

Department of Political Science

Course of The policy of EU structural funds

**The Depopulation of Italian Mountain Villages:  
Are the European Structural and Investment Funds and  
the Inner Periphery Strategy Fostering the Repopulation  
of Italian  
“Ghost Towns”?  
A Comparison between the Pilot Area of Vallo di Diano  
and the non-pilot Village of Morigerati**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aim and scope of the thesis

The present work focuses on the rural exodus phenomenon which has heavily reduced the population of Italian mountain villages, in particular accelerating its speed since the last two decades of the XX century. Indeed, the critical fracture in population stability has been experienced in relation to the technological progress and the pull of the force of «urbanism» combining to offer higher salaries in the tertiary sector while overseeing the end of the historical phase of sharecropping in agriculture in favour of mechanized single crop factory style of food production.

The aim of the thesis is twofold. On the one hand, it examines the overall territorial impact of the depopulation phenomenon in terms of its economic, social, and cultural costs, while on the other, it analyses strategies to effectively counter it. To this end, the work proceeds by framing its investigation within the logic of the European Union (EU)'s Structural and Investment Funds and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), that is to say the twin set of policy instruments which Italy, as a EU Member State, has available to devote to this purpose.

Indeed, the Italian geography of the contemporary «full and the empty» dynamic refers to a world-wide experience of population flux which witnesses an extreme polarization between the over-the-top densely populated cities and the abandoned vacuum of inner areas. In this work the general context is analysed in terms of the causative elements of the physical weakening of these territories, including the backwardness of traditional welfare services; the deterioration of mobility and accessibility conditions; the digital divide; the shrinkage or, in the majority of the cases, the total deficiency of innovative or even safety policies ensuring territorial security from hydrological disasters, earthquakes vulnerability and inadequate infrastructure restoration.

This analysis highlights the significance of the Italian case among the European examples because of the distinctive morphology of its heterogeneous territory. To this end, the research focuses on the spinal column of the Italian boot's region, the mountainous chain of the Apennines, which follows a path starting from the North, in Liguria, ending in the South, in Calabria (with even an extension in the Sicilian island). As part of the research, the statistical data maps display the differences in demographical trends, showing the gap between the "bone" of the territory, the mountainous part, and its pulp, the coast. Additionally, a second factor which stimulates the investigation of the Italian case regards the peculiar role that this country plays among the analogous South-European countries, in particular when referring to the depopulation effects on the Italian *Mezzogiorno*'s average fertility rate and old age dependency.

## **1.2 Methodological note and research questions (RQs)**

Against the scenario of ongoing rural depopulation of mountain villages, this thesis intends to address three principal research questions (RQs):

- *Which are the reasons and the territorial consequences of the phenomenon of depopulation flows across the EU and Italian territory?*

Therefore,

- *What have been the EU's strategy and its implementation means of CAP and Structural Funds in regard to the phenomenon of depopulation of rural villages?*

And,

- *What is the impact of the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas on Italian villages?*

Given the encompassing scope of the investigation as comprised by the research questions, to address them, a multi-method approach has necessarily been adopted. Regarding the specific methods employed in this research, they are: the content analysis of pertinent scholarly literature and document literature about the depopulation issue; the analysis of

statistical data of the territorial impacts of the phenomenon; and a place-based inquiry approach of a significant case study of an Italian mountain area included among the pilot-areas of the NSIA, the Vallo di Diano in the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park, and a not-pilot village, Morigerati, which is helpful for comprehending the actions which were pursued without the NSIA implementation.

The document literature focusing on the depopulation phenomenon comprises European- as well as national (and local) documents. In terms of the first group, texts taken into consideration are mainly public documents of the institutional online portals of the European Commission, European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) and EU Member States, in addition to public statistical data and analyses. The second group mainly consists of “introspective” and national self-examining literature, Italian books such as “Riabitare l’Italia”, written by leading personalities and researchers of the Italian Inner Areas, documents and oral evidence regarding the Morigerati case study and the official Document for the NSIA implementation in the Vallo di Diano area.

It is appropriate to highlight the motivations behind the decision to include in this work the choice of the case of the Morigerati village. During the conduct of the research the village was deemed a significant case because of the trajectory of loss and response to it that it entailed. It then became possible to personally visit the village for fifteen days and, therefore, it was promising to conduct personal interviews with local actors such as an historian, Luigi Puglia; the deputy mayor (who is *de-facto* the mayor) Cono D’Elia; and a researcher and architect committed to the “inner areas cause”, Liviano Mariella. Authorization to single out and name the respondents in this work was given by them to the author. Therefore, Morigerati was chosen because it is a village located in a classified “inner area” of the Italian *Mezzogiorno*, but one with an active response to the depopulation trend in spite of its exclusion from the villages selected by the National Strategy for Inner Areas through the employment of different tools.

Organizationally, the thesis is structured in five chapters: the introduction is the first, followed by three analytical chapters and the conclusions.



The second chapter focuses on the investigation concerning the causes and the consequences of rural depopulation regarded as an European and a national phenomenon. Firstly, the land-abandonment effects in the European macro area are analysed. Indeed, the trend of population growth is slowly decreasing across the EU zone due to the contemporary low fertility rates and ageing crisis. Moving from the current demographical context, the work investigates the countries more significantly touched by the phenomenon and it examines the symptoms and the effects of depopulation. The Italian demographic condition is displayed through an historical analysis of the rural-to-urban population migration as well as the employment of statistical data maps which depict the population shrinkage trend and the gap in GDP against the morphological configuration of mountain areas. Eventually, it will be described the “vicious circle” of depopulation and economic decline which outlines the general triggers and effects related to rural abandonment. Thus, the analysis of this chapter addresses the first RQ.

The third chapter focuses on the second RQ. After a concise discussion of the evolutionary path of the Common Agricultural Policy, it questions whether the policy itself may have augmented and fostered rural abandonment vis-à-vis its original scope. Moreover, it examines the future commitments of the policy which, like other EU policies, has its critics. This research primarily employs European official documents and resultant literature. Then, the investigation shifts to the existing nexus between the second pillar of the CAP, the Rural Development, and the Inner Periphery Strategy. Thus, it deals with both the content and the policy responses proposed by the Strategy on the population shrinkage issue. In particular, the work analyses the criteria selected for the classification of the different targets and their own drivers; the approach employed for the implementation of the policy; and the networking projects and tools for local communities such as the Leader approach and its consequent Community-led Local Development program.

The fourth chapter dwells on whether the translation of the Inner Periphery Strategy inside the national agenda has produced outputs in the villages in which it operates. Thus, it will be thoroughly analysed the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA) as well as the structure and the scope of the policy for the 72 pilot villages. Furthermore, the local actors’ role and their relationship with European and national institutions is examined, to assess their attitude vis-à-vis the approach. Ultimately, in order to present a local viewpoint and to assess

the impact, the chapter will analyse the action implemented by the Vallo di Diano Area and the different programs developed by the Morigerati village. For what concerns the former, it will be considered the inter-municipality system of the “*Città Montana di Vallo di Diano*” and its achievements. For the latter, by starting with its geographical location and specific characteristics, an analysis is carried out, with the assistance of three respondents, of the motivations behind the exclusion of Morigerati from the NSIA. Their perceptions of the abandonment crisis and observations regarding the resources from the EU’s Investment and Structural Funds are discussed. The voice of Liviano Marella, a researcher who is working for projects regarding villages involved in the NSIA and in Matera 2020 European Capital for Culture, also constitutes a source for understanding the strengths and the weaknesses of the Strategy as well as the actions pursued in a non-NSIA context for limiting the local population out-flow. Thus, answering the third RQ.

Therefore, the fourth chapter represents the conclusion of the dissertation. For instance, the last chapter is construed as the final elaboration of all the information collected during the research, it explicitly answers each RQ and it outlines a comprehensive and interconnected vision of the depopulation issue through the comprehension of the causes, the action pursued at the European and at the National level and the impact of the NSIA on pilot as well as non-pilot areas. Additionally, it focuses on the current challenges that inner peripheries are still facing and, consequently, it also proposes some policy and action improvements related to the commitment to the long-term European and Italian objective to invert the demographic trend of inner peripheries.

## **Chapter II:**

### **A comprehensive outlook of the depopulation phenomenon: mapping rural abandonment in the European Union and Italy.**

The aim of this chapter is to explain the depopulation process across rural communities and to do so through various levels of analysis. Firstly, from the European Union perspective, the chapter gives a comprehensive profile of communities in Member States losing population and explains the phenomenon, discussing the causes which have led to the outflow of inner area residents toward urban centres. Indeed, to understand the phenomenon, the structural and the self-alimenting factors that alter the population composition of European rural communities to the benefit of urban centres ought to be singled out, such as declining fertility rates and increasing ageing trends in the last decades.

Secondly, an in-depth examination of the phenomenon will be carried out, focusing on the Italian case. Initially, an historical analysis of the Italian rural population outflow will be provided by focalizing on the XX and XXI century periods. Subsequently, the effects of rural abandonment in Italy will be investigated through the analysis of statistical data maps. The outcome of the analysis of the data collected clearly portrays the disparities within Italian provinces vis-à-vis differences in terms of demography, physical composition, social assistance provided and economic solidity.

Finally, the last paragraph focuses on the causes and the effects of depopulation through the introduction of the “vicious circle” theory. This latter notion is useful to explain the variables that trigger the continuous and unstoppable cause-effect circle and that impact on the financial viability of rural areas. Moreover, other pushing factors of depopulation will be explained. For instance, it will be taken into consideration the influence of local governance efficiency; the poverty rate; the fragile environment and the natural biodiversity of those lands; the economic stagnation and, therefore, the low employment rate.

#### **2.1 The rural depopulation phenomenon in Europe.**

The European demographic pattern has experienced a dramatic transformation over the last half century. From the end of the Second World War to the 1960s, the old world underwent

a substantial rise of its population trend, reaching the present-day level of over 500 million people<sup>1</sup>. Conversely, since the economic downturn in 1975<sup>2</sup>, the EU has been facing a population crunch as the current trend is extremely sluggish and it is even projected to decrease in the long term. In fact, the whole EU population represents only the 6,9% of the world total and it is projecting to diminish to just 4,1% by the end of this century<sup>3</sup>.

This negative demographic trend generates unavoidable side-effects for the population distribution between and within the various European regions. Chiefly, rural and remote areas are predominantly hit by the demographic crisis, thus heavily worsening their currently stagnating economic status compared to the EU average<sup>4</sup>. Also, this deteriorating “vicious circle” hitting the abandoned lands strengthens the additional negative externalities stemming from the dense concentration of population in urban centres (e.g. the augmenting of polluted environments and the rising of house-rentals in the cities.) Moreover, the cluster of population which is experiencing the rural-to-city migration is commonly composed of economically productive youngers of a child-bearing age, therefore fostering a faster aging of the remaining populations<sup>5</sup>.

#### 2.1.1. Sparsely populated and under populated areas in Europe.

Sparsely populated areas have commenced to become a debated concern when in 1994 the Protocol No 6<sup>6</sup> on the Act of Accession of Norway<sup>7</sup>, Austria, Finland and Sweden to the EU conferred a “special status” to the remote regions located in the Nordic countries that are facing population issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Istat, Sessant'anni di Europa. Available at <https://www.istat.it/60annidieuropa/popolazione.html>

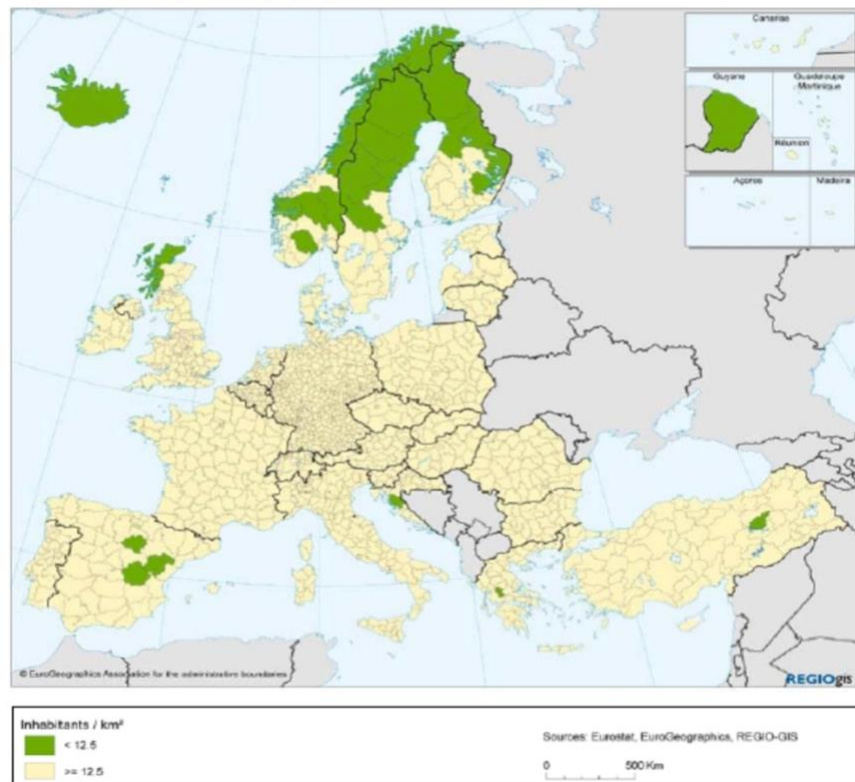
<sup>3</sup> Eatock, David et al., (2017). Demographic Outlook for the European Union, in-depth analysis, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> Document Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A11994N%2FPRO%2F06>

<sup>7</sup> Actually, Norway never became a Member of the European Union due to the results of the two referenda which took place respectively in 1972 and in 1994. Nevertheless, Norway is part of the European Fair-Trade Association (EFTA), the European Economic Agreement (EEA) and the Schengen Area.



**Fig. 1.** Sparsely populated areas.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)<sup>9</sup> advocates the need to devote meticulous attentiveness to «regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northern most regions with very low population density and island and mountainous regions<sup>10</sup>.»

The exact definition of “sparsely populated area” is explicated in the guidelines on national regional aid for the 2014-2020 period<sup>11</sup>. In the document, NUTS 2 regions’ categories are outlined. Those areas are clustered by a minimum and a maximum threshold of population density, territorially delineated by the Member State’s administrative subdivision. Thus, the map in Figure 1 displays the concentration of sparsely populated areas defined under the NUTS 3 clusters with fewer than 12.5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> <sup>12</sup>. The population distribution

<sup>8</sup> Data source: Eurostat, 2017. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Sparsely\\_populated\\_regions.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Sparsely_populated_regions.png)

<sup>9</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

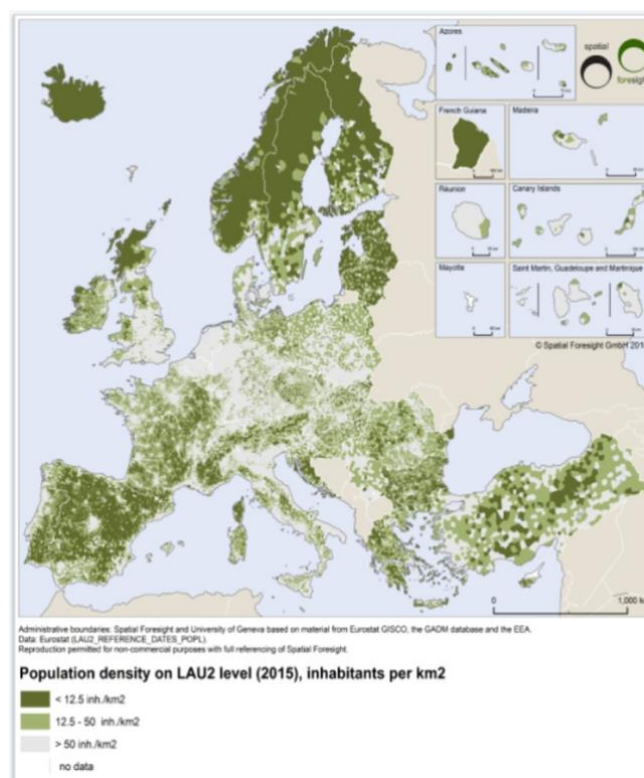
<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Based on Eurostat population density data for 2010.

highlights that the territories that enjoy the special status of “sparsely populated areas” are mostly located in northern European countries: Iceland; the north of Scotland; and the Outmost territory of the Northern regions between Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Nevertheless, those countries share the low-density population feature with other Southern European regions. Generally, in academic literature, different terms are employed when referring to an area with a declining or thinning population. Underpopulated regions, remote areas, thinly populated territories have common structural features: fragile farming-relative economy; lower than national or EU average levels of income; and substantial remoteness from the other regions<sup>13</sup>.

But the special legal status conferred to Nordic “sparsely populated” regions is not translatable to the others under populated areas located in Central or Southern Europe that are suffering from «demographic malaise<sup>14</sup>».



**Fig. 2.** Under populated areas - LAU2<sub>15</sub>.

<sup>13</sup>Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges? study.

<sup>15</sup> Data source: Spatial Foresight, 2015.

In Figure 2, the population density distribution is analysed through Local Administrative Units (LAU2) level. Those categories are the “building blocks” of the NUTS clusters. The LAU2 category respects the municipalities and the communes of EU Member States<sup>16</sup> and, in this case Figure 2 shows the population distribution on Local Administrative Units level in dark green with less of 12,5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, in light green for regions between 12,5-50 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and in grey for LAU2 with a density of more than 50 inhabitants for km<sup>2</sup>.

By comparing Figure 1 and Figure 2, it is worth noting the difference in terms of spatial definition when targeting sparsely populated areas at NUTS level, therefore mainly Nordic EU Member States, and underpopulated regions under the Local Administrative Units (LAU2) level, covering also most of the Southern and Eastern European territory. In fact, the second map delineates the concentration of depopulated municipalities also among the territories of the Iberic peninsula, the Italian Alpes and Apennines in addition to the Eastern countries.

However, the depopulation phenomenon must be considered as a process transforming in time. In fact, the demographic decline is properly defined as the diminishing of the total number of inhabitants over a certain period of time and within a certain geographical area. Historically, population growth has been mainly driven by the natural population change<sup>17</sup> since the migratory factor played a minor role<sup>18</sup>. After the post-war baby boom<sup>19</sup>, the population growth rate began to crunch from the 1970s onwards<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, this period was followed by the 1990s pace following the political and economic union and the enlargements of the EU. This new European moment increased the whole continent net migration value<sup>21</sup>. By then, international migration became the major pushing factor for the fostering of population growth, but since the 2009 financial crisis<sup>22</sup>, the net migration rate has displayed a heavy decrease.

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<sup>16</sup> Eurostat, Local Administrative Units (LAU).

<sup>17</sup> The total numbers of birth minus the total number of deaths.

<sup>18</sup> Eurostat, (2018). Eurostat regional yearbook. Statistical Books.

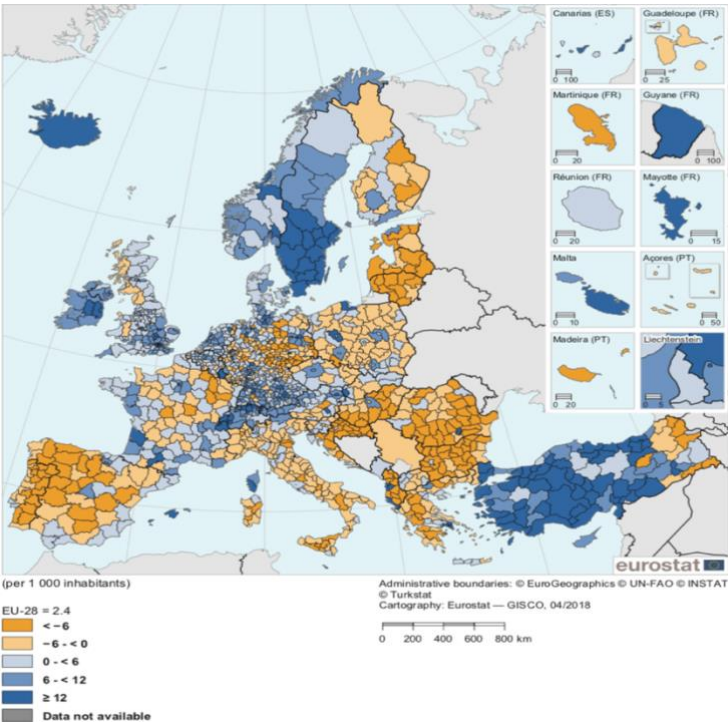
<sup>19</sup> The baby boom period refers to the final years of the II World War up until the mid-1960. During this phase, many EU and Western countries experienced high birth rates.

<sup>20</sup> Eurostat, (2018). Eurostat regional yearbook. Statistical Books.

<sup>21</sup> Difference between immigration and emigration values.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the major side-effect of the financial crisis resulted in the negative rate of the in-flow migration, while increasing the out-ward flows.

According to the European Parliament, one in three regions is predicted to experience a population decline over the 2008-2030 period<sup>23</sup>.



**Fig. 3.** Crude rate of total population change<sup>24</sup>, by NUTS 3 regions, 2016. (per 1000 inhabitants). <sup>25</sup>

Indeed, Figure 3 displays the crude rate of total population change between 1 January 2016 and 1 January 2017. The data possess a twofold configuration of analysis: the natural population change rate and net migration rate.

The majority of the 1 342 NUTS 3 areas displayed in the map recorded a growth in their number of inhabitants, 568 regions reported a decline in their population crude rate, while six regions saw their number of inhabitants unchanged<sup>26</sup>.

