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Abstracts

**of researches presented at the conference, whose
authors did not submit their manuscripts for
publication**

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URBAN-RURAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROMOTED BY LAND USE TRANSITIONS: THEORIES AND APPROACHES

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Urban-rural integrated development is a process of the reconstruction of urban-rural values. It helps to promote the free flow and equal exchange of urban-rural development elements, and achieve the convergence of returns from urban-rural development elements. Land use transition is conjugated with the operation of land system. Operating well the land system via scientifically adjusting and controlling land use transitions can affect the process of urban-rural integrated development. Land use transitions promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas under the effects of strengthening the whole and reinforcing weak links through four channels, i.e., efficiency improvement, value embodiment, development elements circulation and structure optimization. The effect of land use transitions on urban-rural integrated development requires to realize the rational distribution of land incremental value in urban-rural territory. Under ideal channels, it is supposed to promote urban-rural integrated development through income effect, resource effect and urbanization effect. But urban-rural dual institution, distorted land market and obstacles to social integration may distort the positive role of land use transitions. The degree of land use transitions presented a trend of “decrease first and then increase”, and urban-rural integrated development has been improved since 2005 in China, both of which are characterized by spatial agglomeration. Currently, land use transitions have a negative impact on urban-rural integrated development. In order to promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas, the adjustment and control of land use transitions need to reshape the land use right system, to promote the integrated consolidation of territorial space, and to improve the management and control system of land use transitions. In addition, rural restructuring is the link between land use transition and urban-rural integrated development. Giving full play to the comprehensive role of rural restructuring and controlling land use transition can better promote urban-rural integrated development.

Keywords: Land use transition; Urban-rural integrated development; Rural restructuring.

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URBAN-RURAL INTEGRATION, A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS APPLIED TO THE ECOPOLE OF THE VAL D'ALLIER, CROSSED VIEWS FRANCE-ARGENTINA.

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The dynamics of rural territories, in France as in other countries, have been marked by different processes, such as the disconnection between rural and urban spaces, the sectorization of activities, or the distancing of stakeholders in development dynamics. Various more recent processes are resurrecting the question of urban-rural integration, understood as the bringing together of different systems of meaning and action based on sets of social relations (norms, means of communication, indicators of direction and value, power structures, etc.). It is a form of relationship that allows the bringing together of spaces, activities and actors, in order to think of new development models that would respond to the social challenges of rural territories in a sustainable perspective.

The literature on urban-rural integration highlights the importance of structural factors in urban-rural relations, as well as the individual and collective capacities of actors considered as "key". However, this literature gives little account of the strategies and actions of these stakeholders and of the capacities of the rural world to be represented in the processes of urban-rural integration, as well as the forms that their participation in these processes takes.

In order to investigate these questions, a participatory research approach is used, based on strategies deployed in different territorial contexts (France, Argentina). This consists in the researcher's participation in the action, within the framework of devices allowing the in-situ observation of the relations between actors, of the modalities of exchange and decision-making, as much by formal as by informal mechanisms, which favor social innovation.

Applied initially to the case of the Ecopôle du Val d'Allier, located near the city of Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme, France), this methodology has enabled the emergence of initial results concerning spatial relations and the role of actors in urban-rural relations. The Ecopôle is located at the interface of a metropolis and rural areas and is part of a Territorial Food Project. The issues of urban-rural integration concern local activities, the preservation of biodiversity and the political project carried out by its actors. The first elements of analysis raise the

question of the articulation of scales, the recognition of a diversity and multiplicity of actors playing a role in rural dynamics; where original governance modalities emerge. The involvement of actors of rural-urban integration is discussed here in relation to their centrality in the action, as a determining factor in the dynamics of territorial development.

Key words: Territories; Development; Rural-urban integration; Stakeholders; Ecopôle.

