the form of diffused city compromising the former landscape. In smaller centers, less populated, or more distant from communication routes and/or from greater urban centers, depopulation processes are continuing. In Portugal, some smaller and more isolated mountain centers have been affected by rural and cultural tourism projects, linked to respect for the authenticity of the place, to quality of historical-architectural heritage, to the natural environment, to local traditions, and the authenticity of agro-food products. The activity of local tourism, as in Spain, however, is characterized as seasonal or week-end limited, with medium-high categories of users, often residents with jobs in major urban centers. This use didn't generate conditions of economic independence on the places, acting as a colonial economy. In addition to seasonal rural and/or cultural tourism, the implementation of the seasonal population is due to the phenomenon of second homes and the comeback of former emigrants returning to their hometown.

European Union addresses and strategies. The Espo 2020 European program | Different strategies are proposed in Europe to contrast the depopulation of disadvantaged areas. The European Commission has launched the ESPON program 2020, to analyze territorial imbalance, addressing development and territorial cohesion policies, providing fundings for international projects on shared principles. The most recent reports have highlighted an increase in depopulation in many areas within the main European countries. Causes of economic and social marginalization of the 'inner suburbs' have been identified as the geographical isolation, the reduction of the basic services due to the demographic contraction, the poor competence of the local governance and the inefficiency of vertical and horizontal political coordination.

About these causes, the approach methodology is aimed respectively at: programming of physical and digital infrastructures; mediated supply of services (telemedicine, online administration, etc.), or to their transfer from public to third sector (social enterprises); the need to carry out a more efficient local governance, in better connection with vertical and horizontal levels (use of European funds, aimed at enhancing local activities also with common shared European projects; coordination with others local players); to relationships with exogenous players (Noguera et alii, 2017).

Great importance is given to endogenous resources. These consist of social and natural capital, cultural heritage, renewable energies, tourism economies and a high level of life quality. In European strategies, however, studies and initiatives for cultural heritage are addressed only for the economic evaluation of their profitability, rather than to their conditions of sustainable resources and their value of identity for local communities. The existing documents look at a first mapping of the economic impact

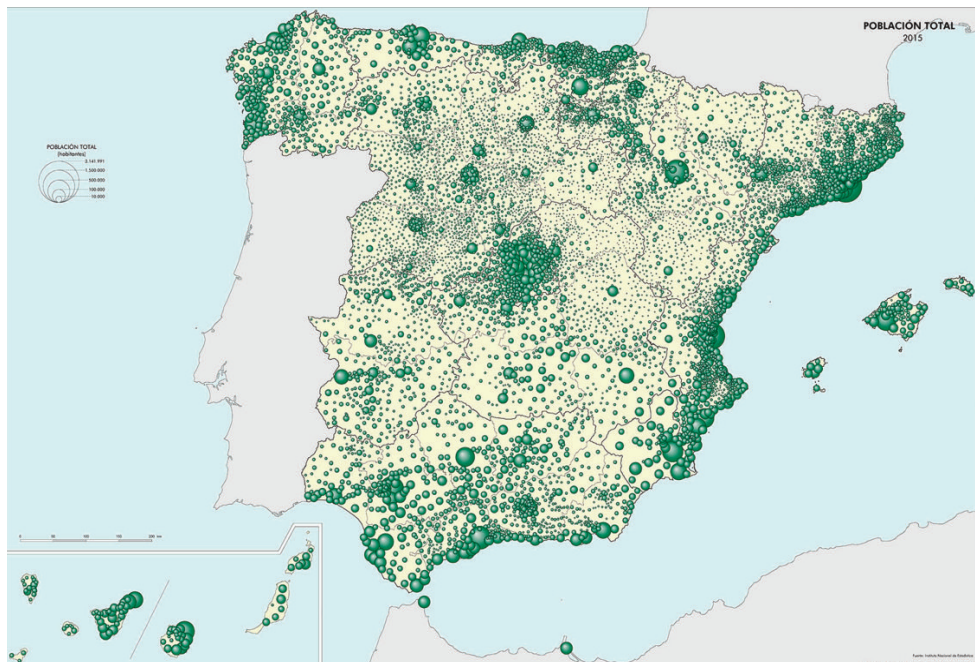
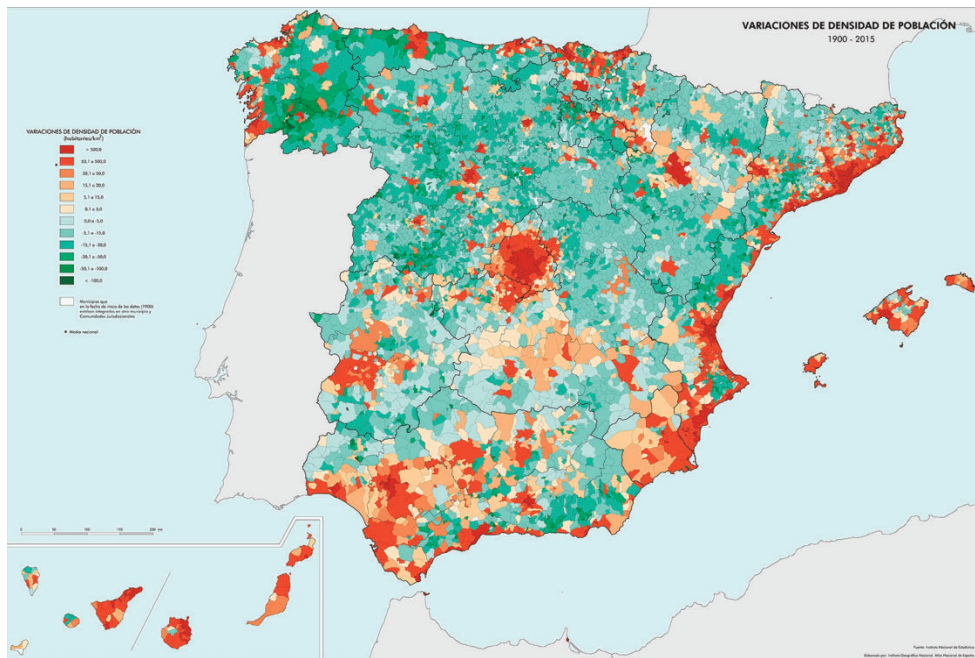