From the map, it is distinguishable that the areas that are experiencing a higher growth in their population rate are in Eastern Ireland, Western Germany, Southern Sweden, and the South eastern corner of United Kingdom.

<sup>23</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> The crude rate of population growth is the ratio of total population growth during the year to the average population of the area in question that year (expressed per 1000 inhabitants.)

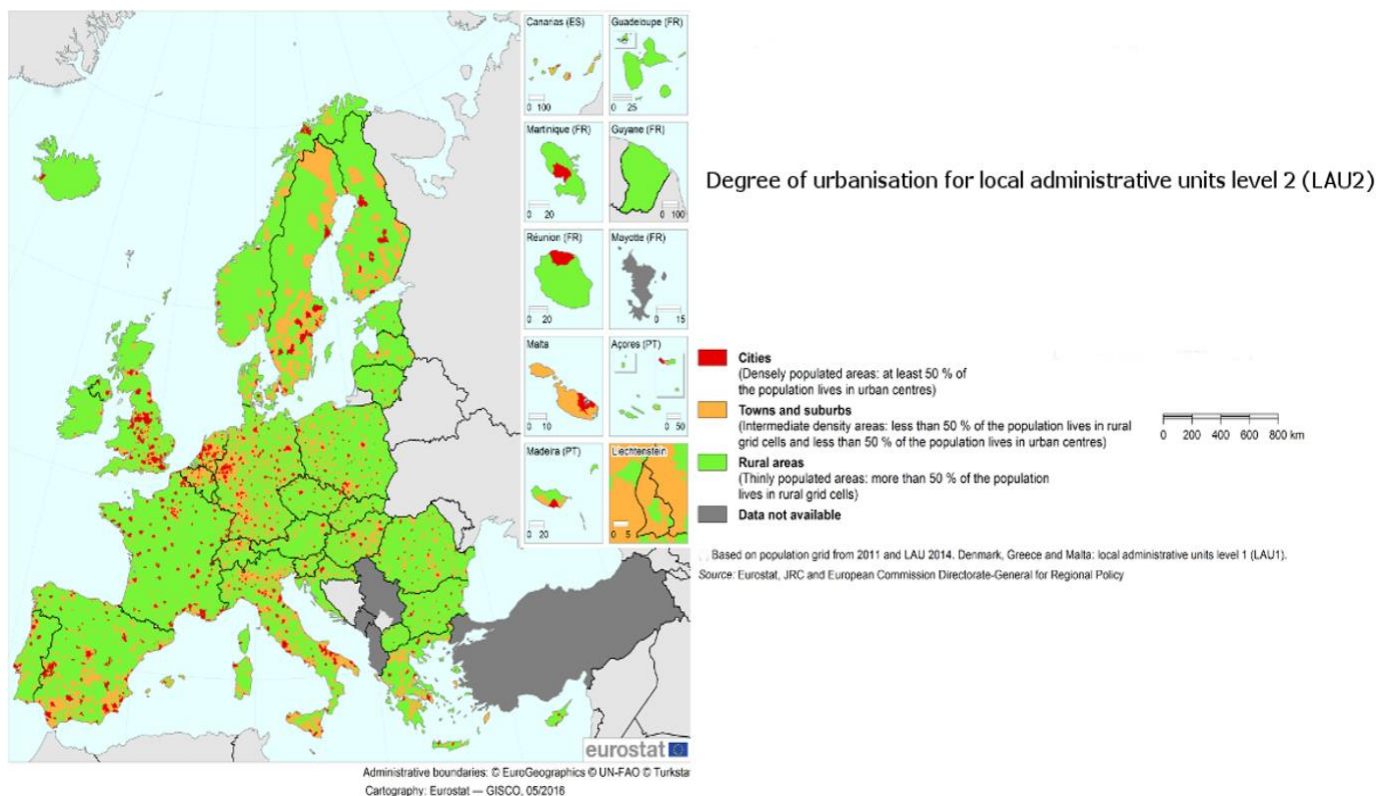
<sup>25</sup> Eurostat, (2018). Eurostat regional yearbook. Statistical Books.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.



Indeed, Figure 3 allows to define medium-terms demographic conditions clusters through the research of the causes that have led to depopulation:

- *The city “pull effect”*: the national and international migrants clusters are concentrating around capital cities because of (perceived) better education prospects and/or employment opportunities;
- *An urban-rural split*: the majority of the urban regions continue to report higher population growth, while peripheral and rural ones record a population decline;
- *A north south split between EU Member States*: due to the rural and natural environment and to the absence of job opportunities, Southern and Eastern Europe are the regions mostly impacted by population decline;
- *Regional divergences within individual EU Member States*: the higher presence of poor and depopulated rural areas in Southern and Eastern Europe implicitly led to regional divergences.



**Fig. 4.** Degree of urbanisation for local administrative units' level 2 (LAU2)<sup>27</sup>.

Finally, Figure 4 displays the European map vis-à-vis the «degree of urbanisation<sup>28</sup>» of each country. This notion is highly significant for comprehending the magnetic effect of urban cities on the rural population. It indicates the status of an area based on the share of the local population living in urban clusters and centres. Indeed, the degree of urbanisation distinguishes three types of LAUs:

- *Densely populated areas*: cities with the majority of the population living in an urban cluster of more than 50 000 inhabitants;
- *Intermediate density areas*: towns and suburbs with the majority of the population living in an urban centre with more than 5 000 inhabitants;
- *Thinly populated areas*: rural areas with a majority of the population living in rural grid cells<sup>29</sup>.

The data show that 42% of the European population lives in cities, 31% in small urban areas and 27% in rural regions.

#### 2.1.2. The two main symptoms of the European demographic malaise.

Rural depopulation is defined as a «systemic phenomenon<sup>30</sup>». Its nature derives from the interdependence of the causes and the symptoms of their demographic decline such as poor access to public services (SGIs), low accessibility, lack of economic competitiveness and innovation and unstable governance. Each of these features erodes the appeal of the shrinking region, thus actioning a downward spiral which results in the exodus of young workers or parents looking for better education opportunities for their children.

Indeed, there are two structural effects which are marking the inexorable decline of the European population: the ageing of the population and the decreasing of the fertility rate. Europeans are living longer than ever before, which may seem a positive sign, but, in reality, it raises many issues for individuals, their families and the social structure.

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<sup>27</sup> European Commission, Tracking cohesion policy investment by type of territory, European Commission. Available at <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/Tracking-cohesion-investments-by-type-of-territory/kff5-7ask/>

<sup>28</sup> According to Eurostat: 'rural areas' are the regions lying outside the urban clusters. 'Urban clusters' are categories of contiguous grid cells of 1 km<sup>2</sup> with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and a minimum population of 5 000.

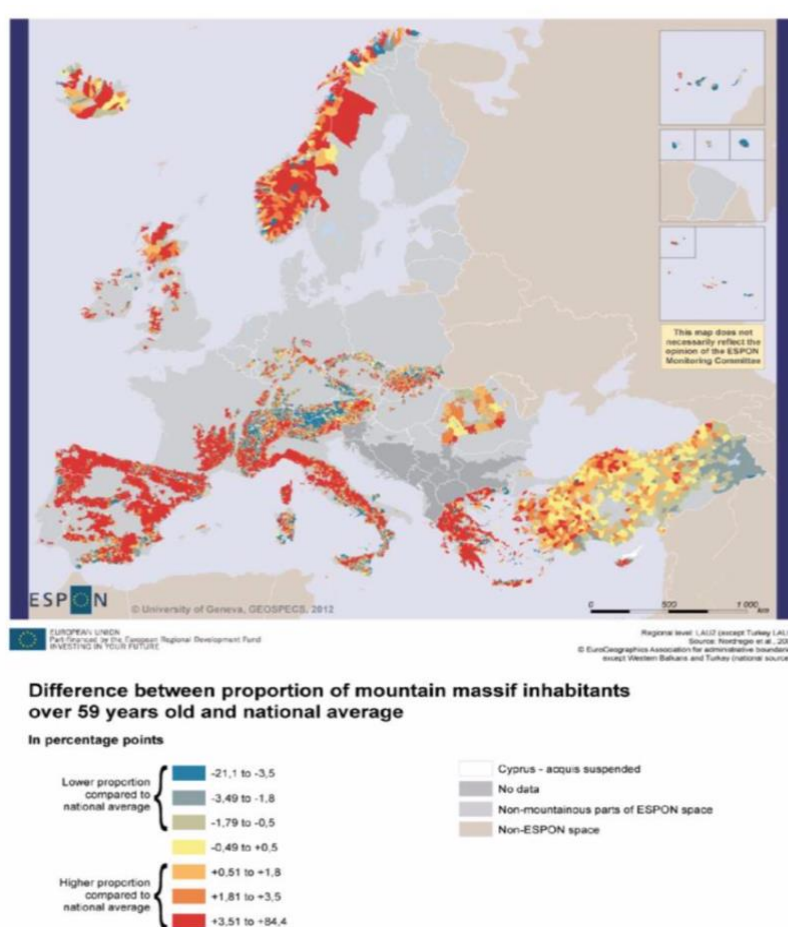
<sup>29</sup> Cells outside the urban cluster.

<sup>30</sup> ESPON (2018), *Fighting rural depopulation in Southern Europe*.

Today, all the EU Member States have a Total Fertility Rates (TFR<sup>31</sup>) below 2.1, which is the minimum level capable of ensuring generational replacement<sup>32</sup>. A low TFR rate and rising longevity expectations imply consequential side-effects such as shrinking and ageing populations<sup>33</sup>.

### *Ageing of the population.*

As a result of the outmigration of the younger population, sparsely populated areas are the regions that predominantly experience population ageing.



<sup>31</sup> The Total Fertility Rate is the average number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her life-time if she were to go through all the childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rate of a given year.

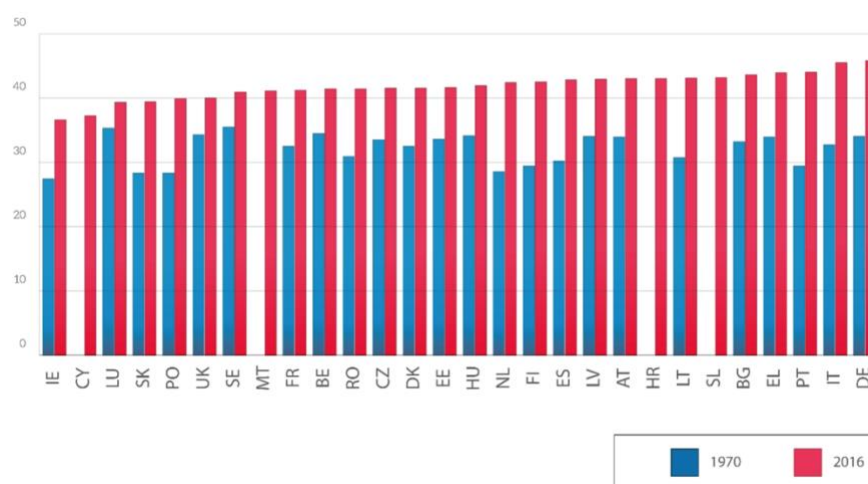
<sup>32</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study.

<sup>33</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study.

**Fig. 5.** Difference between proportion of mountain massif inhabitants over 59 years old and national average<sup>34</sup>.

The map highlights the mountainous territories through their distribution of people over 59 years old vis-à-vis the national average. Indeed, the cluster of “higher proportion compared to national average” is predominantly located on the Spanish Pyrenees, on the Italian Apennines, in Greece, France, Iceland and the Outermost Regions of Norway<sup>35</sup>. The distribution must be compared to Figure 2 and Figure 3. In fact, the specular relationship and the correlation between the depopulation phenomenon and the ageing of the remaining population results unmistakeable.

Additionally, Figure 5 can be compared to Figure 6, which displays a comparison between the average age statistic per EU Member State in 1970 and in 2016.



**Fig. 6.** Median age of the population (years) in EU 28 Member States in 1970 and 2016<sup>36</sup>.

The EU-27 median population age is predicted to become older, increasing from the 40 years average of 2008 to the current 42,6 medium years. In Figure 6, Germany and Italy are the countries which score the higher average age of their population (almost fifty years old). Nevertheless, the alarming data regard the large gap between the medium national age of each state in 1970 and the 2016 average data. Indeed, Eurostat predictions are even more catastrophic when expecting the retirement age of the baby-boomers cohort which will increase the numbers of the old age group leading to an even older Europe data.

<sup>34</sup> Source: ESPON & University of Geneva, GEOSPECS 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study.

<sup>36</sup> Source: GlobalStat based on Eurostat data.

### ***Low Fertility rate***

As the European TRF is currently below 2.1, a risk exists for the generational replacement of the Member States' present population. The upsetting rate could irremediably damage in the long term the conditions of several rural regions of the old continent. If a low fertility rate protractedly persists in a low-mortality context, as the one showed above, a 1.3 TRF rate could eventually imply a thinning birth annual records of 50% and a medium population age of 45 years<sup>37</sup>.

The academic literature analysing the low-fertility rate phenomenon is actually focusing on the socio-economic effects on low-birth trend. Indeed, higher returns to human capital and economic uncertainty in early adulthood are two of the main causes of the late childbearing response for individuals and couples, which is exactly what is absorbing the Southern and Eastern European rural territories<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, contextual factors as the "*familistic*"<sup>39</sup> environment can influence the birth rate. A study conducted by McDonald's<sup>40</sup> shows how the gender equity issue is impacting on the fertility rate. Indeed, his analysis demonstrate that the families composed by a father involved in the child-caring activities are more likely to be constituted by more than one child<sup>41</sup>.

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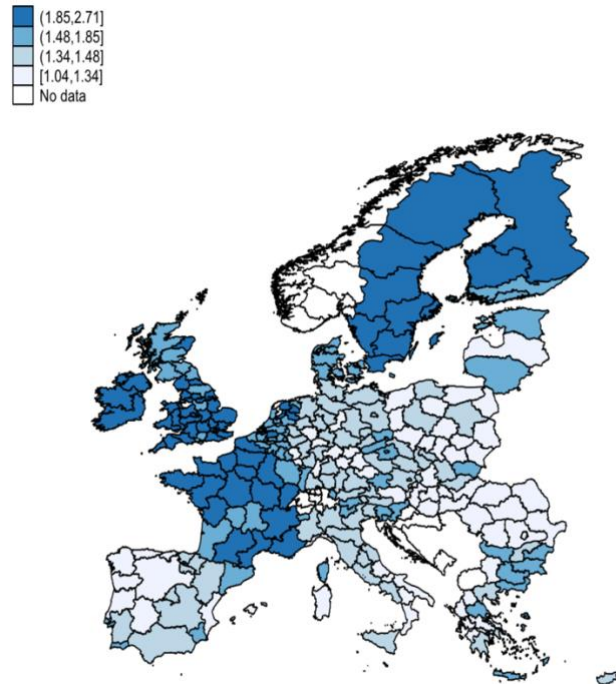
<sup>37</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.pag. 34.

<sup>38</sup>How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, Directorate General for Internal Policies, 2013, p.34.

<sup>39</sup> The notion of familism was developed by Edward C. Banfield who introduced the "*amoral familism*". It describes the aptitude of the individuals of a society of "*maximizing the short-term economic advantages of their family instead of fostering a collective action for the good of wider society*".

<sup>40</sup> McDonald P. (2000), Gender Equity, Social Institutions and the Future of Fertility, Journal of Population Research, No 17(1).

<sup>41</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.p.38.



**Fig. 7.** Fertility rates (Numbers of live birth per woman) 2011<sup>42</sup>.

On the regional level, the fertility rate particularly variates between and within Member States. It changes depending on the socio-economic structures as well as the contextual factors vis-à-vis particular regions. The European map (Figure 7) appears to be divided in three blocks: the North-Western and Anglophone countries, where the fertility rate stays relatively close to replacement level thanks to positive migration inflows (e.g. France saw 2 TRF rate); Southern Europe and German countries experience a birth rate lower at 1.4 as women postpone motherhood; and lastly, Eastern EU countries experience not only a drastic fertility decline, but also a moderately high mortality level<sup>43</sup>.

Indeed, these last two EU country blocks show contextual similar characteristics which are linked to the place of residence. Indeed, their environment may discourage the union formation and the fertility rate if it does not provide an adequate infrastructure availability and childcare facilities. For instance, another contextual factor which impacts on the possibility for a couple to have children is the scarcity of family-oriented policies and the

<sup>42</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.p.36.

<sup>43</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.p. 35

low-chances of female inclusion in the labour force after an absence due to childbirth<sup>44</sup><sup>45</sup>. For example, in Figure 7 the lowest fertility rate is experienced in the Italian *Mezzogiorno*, where the “*familistic*” environment is still extremely dominant.

In fact, Italy and Spain, two countries extremely hit by rural and mountainous abandonment, have the lowest levels of state assistance on tax allowance when dealing with families with children<sup>46</sup>.

For what regards Eastern Europe, after 1990 the discontinuity of many pro-natalist policies<sup>47</sup> and the continuous economic insecurity do not facilitate a favourable environment for the creation of a suitable child-caring environment.

The patterns described above are useful when comprehending the depopulation crisis vis-à-vis the structural concerns that are persisting. The side effect of an unequal population distribution between European cities and peripheries are clearly displayed by the maps.

Firstly, the crude population share demonstrates the cumulation and, therefore, the migration flow of individuals from the rural European territories to the major urban centres. The dense agglomeration of people and the migration of youngsters to urban cities leave behind shrinking spaces and territories that will be later classified as “underpopulated” areas.

Additionally, the younger fertile workforce is the emigrating cluster predominantly moving to city centres, leaving the elderly taking care of the rural areas.

## 2.2 The rural depopulation phenomenon in Italy.

The complex morphological asset of valleys and mountains inevitably shapes the Italian territory «at the edges». Indeed, the classic *meridionalismo*<sup>48</sup> opposes the «bone» of the Alpes and the Apennine ridge to the «pulp» of the coastal areas, together with the inner areas of the major islands of Sardinia and Sicily.

Those marginal areas have experienced an erratic contraction of the human settlement, which has fostered the abandonment and the downfall of the historical artistic heritage and the

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<sup>44</sup> Typical of Mediterranean countries.

<sup>45</sup> Directorate General for Internal Policies (2013). How can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographic challenges?, study, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> Ivi, p. 38.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>48</sup> The «*meridionalismo*» is the body of studies developed during the twentieth century, which investigated the problems of Southern Italy following the Italian unification.

efficient provision of essential services. These unsatisfactory conditions do not guarantee the full exercise of the right of active citizenship.

The Italian government has been totally absorbed by the economic opportunity obtainable from the Fordist modernization of the «industrial triangle<sup>49</sup>» area<sup>50</sup>. And they argue that this single-mindedness has led to the isolation of the under-developed South of the peninsula; therefore, it shaped a Nordic-urban-centred system where the rural areas played an irrelevant role.

More recently, the inner areas have been re-evaluated and reconsidered due to the increasing recognition of the tight dependency between the rural lands and the urban centres; added to the new value attributed to mountain villages in contrast with the hectic globalized city<sup>51</sup>.

### 2.2.1. Historical analysis of the rural-to-city migration in Italy.

«Mobility» has been an essential and secular factor of survival for the rural and the mountain communities. During the modern age, the rural economy of the Alpes and the Apennines has been based on the movement of men along variable spatial distances.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the rural human capital was part of an integrated national economy where pluri-activity was practiced. The pluri-activity consisted in the practicing of various manufacturing jobs as “requested” by the labour market<sup>53</sup>. This job concept will be later substituted by the specialization requirement demanded by the dawn of capitalism.

Along the Alpes and the North and Central Apennines, mobility was required for the daily practicing of the different jobs. While, in the Southern mountain area the transhumance of the pasture inevitably required the possibility of seasonally moving from the mountains to the valleys<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup>The first Italian «industrial triangle» (*To-Mi-Ge*) refers to the North-West area of the peninsula which has at its vertex Turin, Milan and Genoa. This zone developed between the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century with the expansion of the steel and the engineering industry. During the 1980s and the 1990s, Venice, Padua and Treviso created a new industrial triangle of the North-East which became particularly significant for the SME and the manufacturing industries.

<sup>50</sup> Bevilacqua, P., *L'Italia dell'osso*. in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 112.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ivi*, p. 116.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.



During the first quarter of the XX century, the dynamics of this secular system were unavoidably undermined. The economic transformation and modernization of the nearby areas was a stimulus for the residents of the mountain communities to permanently move to the advanced and comfortable valleys, thus modifying the demographic trends of the heights. Nevertheless, the *intra*-national and the transcontinental emigration of those decades is not considered the decisive beginning of the depopulation of rural regions, as the emigration flux of the 1800s was replaced by the natural demographic growth<sup>55</sup>.

Instead, the Alpine mountain communities suffered from the Po valley industrialization and from the development of the production triangle of Turin, Genoa and Milan. In fact, the region's progress offered the possibility of moving stably to the valleys. Another historical movement which characterized the outmigration of mountain Northern communities was the request of female farmhands (*mondine*) for the harvesting of rice, which created a chance for women to move to the *Pianura Padana* and, in time, to acquire an active citizenship role as part of the *Federterra*<sup>56</sup>proletarian front.

On its part, the male population of the mountain community was involved in the cultivation of the reclaimed valleys nearby Modena, Reggio Emilia and Rovigo which required manual labourers who preferred to move to the valleys to work as farm workers<sup>58</sup>.