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SOALHEIRO ESTATE (NW PORTUGAL): AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

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To counter the degradation of ecosystems resulting from human intervention and the abandonment of rural areas requires investment in their revitalisation and sustainable development. An example is Quinta de Soalheiro (Soalheiro Estate), located in NW Portugal in the Vinho Verde Region. The family-owned estate was founded in 1974, when the first vineyards were planted with the autochthonous grape variety, Alvarinho, on 2 hectares of granitic soil and a humid Atlantic climate.

The estate is in an area of family-run micro-farms. Its owners bought several scattered plots, reaching a total of 14 ha in the 21st century. Given the success of their organic wines, they encouraged small owners to follow their example, thus recovering ecosystems, the landscape and agricultural heritage. However, the survival of the social framework was also at stake, given poor training and lack of capital of rural families, so they created a winegrowers' association, which provides technical support and training, fostering more profitable heritage and investment in organic production. The annual production of 700,000 bottles has been achieved and the conditions created for social revitalisation and the permanence of 150 families in a sustainable and innovative context.

Also noteworthy on the social level is the GERMINAR project, whose goals include the social inclusion of disabled people, publishing the history of Alvarinho for children, and launching a digital game on the survival of vines from plagues and extreme climate events.

In terms of innovation, Quinta de Soalheiro has invested in several initiatives: production of high-quality wines such as AG.HORA; recovery of endogenous herbaceous ecosystems to avoid the use of chemical products to control vine pests; investment in native aromatic plants that fix nutrients in the soil; using waste from winemaking (seeds, grape skins, etc.) to produce a fabric

whose texture resembles natural skins such as leather, among others. Given this innovative scenario, Quinta de Soalheiro has been awarded Certification for Innovation and Development.

With a team of 36 employees, young university graduates, the estate and surrounding area boasts development with sustainability and innovation.

In this article, in methodological terms, we have combined documentary research and analysis (including the Quinta's archive), consulting also newspapers and the websites of regional development bodies. This was followed by extensive fieldwork based on semi-structured interviews with agents in charge of several levels of development, as well as members of the Winegrowers' Association, local authorities and residents.

Keywords: Quinta de Soalheiro; Vinho Verde Region; Sustainable Development; Innovation.

PEDRAS SALGADAS SPA AND NATURE PARK: AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT FROM THE NATURAL MINERAL WATERS OF PEDRAS SALGADAS (NNE OF PORTUGAL

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Water is at the origin of life. It is present in oceans, rivers and lakes, it infiltrates into the ground and becomes groundwater. It emerges as water for consumption, spring waters and natural mineral waters.

Underground water begins a slow and complex natural infiltration process which eliminates microorganisms and suspended solids. In this underground world, water is enriched by mineral salts.

The mineralization of Pedras Salgadas natural mineral water (NNE de Portugal) is controlled by nature, since at a depth of between 500 and 1000 meters water circulates slowly through granite fractures. The water dissolves and incorporates calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate that come from the rock, while carbonic gas rises from the inside of the earth, and is incorporated naturally. It is this natural process that makes Pedras Salgadas unique -- a hypersaline, sparkling mineral water, with a unique and constant composition, in which the gas is 100% natural. Pedras Salgadas belongs to a very restricted group of mineral waters, since only 0.5% of them around the world have these characteristics.

After their discovery 150 years ago, these waters became rapidly famous for their curative properties and for their beneficial effects on the preservation of health, and the locality has been a famous place of thermal baths since the late 19th century.

After many ups and downs in the life of Pedras Salgadas thermal waters, the requalification of the facilities with modern equipment and thermal infrastructures gave way to Pedras Salgadas Spa and Natural Park.

The purpose of this study is to divulge the importance of these waters for health, for industry, for tourism and, consequently, for local and regional

development. The methodological framework we follow is based on documentary research, field work and semi-structured interviews with local authorities. It is intended to highlight the past, as waters with health benefits, and its present, with the renovation of the equipment and thermal infrastructure, the requalification of the Park Pedras Salgadas, through the Spa & Nature Park Pedras Salgadas, a project of excellence Tourism in Portugal, but also in the development of the bottling and distribution industry of this water that is unique in the world.