Fig. 2 | Spain: Population density (credit: atlasnacional.ign.es/wane/P%C3%A1gina_principal, 2015).

Fig. 3 | Spain: Population 2015 (credit: atlasnacional.ign.es/wane/P%C3%A1gina_principal, 2015).

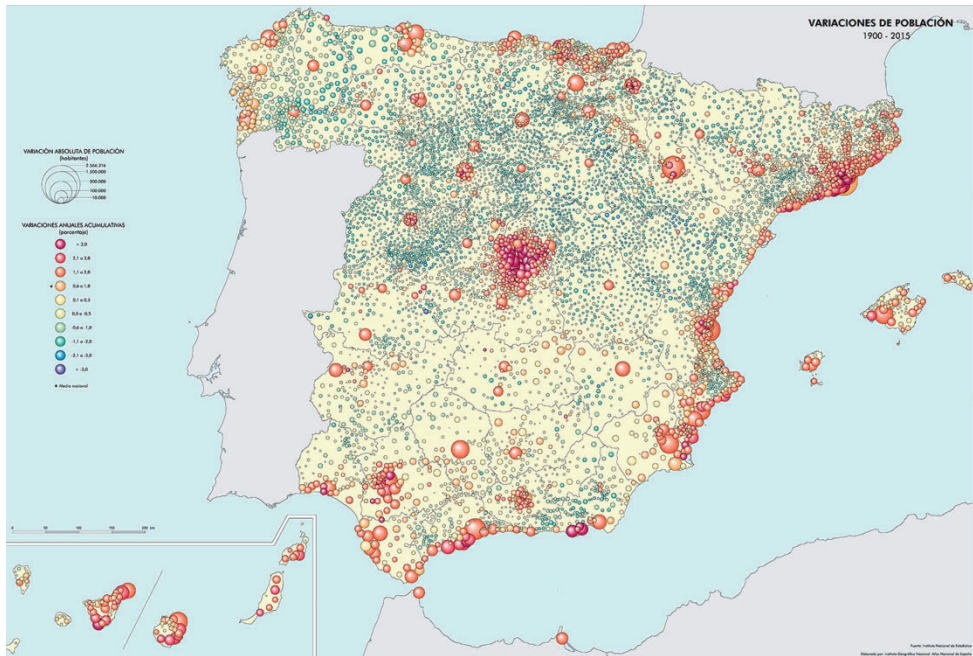


Fig. 4 | Spain: Depopulation between 1900 and 2015 (credit: atlasnacional.ign.es/wane/P%C3%A1gina_principal, 2015).

of cultural heritage on the territories. The report aims to explain the need to develop shared indicators for cultural resources. Cultural heritage is so divided into the following sectors: archaeology, archives, libraries, museums, art galleries; mobile goods collections; built heritage, and divided into pre-1919 building, monumental heritage on national lists; UNESCO Heritage. The data to be collected are linked to the degree of employment and overall turnover that they can generate. The economic sectors are divided into restoration of existing buildings, ICT companies, insurance, tourism and related industries, real estate activities, construction companies (Lykogianni et alii, 2019). The document shows how cultural heritage has not been involved in local territorial development strategies. The concept of Cultural heritage show in the documents shows an approach still conceived in terms of a list of assets, lacking of systemic and multi-relational vision both in terms of relations between physical and immaterial elements, and of the cultural goods in a wider spatial context, as reiterated in many of the international cultural documents (Council of Europe, 1987, 2000; ICOMOS, 2008; ICOMOS-IFLA, 2019).