Undeniably, the close mountain-valley economic relationship was broken by the environmental reclaiming of the coastal and stream basins. For millennia, the extremely harsh conditions of Italy's coastal swamps had made impossible the settlement of communities. Those muddy environments were a favourable atmosphere for contracting malaria, and they were also hazardous places because of the pirate incursions through the water routes<sup>59</sup>. Nevertheless, those lands<sup>60</sup> were seasonably crucial for the commuting economy of the Apennines, because from the fall to the spring season the coastal areas of the country hosted the flocks and the shepherds for the transhumance needs.

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<sup>55</sup> Tino, P., (2002). Da centro a periferia. Popolazione e risorse dell'appennino meridionale nei secoli XIX e XX, in «Meridiana», p. 44.

<sup>56</sup> *Federterra* was a peasant trade-union organization, inspired by the socialist belief. It was created in 1901 in Bologna and it was capillary rooted in Emilia Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto.

<sup>57</sup> Bevilacqua, P., *L'Italia dell'osso*. in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, 114.

<sup>58</sup> Cazzola, F., (1986). *Storia delle campagne padane dell'Ottocento a oggi*, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, p. 115.

<sup>59</sup> Bevilacqua, P., *L'Italia dell'osso*. in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, p. 115.

<sup>60</sup> The Italian swamps were typically called *Maremm*e, mainly located in Tuscany and in Lazio.

Hence, the reclaiming of the valleys and coastal areas irremediably destabilized the secular equilibrium of the mountain economy. The marshy lands reclamation commenced soon after the 1861 Italian unification, continued during the first decade of the 1900s and it was subsequently fostered by the Fascist regime<sup>61</sup>. For instance, the interruption of the mountain-valley century-old relationship was particularly suffered by the *Abruzzese* shepherds who used to descend into the Puglia Tableland (*Tavoliere*) for practicing the transhumance. Nonetheless, the reclaiming of those territories transformed the Apulia lands in wheat fields reserved for quality *pasta* production<sup>62</sup>.

Another unfavourable factor for Italy's rural and mountain economies was the diffusion of urbanization brought about by the needs of the industrial revolution. The reorganization of the administrative territorial structure and the new infrastructural net created by the development of the railways and new highways, favoured the coastal regions, consequently fostering a rapid economic development of those zones and, thus, unequally distributing the wealth deriving from the industrial revolution<sup>63</sup>.

Since then, a clear demographic change has taken hold, predominantly manifesting itself in the gender and age composition of the Italian mountain communities. Indeed, mountains have to come to be mostly inhabited by elderly and women, this community configuration impacting on the declining birth rate and in the changed family pattern. Moreover, numerous mountain lands were deforested to increase farming acreage and to expand the flocks<sup>64</sup>.

Nevertheless, before the outbreak of World War II, those changes were not yet displaying a population crisis. Firstly, the charm of the Alpes and of some parts of the central Apennines started to become a means for enrichment, thus fostering tourism and the renovation of buildings in small mountain villages; secondly, the sharecropping<sup>65</sup> system was still preserving the North-Central Apennines agriculture as a stable organisation supporting a secular social equilibrium.

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<sup>61</sup> Bevilacqua, P., Rossi-Doria, M., (1984). *Le bonifiche in Italia dal '700 a oggi*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, p. 57.

<sup>62</sup> Bevilacqua, P., (1988). *Il Tavoliere di Puglia. Bonifica e trasformazione tra XIX e XX secolo*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.

<sup>63</sup> Lanzani, A., Zanfi, F., *L'avvento dell'urbanizzazione diffusa: crescita accelerata e nuove fragilità* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 123.

<sup>64</sup> Bevilacqua, P., *L'Italia dell'osso*. in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 116.

<sup>65</sup> The sharecropping system is a land contract establishing an almost equal division of the commodities between the landowner and the tenant farmer and the possibility for the latter to live with his family in the farmland.

The first worrying signs of the mountain depopulation process showed up after the conclusion of WWII. At the end of the 1940s, the emigration flow was directed towards transoceanic lands, mainly Argentina, Brazil, USA, Canada and Australia; moreover, the economic appeal of the highly industrialized Europe attracted another slice of the Italian population, which was interested in the job opportunities of the Belgian coal mines or of the German/Swiss steel enterprises<sup>66</sup>. Another population displacement flow concerned the national vertical movement of manpower from the South to the North of the peninsula. The *intra*-national “emigration” reached its peak after the two World Wars and throughout the urbanism dawn of the 1940s. Indeed, the prospects and the convenience of the cities drained the economic and human capital of the high lands, bound to become even more remote.

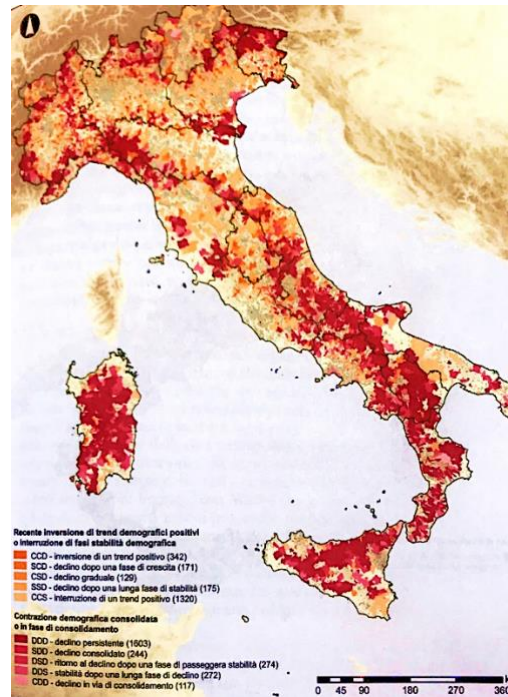
Additionally, the post-war «green revolution», the Common Agricultural Policy<sup>67</sup> of the first 1970s and the end of the sharecropping at the end of the 1980s changed the peninsula agricultural methods of production to favour the mechanized and chemical monoculture. Therefore, the mountain and Southern regions were incapable of keeping up with the globalized industrial economy needs, thus destined for a marginalized and invisible future. Additionally, the desertification of many mountain and remote villages of the peninsula had resulted in the abandonment of physical infrastructure. For instance, the emigration of part of their population led to the dismissal of the unsuitable rural constructions and the landscape simplification (i.e. the disappearance of the minor white roads and canals<sup>68</sup>).

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<sup>66</sup> Martellini, A., L’emigrazione transoceanica fra gli anni quaranta e sessanta, e Romero, F., L’emigrazione operaia in Europa (1945-1973), in Bevilacqua, De Clementi, Franzina (a cura di), Storia dell’emigrazione italiana cit., I, pp.369 sgg e 397 sgg.

<sup>67</sup> The first directions of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) fostered the overproduction of goods through the employment of regulatory mechanism. These measures forced big and small-size farmers to produce as much as possible (look at Chapter 3).

<sup>68</sup> Lanzani, A., Zanfi, F., *L’avvento dell’urbanizzazione diffusa: crescita accelerata e nuove fragilità* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). Riabitare l’Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, p. 123.



**Fig. 8.** Classification of Italian municipalities by demographic trend in the intervals of time 1991-2001, 2001-2011 and 2011-2017<sup>69</sup>.

Figure 8 illustrates the demographic state of the peninsula from the 1990s until 2017. The Italian map describes two leading clusters: it highlights in yellow/orange the zones where a positive reversion of the demographic trend is resulted; while it underlines in pink/red the territories suffering from a consolidated demographic contraction (or the lands on the way to reach a consolidated state). Clearly, the figure highlights the dramatic Apennine demographic scores (excluding the outcomes of the islands).

Especially, the 2008 economic crisis has augmented the draining process of inner areas as indicated by the changes in colour on the map. The financial crisis appears to have underlined the problems of the fast spreading «urbanism» which had been encouraged during the previous decades.

### 2.2.2 Mapping the Italian depopulation issue.

The discussion of the Italian population distribution must be supported by statistical data maps. Indeed, the examination of the depopulation impact ought to be considered at a different level of analysis.

<sup>69</sup> *Ivi*, p. 133.

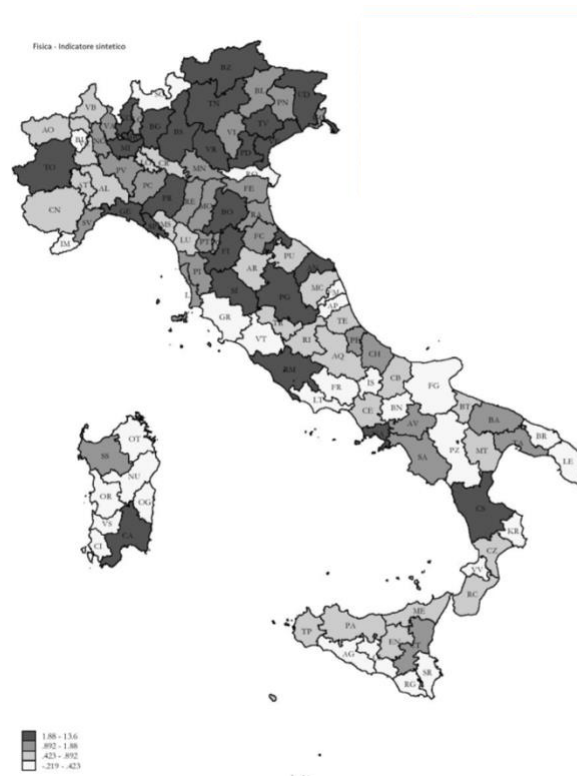
In this paragraph, it will be reported the study<sup>70</sup> carried out by Domenico Cersosimo, Antonella Rita Ferraro and Rosanna Nisticò. The enquiry's purpose is to represent the Italian peninsula in its «full» and «empty» areas depending on the results of the various outcomes. The authors' investigation structure relies on the comparison of four levels of analysis: the physical dimension is explored through the collection of statistics regarding the employment of the use of the soil, the presence of infrastructure and transport services on the territory and the real estate; the second cluster refers to the demographic dimension which considers the territorial presence of tourists, foreigners, the percentage of graduates and the medium life expectancy of the residents; the third aspect indicates the economic strength of the areas and it is evaluated by the data acquired on productive activities and on the exports incidence vis-à-vis the local market structure; lastly, the fourth dimension analyses the social assistance structure of the areas, comprising the quality and the quantity of essential services and the possibility of fruition of cultural goods<sup>71</sup>.

### ***Physical dimension***

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<sup>70</sup> The statistical analysis is published in the book “Riabitare l'Italia: le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste”. The dedicated section is written by Domenico Cersosimo, Antonella Rita Ferraro and Rosanna Nisticò. They provide the synthetic indicator necessary for the elaboration of the data. The records acquired are relative to the 2015-2017 period and in rare cases they refer to the 2010-2011 census data. Therefore, the maps are static photographs and they do not focalize on the time changes.

<sup>71</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, p. 27.



**Fig. 9.** Map of the «full» and the «empty» vis-à-vis the physical level of analysis.

The physical dimension dataset of the Italian peninsula is estimated on the outcomes relative to the use of soil of each province; through the collection of records on the quality and the quantity of infrastructure for the connection of the various provinces (i.e. public transports, highways); and through the number of residents living in residential buildings.

Venice, Milan, Rome, Trieste and Bologna are the five provinces with the higher «full» rate. Their superior result is undeniably a consequence of the public transport utilisation frequency by the residents in these cities, as their incidence of the highways-routes transportation is not very significant. Even though the fuller areas occupy only 30% of the Italian total surface, they absorb about half of the total Italian population<sup>7273</sup>.

Instead, the five «empty» provinces are Oristano, Ogliastra, Medio Campidano, Carbonia Iglesias<sup>74</sup> and Sondrio. The first four are located in Sardinia as the region scores the lowest

<sup>72</sup> In fact, 70 Italians on 100 live in «full» provinces.

<sup>73</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 31.

<sup>74</sup> Ogliastra, Medio Campidano, Carbonia Iglesias are Sardinian historical provinces that refers to the administrative province of Nuoro.

use of soil rate (between the 3 and the 4% of its surface) while the traffic routes and the public transport offer are inconsistent in their service and close to non-existent. Instead, the Sondrio province's (located in the Lombardy region) emptiness derives from the high score of vacant houses.

The North and Central East cluster presents a higher concentration of «full» areas due to the presence of important cities such as Florence, Siena, Perugia, Ancona.

It is visible a «full»-«empty» interchange between the provinces of the central and the southern part of the Italian region. The provinces outcomes derive from the composition of the “physical” data set taken into account. For example, the Milan province scores a high result because of the number of inhabited real estates and the public transport usage incidence, while the Cosenza area is an abnormal data among its southern counterparts because of the traffic highway which crosses the province for more than 100 kilometres<sup>75</sup>. Additionally, the low score of the Potenza area is resulting from its low soil usage and from the deficiency of public transport service, while the “emptiness” of Rovigo derives from the amount of inhabited houses rate and from the modest public transport service<sup>76</sup>.

Obviously, the Milan- Bolzano-Venice triangle is highly «full», while the Rome-Turin-Milan triangle shows a different outcome of alternation of «full» and «empty» provinces.

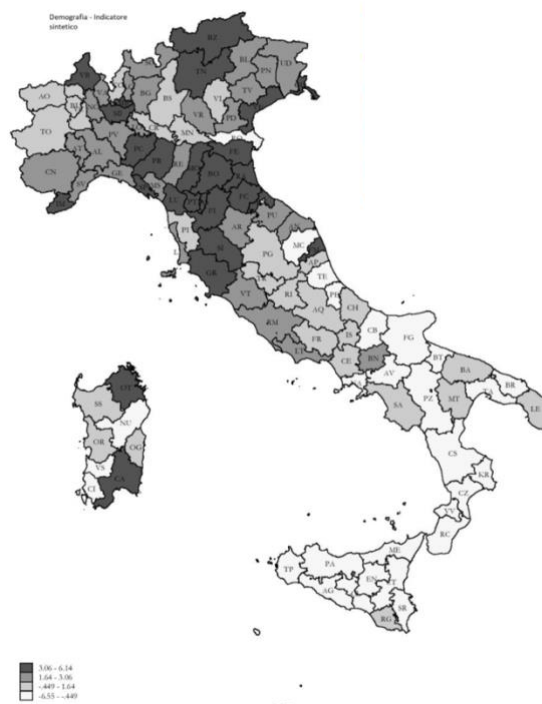
The Capital city of Rome instead is a «full» province, but it is not well-connected with its surrounding area. In the *Mezzogiorno*, there are no axes and no triangles. The infrastructural apparatus is not properly connecting appropriately the provinces, but it is restricted to the centre-periphery infrastructure. Thus, when referring to “physical” remoteness, this map can be useful for explaining the infrastructural isolation of «empty» provinces, particularly the ones located in Sicily, Sardinia (thus, the island), and the inner areas of the Central and Southern Apennine.

### ***Demographic dimension***

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<sup>75</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.



**Fig. 10.** Map of the «full» and the «empty» by the demographic level of analysis<sup>77</sup>.

The demographic evaluation of the Italian territory has been pursued through the comparison of the statistics between the number of residents of a specific area and the percentage of foreigners. Additionally, the data collected also consider the numbers of college graduates in the areas and the resident's life expectancy.

Figure 10 shows the map with results that the majority of the «full» provinces are distributed in the Northern region of the peninsula (apart from the Rovigo and the Massa Carrara provinces), while in the Southern regions, the main cities display an «empty» score (only Benevento, in Campania, is almost-full). In Sardinia, there is a full/empty areas alternation resulting from the high life expectancy rate in Cagliari and the greater tourist flow rate of Olbia-Tempio.

Indeed, Trieste, Prato, Milan, Bolzano and Parma are the first five provinces with a higher «full<sup>78</sup>» character, showing a good score in terms of migration incidence, the weight of foreign residents, number of the college graduates between 25 and 39 years old and the residents' life expectancy.

<sup>77</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, p.33.

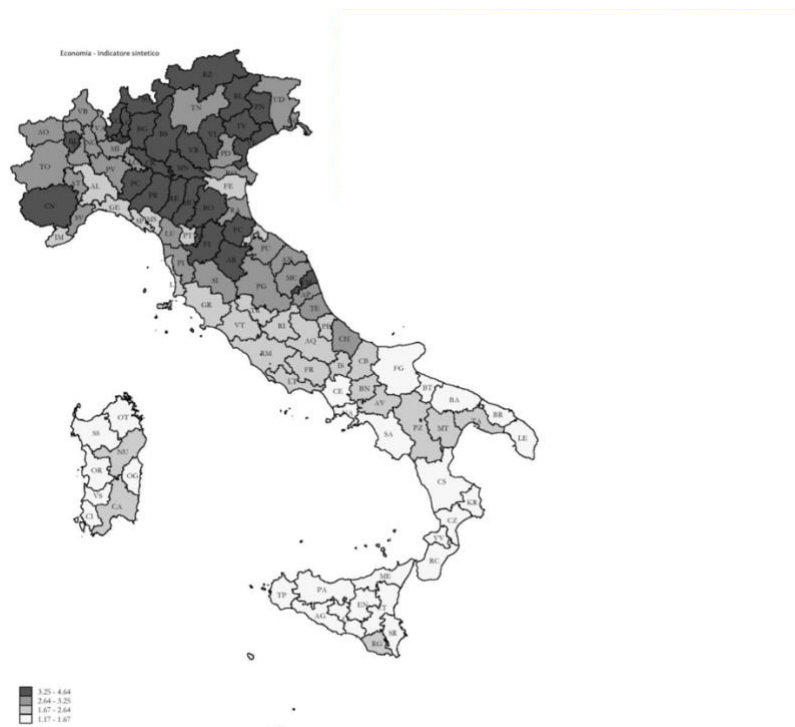
<sup>78</sup> Ivi, p.35.



On the other hand, the five «emptiest» provinces are all located in Sicily: Caltanissetta, Enna, Palermo, Agrigento and Messina<sup>79</sup>.

The differences in terms of demographic incidence between the Italian provinces is dramatic. Life expectancy age result for Rimini, Trento and Treviso's inhabitants is 3,5 years higher than the outcome of the Naples province; child mortality result in the area of Terni, Potenza and Messina is ten times higher than in Pistoia; This outcome is connected to the health caring services of the area, which can be linked to the quality of the infrastructure as well as the distance from the nearest hospital; the percentage of college graduates citizen under 40s in Bologna, Florence, Trieste and Milan is twice higher than in Imperia and the Barletta-Andria-Trani zone; Indeed, this evaluation gives a portray of the labour market as well as the education services provided by the provinces. Indeed, as it will be then analysed, a low education offer and a weak labour market can negatively impact on the population composition of a territory. In fact, the central and the southern part of Italy, especially the Apennine area demonstrates worrying demographic sign.

### ***Economic dimension***



<sup>79</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p.36.

**Fig. 11.** Map of the «full» and the «empty» by the economic level of analysis<sup>80</sup>.

Figure 11 shows the map displaying the economic<sup>81</sup> dimension among the different areas of the Italian peninsula and clearly reflects the economic transformation that the Italian productive sector underwent from the unification of the country until the present days. Indeed, the economic picture of the peninsula shows a dramatic gap between the North and the South.

The Centre and North-East triangle of Arezzo, Como and Bolzano absorbs almost 40% of the national income<sup>82</sup>. Amongst the five provinces with the strongest economy, four are placed in the North-East region (Bolzano, Modena, Treviso and Belluno), while in the North-West, Lecco distinguishes itself for its productive sector. The five economically weakest areas are all located in the South: three are in Calabria (Crotone, Reggio Calabria and Cosenza) and two in Sicily (Agrigento and Palermo). Indeed, the whole South (islands included) displays an «empty» score.

The employment rate of the «full» areas reaches 68%, which is 25 points higher than the value acquired by the empty regions. The unemployment percentage scores a medium of 7%<sup>83</sup> against the 21% of the empty areas (Crotone employment rate reaches a dramatic 28%). For the younger cluster, one in two inhabitants of an «empty» area cannot find a job, and this outcome is reflected in the Neet results (36% against the 15% of the full areas<sup>84</sup>).

Lastly, the GDP per capita is twice in the «full» provinces that of the empty ones (30 000 against 16 000), while the industrialization rate is five times higher in the first group than in the latter.

### ***Social dimension***

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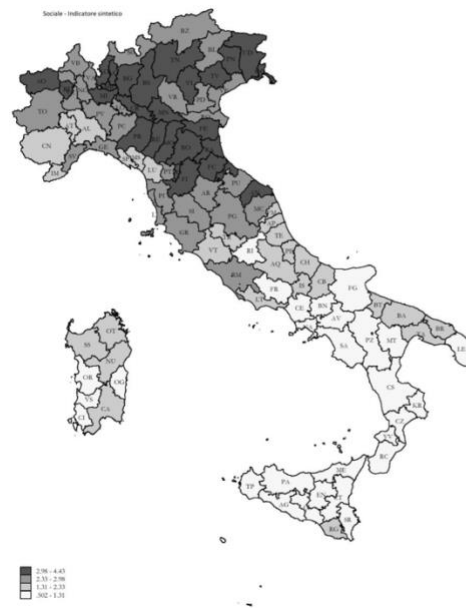
<sup>80</sup> Ivi, p.38.

<sup>81</sup> The synthetic indicator takes into account the GDP pro capite and other labor market variables such as the employment rate, the unemployment rate and the Neet value (youngsters who do not work or study.)

<sup>82</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p.38.

<sup>83</sup> Oscillating between the 3,7% of Bolzano and the 9% of Arezzo.

<sup>84</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. pp. 41.