Keywords: Requalification; rural development; Local and regional development; Mineral Waters Pedras Salgadas.

SPACE–TIME PROCESS AND UNDERLYING DRIVERS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN ROMANIA. THE SHOWCASE OF ROMANIAN PLAIN

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In Romania, the past century has been characterized by widespread and diverse environmental changes mainly driven by a continuous population growth which stimulated the development of agriculture, followed by rapid urbanization and forced industrialization.

The current paper is a space-time analysis of agricultural land transition in the Romanian Plain - one of Romania's main agricultural regions, largely affected by the fundamental structural and functional transformations of the last nearly one hundred years. The authors carried out a historical evolution of the land transformations during the last century in relation to the leading change flows of agricultural use (intensification, extensification, abandonment) in relation to urban development (urbanization, industrialization, suburbanization, deindustrialization) and natural & semi-natural areas dynamics (deforestation, afforestation, water and wetland areas shrinkage/expansion). The investigation was made using multi-temporal materials (Austrian maps, 1912 and topographical maps, 1970), satellite imagery and CORINE Land Cover database (1990, 2006 and 2018).

To identify and understand the spatial transformations, a land use/cover change flows analysis was performed focusing on four periods: 1912-1970, 1970-1990, 1990-2006, 2006-2018 in relation to the main socio-economic and political changes. The first two intervals overlap the largest part of the 20th century which involved significant changes mostly related to the main land reforms (1921, 1945) and the consequences of the communist policies on agriculture

(intensification, collectivisation and state farms), town planning and industry. The last two intervals refer to the post-communist period characterised by the transition to the market economy followed by pre- and post-accession to the (EU) in terms of decollectivisation of agriculture, decentralization, economic restructuring (industrial, in particular), privatization, the implementation of Common Agricultural Policy.

The research findings have indicated urban development (e.g., urbanization, suburbanization) as the main driver of land transformations in the past century which led to conversion of agricultural and abandoned land into artificial (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial), but also the transformation of natural & semi-natural areas for agricultural development and urban sprawl processes.

Key Words: Agricultural land transition; Urban development; Suburbanisation.

Precariousness and multifunctionality of the agricultural lands next to urban conurbations

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Regarding the increasing needs for residential and economic developments but also for the improvement of the living environment, for food and energy productions, we should reflect on the use of agricultural lands. Even if the citizens and the regional government are rediscovering the multiple services provided by agricultural lands, we observe that the agricultural landscape in Wallonia (the south part of Belgium) is in precarious situation, especially at the edge of the cities. While the Regional Policy Declaration promotes the development of quality and proximity food belts, the coexistence of human and economic activities with nature and the end of new land artificialisation by 2050. Our paper focuses on the precariousness of agricultural lands at the edge of the cities, and relates a twofold research to conduct a prospective assessment. First, we conducted a survey among 587 Walloons on the perception of agricultural lands and their functions. Secondly, we analyzed several case studies next to the main Walloon conurbations. Based on satellite images, agricultural parcel data, field observations and interviews with stakeholders, we identified the services provided by these agricultural lands and the different pressures that they face. The research improves our understanding of the role(s) played by the agriculture within, or at the edge of, cities, underlines the thorny issue of land ownerships, points out the diversity of situations encountered, and propose adaptations and ways to sustain peri-urban agricultural activity while preserving environment and developing their social and educational roles.

Keywords: Agricultural land; Multifunctional farming; Prospective assessment; Peri-urban space; Belgium.

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APICULTURE AGAINST MARGINALITY: EVIDENCES FROM LIGURIA'S LANDSCAPE, ECONOMY AND ECOLOGY.