Thus, the role of heritage seems extremely reductive, precisely in its ability to become a ‘resource’, about its specificities and to relations with the geographical, social, natural and productive context. Strategies for the development of inner areas in Eu-

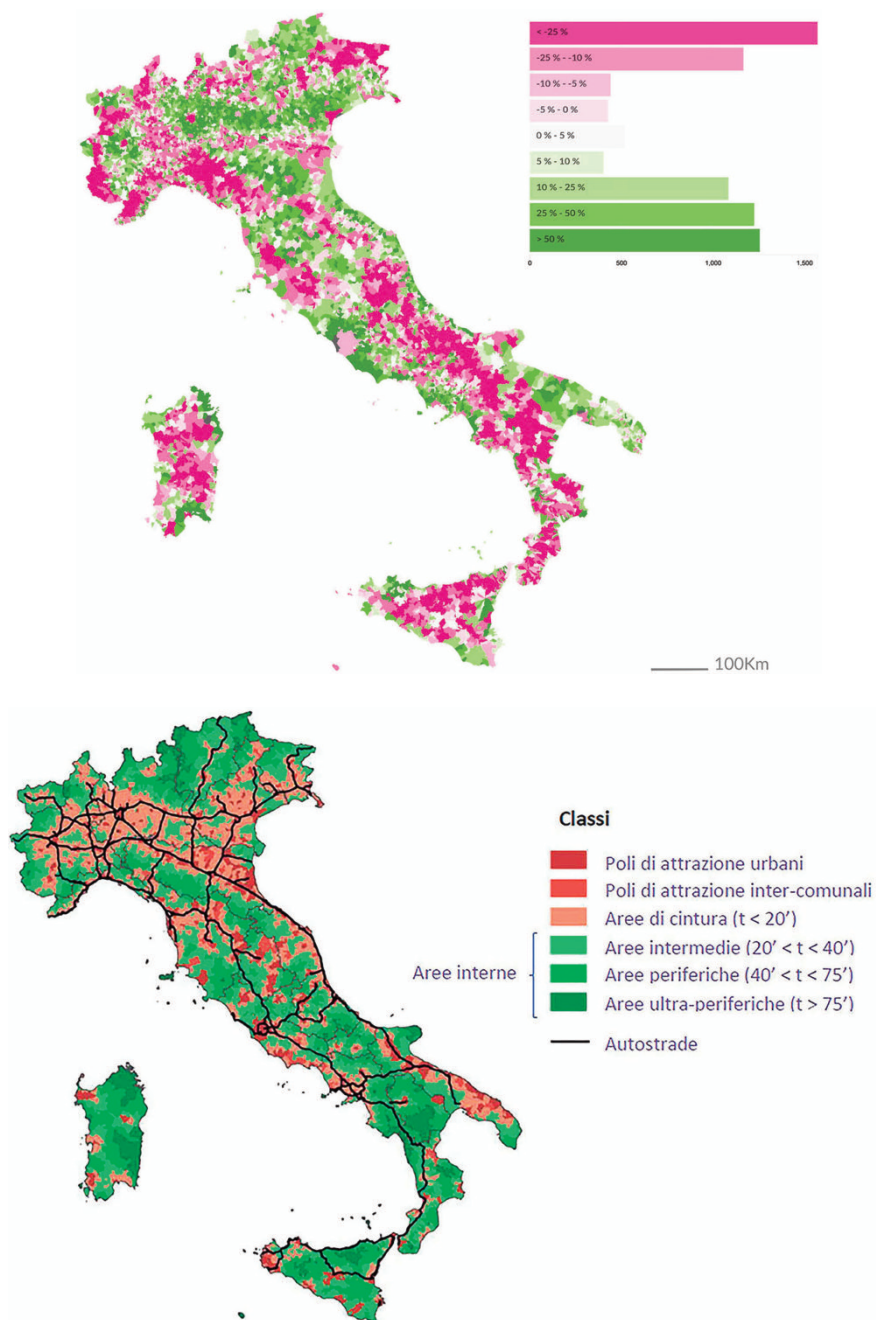


Fig. 5 | Italy: Depopulation between 1997 and 2011 (credit: www.postmetropoli.it, 2011).

Fig. 6 | Italy: Identify of inner areas (credit: old2018.agenziacoesione.gov.it/arint/Cosa_sono/index.html#accept, 2015).

rope have been based above all on the Smart Villages program (European Network for Rural Development, 2018), elaborated in the Cork 2.0 declaration – A Better Life in Rural Areas – which summarizes the work of joint workshops among stakeholders of rural areas, defining hypotheses of sustainable development. The strategies are aimed at reducing the gaps in citizenship services (education, mobility, health), increased following the cuts due to the 2008 economic crisis, and the implementation of some resources (sustainable energetic sources, digital connections). The guidelines indicated derive from recording of experiences in the territory: for the depopulation, the Italian strategies of SNAI (Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne – National Strategy for Internal Areas); for Sweden, the services in peripheral and rural areas; for Spain, the law for sustainable rural development (Law 45/2007); for services reduction, the French experiences of the ‘reciprocity contracts’; the services planning in Flanders Belgian region; the strategy for social resilience in the Netherlands Brabant region; for digital connections the digital diary plans in Finland, Spain, Germany, Latvia, and Sweden.

