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Southern and Mediterranean Europe: Social Change, Challenges and Opportunities in a Time of Crisis

Abstracts

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The debt crisis on Southern Europe countries in general, and in Greece in particular, had severe impacts on economic and social development. This paper aims to analyses the main causes, consequences and potential impacts, on local development in southern countries in general and in Greece in particular. For this purpose, the online questionnaire was applied to experts of Central and Southern Countries. The methodology selected includes multivariate analysis techniques based on cluster analysis of variables and cluster analysis of cases. The results confirm the existence of two groups of clusters that differ in respect of their socio-economic characteristics, main reasons of the debt crises and potential evolution and solutions. All the experts inquired agree with the negative impacts on social welfare and development. According that, the debt crises had negative impacts, namely, by the loss of jobs in urban areas, which could create new opportunities on rural areas, by the return of the young and skilled people to the rural environment. At the same time, this could compromise the strategies of development at local and regional level, by the migration movements of young skilled professionals. The main conclusions also confirm, that all the experts inquired, fully agree with the potentials negative impacts on education, research and development and innovation due the sharp reduction on public finances.

**Key-Words:** debt crisis; Mediterranean countries; cluster analysis; rural development
The processes of rural-urban hybridization have received increasing attention in rural studies over the last decade. Beyond the traditional binary approaches, these analyses have identified a proliferation of the mixed spaces (fringe areas, translocal ruralities, etc.). On the one hand, the cultural and economic impact of globalization and mobilities have strengthened the interconnections between places and the increase of transnational experiences. The “global-urban” and “local-rural” became nowadays interrelated and continuously changed by glocalization. For example, the role of "global countryside" in the international flows of tourism or the “food chain” have been well studied. On the other hand, the rise of private automobile and technologies of communication have changed the work, residential and consumption patterns, blurring the rural-urban divide at regional level. Rurality as a “hybrid space” has been also analysed by regional planning and rural geography. For example, in relation to house markets in suburban areas. However, it has been paid less attention to other aspects and ways of rural-urban hybridization. As for example, the living patterns in the rurality beyond peri-urban fringe, as mountain areas. Furthermore, the impact of the economic downturn also raises here new questions about the role played by mobilities and rural-urban hybridization in the rural sustainability. How are combined daily mobility or multi-residential patterns as family resilience strategies? What is the impact of the crisis and cuts in the provision of public and private services on rural-urban hybridization of these areas? We explore these issues from fieldwork carried out in three valleys of the eastern part of Navarrese Pyrenees in Spain. A region where the impact of economic crisis adds to traditional aging and depopulation process of mountain rural areas. Our findings are based on the study of different familiar sociological profiles and interviews with experts and key informants. We look at the mobility strategies and ways of rural-urban hybridization present in familiar strategies as ways to face the crisis and changes in social conditions. The fieldwork cited and theoretical reflections discussed here have been developed under the framework of the three-years research project “Mobility, social diversity and sustainability: the challenges of the European agenda for rural development” (CSO2012-37540) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.
The Implications of Crisis upon Rural Areas in Greece: Lessons for Rural Development Policies

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Continuous changes in the past three decades related to European agricultural and rural development policies, other international developments, as well as the recent economic crisis have accelerated past and created new rural transformation processes. Interrelated processes have internally transformed the rural areas, forming a ‘new rurality’ characterised by contraction of agriculture, expansion of tourism and construction, increased pluriactivity, increased employment of international migrant labour and the reorganisation of farm operation and family labour division. In the environment of crisis, rural areas have been affected in diverse ways. On the one hand, they experience rising costs of production, falling incomes, increasing inequalities, contraction of public services and on the other, lower unemployment rates than urban areas, increased production and exports and a cowardly ‘back to the land’ movement in which agriculture’s role is enhanced. The paper will discuss the main elements and the dynamics of the changing rurality in Greece over the past decades. Additionally, drawing from Labour Force Survey statistical data, it will also investigate the main characteristics of mobilities towards the rural areas in the context of the present economic recession seeking lessons for rural development policies. Greece: lessons for rural development policies.
The Impact of Family Strategies in Rural Sustainability in Times of Economic Crisis: The Case of Metropolitan Rurality of Sevilla (Spain)