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Rural spaces intrinsically possess a fundamental value from a landscape point of view (Donadieu 1998) besides, obviously, economic and ecological ones. In the context of globalization, agriculture no longer performs a mere productive function, but presents itself also as an activity capable of activating complex social dynamics closely related to landscape dimension (Woods 2011). Indeed, it is from this that part of the cultural value attributed to rural spaces is defined (Bell 2006), on which depends their possibility of being recognized and appreciated by local communities and potential tourists (Derioz and others 2020).

Within this theoretical framework, this paper focuses on the role played by apiculture in Italy from a socio-economic, ecological and landscape point of view. Apiculture is indeed an activity practiced by an increasing number of people (professionals and hobbyists). A significant number of apiaries of various sizes is thus finding a home in the most diverse rural contexts. Nonetheless, in recent years apiculture in Italy has been going through a crisis due to several factors: the drop in flowering due to ecological reasons; the use of chemical products in agriculture; the arrival of allochthonous enemies of bees.

In relation to these problems, this paper presents preliminary results of a research aimed at understanding the role played by agriculture in the specific context of Liguria region (north-west of Italy). It opens with a quantitative analysis whose purpose is to provide a reliable estimation of the number of apiaries and their distribution. A qualitative analysis, instead, is aimed at providing a significant overview of apiculture experiences in this region from an ecological and an economic point of view through a series of interviews with beekeepers. Moreover, the research offers the opportunity to think about the potential role of apiculture in rural landscapes, and so in rural systems. For this reason, in conclusion, this paper aims to show the potential role that apiculture can perform in Liguria as an activity able to participate to, and stimulate, a broader process aimed at overcoming the condition of marginality in which the mountainous and hilly rural areas of Liguria have been living since the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords: Apiculture; Rural Landscapes; Liguria; Italy.

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**THIS FOOD CRISIS IS DIFFERENT: COVID-19 AND THE
FRAGILITY OF THE NEOLIBERAL FOOD SECURITY
ORDER**

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This paper seeks to contribute to an emerging debate about the resilience of the global food system in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We situate the current crisis within a longer-term historical perspective on policy responses to past food crises, and show how the current crisis is fundamentally different from past crises, requiring a different kind of policy response. Our analysis outlines how previous periods of food systems crisis over the past 70 years consistently generated policy responses that called for industrial farming methods, specialization, and international trade. The legacies left by these past policy pushes created vulnerabilities in the face of the present crisis, which is characterized by three interlocking dynamics: disruptions to global food supply chains, the loss of income and livelihoods due to the global economic recession, and uneven food price trends unleashed by a set of complex factors. We argue that further pursuit of the standard policy response is likely to do little to alleviate hunger or improve agricultural livelihoods at the scale needed. The COVID-19 pandemic marks an inflection point and demands a more complex set of policy responses that fundamentally transform food systems.

Key words: COVID-19; food crises; Food insecurity; Food policy; Food systems.

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FOOD GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS BEYOND INTERNATIONAL BORDERS

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Geographical indications (GIs) affecting different sorts of foodstuff have multiplied in recent years, especially in the context of the European Union. Since GIs are generally rooted in nation-state traditions reflected in unique legislations (e.g. France and Spain), they are widely conceived, planned and managed within the respective territories of each country. However, if the delimitation of GIs is always controversial because the area of production of a given foodstuff is usually difficult to demarcate – and the product itself is often difficult to distinguish from other similar (or the same?) foodstuffs –, it is not surprising that conceiving GIs solely within the framework of the nation-state borders is also, predictably, problematic. Indeed, previous research has found that the debate is primarily restricted to the bounded spaces of nation-state sovereignties. Nonetheless, the foodstuff area of production can easily be cross-border and then the GI becomes scientifically questionable. In this sense, there is a need for a theoretical reflection that brings together content from rural studies and border studies on the delimitation of foodstuff GIs and the nature of political-administrative borders.