**Fig. 12.** Map of the «full» and the «empty» by the social level of analysis 85.

The social dimension is configured in Figure 12 through the analysis of the social services provision for each specific province.<sup>86</sup>

This representation is not dissimilar from the results achieved by the economic dimension map. In fact, the comparison of the two Figures offers the possibility of stating a correspondence between the economic wellness factor and the offer and fruition of essential services. The social dimension is relevant vis-à-vis the equal opportunity consideration and, thus the full enjoyment of the citizenship right.

Indeed, more than 90% of the municipalities located in the North of the peninsula offer child-caring services, while the «almost-empty» areas suffer a gap of 30 percentage points below the *Settentrione* medium rate and only 30% of the «empty» municipalities provide for infant assistance<sup>87</sup>. In fact, the number of children from zero to three years old who enjoy this service is 30% in Bologna, while the medium value in the empty regions is of 4%. In this

<sup>85</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli, p. 43.

<sup>86</sup> Indeed, the analysis has taken into account the territorial diffusion of child-care structures, the quality of the provision of electricity, the occupational safety, the capacity of integrating foreigners approximated by the capacity of acquiring the Italian citizenship.

case, the equal opportunity reflection means a likely difference in the interaction aptitudes and in socialization skills between the children of the different regions of the peninsula.

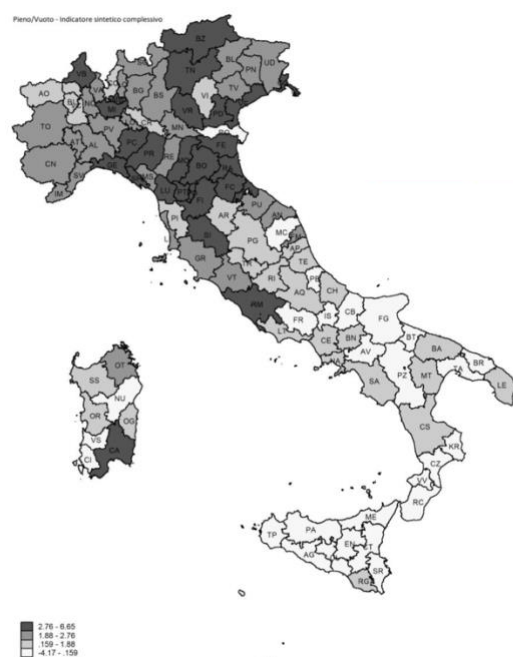
Regarding the interruption of electricity provision, it is three times more frequent in empty regions than in the full ones, while the incidence of workplace accident is 2,4% in the «empty» areas and of 1% in the «full» ones<sup>88</sup>.

The chances for a foreigner to acquire the Italian citizenship is three times higher in the Northern regions than in the South of the peninsula<sup>89</sup>.

The majority of the «full» provinces are located in Emilia-Romagna, in addition to Florence, Prato and Milan. The five provinces with the higher score are relatively small cities like Gorizia, Trieste, Trento and Aosta, together with Bologna, which is famous for its *avantgarde* position in social services provision<sup>90</sup>.

From Rome moving to the South of the peninsula, there are no «full» regions, the five with the worst score are Caserta, Benevento, Vibo Valentia, Crotone and Cosenza.

## Synthesis



**Fig. 13.** Synthetic indicator of the «full» and the «empty»

<sup>88</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. pp. 44.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*.

The synthetic indicator in Figure 13 builds on the data collected through the analysis of the four dimensions discussed above. The results show that more than 20 million Italian citizens (38% of the whole population) live in the «full» Italy, while 11 million (18%) live in the «empty» Italy. Therefore, the majority of the population lives in the «intermediate» areas<sup>91</sup>. The North-East part of the peninsula has a higher score of population density due to the economic opportunities and the provision of social services. The North-West shows a more variegated picture vis-à-vis its counterpart. There only Milan and Monza-Brianza are considered «full» provinces.

The central part of the peninsula is dis-homogeneous in terms of the synthetic indicator. Tuscany is almost entirely «full» as opposed to the Marche region which sees one of its main own «empty» (Macerata). In Lazio, only Rome is considered a «full» province, while the other provinces display a «half/full» pattern.

Despite the presence of main cities such as Napoli, Palermo and Reggio Calabria, the *Meridione* is completely «empty». Instead, the Sardinia region displays an alternation between «full» and «empty» areas.

It clearly appears that all the areas located on the Apennine mountain range, from Arezzo to Reggio Calabria, are «empty». The low outcomes are a consequence of the unsatisfactory and deficient governance of those areas for what concerns the provision of essential services; thus, the unsatisfactory administration contributes to the demographic exodus and therefore the weaknesses of the economic structure.

The Northern regions have enjoyed the weight of the new young foreigner cohorts that have restored their birth rate trend<sup>92</sup>, while the Southern areas suffer from a clear trend of population decline.

## 2.3 The “vicious circle” of the economic backwardness of rural areas.

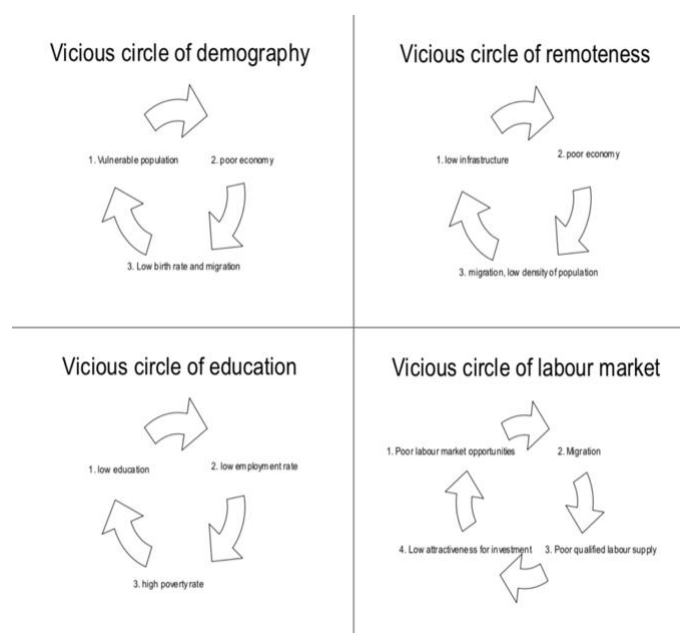
### *The “vicious circle” of depopulation*

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<sup>91</sup> Cersosimo D., Ferrara A. R., Nisticò, R., *L'Italia dei pieni e dei vuoti* in De Rossi, A., Molino, P., Bussone, M., Lombardo, G., & Breusa, D. (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> *Ivi*, p. 31.

To understand the general triggers of the depopulation phenomenon, it is necessary to introduce the “vicious circle” notion. It refers to the unstoppable regeneration of the main causes of rural marginalization. The European Commission Report on rural poverty<sup>93</sup> defines 4 different self-perpetuating cycles. Indeed, the “vicious circle” of depopulation is activated by: demography (i.e. depopulation, the exodus of the residents and the ageing of the population); remoteness (i.e. deficiency of infrastructure and basic services); lack of education facilities (i.e. lack of pre-school structures, illiteracy, *social immobility trap*<sup>94</sup>); labour market issues ( i.e. agriculture as the major employment source, seasonal workers issues, criminal organizations in new forms of *caporalato*)<sup>95</sup>.



**Fig. 14.** The “vicious circle” of rural depopulation<sup>96</sup>.

The “demographic circle” is fed by an unfavourable population equilibrium. In fact, one of the main impediments is the elderly composition of the rural communities and the general

<sup>93</sup> European Commission (2008). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Final Study Report*. Paola Bertolini, Marco Montanari, Vito Peragine. p. 71.

<sup>94</sup> The social immobility trap is particularly determining in rural areas and it manifests in terms of intergenerational income and occupation persistency and in regards of the educational attainment.

<sup>95</sup> European Commission (2008). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Final Study Report*. Paola Bertolini, Marco Montanari, Vito Peragine.

<sup>96</sup> *Ivi*, p.72.

low population density feature which unfavourably affect the local market; this condition is augmented by the low fertility rates and the out-flow migration of the young.

The second loop is the “remoteness” circle<sup>97</sup> which results from the deprived and abandoned infrastructures condition. The scarce attention and policy making towards the physical and organizational structure of rural areas negatively influences their economic performance, thus fostering out migration. This spiral is resulting from the dramatic demographic condition which evidently represents an impediment for the improvement of the local infrastructure. This cycle is the one most frequently observed as the stronger prompter of other cycles, even though the cycles are interconnected and feed on each other. Indeed, the vicious circle of depopulation does not follow a specific order, as each territory is influenced by its own vicious circle of depopulation.

The “education circle” is generated by the low educational levels of most of the rural population; illiteracy, school leavers, the absence of high schools are all variables which lower the employment rate and increase the poverty rate, thus reducing the chances for residents of receiving a high quality education<sup>98</sup>. The “labour market circle” begins with the scarcity of labour market opportunities for many rural area inhabitants. Additionally, many qualified inhabitants are forced to migrate to urban centres. Their outmigration aggravates the local labour force value; a low-skilled labour market discourages the investment of domestic or foreign firms in the area and the consequence is a further weakening of the local labour market<sup>99</sup>.

The mismatch between the supply and the demand of local services unavoidably affects the efficiency of both the public and the private sectors causing the poor maintenance of services which lowers the quality of life and the local living conditions<sup>100</sup>. Additionally, the outflow of skilled workers constrains the inclusion of rural shrinking regions inside the global economy. In fact, the rural areas’ economy is linked to the presence of smaller enterprises of a traditional type mostly in the tourism and the agricultural sectors<sup>101</sup>. Indeed, the outcomes show that the rural regions’ labour offer is dependent for 38% on small enterprises, while the

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<sup>97</sup> Ivi, p 70.

<sup>98</sup> Ivi, p 69.

<sup>99</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>100</sup> ESPON (2017). *Shrinking Rural Regions in Europe. Policy Brief*. Available at <https://www.espon.eu/rural-shrinking>

<sup>101</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS, pp.13

urban economy is only for 27%<sup>102</sup><sup>103</sup>. In fact, the loss of high-skilled workers negatively affects the local innovation of SMEs, thus reducing the modernization of SMEs. It follows that the rural areas' market demand focuses on low-skilled workers, including foreign immigrants and underpaid workers, a condition inevitably impacting on their chances of being socially included<sup>104</sup>.

### ***Local governance***

As mentioned, the local governance capacity of managing shrinking regions is often not satisfactory. At the European level the main reason is purported to be the contained public budgets able to sustain the provision of public services, while for the Italian case, especially in the Southern Regions, the incapacity of the local governance to act is due to the *familistic* environment and, consequently, to the reflection of social inequalities in the governing elite and in the institutions<sup>105</sup> <sup>106</sup>. Indeed, depopulation can eventually lead to reduced fiscal income, increasing the per capita cost of social spending. This condition must be analysed vis-à-vis the population composition of those regions. In fact, as analysed above, those areas have large numbers of elderly in need of health treatments that often cannot be properly assisted due to austerity measures such as the lack of doctors and qualified service personnel<sup>107</sup>. Indeed, the European Commission's Report on shrinking regions conceives the unsatisfactory governance of the thinning areas as one of the main triggers of the stagnating condition of underpopulated regions<sup>108</sup><sup>109</sup>. These deficiency factors have been worsened by the 2008 economic crisis<sup>110</sup> which has definitely hindered the capacity of providing social services by the local Mediterranean governance and has increased the need of proactive cohesion policy addressing shrinking regions.

### ***Lack of adequate transport connections***

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<sup>102</sup> Tietjen, A., & Jørgensen, G. (2016). Translating a wicked problem: A strategic planning approach to rural shrinkage in Denmark. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 154, 29-43.

<sup>103</sup> ESPON (2017). *Shrinking Rural Regions in Europe. Policy Brief*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>105</sup> Felice, E. (2017). *The socio-institutional divide. Explaining Italy's regional inequality over the long run*. Pag. 18.

<sup>106</sup> ESPON (2017). *Shrinking Rural Regions in Europe. Policy Brief*.

<sup>107</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS. p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> ESPON (2017). *Shrinking Rural Regions in Europe. Policy Brief*.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>110</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS.



Remoteness and social exclusion are due also to the deficiency of the public transports and the lack of connection between main cities, the semi-periphery areas and the nearby rural villages. Nevertheless, Articles 90 and 91 of the TFEU states that an adequate transport policy should pursue territorial cohesion<sup>111</sup>. This aim is revealed difficult to achieve as sparsely populated and underpopulated areas may be located at the border or at the periphery of the Member State, thus making it difficult to transport people and goods and thus requiring an expensive transport structure<sup>112</sup>. Moreover, the EU funding projects, such as the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) or the Motorways of the Sea (MoS), do not always connect underpopulated areas and the local public transport services<sup>113</sup><sup>114</sup>.

### ***Environment***

In the light of their geographical remoteness, underpopulated or sparsely populated areas are characterized by a unique natural ecosystem and ,consequently, a high ecological significance. Usually, those regions are rural, island or mountain areas, each unique for its exceptional local products and biodiversity. Nevertheless, their natural equilibrium status is very fragile because of vulnerability deriving from land erosion, loss of biodiversity and drought. Depopulation leads to land abandonment of agricultural land which may well lead to soil erosion and forest fires as the land is no longer taken care of by farmers. Additionally, those areas may be characterized by adverse weather conditions which augment the living cost for the remaining community. Lastly, it still remains unfulfilled the goal for rural areas to become ecologically self-sustainable through natural power sources<sup>115</sup>.

### ***Higher rates of poverty***

The EPRS briefing on EU demographic indicators reports that the risk of poverty<sup>116</sup> is highly determined by geographical reasons. Indeed, it states than the percentage of people risking

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<sup>111</sup> ESPON (2017). *Shrinking Rural Regions in Europe. Policy Brief.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem.*

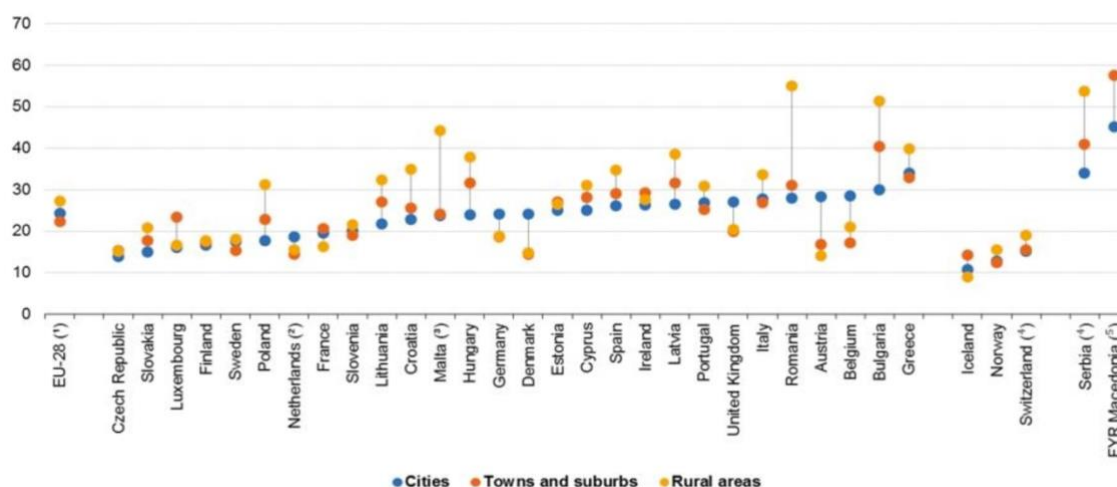
<sup>113</sup> This feature is particularly common in Eastern countries among their rural regions (i.e. Bulgaria, Poland and Romania).

<sup>114</sup> European Commission (2008). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Final Study Report.* Paola Bertolini, Marco Montanari, Vito Peragine.

<sup>115</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS.

<sup>116</sup> Eurostat defines the at-risk of poverty rate as “the share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set a 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income”.

poverty or social exclusion is higher in thinly populated areas, while it is reported to be lower in intermediate density and densely populated areas<sup>117</sup>.



**Fig. 15.** People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by degree of urbanisation, by country, 2014 (% of population). <sup>118</sup>

The graph in Figure 15 clearly shows that the majority of the EU Member States presenting a higher quantity of rural areas reports a high percentage of people at risk of poverty with respect to urban centres; indeed this analysis can be partially explained by the observation of a lower GDP per capita vis-a-vis urban centres<sup>119</sup>. Furthermore, the graph displays that the value of people at risk of poverty is higher in Eastern countries than in Western ones. Mainly, this gap results from the common difficulty of Eastern nations to develop and upgrade their agricultural sector; while the Western ones report a poverty and social marginalization risk for remote rural areas or in zones with accessibility issues<sup>120</sup>.

### ***Monoculture economies – economic stagnation***

According to academic literature<sup>121</sup>, the local market specialisation of sparsely and underpopulated regions is directed towards the primary sector<sup>122</sup>, the manufacturing sector,

<sup>117</sup> EPRS (2015). *EU demographic indicators. Briefing*. Delivoria and Giulio Sabbati

<sup>118</sup> Data source: Eurostat, 2014.

<sup>119</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). *Sparsely populated and under-populated areas*, briefing, EPRS.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>121</sup> Dubois, A., Roto, J. (2012). *Making the best of Europe's Sparsely Populated Areas*, Nordregio working paper.

<sup>122</sup> The primary sector is considered as agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing.

the tourist accommodations and the energy production<sup>123</sup>. Their monodirectional economy usually relies on one high-performing industry; therefore, their source of income is extremely susceptible to external variables and it is clearly influenced by the global economic trend (i.e. inflation, financial crises)<sup>124</sup>. For example, tourism is an economic sector which depends on the world economic state and on the geopolitical conditions of the moment. This condition places the remaining community at a risk, thus there is the need to diversify their economy and therefore create economies of scale. Additionally, their distance from the urban centres and the high cost of transporting goods do not allow the enjoyment of the city spill-over effect as many semi-periphery areas do<sup>125</sup>. Indeed, their agricultural sector is highly influenced and determined by the local climate conditions, by the local market dependency on the global market fluctuations and by the production diversification. Thus, small farmers struggle to be competitive inside the global market.<sup>126</sup>

### ***Unemployment – lack of professional development***

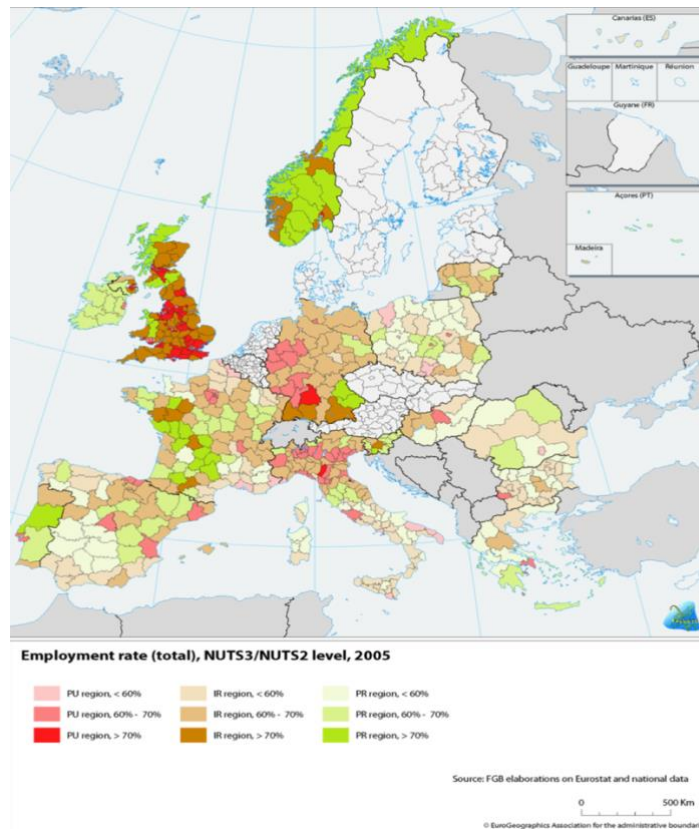
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<sup>123</sup> Dubois, A., Roto, J. (2012). *Making the best of Europe's Sparsely Populated Areas*, Nordregio working paper.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>125</sup> Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem*.



**Fig. 16.** Employment rate (total). NUTS2/NUTS3 level-2015<sup>127128</sup>.

Given the small size of underpopulated economies, the human capital of rural regions is commonly forced to find occupational opportunities in urban centres. Nevertheless, Figure 16 demonstrate that there are various “predominantly rural” (PR) regions that successfully achieve a high employment score. These PRs are mostly located in Germany, France, Poland and Portugal.

Moreover, the lack of progress in ICT fields is an adverse factor for the stimulation of the local economy and for the improvement of the labour market. Thus, in order to effectively achieve ICT development, it is essential to cultivate and to adapt the skills of the local labour force to the new global market needs by diminishing the technological gap between rural and urban areas<sup>129</sup>.