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This work is part of research Mobility, social diversity and sustainability: the challenges of the European agenda for rural development (CSO2012-37540) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. The main objective of the research project is to understand the impact of mobility in rural development. The first results of the research show that many of the family strategies – of which mobility is a very important element and indicator – have changed because they are affected by economic difficulties. Therefore, the family strategies are interesting to analyze, because we see the change that the economic crisis happens in the daily life of people living in rural areas. The results will be also important to know how this affects the development and sustainability of rural areas.

We present the first results of fieldwork carried out in the Vega de Sevilla, as a case study illustrating the changes and processes that configure the metropolitan rurality in Southern Europe. Our findings show that many of the family strategies – of which mobility is a very important element and indicator – have changed because they are affected by economic difficulties. We want to know-how this affects the development and sustainability of rural areas. To achieve our goal, we develop a qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews to different familiar profiles, key informants and stakeholders. These interviews show different discourse function of different profiles, based on sociodemographic: gender, occupation, type of migration, residential relationship with the territory, type of mobility and type of activity / economic sector. Moreover, we include the study the results of a quantitative analysis of secondary data on demographic and topographic characteristics of the area. We are currently at an early stage of research; therefore, this work shows the methodology design to encourage debate about this and the preliminary results.
Rural Resilience to Face the Crisis: Between Individual Action and Collective Action

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It is well known that the ongoing crisis is aggravating social exclusion and poverty phenomena through its impacts on economy and labour markets but also through the austerity policies and the budget cuts, especially in social policies. These effects are not homogeneously distributed around the territory as not every place starts in the same position or has the same resources for facing the negative social impacts of the crisis (rise of unemployment, lower wages, reduction or loss of social benefits, etc.). It is more than evident in the very same features of rural areas who traditionally present lower capital resources, worse services provision or lack of competitive advantages; that is, a set of elements which weakens rural spaces, menaces their sustainability and makes worse their resilience. However, the current crisis is serving as well as a stimulus by forcing local society to face those consequences in an active way either through individual strategies or through collective or community actions, particularly represented in entities and NGOs such as Red Cross or Caritas. The aim of this paper is precisely explore the development of these strategies of resilience in rural Spain through a case study focused on the area “Sierra de Alcaraz and Campo de Montiel” in Albacete province. Primary information was produced from semi-structured interviews that were conducted with 22 stakeholders during April 2014. These were selected by their knowledge and practice on social policies delivery, social action and local development in the studied area. A content analysis oriented by the key dimensions defined by literature on social exclusion and poverty (vulnerable groups, risks driving the processes, primarily) was conducted on the interviewees’ speeches. The results describe a diverse group of situations ranging from the quasi-public performances of the biggest nationwide social action entities (Red Cross and Caritas) whose activities, such as closets and food banks, are financed by public funds, to personal survival strategies that depend directly on the innovation and adaptation skills of the rural dwellers. Between these extremes there are also reported a great deal of resources and activities developed by local associations that act on a specific field, and the strategies developed in the network of family support. Rural Context: from migrant workers to social innovation.