Experiences and case studies in Europe | In Europe some examples of existing resources re-use, both natural and historical, integrated with sustainable development have successful inverted the depopulation trend in some small towns, while other less systematic, integrated and participatory experiences have led to temporary solutions or ‘urban’ colonization of the inner areas, without starting locally production processes. Successful experiences have been led in Sweden and Scotland, while experimental programs are underway in Italy. In Italy, the SNAI program (National Strategy for Internal Areas) is at the early stages of experimentation (Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, 2013). This was based on the identification of inner areas as places distant to primary services (health, education, transport), identifying the inadequateness of the services in the further population decline. The consequent mapping (Fig. 6) identifies in the difficulty of access to these primary services, the cause of further moving away of the population. The route adopted defines some main and complementary actions: making more efficient the connections with infrastructure; reducing access times to basic services, including digital connections (telemedicine, distance education); enhancement of local resources, such as natural and cultural capital (Barca, 2016).

The optimization of connecting infrastructures is a pre-condition for subsequent actions. This optimization should be guaranteed by state funding, however adopting the criterion of existing infrastructural networks maintenance, with the integration of the new need parts, in a sustainable way; encouraging the collective transport, not only for people but also for goods, is another measure. The second objective is focused on the enhancement of the specificities existing in inner areas through sustainable development logics (valorization of cultural and natural capital, of local workmanship; energetic independence by renewable energy sources). The EU funds should be the principal funding for local development projects, for the transportation network along with facilitating measures related to sustainability (incentives or tax breaks). Another strength is

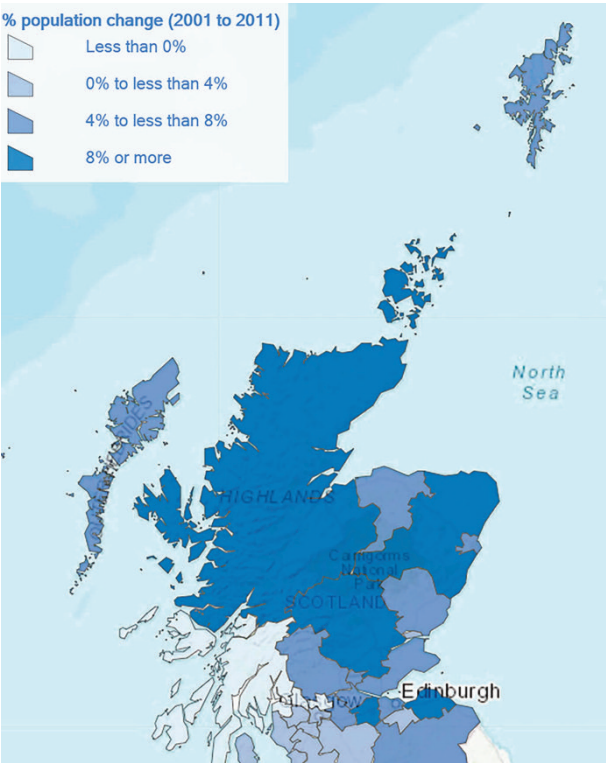


Fig. 7 | Scotlands. Highlands and Islands areas. Increase of population between 2001 and 2011 (credit: www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/, 2011).



Fig. 8 | Scotlands: First realisation of the digital network, and future planned expansion (credit: sspa-network.eu/en/documentation/, 2017).

the proposal to establish macro-territories composed of small cities networks. Some pilot projects have been launched, among which, one of the most advanced has affected the Madonie area, in Sicily (Madonie Laboratorio di Futuro, 2017).

The Italian debate and the experiences carried out on wide-area planning have been based on this strategic line. The reflections on the existing economic policy project based on the polarization in a few centers linked between themselves and the hier-