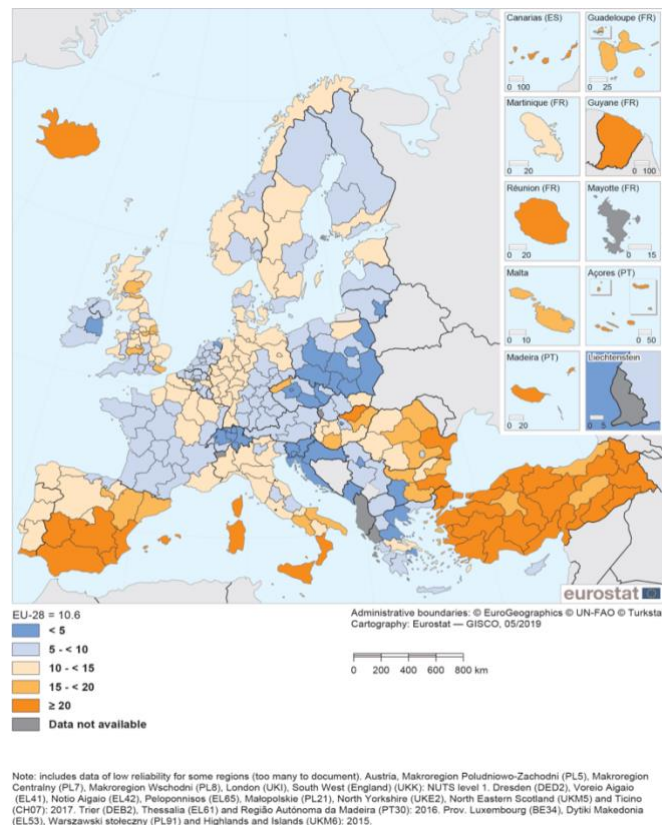
<sup>127</sup> The figure nominates the “predominantly urban” regions with the abbreviation “PU”; “intermediate regions” as IR; and “predominantly rural” regions with “PR”.

<sup>128</sup> European Commission (2008). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Final Study Report*. Paola Bertolini, Marco Montanari, Vito Peragine.

<sup>129</sup> Ivi, p. 63.

## Education

Finally, the development of the labour market and the rural economy is highly dependent on the average education attainment of the rural younger cluster. In fact, as Figure 17 shows, the rate of school leavers in peripheral areas<sup>130</sup> results to be tremendously high.<sup>131</sup>



**Fig. 17.** Early leavers from education and training, 2018. (% of people between aged between 18-24 years, by NUTS 3 region)<sup>132</sup>.

Figure 17 displays the gap between rural and cities by the number of early leavers from education and training. School attendance is considered fundamental for redeeming an unequal social and family background. Therefore, the outcomes displayed by the map demonstrate a high inter-generational transmission of poverty and exclusion in rural regions. Moreover, as many of the pupils who have to attend school commute every day and given

<sup>130</sup>Particularly in Southern Europe.

<sup>131</sup>Margaras, V. (2016). Sparsely populated and under-populated areas, briefing, EPRS,.

<sup>132</sup>Source: Eurostat, 2018.

the decline in the number of rural schools<sup>133</sup>, primary and secondary institutes are currently less accessible both in terms of distance and of cost for their families.

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<sup>133</sup> European Commission (2008). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas. Final Study Report*. Paola Bertolini, Marco Montanari, Vito Peragine, p. 65.

## **Chapter III:**

### **The role of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Inner Periphery Strategy to target the depopulation issue.**

Addressing the second research question, the purpose of this chapter is twofold: on the one hand it aims to portray the Common Agricultural Policy's effects on rural communities and, on the other, to depict the strategies currently in place for the development of inner territories. Firstly, it will be briefly outlined the evolution and the consequences of the Common Agricultural Policy. Indeed, the CAP's path will be summoned through an historical and chronological evolution of its reforms from the 1957 Rome Treaty until the present days. Therefore, a conceptual and theoretical description of the rural development strategy under this policy will be given.

The second paragraph firstly concentrates on the birth of the integrated approach as the main intervention logic for the pursuit of rural development. Various documents will be analyzed as the 1987 documents for "the future for rural society", the Cork's conferences of 1997 and 2016 and the Salisbury meeting of 2003. Lastly, the Inner Periphery Strategy will be described in concert with other rural development tools such as the LEADER project and the Community-led local development (CLLD). The Inner Periphery Strategy will be portrayed through the analysis of the various areas delineated by the plan and the general objectives that must be pursued by each Member States. Thus, the implementing instruments will be outlined, in particular the achievements of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) and their effective action on the territory. Also, it will be described one LAG case which has been at work since 1997 on the neo-Greek-speaking area of *Bovesia*, in the Calabria Region, and its efficient action for fostering the rural development of the territory through the valorization of its distinctive local features.

#### **3.1 The evolution of CAP and of the rural development pillar and their impact on EU rural communities.**

The European Common Agricultural Policy is perceived as a strategy employed for modernizing and for protecting European farmers against the internal and external threats of

the globalized and consumption based industrial economy. This paragraph's purpose is to inquire whether the CAP, in its early stages, produced results augmenting the disparities between small-scale and big-scale farmers, therefore worsening the economic development of the rural environment. Then, through a brief historical summary of the CAP evolution, an outline will be given of the changes and results achieved by the introduction of the rural development pillar in the protection of small-size farmers.

### *3.1.1. The 1960's: the CAP artificial market as an instrument for consolidating the new-born European productivity.*

The path of the Common Agricultural Policy dates back to the 1957 Rome Treaty, when the then European Economic Community was formally instituted. Article 3 of the constituent agreement can be conceived as a clear portrait of the major necessities which were vital for the survival of Europe after the two World Wars.

Indeed, the article advocates the need to increase productivity and ensure a stable food security supply after the almost total destruction of the European primary industry. Therefore, the main economic strategy had to foresee two tracks: on the one hand, it was necessary to include farmers into the new-born welfare state ideal, while on the other, the countryside's population rate had to be preserved in such a way as not to affect market demand

1. The then new Europe was predominantly composed by a rural society occupied in agricultural jobs. This consideration led to another concern about the farming sector: the need to protect farmers' income so as to foster the overall European economy<sup>2</sup>.

Indeed, Article 33 (ex. Art. 39 EEC) of the Rome Treaty stipulates the five objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy for "the six"<sup>3</sup> founding Member States:

- i. increasing agricultural production through the promotion of technical progress and through the guarantee of the rational development of agricultural goods and the optimum utilization of the inputs;
- ii. guarantying a stable fair living standard for the farming community, in particular by increasing farmers individual earnings;

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<sup>1</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 'Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform' in *ibid.* p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ivi* p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> The original signatories: France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.



- iii. stabilizing the market;
- iv. assuring the availability of supplies;
- v. safeguarding supplies at reasonable prices in order to be easily reachable by consumers.<sup>4</sup>

The accomplishment of these purposes required the employment of a complex, but simultaneously indispensable, market mechanism that would have distorted the natural equilibrium of the market itself. In fact, the agricultural policy was sustained by a price support strategy and a direct income payments mechanisms<sup>5</sup>.

The regulatory approach applied by the European agricultural sector during the sixties is contemplated as a consequence of the policy attitude which contradistinguished the era of the earlier decades of the twentieth century<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, this type of governance was engaged from the 1929 Great Depression onwards<sup>7</sup>, but it crushed with the 1957 European context of communitarian free market spirit and of democratic political attitude. As a consequence, the competitive and the social natures of the farming sector strategy were acting like two faces of the same medal without being able to coordinate among themselves.

The EEC-wide common “target price”, often more than twice the world values, was established for the basic farm products in order to secure farmers’ income<sup>8</sup>. This *manoeuvre* was combined with a “variable levies” strategy which was applied to foodstuffs of non-member countries to realm the fixed prices. Additionally, if a commodity’s price market fell below the twenty percent of the established target price, the national intervention agency would have acted as a “stock guarantee” by purchasing all the unsold production through falsely removing the supply and therefore preventing a further fell of the price<sup>10</sup>. Consequently, these institutional prices were attached to the Common Organization for Institutional Markets (COM).<sup>11</sup> Each of the values regulated a productive sector through the artificial price mechanism, the storage arrangements and the control of the imports by facilitating exports through subsidies appliance<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 ‘Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform’ in *ibid.* p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ivi* p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>10</sup> Stead, D. (2007). “Common Agricultural Policy”. EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples.

<sup>11</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L’evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant’anni di adattamento. Online publication. Agrireregioneuropa, 13.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 ‘Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform’ in *ibid.* p. 169.

The first effective building block of the European agricultural policy was the 1962 common market organization on cereals which also signed the beginning of the long-lasting international dispute between the United States and the EU on the CAP settings. The quarrel was due to the exemption of agricultural import quotas<sup>13</sup> from the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT).

Despite the achievements of the quantitative agricultural results on the production side, the price mechanism and the distortion of the market were to the advantage of industrial scale farmers at the expenses of the smaller-size ones since the big cultivator industry was induced by the price mechanism to assume a rent-seeking logic instead of a profit-making one by spasmodically overproducing<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, the financial allocation was principally absorbed by the pricey market intervention and the sustainment of the price arrangement instead of being addressed to backing farmer structures which had an expense on the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund of only 5% of the whole CAP amount<sup>15</sup>.

### *3.1.2. the 1970s: the consequences of the CAP on the agricultural market and on rural areas*

As mentioned, the five objectives stated in Article 39 were eventually contradictory in their feasible application through the price mechanism. Indeed, as the market logic was not applied, the EEC countries bounced from a historical stage of food scarcity to an overproduction phase of agricultural goods which structurally exceeded the supply. Thus, the Community had to sustain higher costs both due to the fixed prices mechanism, the farmers' income sustainment apparatus and also due to the expenditures stemming from the reallocation of exceeded goods<sup>16</sup>.

Furthermore, the principal deleterious effect attributed to the Common Agricultural Policy is its tendency to advantage big agricultural farmers by pumping their production of goods at the detriment of the rural environment. The agricultural policy rapidly transformed the traditional lifestyle and methods of production of small farmers communities for the aim of boosting the industrial results of agricultural foodstuff<sup>17</sup>. Over time, immoderate wastage of

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<sup>13</sup> Ivi, p. 170.

<sup>14</sup> Ivi, p. 169.

<sup>15</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregioneuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>16</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 'Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform' in *ibid.* p. 171.

petrochemicals, environmentally damaging techniques and inputs used to foster production impacted negatively on the lives of mountain farmers, fostering the inevitable rural exodus in favor of the more gainful industrial agricultural productions<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, small farmers endured their occupation mainly through the sustainment derived from others economic activities and through welfare payments<sup>19</sup>. An example of the CAP side-effects is the Belgian farmers wage case: during the seventies the income of a worker employed in the agriculture field amounted to 74% percent of the salary of a worker employed in another sector<sup>20</sup>.

Consequently, the 1968 Mansholt memorandum can be conceived as the first warning signal in regards of the CAP side-effects. It proposed a different intervention strategy which obeyed the spirit of “production” of those years. In fact, the document suggested policies addressing the modernization of farmers’ structures having an eye for the peculiarities and the particular nature of each region and territory<sup>21</sup>. Additionally, the memorandum’s recommendations proposed the application of economic measures and occupational policies which would have assisted disadvantaged and less-densely populated rural areas which were experiencing population exodus<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, the 1983 budget closure revealed the failure of the effectiveness of the memorandum. The disregarding of its implementation was a consequence of the negligence manifested from both, the European and the national levels of the administration: the former was responsible for the inadequate and insufficient resources allocated to the cause, and, the latter were incompetent in the effective application of the memorandum in those weak rural areas; therefore, demonstrating the urgency of applying a bottom-up and a place-based approach<sup>23</sup>.

### *3.1.3. The 1980s: the necessity to contain the costs*

The Seventies and the Eighties were decades of crisis for the Common Agricultural Policy as the States<sup>24</sup> not benefitting from the strategy began to question whether the expenditure

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<sup>18</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L’evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant’anni di adattamento. Online publication. Agriregioneuropa, 13.

<sup>19</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 ‘Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform’ in *ibid.* p. 171

<sup>20</sup> *Ivi*, p. 168.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. Agriregioneuropa, 12, 65-69.

<sup>23</sup> De Filippis. Storti (2001), Le politiche di sviluppo rurale nell’Unione Europea: un secondo pilastro tutto da inventare, Sviluppo Locale, IX, 19, 2001

<sup>24</sup> UK is an example. The English farming sector was composed by few small agricultural industries which could not benefit from the sustainment on production of the CAP (Wallace, 2005).

allocated for the policy disproportionately burdened the communitarian budget. Moreover, the internal agricultural market had to change its functional logic in order to equally allocate the resources and to ensure a fair competitive relationship with non- EU markets. Indeed, Brussels pushed for a neo-liberal attitude towards the policy<sup>25</sup>, therefore modifying the initial regulatory method, given that CAP disbursement accounted for as much as 70% of the European budget<sup>26</sup>.

Despite the absence of a factual reform on the price rule structure, the Community actuated an adjustment on the production side of the agricultural policy through the introduction of milk quotas in 1984<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, in 1988, the principle of co-responsibility of producers was partially established. Its scope was to distribute the burden of the overproduction costs of foodstuffs surplus between the producers and the EU<sup>28</sup>.

Consequently, the reformed European agricultural strategy introduced the budgetary stabilizer<sup>29</sup> and it recognized the limitation of guarantees and quotas on the majority of farming goods such as milk, sugar, vineyards, tomatoes and tobaccos<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless, the single market was meant to start in 1993<sup>31</sup> and the costs of CAP was still high despite the attempted adjustments in the budget allocation.

Additionally, in 1986 the disparities among European regions were manifestly surfacing due to the accession of Portugal and Spain among the Member States. Therefore, the Community comprehended the need to institute an integrated policy aimed at smoothing the inequalities among Members States through the employment of a joint action of the different funds. Indeed, the Integrated Mediterranean Programs of 1985 (IMPs, Reg. 2088/85) were a successful pioneer for the new Cohesion Policy era. The IMPs were planned as multiannual programs which would have assisted the weaker and traditional Mediterranean agricultures to bear the negative effect of the accession of the two new members<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregionieuropa*, 12, 65-69.

Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 'Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform' in *ibid.* p. 171

<sup>27</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregionieuropa*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 'Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform' in *ibid.* p. 171

<sup>29</sup> Every time the communitarian production would have raised the guarantee quantities, the budgetary stabilizer would have lowered the prices in the following years.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> The Single European Act (SEA), approved by the heads of the State, was implemented as of 1 July 1987 . Indeed, the Act aimed to complete the European single market, therefore allowing the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital, by 1 January 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregionieuropa*, 12, 65-69.

Thanks to the Single European Act of 1986 and to the 1988 Structural Funds reform, Cohesion policies were officially intended to alter their previous intervention logic, from a sectoral to an integrated approach in the settling of the programs. Indeed, the new paradigm was especially designated to rural areas which were then defined as less-densely populated areas suffering from limited differentiated economy and from the ageing of the remaining population<sup>33</sup>. In the planned projects, the three key elements for the enhancement of a general rural policy implementation approach were:

- a) the need to allocate resources for the improvement and the renovation of the agricultural structures and machines;
- b) the preservation of the peculiarities of each farming sector; and
- c) the exigence of merging the resources of the different funds and not relying only on the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund (EAGGF)<sup>34</sup>.

Additionally, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the CAP had to manage the development of the traditional agriculture of the East-central Europe countries<sup>35</sup>. This purpose unavoidably imposed additional funds to be allocated to the agricultural sector. Their particular transitional stage and their dissimilar market setting implied considerable efforts to ensure a gradual conversion of their planned economy to a single and competitive market system. The enlargement would have indeed implied higher costs for the old Members States when trying to aid financing those nations<sup>36</sup>.

Regarding the international policy showground, in 1986 the last act of the Uruguay Round<sup>37</sup> began. Many countries as the United States, accused the Community of assuming a protectionist attitude towards its agricultural products and towards the farming market which was damaging the natural trading exchanges<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregioneuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> The Uruguay round was the 8<sup>th</sup> multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) in the GATT framework. The contracting parties were 123 countries which met from 1986 to 1993 to negotiate on agricultural subsidies, foreign investment, intellectual property and to begin the process of opening trade in banking and insurance services (WTO website).

<sup>38</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.

### *3.1.4 The 1990s: the MacSharry reform.*

The previous adjustments on the CAP setting did not unravel the two knots of the scarce competitiveness position of the Community inside the GATT framework and the CAP's sizeable expenditure on the budget. The conclusion of the Uruguay round became reachable merely thanks to the 1992 reforms of Ray MacSharry, the then Commissioner for Agriculture<sup>39</sup>. The new modifications aimed at changing the institutional price logic by lowering the level of European guarantee prices in order to ensure converge between those values and the ones of the globalized market so as to enhance higher competitiveness in the world of foodstuff trading.<sup>40</sup>

As for the side effects of the reform on the income sustainment objective, a compensatory mechanism was established. Its purpose was to reimburse the loss of farmers' income due to the lowering of the market prices (set-aside)<sup>41</sup>. In fact, the procedure of "almost decoupling" redefined the sustainment mechanism as it shifted from a price-based approach to an income-based one<sup>42</sup>.

Nevertheless, the green light on the overproduction of the previous three decades had fostered a consequential wastage of petrochemicals in the cultivation of the fields<sup>43</sup>. The recognition of the environmentally damaging attitude of the communitarian large farming sector steered the 1991 first European regulation on biologic agriculture<sup>44</sup>. Additionally, the new environmental concern pressed for more attention and for the enforcement of rural development policies<sup>45</sup>.

### *3.1.5 Agenda 2000: the common agricultural policy of the new millennium.*

Despite the forty years of CAP control, its structure was still a highly debated topic. The high costs for the EU budget, the East-enlargement consequences and the new WTO negotiations led to the decision to re-define the principles and the measures of the Common Agricultural Policy<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Wallace and Wallace (2005), ch. 7 'Agricultural Policy: Constrained Reform' in *ibid.* p.162

<sup>40</sup> i.e. the cereal prices were lowered of the 29%

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>42</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>44</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregioneuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem.*

Indeed, the Agenda 2000 strategy fostered the concept of multifunctionality of the various economic sectors through the application of the integrated approach to policy programming. Moreover, the new-millennium plan promoted the European agricultural model as an ideal type and a global example of the environmentally caring production of quality foodstuff<sup>47</sup>. The respect of the sustainability principle consists in valuating extra-economic, and therefore social, variables which influence the farmers' milieu, such as the territory, the environment and the society. Indeed, the Agenda 2000 added the second pillar of "rural development" to the CAP structure<sup>48</sup> which acquired a new autonomy in regard to the other Cohesion policies, being implemented with separate programs compared to the other Structural Funds<sup>49</sup>. Thus, from the beginning of the new millennium, the paradigm which guides the communitarian agricultural sector has focused on the relevance of the quality over the quantity of the products<sup>50</sup>. Additionally, more commitment is directed towards the role of small farmers in the emerging and in the enhancement of rural communities, in particular of the villages located in mountainous and in remote territories<sup>51</sup>.

### *3.1.6. The Fischler reform.*

Nevertheless, the decoupling was still not entirely effective as the European Union still bore part of the unsold production.

In 2003, the then Commissioner for Agriculture Franz Fischler presented a proposal to reorganize the CAP tools. Indeed, one of the most remarkable adjustments was the refinement of the decoupling procedure through the norm of the producer's independent sustainment of agricultural goods surplus<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, the reform instituted the farmers responsibility over their own production with the aim of limiting market distortions and of preserving their income without losing the advantages deriving from CAP. Furthermore, the reform was also revolutionary in its reach because of its social and environment-caring commitment. Indeed, it established the "conditionality obligation", namely the respect of the criteria of the

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> Today, the Common Agricultural Policy is still composed by two pillars: the first regarding the functioning of the market and the respect of the competition principle, and the second which is the commitment to foster rural development (Wallace, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Mantino, A. (2013). La programmazione dello sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: il position paper e l'accordo di partenariato. Online publication Agriregioneuropa, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. Agriregioneuropa, 13.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*.

environmental safety, food security, wellness and animals health and of good agronomics conditions for the soil. Thus, the penalty for the violation of this responsibility consists in the return of part or of the total of the direct payments amount deriving from the CAP subsidies<sup>53</sup>. Additionally, the *consideranda* of the 2003 Fisher regulation on CAP stated that the rural development strategy had to deal with the managing of the territory and the quality of life in those areas particularly interested by the depopulation phenomenon and fight the regression of the peri-urban rural areas suffering from the expansion of the urban centers<sup>54</sup>.

### *3.1.7. The 2007-2013 period and the CAP 2014-2020.*

In the 2007-2013 budgetary period, the division and the separation between the rural development strategies with the other Cohesion policies was remarked by the presence of two different strategic documents for their respective implementation: the National Strategic Framework Plan (NSFP) for the Cohesion policies, and the National Strategy Plan (NSP) for the rural development field<sup>55</sup>. Additionally, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development was formally instituted in 2007.

The commitment to the rural development objective was emphasized and clearly expressed again in the Europe 2020 strategy, covering the period 2014-2020. Definitely, the goal of reducing the extreme poverty rate and the environmental responsiveness are two objectives that, in concert with the smart specialization approach, can be integrated in the more general commitment for rural improvement. From this current period, the measures of the rural development are applicable to all the regions of the European Union and they must be converted inside the Member States' framework under a classification of areas typologies which is functional to the context and the priorities of the territory<sup>56</sup>. Indeed, the new rural development program for the 2014-2020 period continues in the logic of the multiannual programming with the news deriving from the innovation subject through the Operational Groups of the European Partnership for Innovation<sup>57</sup>. In the current European programming period, rural development is funded by the significant 24% of the whole amount dedicated to

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<sup>53</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>55</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregioneuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>56</sup> Mantino, A. (2013). La programmazione dello sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: il position paper e l'accordo di partenariato. Online publication *Agriregioneuropa*, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Frascarelli, A. (2017). L'evoluzione della Pac e le imprese agricole: sessant'anni di adattamento. Online publication. *Agriregioneuropa*, 13.



the CAP (95,5 billion of euros)<sup>58</sup>. Additionally, a new central role is played by the Community-led local developments<sup>59</sup> (CILD) which supports the formation of local partnerships and the realization of integrated development programs in the rural areas of the Union<sup>60</sup>.