1 This work is part of the results of the project «El impacto de la crisis en las nuevas formas de exclusión social en el medio rural albaceteño: un caso de estudio a partir de la realidad territorial de la comarca Sierra de Alcaraz y Campo de Montiel” funded by the Instituto de Estudios Albacetenses “Don Juan Manuel” and the Excma. Diputación de Albacete, in his call for Research Grants 2013.
Rural Conext: from migrant workers to social innovation

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The aim of this paper is analyze how the agency of migrant seasonal workers can change the perception of the power of social movement in rural area. This essay is based on ethnographic analysis. The general framework is the economic crisis, actually main characters (little growers, political activist, seasonal workers) involved, are hit by these economic shock. First, little growers lose their power in favour of retailers and they are forced to find new innovation way as for example the use of migrant workers useful because thanks to their precariousness in life they are the good workers just in time. At the same time the activist of the autonomous group are young people, after losing their work in the North of Italy or after finishing their studies, came back in Campobello. At the end migrant seasonal workers are in this sector for the first time, actually they are the workforce expelled from the North, we can observe the concrete effect of the crisis. Most of them are in Italy for longtime and they worked in the firms and after losing their job they decide to try this new “experience” in a ghetto for olives pickers, it’s incredible to observe their reaction standing in front of tents of the ghetto.

Last year there was a ghetto 1 km far from the town where migrant workers live waiting for a daily work as picker of olive. An autonomous political group was born at the beginning just to understand how it was possible a ghetto so close to a town, after some months they start to reflect about effects of agrarian capitalism produces in their territory and in their life, at the same time they started building a new way to conceive the relationship between resources and their life. The agency of seasonal workers make people starting to think in an different way about their own territory.

They are promoting, after several meeting, a new field of knowledge exchange between the weakest actors of the chain of olive oil production and as migrant workers, growers and also young precarious of western Sicily. They are reflecting and acting in order to find a new way to conceive their rural context, building possibilities transforming traditional production way toward a model based on good social and economic relationship, a new way to generate knowledge and new way to produce welfare and income.
Coming and Going: Etnographic Insights on Reciprocity, Movement and the Crisis

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This paper explores how the residents of Monte da Pedra, a village in southern Portugal, ascribe meanings to the current context of crisis and austerity measures brought into their own daily lives. Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out intensively during thirteen months (May 2012 to June 2013) and consisted of direct-participant observation as well as of a series of exploratory interviews with residents and their visiting family relatives.

Monte da Pedra is one of the villages of the municipality of Crato, in the district of Portalegre (northern Alentejo). The socio-demographic structure of the locality follows the pattern of de-population that characterizes other rural areas in southern Europe. From an ethnographic perspective, if we consider the effects of the crisis on the daily-life of the villagers, results so far show that there is heterogeneity in the perceived damages of the crisis upon the daily life. Perceiving the crisis into differs according to the age-group and life-style of each informant. Among older informants (above 75-80 years old) the memory of other times of crisis, makes them relativize this current crisis in the face of their own life experience during past times of scarcity. The times of crisis go and come back (‘vai e vem’) according to older residents lived experience. The village’s younger residents (lacking this time-frame longer scale, and having life-styles of stronger consumption practices) think that the crisis is damaging their lives in various paramount ways. Unemployment and rising costs of living are two main aspects identified by them. These have had paramount effects in their family budgets and among the actions order to mitigate the damage of crisis upon local families’ budgets one finds migration and money borrowing.

Indeed, ethnography has shown that in Monte da Pedra, residents’ actions in the face of life constrains are directed towards intensifying some the practice of reciprocity. The local dynamics of reciprocity have been re-casted in several ways, namely, through the perceived increase in the circulation and exchange of some items (money lending practices, food offerings, etc). Particularly, one aspect that is visible is food items produced locally (such as eggs and vegetables) which are redistributed among friends and relatives.
MIGRATION TO THE RURAL IN TIMES OF CRISIS

To Live or Not to Live in the Rural, that is the Question? What is Driving Portuguese Urban People to Want to Live in the Countryside?

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The main aim of this paper is to debate the motivations behind the will to live in the countryside expressed by the Portuguese urban population in a recent survey carried on within the research project Rural Matters. This debate is rooted both in the consequences of the Portuguese rural areas’ transformations during the last decades and in the recent political and media narratives about the ‘return-to-the-land’ movements. Moreover this debate can be placed in the centre of the discussion about what is driving counterurbanisation processes on southern European countries, following the reflections, among others, of Halfacree (2008) and Gkartzios (2013).