Be that as it may, in the context of the European Union, there are several cases in which de facto cross-border cooperation has been based on the common agricultural product existing on both sides of the boundary and, more importantly, GIs have been legally established at a cross-border level. A particular instance has occurred in the Istrian region, located between Croatia and Slovenia, which is partly explained by the different pace of accession of these two countries to the European Union, which has strongly influenced the conflicts that have arisen around the GI designation of agricultural products in this area. For the specific study of this case, and other concomitant case-studies that are considered topical, a qualitative research has been carried out by means of semi-structured interviews, whose preliminary results are intended to be examined in this paper. This research has benefited from the HIGHLANDS.3 project of the European Union, devoted to the study of innovation experiences in the field of sustainable development in mountain areas.

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PROXIMITY TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS: BENEFITS AND LIMITS OF AN UNDEFINED PRACTICE

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Proximate rural and natural areas have gained momentum in a context of strict restrictions for international travel due to the global covid-19 pandemic. In Spain, they have increased their popularity as tourism destinations when tourism could not be practiced as usual, and, for some time, proximity became an essential factor when choosing holidays or weekends' destinations. Rural tourism and nature-based tourism are well-consolidated forms of tourism based on very diverse values such as tranquility, quality food, clean air, beautiful landscapes, or identity. They are usually understood as alternatives to mass tourism and have been analyzed as tools for local development that contribute to diminish territorial imbalances between coastal areas with over tourism experiences and rural areas in a situation of under tourism.

This proposal aims at introducing the concept of proximity tourism as a sustainable strategy to promote tourism in rural and natural areas through the case of Spain. It is based on research projects conducted the last 15 years on different Spanish regions and built on qualitative and mix-methods (Cánoves et al., 2017). These have mainly focused on the stakeholders' role on tourism and local development processes (Gössling et al., 2012) which has been analyzed from the regional, sectorial and product's perspectives.

We argue that applying proximity and its multiple dimensions to tourism development may contribute to increase territorial resilience since it requires involving a diversity of economic, cultural, and social stakeholders into the process (Chien-yu & Chin-cheng, 2016). They interact within a cluster, improving the way wealth is redistributed, increasing community rooting, and contributing to curb depopulation.

Despite the apparent contribution of proximity tourism as an opportunity to value and promote existing local good practices in terms of environmental care, working conditions, redistribution of benefits, and social impact of economic activities, this perspective does not seem to represent in a short term a definitive alternative to the traditional tourism model, based on illimitate growth.

Nevertheless, it could become a way for rural areas to attract visitors, and place tourism at the position of facilitator of larger constructive territorial dynamics. That is if the public administrations promote it through adequate planning.

Keywords: Proximity tourism; Rural environment; Socio-territorial resilience; Sustainable strategy planning.

INSIGHTS INTO TOURISTS, RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES PERCEPTION ON CULTURAL TOURISM. THE SHOWCASE OF A RURAL AREA OF BUZĂU CARPATHIANS AND SUBCARPATHIANS (ROMANIA)

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Cultural tourism accounts for 39% of tourist visits globally, being recently recognized as a leading factor for tourism development (UNWTO 2017). Europe has a rich history of cultural heritage and well-developed tourist attractions, but some areas are still underdeveloped and unrecognised. It is also the case of Buzău Carpathians and Subcarpathians, a predominantly rural area with a high tourist potential, both natural and anthropic ensuing from the complexity and diversity of natural landscapes and local historical background. The current study is trying to provide an overall image of the challenges of local cultural tourism by understanding the behavior and experience of tourists and their interest related to cultural tourism; the perception of residents on cultural tourism and what is the impact of (cultural) tourism; the current state and future potential of cultural tourism according to tourism entrepreneurs. The research is tourists -, businesses (e.g. accommodation units, restaurants, cultural sites) - and residents-oriented, developed around and in connection with the main tourist attractions in the area. The survey relies on two field campaigns carried out in August and September 2020 when 161 questionnaires were applied to tourists, businesses, and residents in 22 LAUs of the total of 34 LAUSs of the study area. The study revealed that nature/landscape and the local traditions are the main motivation of tourists to visit the study area, but also identified some drawbacks of tourist development in the area, i.e., the lack of proper infrastructure and public transport, the poor information and communication for tourists. However, there are also some economic benefits from the cultural tourism, mainly for the residents. An