### 3.1.8. Post- 2020 CAP: what could be

For what concerns the post-2020 CAP negotiations which are underway, many issues arise from the costs linked to the Brexit resolution<sup>61</sup>. The Communication of the Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2021-2027 period preliminarily exposes in the draft that the 28,5 % of the total budget of UE 27 are directed to CAP, which is 5 percentage point below the previous programming period of 2014-2020<sup>62</sup>. This suggested change is mainly attributed to the decision of reducing the resources for rural development, therefore the second pillar, as the former EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan<sup>63</sup> declared the intent of safeguarding the direct payment mechanism<sup>64</sup> in order to “*ensure farmers’ income and leave smallholders unaffected*”<sup>65</sup>. Such a justification is mainly driven by the reliance of the former Juncker Commission to increase the co-financing rates<sup>66</sup> to be employed in the implementation of the rural development pillar as for the need to modernize farm structures. If this proposal is adopted the new Commission the gap concerning the rural development budget would be a 10% which to be filled by the Member States’ resources.

Additionally, the former Juncker Commission has proposed a model constructed on the prediction of the outputs and on a new risk management tool in order “to address crises generated by unforeseeable developments in international markets or by specific shocks to the agricultural sector following actions undertaken by countries outside EU”<sup>67</sup>.

Beyond this brief explanation of the CAP resources and the EU budget, the main change in the CAP package for the 2021-2027 financial plan could be the new regulation of the

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<sup>58</sup> Mantino, A. (2013). La programmazione dello sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: il position paper e l’accordo di partenariato. Online publication Agiregionieuropa, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Paragraph 3.3.4 pag.76.

<sup>60</sup> Mantino, A. (2013). La programmazione dello sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: il position paper e l’accordo di partenariato. Online publication Agiregionieuropa, 9.

<sup>61</sup> D’Andrea, M. R. P. Il punto sulla riforma della Pac dopo il 2020.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>63</sup> The current Commissioner for Agriculture is Janusz Wojciechowski which was elected in December 2019.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> Euractive (2018), “Commission throws the ball to EU states on Cap rural development, prioritises direct payments”

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*.

Strategic Plan which assimilates the measures of the first and the second pillar<sup>68</sup>. If adopted, the new regulations imply that each Member State must elaborate a Strategic Plan which explains the specific objectives to pursue and the tools needed for their implementation.

Essentially the proposed CAP package can be summed up in five points:

1. *A new governance*, defined by the new strategic plans;
2. *A new method*, which means the shift of the focus from compliance, namely the respect of the rules by the Member States, to performance, which signifies the attention to the results that the Members States are capable to achieve after the implementation of the strategy;
3. *A higher subsidiarity* and therefore higher consideration of local specificities through the identification of each need;
4. The simplification and the streamlining of the administrative workload;
5. *An environmentally dedicated ring-fencing*: namely reserved funds dedicated exclusively to the environment and the climate change purposes linked to the trackability of the expenses. This *manoeuvre* would guarantee that at least the 30% of the EAGDF expense be devoted to environmental issues, plus a 40% of the whole expenses of the CAP targeting greener purposes<sup>69</sup>.

Additionally, it is important to underline that in 2017 the Commission published a new Communication regarding the implementation of the rural development objectives on the future of food quality and agriculture<sup>70</sup>. Thus, the Communication emphasizes the need to foster generational turnover in rural areas through the commitment of national and regional governments to facilitate the access to financial instruments for the young interested in working in rural areas. Also, the Communication emphasizes the importance of clean energy, circular economy and sustainable tourism<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> D'Andrea, M. R. P. (2019). Il punto sulla riforma della Pac dopo il 2020. *Agriregionieuropa* anno 15 n°56, Mar 2019. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/56/il-punto-sulla-riforma-della-pac-dopo-il-2020>

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> European Parliament. (2019). Note tematiche sull'Unione Europea. Online Publication. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/it/sheet/110/il-secondo-pilastro-della-pac-la-politica-di-sviluppo-rurale>

### 3.2 The Rural Development Pillar: theories and policy model.

In this paragraph, it is discussed the general objective of rural development in its multidisciplinary and integrated nature. Firstly, the paragraph deals with the birth of the “integrated approach” for a rural development strategy through the analysis of the “future for rural society” document, the two Cork assemblies of 1997 and of 2016 and the Salisbury conference of 2003. Then, it analyses the theoretical basis underlying the rural development approach and the reflection on policy formulation by emphasizing the role that regional representatives and local actors have in the formulation of the Partnership Agreement.

#### 3.2.1. *The integrated approach of the rural development pillar*

The birth of the integrated approach in the rural development field dates back to the “the future of the rural society”<sup>72</sup>, a document transmitted by the European Commission in 1988. It collected all the elements of the new communitarian policies and it introduced the notion of “integrated rural development”<sup>73</sup>. The document starts with an analysis of the transformation of the rural areas, specifically:

1. a high restructuring of the rural sector which has led to the decrease of the utilized agricultural surface and the reduction of the labor force due to the modernizing of the production processes;
2. an unconnected economic diversification in the agricultural production between the mountains and the valleys;
3. an inversion of the depopulation tendencies in rural regions, with the exception of Greece, the Italian *Mezzogiorno*, Spain, Portugal and the Massif Central of France.
4. The existence of interregional migration flows towards small urban centers, especially at the periphery of the Community<sup>74</sup>.

Indeed, the analysis summarized above continued with the identification of three different areas of action and differentiated solutions:

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<sup>72</sup> European Commission (1988). *The future of rural society*.

<sup>73</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Politiche rurali e disparità territoriali in Italia: una valutazione di impatto sulle aree interne. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. pag.17.

<sup>74</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Politiche rurali e disparità territoriali in Italia: una valutazione di impatto sulle aree interne. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. pag.17.

- a. *Areas under heavy anthropogenic and economic pressure*: it refers to rural areas surrounded by (or efficiently connected to) conurbations (*peri-urbans areas*). This cluster contains all the regions where the modernizing process of agriculture has deteriorated the local natural environment (pollution, destruction of the green spaces)<sup>75</sup>. Therefore, the objectives pursued by the policies must not focus on the acceleration of the local economic development, but on the protection of the environment<sup>76</sup>.
- b. *Areas where a rural decline is in place*: these zones usually suffer from regional out migration, inter regional migration from rural areas towards urban centers, weak production structures and scarce forms of income<sup>77</sup>. The action planned for those areas is directed towards local agricultural development in addition to the implementation of policies aimed at the creation of workplaces different from the classic agricultural ones in order to differentiate the local economy<sup>78</sup>.
- c. *Marginalized areas with poor transport connection (periphery)*: those zones suffer from high depopulation rates, land abandonment, limited possibility for fostering economic differentiation, absence of basic infrastructure<sup>79</sup>. The document states that the instruments capable of reactivating those areas should not tackle the agricultural sector only, but also other industries like craftsmanship, services offered to the population, the natural environment and the promotion of the cultural heritage.<sup>80</sup>

Apart from the intersectionality of the rural development purpose, another main step forward was the insert of structural and agricultural policies inside the strategies for regional development. Indeed, thanks to the first Delors package in 1988, the Structural Funds were firstly reformed. The new policy approach of integrated and multisectoral development sustained by the document was funded by the EEAG, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), and other financial instruments available like the European Investment Bank<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> In Italy, those areas can be identified in the *Pianura Padana* and in coastal areas.

<sup>76</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Politiche rurali e disparità territoriali in Italia: una valutazione di impatto sulle aree interne. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. pag.17.

<sup>77</sup> The Italian case of the *Mezzogiorno* area.

<sup>78</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Politiche rurali e disparità territoriali in Italia: una valutazione di impatto sulle aree interne. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. pag.18.

<sup>79</sup> Generally, those areas are located on the upland regions and the islands.

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>81</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Politiche rurali e disparità territoriali in Italia: una valutazione di impatto sulle aree interne. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. pag.19.

Additionally, two intergovernmental conferences which took places in Cork (1996)<sup>82</sup>, therefore during the discussion on the Agenda 2000, and in Salisbury (2003)<sup>83</sup>, during the elaboration of the Fisher reform, are the main pioneers of the integrated approach for fostering rural development. Indeed, they emphasized the need to adopt a multidisciplinary method linking together agriculture, environment and industry by also focusing on the revaluation of local culture and market<sup>84</sup>. This new perspective, indeed, is based on various ideas, on multisectoral implementation and on the well-functioning of each government and regional representation.

The Cork conference, in particular, was the turning point for the future reform of the rural development sector. It enumerated a decalogy of the main principles of rural development<sup>85</sup>. Additionally, the Table of Cork pointed out the necessity to counter the rural exodus through the fight against poverty and through the promotion of traditional lifestyles and the stimulation of employment by ensuring fair and equal opportunities<sup>86</sup> and it put particular emphasis on the need to apply a bottom up approach with experiences as the LEADER<sup>87</sup> project.

Instead, the Salisbury conference inaugurated a new Regulation regarding the simplification of the programming and financial framework, through the Partnership Agreement and the inclusion of the Leader program<sup>88</sup>. Notwithstanding, only in 2007 the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development became effective.

Indeed, as for the concerns deriving from the intensification of the rural exodus phenomenon and in regard to the increased awareness about the climate change challenges, in 2016, a Cork 2.0 declaration was released. This innovative *manifesto* pointed out ten new “political orientations” to innovate rural development policies:

1. *Promoting the prosperity of rural areas*: this direction looks forwards to the need to offer inclusive and innovative solutions for facing economic prosperity, food security, climate change, resource management, social inclusion and integration of migrants.

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<sup>82</sup> Hoffmann, A. (2006). *La nuova politica di sviluppo rurale* (Vol. 413). Franco Angeli. p.76.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>85</sup> Which are the rural preference, the integrated approach, the diversification, sustainability, simplification, subsidiarity, programming, financing, managing and valuation/research.

<sup>86</sup> Hoffmann, A. (2006). *La nuova politica di sviluppo rurale* (Vol. 413). Franco Angeli. p. 78.

<sup>87</sup> Paragraph 3.3.4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*.

These policies should promote the dynamism of rural areas through the adoption of integrated strategies<sup>89</sup>.

2. *Reinforcing rural value chains*: the integrated approaches should develop rural value chains and local productive networks. Indeed, they should encourage the emerging of business opportunity for sustainable agricultural enterprises. This orientation derives from the growing concerns of consumers about food quality and production processes. Indeed, the policies should pursue horizontal and vertical integration to ensure a transparent contractual relation within the supply chain and legal possibilities to organize farmers' collective action (risk management tools)<sup>90</sup>.
3. *Invest in the profitability of rural areas*: the policies should focus on generating added value for the rural societies. Indeed, the need to invest in public and private services and essential infrastructure is great. The investments should be also directed towards the digital gap by the improvement of the digitalization and the connectivity of rural areas as well as the strengthening of the rural-urban linkages. Moreover, particular attention should be given to the aspirations of rural youth and for generational renewal<sup>91</sup>.
4. *Preserving the rural environment*: the land management has a key role in the rural development field. Indeed, the measures should be directed towards the delivery of environmental public goods and services which reflect the variety of local peculiarities<sup>92</sup>.
5. *Managing rural resources*: cross-sectoral policy responses are fundamental for satisfying the growing request for food, feed and biomaterial. These should guarantee the sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil and biodiversity<sup>93</sup>.
6. *Encouraging actions in favor of the climate*: as for the growing concerns about climate change challenges, mitigation and adaptation strategies should be pursued for carbon seizure and storage in rural areas. Indeed, it is necessary to understand the rural areas' potential to produce sustainable renewable energy<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> European Network for Rural Development, (2016). Factsheet UE on Rural Development 2014-2020 in the Cork framework 2.0.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*.

7. *Stimulating knowledge and innovation*: rural local actors must have access to appropriate technology and connectivity. The strategies should pursue social innovation, education, and vocational training on a peer-to-peer exchange, networking and cooperation among farmers<sup>95</sup>.
8. *Reinforcing rural governance*: as for the significance of interacting in a networking arena, bottom-up and local initiatives should be pursued in order to activate rural potentials. Indeed, the CAP structure should be based on a common integrated framework which targets economic, social and environmental objectives<sup>96</sup>.
9. *Stimulating the implementation and the simplification of the policies*: the streamline of the CAP regulatory framework and the introduction of the e-Governance<sup>97</sup> are necessary in order to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries of both national and regional administrations<sup>98</sup>.
10. *Improving performance and incrementing responsibility*: in order to be accountable, a policy should be monitored and evaluated on the benefits of actions, the efficiency of expenditure and on the assessment of the delivery of results against policy objectives<sup>99</sup>.

### 3.2.2. Rural development and its policy composition.

As affirmed above, the Agenda 2000 has the merit of having collected all the instruments and the tool for the purpose of rural development <sup>100</sup>.

Rural development is supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and, in the current programming period 2014-2020, the whole budget amounts of € 100 billion that must be spent throughout the course of this period until the end of 2023<sup>101</sup>. The programs pursued for rural development can be arranged on national or regional bases and must target at least four of the six “*policy priorities*” of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>97</sup> The e-Government is the digital management of the public administration.

<sup>98</sup> European Network for Rural Development, (2016). Factsheet UE on Rural Development 2014-2020 in the Cork framework 2.0.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>100</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Le politiche di sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: un’analisi dei fattori che ne condizionano l’attuazione in Europa. Agriregionieuropa, pag. 27.

<sup>101</sup> European Commission. *Rural Development*. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en)

1. Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
2. Enhancing the viability and the competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
3. Promoting food chain organization, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
4. Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the low-carbon transition and climate adaptation economy in the agriculture, food and forestry fields;
5. Restoring, preserving and encouraging ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas<sup>102</sup>.

Additionally, apart from these priorities, for the programming period of 2014-2020, each Member State has developed a Partnership Agreement (PA) in cooperation with the European Commission. The PA is an orientation document whose aim is to program the interventions of the Structural and Investments Funds and link them to the Europe 2020 objectives. Additionally, it presents a list of national and regional operational programs (OPs) and indicative annual financial allocations for each of them<sup>103</sup>. The Europe 2020 strategy, the PA and the rural development implementation structure have evolved through the elaboration of smart specialization approaches and therefore, the identification of strategic areas for intervention, based on the analysis of the strengths and the economy's potential with the involvement of local resources, local actors and stakeholders<sup>104</sup>.

At the end of the eighties, the crisis of the Fordist model of industrial organization led to the development and the conceptualization of new theories regarding a new flexible specialization model for the improvement of the job market. Essentially, those new concepts suggested that local factors are essential for implementing policies for the different rural territories. Indeed, the new theories recommended abandoning the standardized policy tradition and pursuing the building of strategies which could specifically target the peculiarities of the different regions. Those theories were based on the analysis of successful

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<sup>102</sup> European Commission. *Rural Development*. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en)

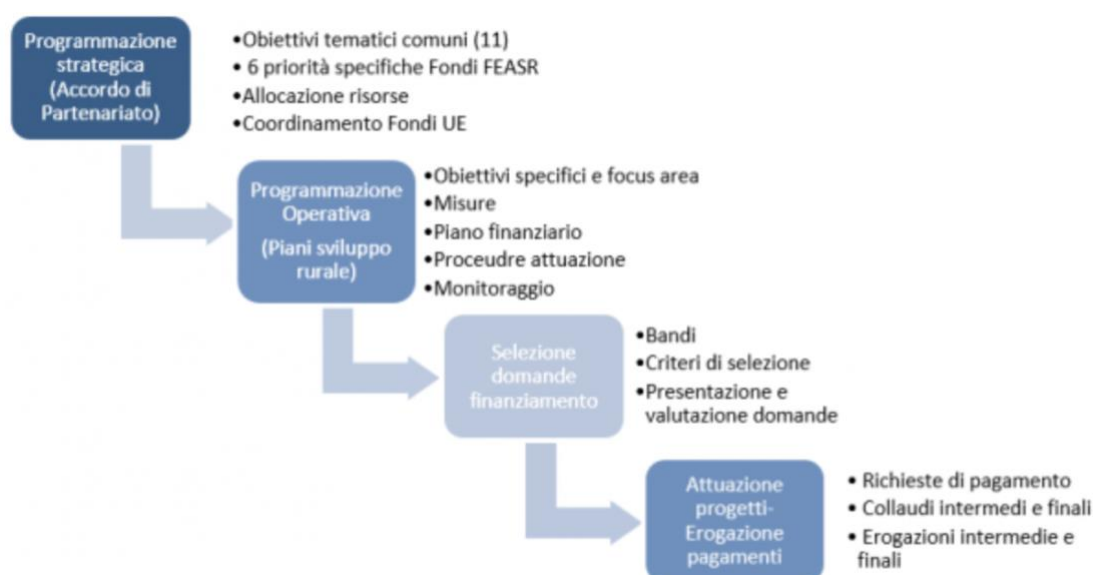
<sup>103</sup> European Commission, *Glossary*. Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/p/partnership-agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/p/partnership-agreement)

<sup>104</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregionieuropa*, 12, 65-69.



case studies in the attempt of extrapolating suggestions for policies capable of being replicated elsewhere. For example, the network theory<sup>105</sup> and the *milieu innovateur*<sup>106</sup> are together theories relatable to the endogenous development analysis<sup>107</sup>. Indeed, in the European implementation policy context, a balance between the endogenous and the exogenous forces is reached as the local actors set the target and the design of the PA, while the external agency sets the general conditions and achievements that the former must pursue and tailor to specific places<sup>108</sup>.

Practically, in the new conception there are mainly four major programmatic phases: the partnership agreement, the operational programming, the selection of financing aid and the implementing and the disbursement of payments for the projects<sup>109</sup>.



**Fig.18.** The phases of PA for rural policies implementation<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> The Network theory relies on the concept of “graph”. Indeed, the theory provides a set of techniques for analyzing their structure in a system of interacting agents, which is a network. In fact, the OECD claims that networks create social capital for individuals and communities (Owen-Smith, J, 2016).

<sup>106</sup> The *milieu innovateur* is defined as the set of relations that unify a production system, the different actors, the industrial culture and a common representation system of a specific territorial areas. These conditions generate a collective learning process which is susceptible to the dynamic of the innovative processes (Coppin, O., 2002).

<sup>107</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregioneuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>108</sup> Barca, F. & McCann, P. & Rodriguez-Pose, A. (2012), *The Case for Regional Development Intervention: place-based versus place-neutral approaches*. *Journal of Regional Science*. Vol.52, Issue 1.

<sup>109</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Le politiche di sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: un’analisi dei fattori che ne condizionano l’attuazione in Europa. *Agriregioneuropa*, 14.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*.

The first phase of strategic programming (the Partnership Agreement) basically regards the planning of the tactical objectives for the rural development purpose which are formally agreed by local actors<sup>111</sup>.

Indeed, the countries that have regional representatives must ask for the approval of the aims in concert with the regional administration and the national and regional stakeholders<sup>112</sup>. This negotiation is crucial for determining the allocation of the available resources for the eleven common thematic objectives<sup>113</sup> and for the division of the investments between the regions and the autonomous provinces. Indeed, the role of the Structural and Investment Funds (SIF) is discussed, in particular of the European Fund for Rural development (EFRD)<sup>114</sup>.

After the approval of the PA, the second phase of the operational programming consists of the development of the national plans for rural development. This crucial moment is complex in its negotiations because of the difficulty in complying with the regulation promulgated by the European Commission on the representation methods<sup>115</sup>.

The implementing phase, instead, is mainly influenced by the slowness or speed and the inefficiency or performance of the public administration, the incapacity or the availability of investments and the effectiveness and the promptness or not in providing incentives to farming industries<sup>116</sup>.

Even if this policy model aims at grouping and at supporting the voices of all the congruent local actors, its slowness may influence the effective application of rural strategies, in particular in those countries with low performance of the public administration sector<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>113</sup> The common 11 thematic objectives are agreed for the Europe 2020 strategy: reinforce research and technological development; improve the access and the employment of technologies for information; promote competitiveness of SME of the agricultural field and the fishing sector; sustain the transition towards an economy of low carbon emission; promote the adaptation to the climate change and the efficient use of resources; favoring the sustainable transport systems and the efficient use of resources; promote the sustainable occupation of the workforce and sustain their community; favoring social inclusion and fighting poverty and every discrimination; invest in education, in the occupational education and in the permanent education; reinforce the institutional capacity of the public authorities and the efficient public administration. (Mantino, F., 2018)

<sup>114</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>115</sup> The representation methods regard the modality in which the needs are represented and enumerated, the link between the needs and the objectives and the description of the intervention measures.

<sup>116</sup> Mantino, F. (2018). Le politiche di sviluppo rurale 2014-2020: un'analisi dei fattori che ne condizionano l'attuazione in Europa. *Agriregionieuropa*, 14.

<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Italy, as the other countries with a regional system, takes 310 day to approve the Partnership agreement, idem is for France (475 days) and Spain (459 days).

### 3.3 The Inner Periphery Strategy and the Leader Project.

This paragraph portrays the Inner Periphery Strategy and other implementing tools as the LEADER and the Community-led local Development instruments which foster the development of remote rural areas. Firstly, it will be conceptualized the notion of periphery through the analysis of different sociological, geographical and anthropological theories. Therefore, it will be described the Inner Periphery Strategy and its integrated and place based approach, and the part dedicated to the European's tools for fostering rural development. Lastly, an example will be given of the experience of the Local Action Group of the *Greganica* Area of the Calabria region and how they have efficiently used the instruments provided by the Rural Development Network.