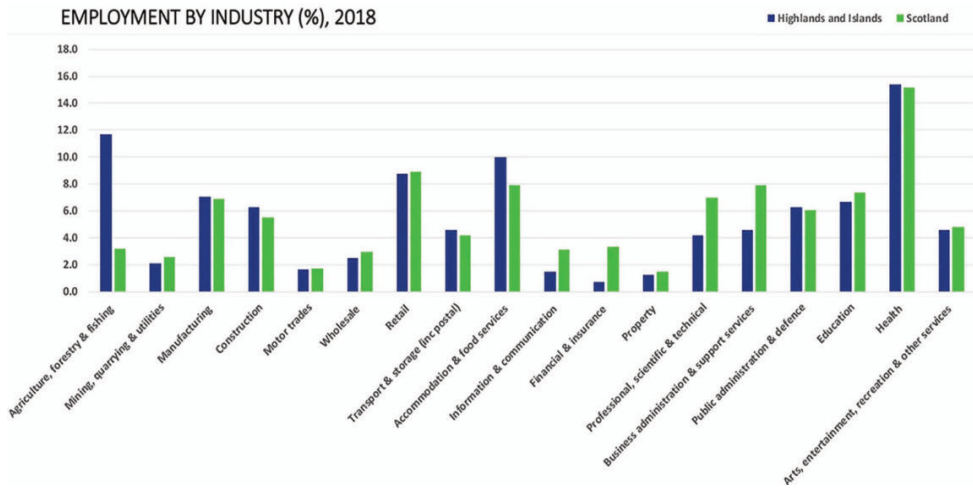
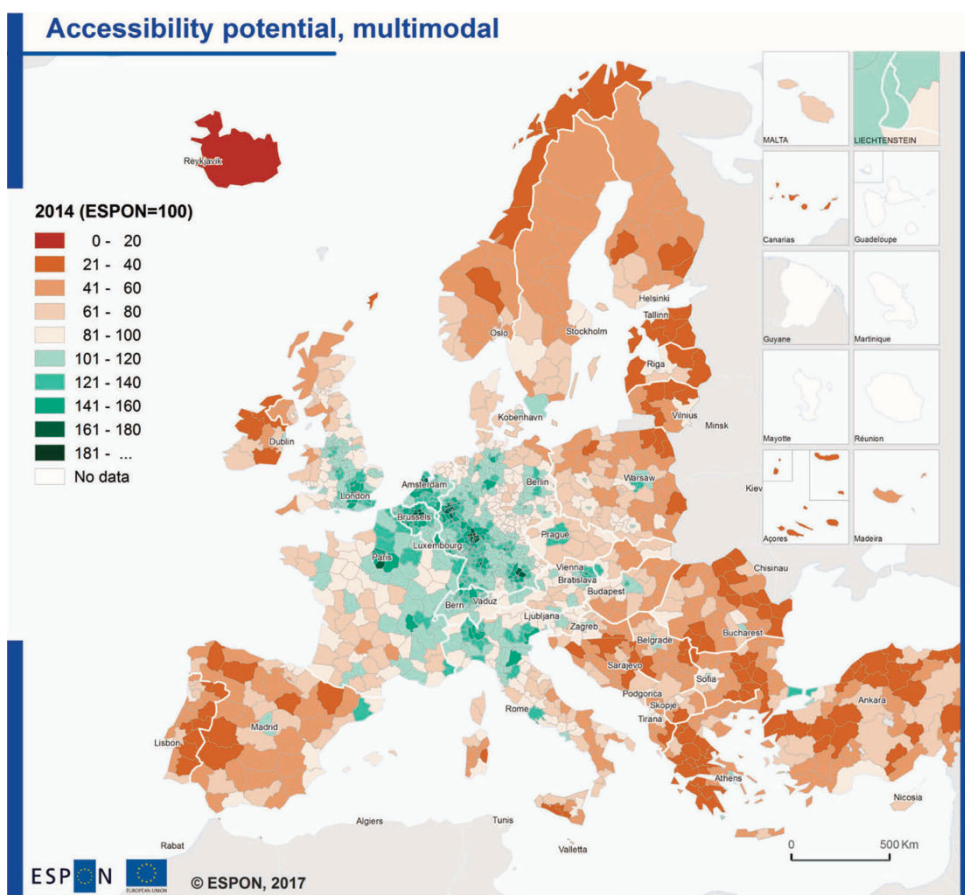


Fig. 9 | Highland and Island Enterprise. Employment by industries between Scotland and Highland and Island region (credit: www.nomisweb.co.uk/, 2018).

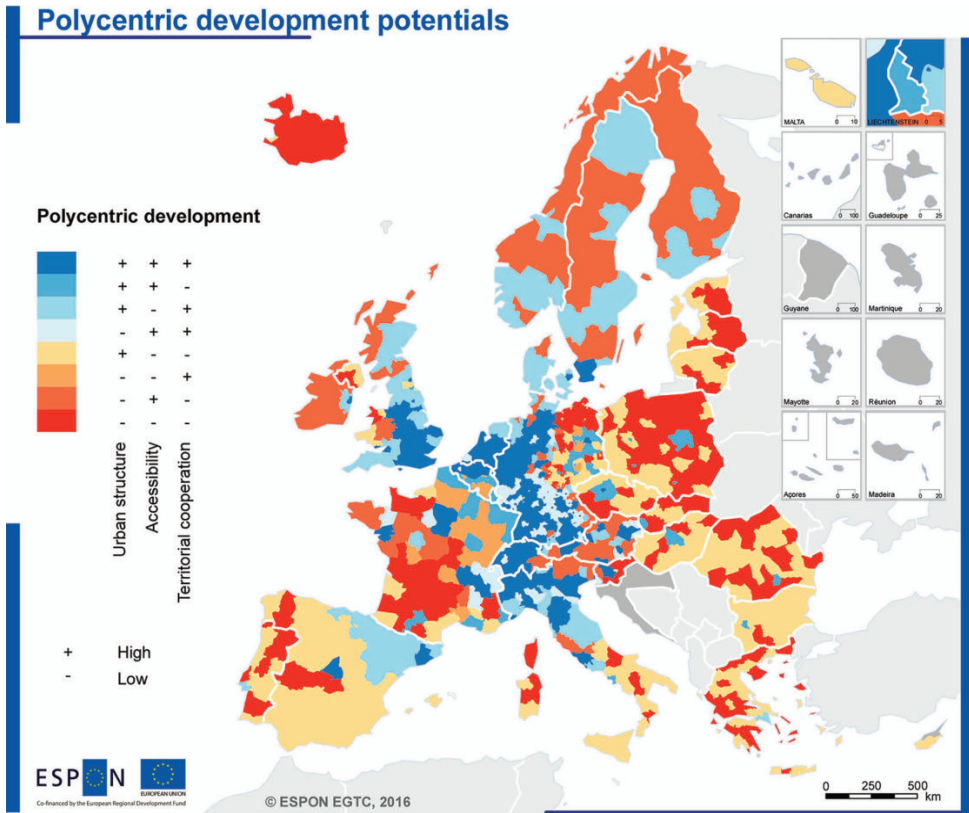
archical structure of settlements were the cause overtime of the deterritorialization phenomena that led to the emptying of the inner areas throughout Europe, and the corresponding congestion of the metropolitan areas. The return to local specificities, the concept of urban bio-region, as a system of ‘city networks’, a widespread network of small cities connected by nodes, as shared management models on a local scale, can allow to implement the potential of existing values, rather than interpreting these portions of territory ‘as areas of life for the metropolis’ (Magnaghi, 2010). Needs of return to sustainable and democratic quality of life on a small scale, are also already mentioned by other authors (Becattini, 2008), in which the historicity and identity of places become essential factors (Oteri, 2019), linked to conservation of natural and cultural heritage, sustainability and quality of life, with urban spaces in balance between landscape and social community (Bevilacqua, 2015).