The main changes observed in many rural areas can be strongly related to the loss of economic and social relevance of agriculture as well as, in consequence, to the increasing understanding of the rural as a place of/for consumption (Figueiredo, 2013). Many Portuguese rural areas suffered a process of progressive abandonment at many levels, being nowadays demand and consumed by urban populations mainly in quest of recreational and leisure experiences in the countryside. Recently, apparently as a consequence of the economic and financial crisis, rural areas appear to be regaining a productive status being increasingly portrayed (in the media as in the dominant political discourses) as contexts full of opportunities mainly for the young populations. In fact, media narratives emphasise nowadays the ‘stories of success’ of young people who have moved to the countryside.

Much of the debate around counterurbanisation, as deriving from the ‘back-to-the-land’ movements of the northern countries of Europe, stresses the relevance of the positive attributes of rurality as the main motivations underlying those movements. The economic motivations, particularly the ones related to the consequences of the economic crisis many southern European countries experience, seemed to be rather neglected until recently.

Empirical evidence from a survey recently conducted in Portugal on the social representations of rural areas demonstrate that the majority of the urban population (51%) would like to move to the countryside. The motivations, however, are not in line with the media and political discourses, i.e., are not related to the representation of the countryside as a productive space, containing economic opportunities (job creation, production, etc.)

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2 This paper was elaborated within the 3 years research project: Rural Matters – meanings of the rural in Portugal: between social representations, consumptions and development strategies (PTDC/CS-GEO/117967/2010), funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and co-funded by COMPETE, QREN and FEDER.
agriculture, etc.) but rather associated with the representation of an idyllic rural (more quiet, simpler and healthier than the city). It is mainly the wealthier, younger and more educated people who express the will to move to a rural environment, as well as the ones that use to visit rural areas for recreational purposes. This evidence, although needing more research, contradicts what appears to be the actual tendency in other southern European countries (e.g. Greece, as shown by Gkartzios, 2013) regarding the role of the economic crisis as the main motivator to the ‘return-to-the-land’ movements. This evidence also opens the opportunity to further discuss what seems to be the ‘Portuguese specificity’, taking into account the liaisons of urban populations with the countryside, as well as the role of social representations of rural and rurality as the driving factors behind the will to move to the countryside.

References


Pro-Rural Migration in a Time of Crisis: Dreams, Paradoxes, Ventures, and Failures.

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In countries such as Spain, where many remote rural areas are still immersed in a depopulation process, pro-rural migration has lately been considered to be a way to slow down - or even to stop - that trend and to foster the revival of certain rural areas. Even though pro-rural migration is highly selective about the destination places and it coexists with the also selective out-migration from rural areas, pro-rural migration has become a key driving force of contemporary population restructuring on rural territory.

The increasing relevance of pro-rural migration is enhanced by the fact that it constitutes, in most cases, not just a residential choice but a life venture, a life project that combines many different elements (Rivera 2007). Furthermore, this venture is in tune with a critical modernism (Halfacree 1997) and with some increasingly shared values such as environmentalism, community spirit, body and soul regeneration, tranquility, slow pace, and so forth.

The sudden eruption of the crisis is having a great impact on rural territories and rural lives. In many cases, it provokes a fracture on people’s life and represents a critical point that makes rural and urban people feel compelled to reconsider their expectations; to give sense to their lives in a new and radically different scenario.

This paper aims to analyse the impact of the crisis in pro-rural migration: people’s expectations, new dwellers’ opportunities and challenges to start and achieve success in their pro-rural venture. The discussion is based on the preliminary analysis of the fieldwork undertook in the region of Sierra de Francia and immediate surroundings, in Salamanca. This region has been progressively losing population, although it has also been the destination of pro-rural migrants in the last decades. Fieldwork consisted on a series of in-depth interviews conducted to new rural dwellers in August 2014.