#### 3.3.1. the Inner Periphery Strategy: the a-spatial definition of “periphery”.

Before discussing the organization and the implementation of the Inner Periphery Strategy, it is necessary to reflect on the meaning of inner “peripheries” in the European terminology. Currently, the “Euclidean” or geographical definition of periphery is still strictly dependent on the flows of goods and services and it is calculated in kilometers, travel-time or travel-costs. But the rapid information flows have rearticulated the significance of “space” and “proximity”<sup>118</sup> where the units of measurement employed in the calculation of the physical distance are not valid as data flow through other forms of “organized proximity” (social, legal, institutional)<sup>119</sup>.

Therefore, it is important the analysis of all the factors that can characterize periphery as a term.

Firstly, the anthropological studies of Edwin Ardener have been significant for reflecting on the concept of “remoteness”<sup>120</sup>. In its 1987 work “Remote areas, some theoretical considerations<sup>121</sup>”, he states that the concept of remoteness can be defined only if related to the notion of “central area” and, therefore, it is perceived to be related to imaginary places<sup>122</sup>. In fact, he stated that the etymology of the term “remote” derives from the Latin *removeo*

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<sup>118</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 7(1), p. 26.

<sup>119</sup> Torre, A., and Rallet, A., (2005). Proximity and localization. *Regional Studies*, 39(1), 47–59.

<sup>120</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.5.

<sup>121</sup> Ardener, E. (1987), *Remote Areas, theoretical considerations*. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2 (1): 519–533.

<sup>122</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.5.

which literally means “removed”. Accordingly, a “remote” region is the place which is “removed” from the Western ideal representation of reality and, therefore, it assumes an “imaginary” gloom<sup>123</sup>.

*«The lesson of “remote” areas is that is a condition not related to periphery, but to fact that certain peripheries are by definition not properly linked to the dominant zone. They are perception from the dominant zone, not part of its codified experience<sup>124</sup>.»*

Indeed, the Inner Periphery Strategy takes into account the distance from urban conurbations, and therefore the difficulty in delivering public services to inner areas.

From this thought, in 2014 Harms, Shafqat and Shneiderman<sup>125</sup> edited and revived the debate inaugurated by Ardener’s work as they emphasize how its theory was both detaching the term “remoteness” from its geographical connotation as well as it was characterizing the notion with a *«relativistic social construct<sup>126</sup>»*, a way of being. Therefore, they associate remote areas to a further concept, which is *social edginess* as for the marginal position of the inhabitants of urban fringes compared to the dominant state of urban people<sup>127</sup>. Indeed, these thoughts are familiar to the German historian Ernst Nolte and his statement that the inner peripheries located in Southern Europe are a consequence of their past-status of “border-regions” during the Christian and the Muslim era<sup>128</sup>.

Moreover, the geographical approach<sup>129</sup> is theorized by professor C. Michael Hall in his 2013 work “Vanishing Peripheries: does Tourism consume Places?” who conceptualizes a “remote” territory by giving a relative character to the concept of peripherality.

*«The periphery depends on where you stand»<sup>130</sup>.*

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<sup>123</sup> Ardener, E. (2012). Remote areas: Some theoretical considerations. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 2(1), 519-533.

<sup>124</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 532.

<sup>125</sup> Harms, E., Shafqat, H., & Shneiderman, S. (2014). Remote and edgy: New takes on old anthropological themes. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 4(1), 361-381.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>127</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.6.

<sup>128</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.8.

<sup>129</sup> *Ivi*, p. 7.

<sup>130</sup> Hall, C. M., Harrison, D., Weaver, D., & Wall, G. (2013). Vanishing Peripheries: Does Tourism Consume Places? *Tourism Recreation Research*, 38(1), 71-92. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2013.11081730>

Indeed, Hall recollects the attributes often linked to the “periphery” and he found that those areas are mostly united by distance, not only geographical, but also figuratively, from the peculiarities of urbanized areas; this means that they have a set of common characteristics<sup>131</sup> that are both the cause and the result of their remote character”<sup>132</sup>, which reminds to the concept of “the vicious circle of depopulation”.

This concept is strictly linked to the current of thought developed during the eighties and the nineties, when the measuring of geographic peripherality was calculated through the employment of various spatial models. Indeed, the classic regional development model of Myrdal, Hirschamann and Friedmann and the New Economic Geography school<sup>133</sup> focused on the concept of “economic potential”. It is an indicator devised as a proxy to calculate the consequences of agglomeration<sup>134</sup>. Their researches applied these considerations in the construction of maps portraying Europe and its peripherality through different economic and social perspectives and the results manifested some “enclaves” in the periphery of “Central Europe”. Nevertheless, the accession of Portugal and Spain in 1986 and of Sweden and Finland in 1995 coincided with the elaboration of these analysis and, therefore, the focus shifted to the study of sparsely populated territories of North and West Europe at the expenses of the central European regions<sup>135</sup>.

Moreover, another significant step was the recognition of the “semi-periphery” area by the sociologist Marina Blagojević<sup>136</sup>. A semi periphery is portrayed as a social hybrid standing between the city and the periphery relationship and therefore outlining a condition of *«being different, but not being different enough and similar, but not similar enough<sup>137</sup>»* to the city core and the real periphery<sup>138</sup>. Such approach can be easily connected to the structuralist “Modern World System” perspective of Immanuel Wallerstein which combines the effects

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<sup>131</sup> I.e. geographic remoteness, weak economies and out-migration.

<sup>132</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.7.

<sup>133</sup> The New Economic Geography school focuses on spatial economics through an integrated and micro-founded approach to spatial economics. It underlines the role of clustering forces in generating an uneven distribution of economic activity and income across space (Venables, A., 2005).

<sup>134</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 7(1), p. 28.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>136</sup> Blagojević-Hughson, M., & Bobic, M. (2014). Understanding the population change from semi-peripheral perspective: Advancement of theory. *Zbornik Matice Srpske Za Drustvene Nauke*, 314(148), 525-539.

<sup>137</sup> Blagojević-Hughson, M., & Bobic, M. (2014). Understanding the population change from semi-peripheral perspective: Advancement of theory. *Zbornik Matice Srpske Za Drustvene Nauke*, 314(148), 525-539.

<sup>138</sup> Pezzi, M. G., & Urso, G. (2016). Peripheral areas: conceptualizations and policies. Introduction and editorial note. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 6(1), p.8.

of modern history to the geography development of territories<sup>139</sup>. Indeed, its tripartite division of the world's countries consist in the core, which is the result of the capitalist exploitation and its dependency on the labor of the periphery; the periphery itself; and the semi-periphery which aims to interact with the core, but it does not have enough "power" to be associated with the latter<sup>140</sup>.

Summarily, the notion of peripheralization must be dissociated from the concept of marginalization as the former is a dynamic process which expresses the role of the interactions across different agglomerations, while the latter states a static socio-economic status and setting. The concept of periphery is linked to its degree of social marginality and not necessarily to its distance from the urban center or the densely agglomerated economic hubs; indeed, the Euclidian definition of periphery influences the social attitude and the allocation of the resources of the territory itself<sup>141</sup>.

### *3.3.2. The Inner Periphery Strategy: the content and its implementation*

Currently, the Inner Periphery approach aims to target the inner territories by following both, spatial and a-spatial drivers<sup>142</sup>. In fact, the lack of connectedness is adopted as the main trait for targeting inner peripheries as this discriminant is tightly interrelated with the location of the area within the "Euclidean<sup>143</sup>" space, the quality of service accessibility and its economic potential that can be activated or mobilized through different human activity (organized proximity). <sup>144</sup>.

The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) has already defined a spatial and hierarchical definition of the various territories. The levels of the research develop on three aggregated areas namely "Nomenclature of Territorial Unit for Statistics". This classification defines NUTS 0 level as the Member State and NUTS 1 as the largest level in the regional hierarchy<sup>145</sup>. The latter is composed by NUTS 2, the regions, and NUTS 3 which are the smallest sections of the regions and have the least well-defined set of indicators.

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>140</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 7(1), p. 29.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>142</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 7(1), p. 31.

<sup>143</sup> Pag. 62.

<sup>144</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 7(1), p. 31

<sup>145</sup> Such as the German federal states, Belgium regions, for the Italian case the zones are the Nord-west area, Nord-east, Centre, South and Islands.

Nevertheless, NUTS 3 levels are a cluster very wide-ranging as even this aggregation is composed of smaller “components” that must be defined by rough and less-sharp indicators as Inner Peripheries<sup>146</sup>, each of them usually intersecting two or more NUTS 3 regions<sup>147</sup>.

Differently from the previous three classifications, those areas are not relatable with the administrative subdivision as the aim has been to target areas’ specific socio-economic characteristics. Therefore, Eurostat coined a new cluster of analysis, the “Local Area Units” (LAUs)<sup>148</sup> and the “Inner Peripheries” (IPs).

Indeed, the Inner Periphery Strategy has been implemented from the current programming period of 2014-2020<sup>149</sup>. It targets three main focus areas each demarcated by its own drivers and its own set of interventions:

1. *Enclaves with low economic potential (IP1)*: due to its proximity to core areas which enlarges the connectivity gap,<sup>150</sup> this cluster must be targeted through responses which improve and encourage the connections to main transport hubs through infrastructure improvement, travel cost discounts and logistics systems<sup>151</sup>.
2. *Regions that experience poor access to services of general interest (IP2)*: these areas experience geographic remoteness and scarce intra-regional service delivery or access. The policies should encourage the substitution of local service delivery with a new technologic transfer IT- based. Therefore, strategies that target the administrative hubs through the fostering of economy of scale logic could worsen their condition<sup>152</sup>.
3. *Areas which lack of relational proximity (IP3)*: this cluster focuses on the territories excluded from the common economic activity of the core, depending or not on their Euclidian distance from the urban centers<sup>153</sup>. Those areas are characterized by less-influential governance structures in comparison to the ones of the urban centers

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<sup>146</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 7(1), p. 33.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>149</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 7(1), p. 26.

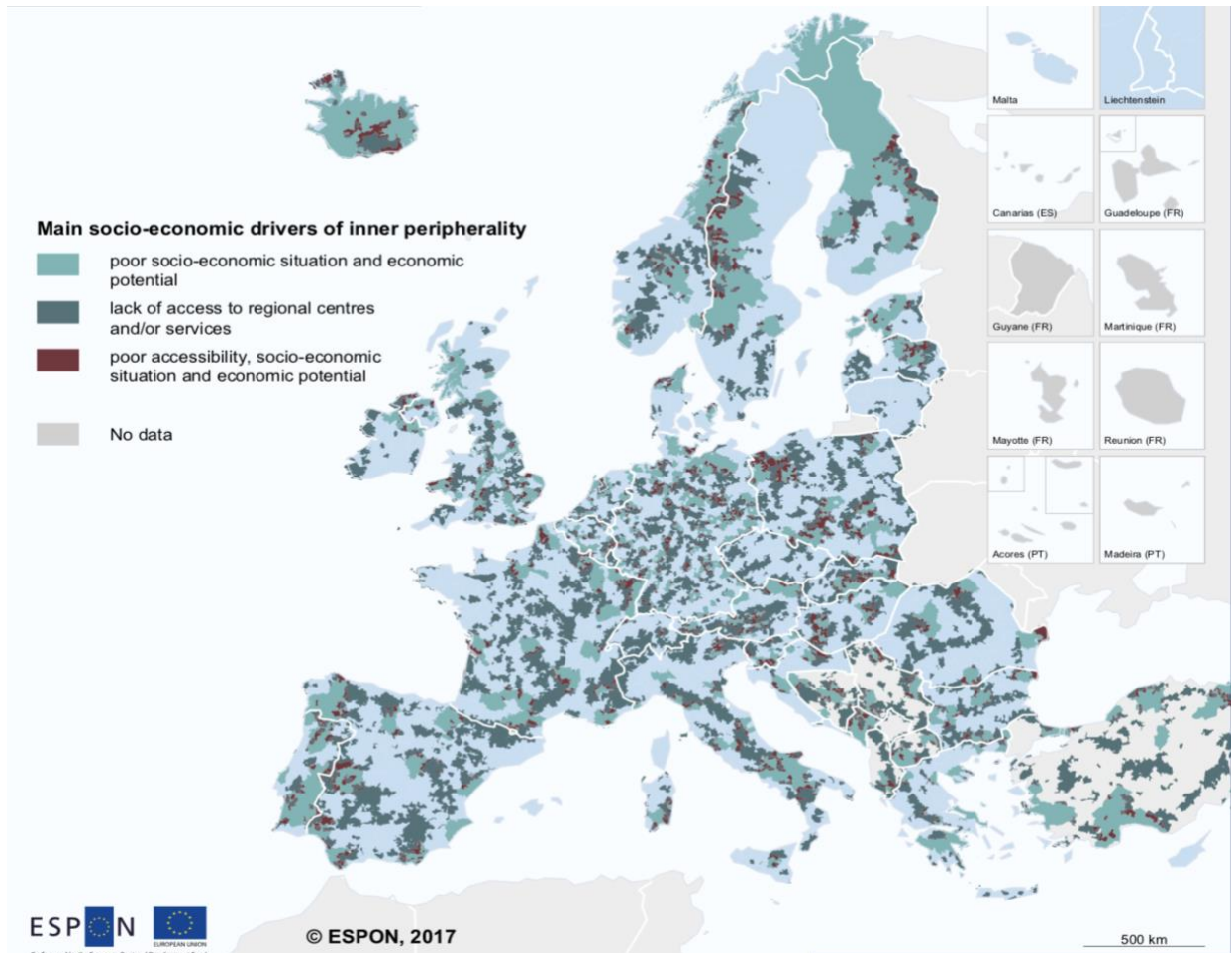
<sup>150</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>151</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem*.

and, therefore, they tend to have less power in the decision-making phase of the allocation of public expenditure<sup>154</sup>. Actions should pursue the strengthening of the IP3/urban interaction and therefore the construction and the improvement of the network among local actors<sup>155</sup>.



**Fig. 19.** Map of main drivers of inner periphery<sup>156</sup>.

These features play a significant role in the delineation of the zones of action and in the map construction which defines where the strategy must be pursued. Figure 2 shows that areas where the driver is a poor economic performance or a demographic issue (therefore IP1 IP3) constitute 46% of the whole European territory. Instead, the territories that suffer from poor access to services or to regional centers (IP2) cover 45%, while the areas presenting the whole set of characteristics, therefore defining an “acute” form of IP (IP1, IP2, IP3) represents 9%

<sup>154</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>155</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibidem*.



of the total European territory<sup>157</sup>. The data set demonstrates that the concentration of 80% of inner peripheries with low economy potential (IP1) and with low accessibility to services (IP2) is located in rural and intermediate regions, while inner peripheries with poor accessibility characteristics (IP2) are located in mountainous territories<sup>158</sup>. Instead, the zones with the IP3 characteristics are mainly located in urban and metropolitan areas (32,2% and 43%).

### 3.3.3 The strategies adopted for the different Inner Periphery territories.

The Inner Periphery strategy suggests an integrated and multilayered logic for tackling the local, regional and national governance by following the unsatisfactory connectedness as the main driver. The logic for intervention bases its research on the identification of the weaknesses and the intrinsic potential of each IP in the application of the place based approach<sup>159</sup>.



**Fig. 20.** Outline of the intervention logic for enclaves of low economic potential (IP1)<sup>160</sup>.

The areas characterized by low economic potential are identified by their geographical and spatial distance from the nearest core centers. Therefore, such dislocation affects entrepreneurship investments, innovation growth and subsequent economic prosperity. The strategy (Figure 3) recommends empowering the business and the institutional local structures for promoting the acquisition of information and modernization. Therefore, the policy responses are to be implemented through the encouragement of efficient physical infrastructure (i.e. roads, airports and in new types of mobility). Nevertheless, as a greater connectivity may favor urban core areas more than the inner ones (“pump effect”), it is suitable to complement the measure with policies oriented towards the building of human,

<sup>157</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>159</sup> European Network for Rural Development, (2016). Leaders/CLLD state of play.

<sup>160</sup> European Network for Rural Development, (2016). Leaders/CLLD state of play.

social and institutional capital in order to increment the inner area capacity of interacting with markets and business networks (i.e. brokerage, urban-rural partnerships)<sup>161</sup>.



**Fig. 21.** Outline of the intervention logic for areas with poor access to services of general interest-SGIs (IP2)<sup>162</sup>.

The enclaves under the IP2 category do not guarantee a stable access to services of general interest<sup>163</sup> (SGIs) due to their remote location. Therefore, the unfavorable life-conditions of the local inhabitants can lead to population exodus that consequently comports a mutation in the population age structure usually entailing an old-age dependency of the remaining society and the poor performance of the local economy. The set of policy suggestions (Figure 4) promoted by the strategy develops in four fields and pathways:

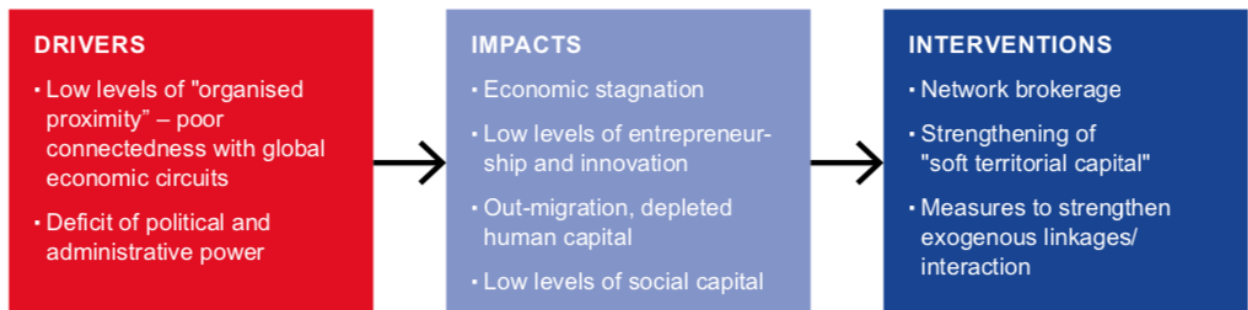
- 5 *Information technology*: the employment of new technology with the aim of reducing the geographical distance (i.e. telemedicine, online administration.)
- 6 *Social innovation*: the reconsideration of the public sector role in the provision of local services and in the eventual delegation of their delivery to third sector organizations, to social enterprises or to the local community through the promotion of social innovation logics.
- 7 *Governance reform*: the restructuring of local governance must be pursued in order to facilitate a greater coherence between a range of providers, and greater responsiveness to the needs of inner peripheries.

<sup>161</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>162</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>163</sup> The services of general interest (SGIs) are classified by the public authorities of each EU Member State and they must follow specific duties for the public interests. They can be provided by the State or by the private sector (i.e. public transports, postal services and health assistance).

8 *Enhancement of residential environment*: the policies should pursue encouraging the population in the care of the environment and of local facilities in order to foster the well-being of the inhabitants<sup>164</sup>.



**Fig. 22.** Outline of the intervention logic for areas suffering peripheralization (IP3)<sup>165</sup>.

This last intervention logic (Figure 5) is more suitable for marginalized areas instead of peripheral ones. Here, the peripheralization has a broader focus as the IP3 areas suffer from a form of “territorial exclusion” which differ from the geographical remoteness. The “organized proximity” theorization may inspire for these territories a multifaced aspect of the inner periphery society composed of “cultural and institutional legacies<sup>166</sup>” depending on the economic and structural bases where long-established configurations of power may have played a part<sup>167</sup>. Therefore, the rationality for policy intervention should pursue the whole set of suggestions recommended for the first and the second types of IPs with the aim of fostering both, the economic development and the social/community well-being<sup>168</sup>.

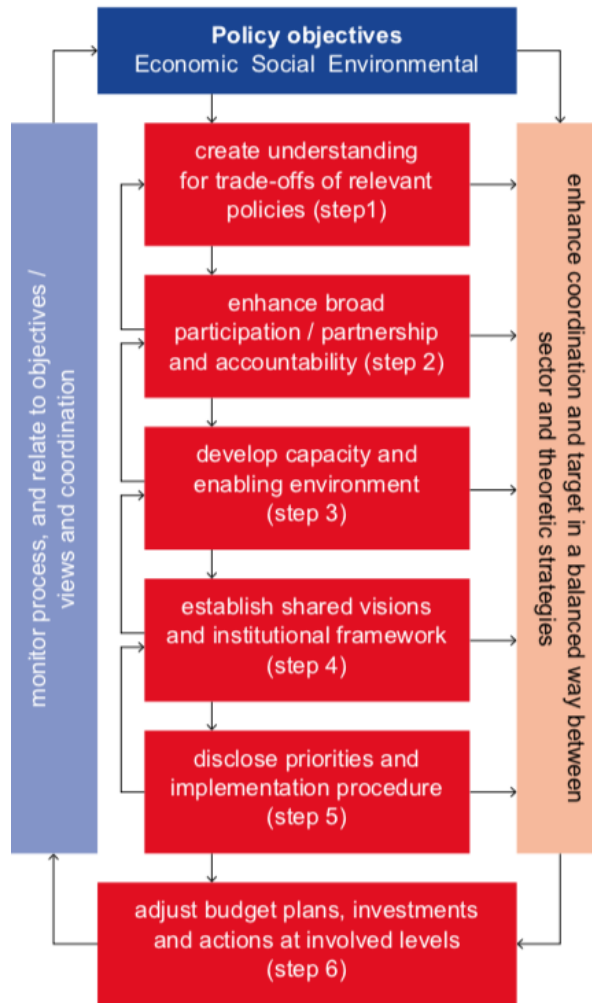
<sup>164</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>166</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 7(1), p. 33.