Similar systems have been successfully tested in the UK (Copus, 2018). The Scottish experience in the territories of the Highlands and Islands, through the establishment of an independent agency for development (HIE – Highlands and Islands Enterprise) is surely the one that has most respected the policies of integrated conservation of heritage, sustainable reuse of resources and shared management, leading to high levels of success, with a population growth rate of 7.5% from 2001 to 2011 (Black, 2003; HIE, 2014; Fig. 7). The Highlands and the Scottish islands constitute the north-western part of the region, affected by migration, like the rest of Europe from the mid-eighteenth century to the first half of the XIX century when agriculture profitability fall led to the eviction of defaulting tenants. Most of the current local residents are composed of ‘crofters’, descendants of tenant farmers, who during the repeated agri-



cultural crises, remained in the area by integrations of farming with other activities, according to a multifunctional model.

The land ownership of the large estates underwent a substantial transformation, in 1991 and then in 1993, with the respective establishment of the LECs (Local Enterprise Companies), and of the property reform law, which set the CLUs, (Community Land Unit), unit of common land. The LECs, identified on a territorial scale, have a council elected by the inhabitants of the communities, whose members are representatives and responsible for pursuing the strategic objectives set in annual operating agreements with the HIE. The HIE, in turn, has the task of achieving the objectives agreed with the Scottish executive (Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996). The agency has acquired land for the community, on which to carry out development projects. The pre-existing state of very extensive, large proprietary, often abandoned units, did not allow citizens to have a sufficient territorial base to develop planned actions. In this case, the most disadvantaged areas have received considerable economic support, aimed at achieving



Figg. 10, 11 | ESPON Report Maps: Accessibility, potential multimodal; Polycentric development potential (credit: www.espon.eu, 2017).

development goals, periodically monitored, reviewed and/or modified where the goals set in the medium-terms were not achieved. The model, however, needed, as in the Italian SNAI strategy, a previous plan to implement the physical and digital infrastructures in the areas (roads, ports), carried out, the first, from the 70s to the 90s, the second, for some parts, with additional network expansion plans (Fig. 8).

Examples of the strategies are the interventions adopted in some small municipalities: Ullapol and Alchitibue. Ullapol is a small harbour town built in the 18th century for commercial fishing in the North Sea, with a population that was initially entirely occupied in this activity, the only economic resource of the place. The crisis of the company in the 1990s' gravely undermined the community, which decided to undertake shared initiatives. The project included the acquisition of the port and existing structures by a collective society formed by the citizens themselves. In addition to the purchase of the structures, the community, thanks also to projects developed with the Agency and funded with EU funds, has established diversified activities, with the en-

largement of the port for the activity of tourist ferries between Scotland and the Hebrides, thus improving territorial connections and entering in a wider circuit. The profits were reinvested both in social activities and in a small factory for the production of briquettes for combustion, as well as in the digital networks owned by the municipality. Alchitibue, a less populous center than the first, very far from the main roads and services, connected by a single very winding and narrow road. In this case, Ullapol has set up an investment company that has allowed the installation of some structures for the production of sustainable energy, the purchase, and reactivation of an old salmon smoking plant and disused buildings acquisition for accommodation facilities. The actions were therefore oriented towards the maintenance of the resident population and the use and strengthening of existing resources in the area (SSPA, 2017).