If we look at the pro-rural migration from a holistic perspective (Rivera 2013), the preliminary results show that the crisis is playing a complex role in pro-rural migration.

- It can be the trigger element that helps many people to take the decision to move to the country and to try their dreams to come true.
- It can also represent the best – or only- solution to many people’s critical situation in towns: unemployment, high living cost, and so on.
- It can become the failure of pro-rural migrants’ expectations and dreams, leading to the end or transformation of the pro-rural migration previously embraced by new rural dwellers.
- Finally, in order to be successful, pro-rural migration needs a scenery with some given characteristics (e.g. views, ...). However, even if the scenery is achieved,

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3 This is a four-year project funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (CSO2011-27981).
pro-rural migration also needs a scenario with a range of possibilities. This scenario might now be at risk due to the crisis.

References


FARMING, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS (I)

Development Paths Of Small Subsistence Farms in Greece Italy and Portugal

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The basis of this paper are the results of a country case study in Greece, Italy and Portugal undertaken for a study requested by the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural development carried out in 2013 and entitled “Semi-Subsistence farming – value and Directions of Development”. Over recent decades, the number of Small Survival Farms in Greece, Italy and Portugal has constantly reduced mainly due to absorption into larger farm holdings, or to land abandonment.

The paper discuss in what areas the SSFs are concentrated. Firstly, in mountain areas and economically depressed inland regions, where outmigration has often resulted more in farmland abandonment rather than in land concentration. The second area of high concentration of SSFs is in peri-urban and other areas with off-farm opportunities. In such areas, many SSFs survive mainly as the result of the adoption of household strategies based on off-farm employment and outsourcing.

Although it may be too early to assess fully the impact of the crisis on farming systems in the three southern countries, we discuss how the current recession may affect the future of SSFs. First, increasing unemployment in non-farming sectors reduces the chance of finding an off-farm job. This may trigger future exit from SSF status and a trend towards increased farm size. Second, increasing unemployment, coupled with immigration and often inadequate state pensions and cuts in public sector salaries, has increased the numbers of low-income and poor households. In the current context of recession, agriculture is perceived as a refuge, and small-scale farming as an important contribution to household budgets and food security, as well as to alleviating rural poverty.

Key-words: Small Subsistence farms, Farm size; institutional factors; future development.
What Different Agricultural Types Currently Bring to Rural Communities? A Qualitative Assessment in Southern Portugal

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The present study intends contribute to qualitative knowledge about agriculture's influence of well-being in rural areas of Southern Europe. Both qualitative and quantitative knowledge can help policy makers to learn aspects important for rural development and take wise decisions, especially in a time of crisis when new measures of progress than purely the GDP are discussed. One of the definitions of crisis by the Oxford dictionary is “a time when a difficult or important decision must be made”. Recently, there is a recognized challenge between researchers and policy makers, to shift from measurement of progress based on economic production to measuring peoples’ well-being. Still, the multidimensional nature of well-being is a complex issue in terms of evaluation. Consequently, developing appropriate assessment methods based on meaningful information, leading to a broader understanding of the well-being in rural areas is necessary.

The aim of the study was to assess positive and negative impacts of different agricultural types on well-being of local communities. It is explicit that well-being in rural areas is not merely influenced by the agricultural sector alone. Hence, agriculture still has a vital impact on the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions, thereby determining the contribution it can make to rural well-being and to the sustainability of territories.

The data were gathered through eighteen semi-structured qualitative interviews. The interviewed sample included national researchers from sociology, economy, psychology and history. There were also interviewed members of the rural authorities and members of rural communities including both farmers as well as non-farmers. The questions were related to agricultures’ characteristics that influence well-being of local communities. Four types of the agriculture were selected to be studied. They represent principal trends currently existing in Southern Portugal: small-scale diversified, small-scale specialized, large-scale diversified, and large-scale specialized.