important component of the study is the assessment of COVID-19 pandemic impact on cultural tourism, especially on the small businesses during and after the travel restrictions (e.g. revenue losses, temporary closing down and layoffs/technical unemployment), but also on tourists' travelling preferences and sentiment (e.g. safer destination choices, risk perception, travel motivation and confidence, chosen transport means, attitude to local/foreign travel) and residents' attitudes and behaviour. The current study was performed within the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation under grant agreement no. 870644 - Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT).

Key Words: COVID-19; Pandemic impacts; Cultural tourism; Carpathian and Subcarpathian rural areas.

Boosting potential for GeoDesign? Smart rural development and digitalisation of the system of rural planning in Poland

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This research offers an assessment of the level of digitalisation and digital transformation of spatial planning, as this is taking place in the rural gminas (units of local administration) within the region of Łódź – as one of the 16 so-called voivodeships into which Poland is divided. The choice of research area is of importance and interest, given a central location in the country and specific features of the settlement system (relationships in terms of the location of rural areas in respect of a single large city in the region, with all the smaller towns forming a rather evenly-spread network). This is of major significance in the context of the diffusion of innovation that digitalisation and digital transformation represent. In a broader context, the Polish example may anyway be thought interesting, given specific historical conditioning of the system of spatial planning that ensures de novo development over just 3 decades so far (in a period of transformation that was additionally associated with accession to the European Union). That has meant adjustments and adaptation to European regulations that look like a suitable point of reference for analysis being carried out in other EU Member States and regions. The empirical analyses present here are founded upon secondary statistical data as well as our own primary data on the subject of geoportals and their functionality in rural parts of the Łódź region. The assessments of both planning coverage and geoportal functionality reported on here supply insight regarding the potentials for rural gminas to implement the concept of GeoDesign, as an integral part of “smart rural development”. The research carried out made it clear that only a fifth of rural gminas in the region are of high potential where GeoDesign is concerned, while every third such gmina has only very low potential. A further key conclusion is that rural gminas heading along the path of “smart development” may break out of a spatial order existing thus far on the basis of disparities, and a division of regions into a centre and peripheries.

Keywords: Geo-Design; Digitization; Digital transformation; Rural planning; Smart rural development; GIS; Rural areas.

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SOCIAL INNOVATION IN RURAL AREAS: THE CASE OF OLIVE OIL COOPERATIVES IN ANDALUSIA (SOUTHERN SPAIN)

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Innovation seeks answers to social problems by identifying and offering services that improve the quality of life of people and communities (Noya, 2011). Cooperativism is a recognised formula for achieving sustainable, territorially anchored and inclusive development (Ajates, 2020). There is currently a great deal of research aimed at investigating the importance of innovation in cooperatives to try to reduce the abandonment of farms, encourage generational change and prevent rural depopulation (Alguacil Mari, 2020; Fajardo García and Escribano Pizarro, 2020). Our work focuses on Andalusia, where 70% of the oil is processed in cooperatives distributed throughout the rural territory. Cooperatives emerged as a defensive instrument for small farmers, to obtain a better price for their product, but the reproduction of conservative attitudes can be a burden in terms of survival in the scenario of global economic competition.

The aim of the work is to analyse the processes of social innovation that are being developed in the oil cooperatives to face the challenges of competition and to favor cohesion in the Andalusian municipalities most specialized in this product. The research has carried out according to an appropriate methodology for the case study. The main results include a reflection on the origin and territorial impact of this type of enterprise, the difficulties they face, the improvements they have adopted, and the purpose of the social innovations detected. One conclusion is that a deepening of the transformations under way may be the key to improving the competitive capacity of olive oil cooperatives and, thus, to generating employment opportunities with which to continue making the rural environment an attractive place to live.