The cultural and traditional identity of the place has played a fundamental role both as an element of strengthening the spirit of community, and as recognition of the local resources, in the function of cultural and tourist offer as place branding (Fig. 9). In this sense, higher education projects (presence of a university, the HUI, University of Highlands and Islands, with 13 locations), have two objectives, to guarantee high levels of training and skills, and build projects capable of offering employment opportunities into place, through the enhancement of the existing resources. The principal training areas are divided into some branches: human science (history, art, heritage, and literature, also with detailed studies on regional history) and creativity field (linked to development of traditional activities, as in Shetland Island college, the contemporary textiles, derived by quality textiles tradition of the place); others in Scientific, environmental and Engineering fields, with specific attention to environmental and energetic perspectives useful to enhance local resources (Forestry, fishery marine, agronomy science); other in fields of social services (educational and Childcare); others joined different skill, as Business, Leisure and Tourism, and Digital skill. A specific course of studies has turned to Gaelic studies, aimed to maintain the local identity and built a skill for specific tourism in the area.

Even the 'arctic' territories of Sweden and Norway, respectively regions of Norrbotten (Sweden) and Lapland (Norway) characterized, as the Scottish areas, by difficult environmental conditions, but significant natural resources, have planned the adhesion to Smart project villages (Teräs et alii, 2019). In both regions, there is the presence of both national and international industries (mining, metallurgy), but the project presented tends to diversify job opportunities according to network-connected projects, both with the existing university facilities (of high level), which with industrial activities, which natural condition of the shores on the Arctic, for tourism, the safeguard structures of this area, the implementation of the circular economy (Kluge and Spiekermann, 2017).

Conclusions | Strategies, and initiatives to contrast the depopulation of inner areas are present both at the level of European programming and in single countries. For Italy,

the abandonment of internal centers would lead to the loss of small villages, rural heritage, shared traditions, agro-food specificities, which make up a large part of the identity heritage of our landscape. According to a more extended view, the waste of huge portions of potentially exploitable territory, the hydro-geological risks resulting from its lack of maintenance, the loss of agri-food biodiversity, the abandonment of the cultural and environmental resource and the high level of quality of life still traceable in the inner areas highlight the criticality of global economic development model, adopted by the European Community, made of polarity among city-states (Figg. 10, 11), determining land degradation, heavy inequalities, and increasingly dysfunctional housing, social and economic conditions.

Programs and experiences based on the 'bottom-up' approach showed a high level of effectiveness to contrast the population decline. The values of cultural landscape (cultural and natural capital; traditional activities; users shared traditions) have a fundamental role as factor of sustainable development, able both to strengthen the social cohesion and participative policies of resilient communities through the recognition of common identity values and to constitute bases of development activities found in place and not 'top-down' imposed.

The inheritance of local cultural resources certainly, as shown, isn't the only element useful to contrast depopulation of inner areas (physical and digital infrastructures, energetic independence, and social enterprises, are others principal factors) that needs a multifunctional and multi relation approach, but it represented one of most important among the fundamental ones.

References

Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale (2013), *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance – Accordo di Partenariato 2014-2020*. [Online] Available at: old2018.agenziacoesione.gov.it/opencms/export/sites/dps/it/documentazione/Aree_interne/Strategia_nazionale_per_le_Aree_interne_definizione_obiettivi_strumenti_e_governance_2014.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Barca, F. (2016), *Disuguaglianze territoriali e bisogno sociale – La sfida delle «Aree Interne»*, Testo della lezione per la decima Lettura annuale Ermanno Gorrieri, Modena – Sala Gorrieri – Palazzo Europa – 27 maggio 2015, Fondazione Ermanno Gorrieri per gli studi sociali. [Online] Available at: www.fondazionegorrieri.it/images/pdf/Lettura2015_FabrizioBarca.pdf [Accessed 30 August 2019].

Becattini, G. (2008), "L'amaro risveglio", in *Il Ponte*, n. 10, pp. 5-9.

Bevilacqua, P. (2018), *Ecologia del tempo – Uomini e natura sotto la sferza di Crono*, Castelvecchi, Roma.

Bevilacqua, P. (2015), "Una nuova agricoltura per le aree interne", in Meloni, B. (ed.), *Aree interne e progetti d'area*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, pp. 118-122.

Bevilacqua, P. (1996), *Tra natura e storia – Ambiente, economie, risorse in Italia*, Donzelli, Roma.

Black, S. (ed.) (2003), *The role of Highlands and Islands Enterprise in community development | SMARIT*, n. 9/2003, pp. 1-8. [Online] Available at: www.setur.fo/media/5108/smarit_9_2003.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Copus, A. (2018), “The wisdom of the fathers? Regional/rural development policy and structures for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland 1965-2015, through the lens of smart specialization”, in Kristensen, I., Dubois, A. and Teräs, J. (eds), *Strategic Approaches to Regional Development – Smart Experimentation in Less-Favoured Regions*, Routledge, London, pp. 86-102.

Council of Europe (2000), *European Landscape Convention, Florence 20 October 2000*, European Treaty Series, n. 176. [Online] Available at: rm.coe.int/1680080621 [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Council of Europe (1987), *The Santiago de Compostela Declaration, 23 October 1987*. [Online] Available at: rm.coe.int/16806f57d6 [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Dematteis, G. (2015), “Aree interne e montagna rurale in rapporto con le città”, in Meloni, B. (ed.), *Aree interne e progetti d'area*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, pp. 58-69.