According to responses, different agricultural types provide diverse positive and negative outputs to local communities. It seems that there is no one optimal type of agriculture that could satisfy entire rural community. The aspects’ variability was recognized not only in terms of economic benefits of agricultural types, but also in social, cultural and environmental dimensions. The above mentioned differences will be presented and discussed.
Coping with Structural Adjustment and Crisis: Changing Livelihood Strategies in Harmanli Village

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For the majority of small farmers, structural adjustment programs and economic crises continuously diminish the level of income, and farming on its own becomes incapable of providing sufficient livelihood for rural dwellers. This study intends to tease out the process of easing away from a strictly agrarian existence and engaging in multiple activities by examining recent trends in rural employment, occupational shifts, changes in the main income sources, emerging new economic activities, and spatial relocation in the Harmanlı village, Bursa, Turkey. It aims to illustrate how rural inhabitants in the village manage their subsistence and overhaul consumption patterns, gender roles, environment, and social exclusion in order to surmount the vicissitudes of structural reform and crises with reference to the political dimensions of livelihood adaptation and relations with the state.

This study also expects to show that the dynamics of farmers’ livelihood strategies are disregarded by macroeconomic appraisals of agrarian transformation. The diversification of income sources and coping strategies cannot be captured by the statistics because most statistics do not reveal the simultaneous relationships that small farm households tend to maintain with land, labor, and commodity markets, giving rise to multiple income sources. In a nutshell, statistics are static but farmers are dynamic. In this study, the attention given to real experiences of rural producers instead of statistics enables us to investigate what the structural adjustment and crises mean on the ground and what kind of coping strategies derive from them in the Harmanlı village. Besides, a comprehensive analysis on livelihood strategies encourages us to go beyond classical discussions on the emergence of wage labor and the concentration of land for agricultural transformation, and reminds us that confrontation of the market-led system begins with the mechanisms used by households to preserve subsistence levels and social reproduction. Finally, it is important to note that a critical perusal of the rural-urban linkages that provides a useful lens for understanding the complexities of rural inhabitants’ livelihoods and their coping strategies, which usually include some form of mobility and diversification of income sources and occupations will enable us to understand newly opening scenarios for rural areas.
FARMING, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS (II)

Value of Goods and Services Produced by Water Surfaces Located in Forest Areas. Case Study: Municipality Of Alcoutim

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With the emergence of new cultures and social trends, the population demand for environmental goods and services provided by multifunctional rural ecosystems has been through a growing evolution. Given that these goods and services are usually not exchanged in the market, there is not a traditional commercial activity or a market price, which makes it difficult to determine the respective value. However, in this context of crisis, rural areas re-gained some attractiveness. Is it possible that, in this context, environmental goods and services can be viewed as an opportunity in rural territories?

The need to value non-business assets of rural ecosystems, i.e. assign a value to ecosystem services by determining the economic benefit generated by these services, is essential to internalize them in the decision-making process and be considered in the definition of policies and land management programs to promote rural and regional development.

In this framework, the principal objective of the present study is to examine and quantify the environmental goods and services produced by water surfaces present in rural ecosystems, namely in forest areas, as is the case in areas of influence of the irrigation projects of dams Pão Duro, Preguiças, Vaqueiros e Pessegueiro, in municipality of Alcoutim, which is located in northeast of Algarve. This study also identified and characterized the types of owners, users, farmers and inhabitants of the area under study and defined their profile and behavior, while consumers of an environmental good.

The surveys that support this analysis are in the form of questionnaire and allow to apply the Contingent Valuation Method, which aims to determine the predisposition of the community to pay for maintenance and improvements in the environmental quality of water surfaces, i.e., to defend a particular environmental good or service which also increases the social welfare.

Keywords: rural ecosystems, multifunctionality, value of ecosystem services
This paper explores the current changes of a new rurality that connects new strategies in rural territories with new notions of quality and safe food. The results correspond to a current coordinated I+D Project entitled: "Territories and meanings of quality: new strategies and representations of food systems".