Keywords: Olive oil; Rural development; Social economy; Social innovation.

THE PROBLEMS IN RURAL COMMONS CREATED FOR SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

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In Turkey, over a million people migrate for short-term seasonal agricultural work with their families every year within the country. In particular, in rural areas of eastern and southeastern Anatolia regions of Turkey, many landless people make a living as seasonal agricultural migrant workers. During the harvest season, when requires numerous agricultural workers, seasonal agricultural workers who migrated from other regions set up tents around temporarily contracted farms and temporarily live with their families for 2-3 months to do seasonal agricultural work. The living patterns of those who live while moving with their families for a short period have resulted in poor living conditions, which is emerging as a major social problem in Turkey.

Therefore, recently in order to solve these problems, several rural municipalities have provided temporary residential areas for seasonal agricultural workers and basic living facilities such as water, electricity, toilets, and kitchens. However, rural commons prepared for seasonal agricultural workers often cannot be reused because those are contaminated and damaged due to careless use, waste, and negligence in the management of previously used workers. As this creates another social problem, new research and management efforts are needed to sustainably maintain and use these rural commons.

The town of Konaklı in the province of Niğde is one of the largest potato producers in Turkey. Forthis reason, many seasonal agricultural workers make short-term migration here in search of work during the potato harvest season. The local government provided basic facilities necessary for basic living as a rural common for seasonal workers.

Therefore, what kind of problems is appearing in these rural commons, and how to manage and make efforts to solve these problems was examined. This study was conducted with data collection by in-depth interviews and questionnaires on seasonal workers and local government officials in Jun and July 2019.

This study can have a positive effect on the improvement of the rural commons for seasonal agricultural workers from a long-term perspective and can be used as basic data for future related research.

Keywords: Rural commons; Seasonal Agricultural migrant workers; Konakh Town.

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THE EFFECT OF SHUBRA-BENHA EXPRESS ROAD ON SETTLEMENT SPRAWL OF THE NEARBY VILLAGES USING GEOMATICS TECHNIQUES

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The present paper investigates the effect of the Shubra-Benha Express Road on settlement sprawl of the villages located nearby its two sides. It focuses on the growth of informal buildings using geomatics techniques: remote sensing, GIS, and high-resolution spatial data.

The road is 40 km long, 41 m wide, and includes 4 traffic lanes in each direction. The daily traffic volume is 60,000 cars, and the average journey time is 25 minutes. The road was built with the aim of contributing to easing traffic congestion on both the Greater Cairo Ring Road and the old Shubra-Benha Road. It connects several main roads with some governorates of central and eastern Delta, Cairo, and Alexandria.

The study concentrates on the problem of rural settlement expansion as a spatial process and analyzes the various factors affecting it. This is to be attained through a field survey of selected villages in the study area, which number about 25 villages and 19 settlements. The study adopts the descriptive and the behavioral approaches depending on the theories of movement and conflict.

The expected outputs of this study include production of map series covering rural settlements growth. The process of urban growth and the factors affecting it will be evaluated, in addition to identifying the positive and negative aspects in the growth process in the study area and taking this into account when planning development. It is expected that a number of ministries and government agencies, such as the Ministry of Housing, the Urban Planning Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant authorities, will benefit from the results and recommendations of the study.

Keywords: Shubra-Banha Express Road; agricultural land decrease; sustainable development; geomatics techniques; rural settlements geography.

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SOME GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ AREA IN SIWA OASIS, THE SPATIAL MENTAL IMAGE OF ITS RESIDENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, AND THEIR CONTENTMENT WITH SERVICES

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The research objective is to identify some geographical features of a new “Abu Bakr As-siddiq” area, northern Siwa town. The research also aimed at identifying residents' spatial knowledge of some development issues, their spatial preferences, and contentment with services.