European Network for Rural Development (2018), *Borghi intelligenti – Nuova linfa per i servizi rurali | Rivista rurale dell'UE*, n. 26. [Online] Available at: enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd_publications/publi-enrd-rr-26-2018-it.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2019].

HIE – Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2014), *Highlands and Islands – Area profile*. [Online] Available at: www.hie.co.uk/media/3180/highlandsplusandplusislandsplusprofileplus2014_high.pdf [Accessed 15 November 2019].

ICOMOS (2008), *The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes*. [Online] Available at: www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/culturalroutes_e.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2019].

ICOMOS-IFLA (2019), *Rural Heritage: Landscapes and Beyond – Proceedings of the 2019 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium*. [Online] Available at: scholarworks.umass.edu/icomos_isccl/ [Accessed 15 November 2019].

Jedrej, C. and Nuttall, M. (1996), *White Settlers – The Impact of Rural Repopulation in Scotland*, Harwood Academic Publishers, Luxembourg.

Kluge, L. and Spiekermann, K. (2017), *Scenarios for accessibility by the sea, road, rail, air and multimodal*, D2 – Interim Report, Spiekermann & Wegener Urban and Regional Research (S&W), January 2017. [Online] Available at: www.espon.eu/access-scenarios [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Lykogianni, E. et alii (2019), *Material Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Territorial Development Resource: Mapping Impacts Through a Set of Common European Socio-economic Indicators*, Targeted Analysis, Final Report, 27/09/2019. [Online] Available at: www.espon.eu/cultural-heritage [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Madonie Laboratorio di Futuro (2017), *Strategia d'area – Madonie Resilienti – Laboratorio di futuro nell'ambito della Strategia Nazionale Aree Interne*, 27 Gennaio 2017. [Online] Available at: madonieareainterna.it/download/strategia-darea-definitiva/?wpdmml=1424&refresh=5dc46f27db-ca1573154599 [Accessed 31 August 2019].

Magnaghi, A. (2010), *Il progetto Locale – Verso la coscienza di luogo*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino.

Martinez-Fernandez, C., Audirac, I., Fol, S. and Cunningham-Sabot, E. (2012), “Shrinking Cities: Urban Challenges of Globalization”, in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 36, issue 2, pp. 213-225. [Online] Available at: doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01092.x [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Noguera, J. et alii (eds) (2017), *PROFECY – Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe (Inner Peripheries: National territories facing challenges of access to basic services of general interest)*, Applied Research, Final Report, version 07/12/2017. [Online] Available at: www.espon.eu/inner-peripheries [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Oteri, A. M. (2019), “Architetture in territori fragili – Criticità e nuove prospettive per la cura del patrimonio costruito”, in *ArcHistoR*, vol. 11, pp. 168-205. [Online] Available at: dx.doi.org/10.14633/AHR118 [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Pallagst, K., Wiechmann, T. and Martinez-Fernandez, C. (eds) (2014), *Shrinking Cities – International Perspectives and Policy Implications*, Routledge, New York.

Pinilla, V., Ayuda, M.-I. and Sáez, L.-A. (2008), “Rural Depopulation and the Migration Turnaround in Mediterranean Western Europe: A Case Study of Aragon”, in *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, vol. 3, n. 1, pp. 1-22. [Online] Available at: journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/91 [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Pinilla, V. and Sáez, L. A (2017), “La despoblación rural en España: génesis de un problema y políticas innovadoras”, in *Informes CEDDAR | Centro de Estudios sobre la Despoblación y Desarrollo de Áreas Rurales*, n. 2017-2, pp. 1-24. [Online] Available at: www.ceddar.org/content/files/articuloof_398_01_Informe-SSPA1-2017-2.pdf [Accessed 10 October 2019].

Raugze, I., Daly, G., van Herwijnen, M. and EPSON EGTC (2017), *Shrinking rural regions in Europe – Towards smart and innovative approaches to regional development challenges in depopulating rural regions – Policy Brief*. [Online] Available at: www.espon.eu/rural-shrinking [Accessed 30 November 2019].

Recaño, J. (2017), “The Demographic Sustainability of Empty Spain”, in *Perspectives Demographiques*, n. 7, pp. 1-4. [Online] Available at: ced.uab.cat/PD/PerspectivesDemographiques_007_ENG.pdf [Accessed 30 November 2019].

SSPA – Southern Sparsely Populated Areas (2017), *Successfully combatting rural depopulation through a new model of rural development: the Highlands and Islands Enterprise experience – Report of the Taiex-regio visiting group of Cuenca, Evrytania, Licka-Senj, Soria and Teruel- Southern sparsely populated areas – 2-4 May 2017*. [Online] Available at: sspa-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/HIE-SSPA-Report-complete-document-1.pdf [Accessed 30 November 2019].

Teräs, J., Jokelainen, K., Ejdemo, T. and Örtqvist, D. (2019), “Smart specialisation at the edge of Europe: case study of sparsely populated regions in the Arctic”, in Kristensen, I., Dubois, A. and Teräs, J. (eds), *Strategic Approaches to Regional Development – Smart Experimentation in Less-Favoured Regions*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 71-85.