Rural development strategies based on quality production (PDOs, IGP, Territorial Labels, etc.) have two types of conditions for success. “Internal” conditions that have to do with the social, cultural and economic dynamics among local actors and their relationship to the institutional framework. “External” conditions imply that the shape of the strategies applied by local actors depends too on their evaluation of the potential demand by consumer of their products. It is also apparent that not all configurations of actors and development strategies allow the achievement of the multiple goals intended, and so it becomes of the greatest interest to analyze processes in which different development models confront one another, with the ensuing tensions and conflicts.

The objectives of this article are: 1) to identify and study comparatively regional development strategies and processes based on quality production and on the territorial “anchoring” of agro-food products, identifying the main sources of conflict between quality labels, territories and actors. 2) To connect these initiatives to social representations of quality schemes, as seen by the diverse agents participating in it, with special attention to consumers. 3) To analyze the impact that the current economic crisis have been in the quality food strategy, by the side of producers as well of the consumers.

The results we report are the outcome of a study based on five years of fieldwork with a comparative approach developed in Spain, The Netherlands, and France. We made 329 interviews to producers, processors, technicians, politicians, associations and 30 to consumers about different quality labels related to Iberian Ham; Cheese and Olive Oil.

This paper shows that as well as the positive synergies, such initiatives constitute a locus of conflict, negotiation and power between the parties and involve exclusion of certain actors, both in the side of production and consumption. In this paper we wonder if the strict rules linked to certified food products and the conflicts arisen from them makes these strategies viable in times of economy crisis.
How Local is Terroir? Brief Characterization of Nemea Wine-Producing Area

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Rooted on the deepest pages of history the past of Greece holds a long tradition on wine producing; one of the longest in European vine growing and winemaking. However, its continuous pathway does not always revealed a high quality course for Greek wines. Only counting back the last three decades we can trace a complete transformation towards quality resulting from considerable investments on modern winemaking technology and important wineries being built all over the country. Nemea wine producing area is one of these cases of positive evolution, where the Nemea VQPRD became one of the most important wine zones in the country. Furthermore, the importance of wine for the area is visible in the fact that viticulture is the main agricultural activity. In the same sense, the highest share of the local income comes from wine production and commercialisation. In such context, addressing the relationship of the wine production and wine consumption within and outside the local community appears to be crucial in the context of the recent economic crisis. This importance lies on how different strategies to face economic crisis, like qualification processes based on terroir, can enhance or constrict rural development possibilities of wine production. Thus, focusing on the importance of the terroir some relevant issues can be discussed mainly related to the changes in the role of local knowledge (as part of the concept of terroir) on the winemaking organizational structure that may be induced by the more international market orientation of the Nemea wines in consequence of the crisis. In other words, it is important to understand the changes as well as if they imply a threat of de-territorialisation as a response to the necessity of expanding wine business. The exploratory contacts show that there are increasing investments in expert and technical knowledge on a continuous seeking for improving the quality of the wine, also due to the growing attractiveness of the area. This focus on formal knowledge does not always take place in a harmonious relationship with the local knowledge of the farmers, especially when the first seems to gain over the latter. However, the existence of both types of knowledge and the preservation of the relationship between them plays a vital role to preserve ‘localness’ over de-territorialisation. This relationship seems to be only possible to protect under a re-shaping of traditional knowledge, re-creating territorial identity along with the winemaking modern techniques.

Keywords: rural development; agro-food qualification; wine terroir; economic crisis.

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4 This communication is integrated on a joint Master thesis research between University of Aveiro and Harokopio University under the supervision of Professors Carlos Rodrigues and Elisabete Figueiredo from Aveiro and Professor Pavlos-Marios Delladetsimas from Harokopio. The thesis research focus on a comparative analysis case studies between Nemea wine region in Greece and Basto wine region in Portugal. The research is on a very preliminary stage, therefore the data presented has an exploratory nature.