Through the field survey in winter 2017, it was possible identifying land use features, types of 530 buildings, some characteristics of the residents, and the neighborhood lifestyle.

Through a sample 10% of housing owners, it was possible clarifying their spatial mental image of Egypt geographical dimensions, preferred governorates, and knowledge of development projects, new cities preferences, Matruh Governorate cities preferences, and respondents' contentment with some services.

The study followed the descriptive analytical methodology, used the administered questionnaire with questions for the respondents, spaces for their sketching, for buildings characteristics, and maps for the spatial perception tests.

The study used direct observation, personal interviews, Excel, ArcGIS for statistical processing and mapping.

The study found that the major land use is the residential, 5% is commercial, service use, and 23% of buildings are Arab houses mostly have large storage yards. One-fifth of housing owners practice agriculture, livestock, sheep farming, and own land or well.

The population is a mixture of immigrants, mostly from rural governorates, Siwa natives and settled Bedouins from surroundings. Most of them work in services, and quarter of them combines two jobs including farming.

The study found respondents' knowledge gaps in their geographical knowledge of Egypt, their lack of spatial awareness toward development projects except for nearby or famous sites.

It was also found that they preferred Matruh governorate for housing and work, urban governorates, and governorates from which immigrants came. They

prefer new nearer cities, and new cities in the governorates of immigrants. In Matruh Governorate region, they preferred big and nearer cities.

Their contentment with security, housing and electricity was higher than other services.

The study concluded that there is a semi geographical isolation of the population, a modesty of living standard, their spatial knowledge, and their contentment. It is recommended paying attention to remote areas as they are considered defensive in border areas.

Key Words: Contentment; Spatial mental image; Livestock & Sheep farming; Spatial perception tests; Cognitive gaps.

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**PROJECTS OF THE DECENT LIFE INITIATIVE FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE- AN
APPLIED GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY IN ASHMOUN
DISTRICT, MENOUIA GOGERNORATE**

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The current study aims to make a geographical evaluation of the projects included in the “Decent Life” initiative in Ashmoun District from the point of view of sustainable rural development with its social, cultural, economic, administrative, and environmental dimensions by applying the methodology of "Sustainability Assessment; Level, Attitude" (SALA).

The Egyptian countryside, which accommodates more than half of the country’s population, was exposed to development projects during the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century, the most important of which was the Integrated Rural Development Program “Shorouk” from 1994 to 2003. All projects, unfortunately, lacked coordination and integration plus weak funding.

The Egyptian President, El-Sisi, launched a decent life initiative on January 2, 2019, aimed at providing the needs of the neediest community groups in services and housing fields, as well as alleviating the suffering of poor families in rural areas and urban slums. On October 22, 2019, the Decent Life Foundation was established by Egyptian youth volunteers.

The initiative is based on the implementation of service and development projects that guarantee a "decent life" and improve the living conditions of poor families, orphans, female heads of household, children, unemployed youth, and people with disabilities, and provide job opportunities to strengthen the independence of citizens and motivate them to improve the standard of living for their families and communities.

More than 58% of the population of the republic in twenty governorates, comprising 175 districts, and more than 4,500 villages and 28 thousand hamlets, will benefit from the "Decent Life" projects. The 52 districts have started, provided that the projects are implemented in the rest of the districts other over the next two years.

The area of applied study is Ashmoun District that occupies the southern portion of Menoufia Governorate in mid Nile Delta, and is the largest one of its nine districts, in terms of area, population and numbers of villages (54 villages).

The number of "Decent Life" projects assigned for Ashmoun District reached 1,088 projects, distributed in the sectors of drinking water, sanitation, education, natural gas, youth, sports, communications, Local government units, environmental improvement, solid waste management, health, electricity, irrigation, roads, transportation, and veterinary sectors.

Key Words: Egypt countryside; Decent Life initiative; Ashmoun District; SALA methodology.