<sup>167</sup> ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibidem*.



**Fig. 23.** Steps for regional policy integration<sup>169</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, the “pump effects” of the policies can trigger unfavorable side-effects which could even worsen the inner peripheries’ context. The integrated approach (Figure 6) is conceived in order to target all the three types of IPs already identified so as to foster the interaction between inner areas and the cores, thus influencing the IP’s environment. In order to create a new dynamic system, the strategy suggests involving different layers of the governance apparatus, especially when referring to the «mobility» issue<sup>170</sup>. This intervention logic pursues the creation of networks as opposed to a series of atomized and fragmented actions for the inner peripheries. Indeed, the various pathways are consequential to the implementation of the policies as their aim is to tackle different interrelated aspects of the socio-economic and cultural local structure. In fact, the policies

<sup>169</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem*.

should address the most shared features of inner peripheries regions and thus, should monitor the areas in the following processes:

- Levels of out-migration rate, particularly among the younger cluster;
- The relation between the local market and the traditional or mono-sectoral economic activity;
- The institutional performance of local and regional actors and their understanding and application of the cooperation and cohesion targets;
- The rate of low skilled workers and poor attractiveness of the external workforce;
- The sense of abandonment deriving from the negligence of the policy actors and lack of national or trans-national spatial perspectives<sup>171</sup>.

In the application of the model, all three types of IPs may coexist, thus a place-specific strategy must be pursued also because the “vicious circle” of decline is unique to each context. The strategies developed by each region may also take inspiration from the actions pursued by other similar IPs. For what concerns the financial possibilities, each region should look for specific resource allocation for their OPs, as well as looking for calls that do not possess a territorial requirement, but that tackle territories facing demography decline, access to services or local development. As illustrated in Figure 6, the IPs regions should consider all the five steps. Indeed, these stages are mutually interrelated as they eventually influence each other. Finally, the last phase regards the financial action and concerns the budget plans arrangements and the investments that must be sustained by the administrative level to become effective.<sup>172</sup>

#### *3.3.4 Instruments for rural development: the LEADER project, the CLLD and the ITI.*

Connectiveness is one of the decisive topics and objectives of the Inner Periphery Strategy. The absence of interaction within different IPs or between IPs and core centers is perceived as the cause of their peripheralization and marginalization. Therefore, two different governance hubs are in place in order to implement, but also to connect, these different realities.

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<sup>171</sup>ESPON (2018). Inner peripheries in Europe - Possible development strategies to overcome their marginalizing effects. Policy Brief.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibidem*.

The European Rural Networks' Governance<sup>173</sup> works in concert with a second European Rural Network: the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity (EIP-AGRI) and Sustainability<sup>174</sup> aiming at bringing together the various rural development stakeholder groups.

Their actions work along a twofold structure:

1. The European rural Networks' Assembly, which was launched in January 2015 as the main governance body of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and the EIP-AGRI<sup>175</sup>. It comprises two permanent working groups on Innovation for agricultural productivity and sustainability. Additionally, it deals with the LEADER and the Community-Led Local Development<sup>176</sup>.
2. The European Rural Networks' Steering Group which ensures the effective coordination of the ENRD and the EIP-AGRI thematic work.<sup>177</sup>

The Leader<sup>178</sup> approach and its consequent Community-led Local Development (CLLD)<sup>179</sup> are great examples of the application of the endogenous theory<sup>180</sup> from which it is drawn the smart specialization objective regarding the rural development policies and inner peripheries strategies. Founded in 1991<sup>181</sup>, the LEADER's aim is to explore new approaches for the fostering of rural development through the interconnection of local communities for the formation of private and public partnerships defined as "Local Action Groups" (LAG<sup>182</sup>) co-financed by the EARDF or by the Structural Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund<sup>183</sup>. Nevertheless, the LEADER approach considers the local economic activities and how the impact on the prices may deviate from the market logics.<sup>184</sup> In fact, the program encouraged the unique peculiarities of each territory through

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<sup>173</sup> European Network for Rural Development. European Rural's Network Governance. Online at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/about/european-rural-networks-governance\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/about/european-rural-networks-governance_en)

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>175</sup> European Network for Rural Development. European Rural's Network Governance. Online at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/about/european-rural-networks-governance\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/about/european-rural-networks-governance_en)

<sup>176</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>178</sup> *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*.

<sup>179</sup> Copus, A., Mantino, F., & Noguera, J. (2017). Inner Peripheries: an oxymoron or a real challenge for territorial cohesion?. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 7(1), p. 42.

<sup>180</sup> Nel testo.

<sup>181</sup> Storti, D. (2016). Aree interne e sviluppo rurale: prime riflessioni sulle implicazioni di policy. *Agriregionieuropa*, 12, 65-69.

<sup>182</sup> Local Action Group manages participative local development plan such as the Leader and the CLLD and it is composed by representative of public and private interests of the targeted territory.

<sup>183</sup> European Maritime and Fishery Fund.

<sup>184</sup> Margarian A. (2013), A constructive critique of the endogenous development approach in the European support of rural areas, *Growth and Change*, vol. 44 n. 1, pp. 1-29

the arrangement of harmonized action of the local actors. Therefore, ideally the optimal intervention mix should not be dictated by national or supranational authorities, but through the application of an organized multi-level governance addressing territorial diversity. Additionally, other tools operating in concert with the LEADER experience are the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) and the Community- Led Local Development (CLLD) and national/regional instruments. The former is a non-compulsory tool introduced in the current programming period<sup>185</sup>. This tool's aim is to support regional development strategy at a later stage. ITI is applied at various territorial scales featured by specific shared characteristics (cities and urban areas, deprived urban areas or neighborhoods, city-regions, national parks etc).<sup>186</sup> Instead, the CLLD is strictly connected to the LEADER project as, unlike the ITI, it follows a bottom-up approach and focuses on the action of local communities for territorial development. This instrument selects the Local Action Groups who are the owners of, and therefore, responsible for, the local projects: they identify the action place, fix the goal, the form and the governance of the partnership and they select the projects to be financed.

***Successful Examples of Leader Project: the LAG's action in Bovesia***



**Fig. 24.** The Bovesia area<sup>187</sup>

<sup>185</sup> ESPON (2017). Strategies for Inner Peripheries. Final Report. pag. 29

<sup>186</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>187</sup> Available at [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com)



The *Bovesìa*, also known as “*Area Greganica*”, is an inner territory located in the Reggio Calabria province (Figure 7). In this area, there is a secular presence of a minority Hellenic<sup>188</sup> linguistic group which speaks the *griko*<sup>189</sup>. Because of the absence of principal routes of communication and highways, this area has long been untouched by economic and industrial development which has led to a population exodus and the subsequent decline of the population rate. The Local Action Group of the *Greganica* Area has been in action since 1997 and it is composed of public and private entities equally represented. The partnership process has fostered shared interventions and projects for the rural development of the area. As for the environmental significance of the territory, the LAG has started the project of accommodation structures distributed throughout the territory and other projects like SPITI TI MUSIKÌ- The house of the Music in the Gallicianò village with the aim of researching and experimenting new form of music through the influence of the ancient Greek-Calabrian melody aiming at creating a continuous flow of artists from all over the nation<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>189</sup> The Greek minority linguistic group in Italy is located in Calabria and in the Salento part of the Apulia region. The Calabrian greek or *griko* is a neo-Greek dialect spoken by these communities which derives from the Greek conquest of the VIII century b. C. The Greeks population calls the language *Katoitaliòtika* (Italian of the *Meriodione*).

<sup>190</sup> LAG “Area Greganica” web site: <http://www.galareagrecanica.it/index.php/progetti/cultura>



## **Chapter IV**

### **The Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA): analysis of the policy impact inside and outside the pilot-areas**

As affirmed in the second chapter<sup>1</sup>, after the Second World War, Italy experienced a phase of accelerated industrial development. The economic growth trend has been described by the Italian Official Document for Inner Areas<sup>2</sup> as “widespread” and “polarized”.<sup>3</sup> “Widespread” as for the high number of cities as well as medium and small-size conurbations which have experienced economic progress, but “polarized” as it manifested only in specific neighborhoods of cities or in part of the Italian system of urban conurbations<sup>4</sup>. On one hand, the territorial model of “polarized diffusion” of economic growth has formed a territorial system composed of big, medium and small urban systems. On the other, this economic development pattern marginalized the areas not adequately structured for the globalized market, thus relegating “inner areas”- small centers, villages and mountain settlements- to a status of «places that do not matter<sup>5</sup>».

The updated statistical maps already analyzed in the second chapter<sup>6</sup> retrace two territorial trajectories of convergence/divergence for what concerns community and economic development:

1. The differences in the development trajectories between macro-regions (North-South, North-Center-South).
2. The differences in the development trajectories between the inner part of each region and macro region as well as the coastal part.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 2.2.1.

<sup>2</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*.

<sup>3</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Rodríguez-Pose, Andrés (2017) The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11 (1). pp. 189-209.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 2.2.2.

This chapter's aim is to properly answer the third research question:

*What is the impact of the Italian Inner Periphery Strategy on Italian villages?*

Firstly, the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA) is discussed through its various facets. The first step regards the understanding of the instruments which have led to the construction of the Italian map of inner areas. Thus, the intermediate and long-term objectives pursued by the policy are analyzed, and, lastly, the selection process adopted by the Technical Committee and the Regions for the delineation of the first 72 pilot areas is explained. Additionally, the paragraph investigates in depth the co-design process, in order to comprehend the role that the active citizenship organizations play in the delineation of the *area's strategy*.

Secondly, the short-term impact of the Strategy is analyzed. In doing so, the case of the Vallo di Diano in the Cilento park is illustrated. The Vallo di Diano pilot-area appears to have successfully implemented the policy by focusing on the inter-municipality purpose and through the coordination of the various villages for what regards the provision of SGIs.

Lastly, the third section focuses on the impact of the strategy "outside" the borders of the pilot-areas through the case of Morigerati. The village is located in the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park, in particular it is located between two pilot areas (the Inner Cilento and the Vallo di Diano region) which are currently implementing the Strategy. Through the voices of three local actors (the vice-mayor, a local guide and one stakeholder) who are active in the Morigerati area, it is questioned whether the strategy has changed the villagers' views, not anymore as atomized and disseminated villages, but as a networking of towns, knowledge and resources.

#### **4. The National strategies for Inner areas and the role of local actors.**

This paragraph focuses on the content of the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA). So as to comprehend the matter, first the process through which the Italian's inner areas map has been constructed is addressed, therefore explaining the modalities and the parameters adopted in order to delineate and define inner areas in "policy terms". Thus, the paragraph underlines the intermediate and long-time objectives that the policy aims to reach. Lastly,

both, the innovations that the Strategy has carried out and the new role that the active citizenship play in the co-design stage for projecting the areas' strategies are analyzed.

#### 4.1 How the National Strategy for Inner Areas identifies inner peripheries.

As it was affirmed above<sup>7</sup>, since 1950s, a relevant majority of Italian inner areas has experienced a *marginalization* process which resulted in the *de-anthropization*<sup>8</sup> of the local community and territory. This process has further boosted the gradual reduction of the local offer of public, private and collective services (SGIs) which today are the key European discriminant for addressing the life quality of the inhabitants of a specific place<sup>9</sup>. The Italian case is significant for the variety of inner areas existing in its territory on various levels of analysis as the geographic, the economic, the social, the cultural and the eco-systemic ones. Therefore, in this case it is significant to develop policies with an eye to endogenous and exogenous actors, thus combining the European, the national and the local outlook. Through the national lens, it is possible to perceive the variety and the complexity of the whole set of inner areas, without being able to formulate the best policy programming for the local territory. While, the local lens is able to directly assess the needs which the program has to target through the inclusion of local social innovators in the co-design stage.

In the short term, the strategy has a twofold objective: to adapt the quantity and the quality of the education, healthcare and mobility services of these areas and to promote development projects which valorize the local natural and cultural heritage by strengthening the local productive chain<sup>10</sup>.

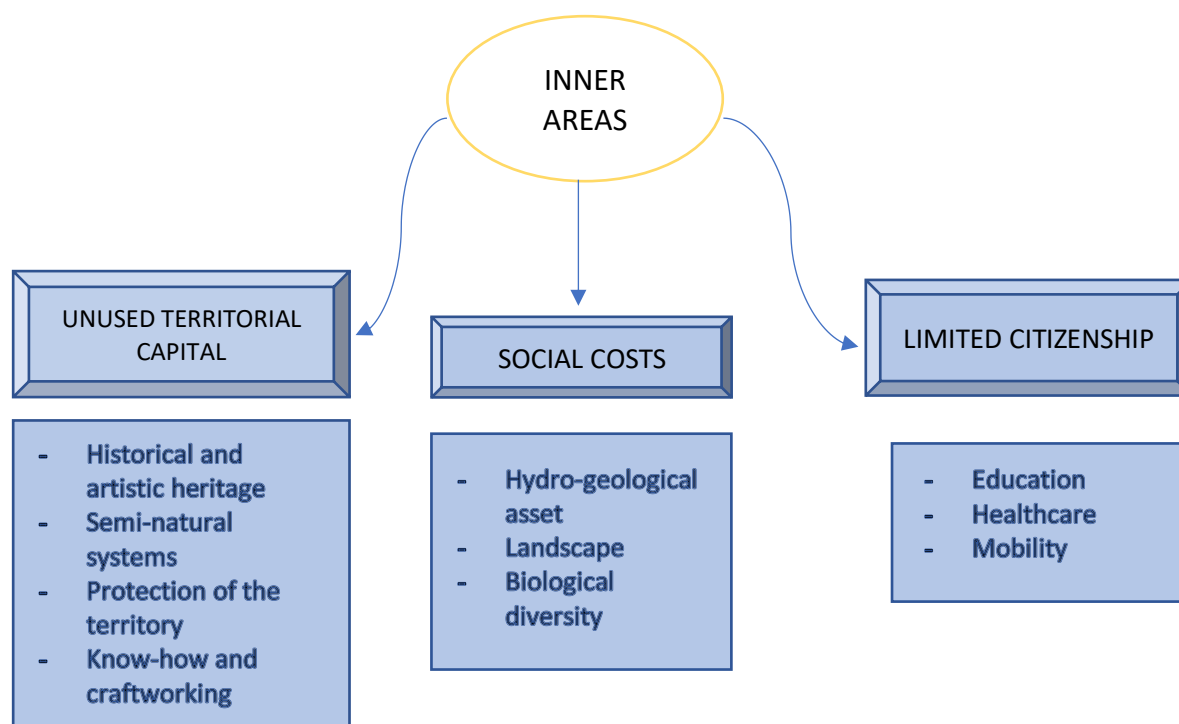
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<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 2.2.1.

<sup>8</sup> *De-anthropization* refers to the process of demographic decline under the critical threshold and, therefore, an old-age dependency of the remaining population (over 65 years).

<sup>9</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ivi*. Pag. 9.



**Fig. 25.** Description of the current state of inner areas by the National Strategy for Inner Areas<sup>11</sup>.

Figure 25 shows the three levels of description of inner areas articulated in common sub-levels. Indeed, there are two different ways of reading the figure: as the description of the weaknesses, but also of the strengths of inner areas. Indeed, in the delineation of the inner areas' map of the Italian territory, the Italian National Strategy's first aim was to single out the inner villages vis-à-vis their unused "economic potential"<sup>12</sup>. For instance, the latter is valued in regard to the presence of semi-natural systems in the territory, the building capital now in disuse but available for redevelopment, the partial loss of local and traditional knowledge due to the emigration and the demographic decline but still present to be leveraged<sup>13</sup>.

Secondly, their intrinsic economic potential not yet realized, faces a condition of high social costs determined by their abandoned state<sup>14</sup>. In many cases, inner areas are characterized by

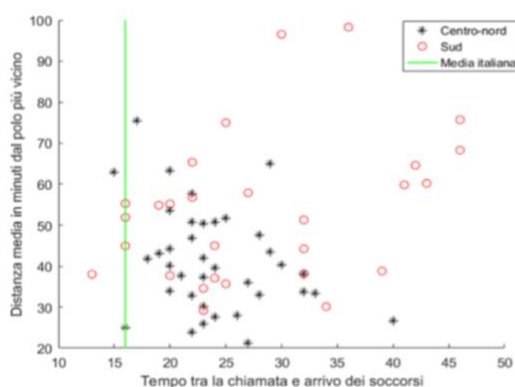
<sup>11</sup> Personal re-elaboration. Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 15.

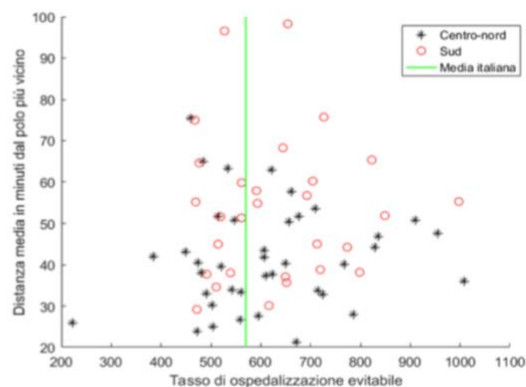
<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

production processes and investments that, because of their small scale and their typology, generate high social costs<sup>15</sup>. For instance, the hydrological failure, the biodiversity and the dispersion of the local practical knowledge are an example of eventual social costs derived by their state<sup>16</sup>.

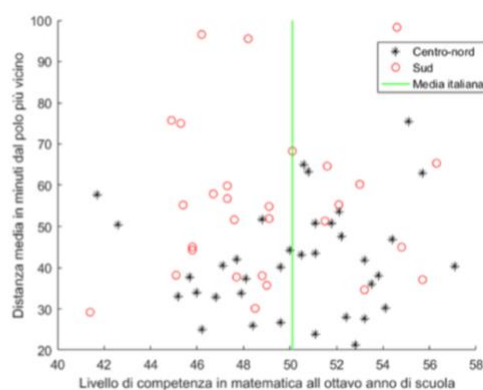
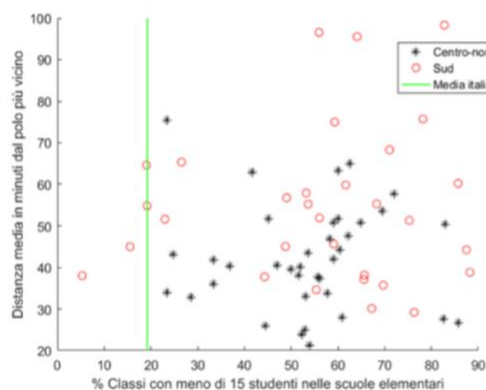


a) Time between call and arrival of the emergency service



b) Avoidable hospitalization of patients.

**Fig. 26.** Health service<sup>17</sup>.



<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

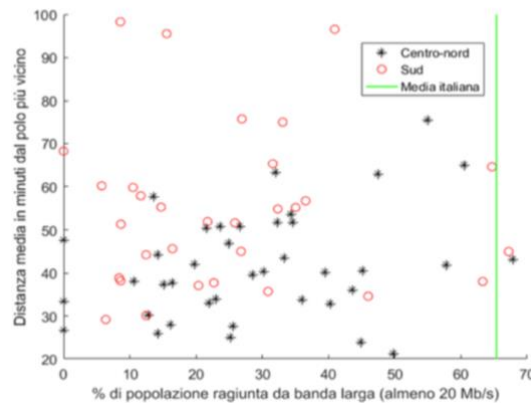
<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Barca, F., (2017). Disuguaglianze, rabbia e dimensione territoriale. La faglia-città campagna, le cause e la strategia italiana per affrontarla, conferenza “Trends in inequality”, Istituto Cattaneo, Bologna.

a) Dispersion of school's buildings

b) Levels of competence in math

**Fig. 27.** Education<sup>18</sup>.



**Fig. 28.** Broadband access<sup>19</sup>.

Another element that the NSIA contemplates is the poor access to SGIs like health care structures, education, mobility and the broad band connectivity for the local community. This deficiency hugely reduces the well-being of the local population and limits their opportunities and their “range of choices” also for possible new residents. Indeed, health care structures (Figure 26), education services (Figure 27), mobility and internet access for the local community (Figure 28) are not efficiently provided. For example, the time frame between the call to emergency services and the arrival of the ambulance (Figure 2, panel a) is reported to be higher in inner areas than the national average (16 minutes), and in many cases it arrives even after 45-50 minutes<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, school buildings appear to be dispersedly located across these areas in both the macro areas (North and South) of the country<sup>21</sup>. Also for what concerns the broadband access, it is evident that the majority of the population of Italian’s inner areas does not have access to fast connectivity.

<sup>18</sup> Barca, F., (2017). Disuguaglianze, rabbia e dimensione territoriale. La faglia-città campagna, le cause e la strategia italiana per affrontarla, conferenza “Trends in inequality”, Istituto Cattaneo, Bologna.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

#### 4.1.2 The map of the inner areas of the Italian territory.

Between 2012 and 2014, the Italian Department for Development Policies in collaboration with Istat<sup>22</sup> and the Italian National Bank, worked to construct the map of inner areas of the country<sup>23</sup>. The goal was a map which would have overcome the traditional dichotomy city/countryside and would recognize the distance from the essential services as a structural deficiency in a significant part of the national territory<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, the general definition of inner area is outlined as the “majority of the Italian territory characterized by a significant distance from the centers for the provision of essential services<sup>25</sup>”. The strategy develops the map of the territory through a “polycentric<sup>26</sup>” lecture of the nation. Indeed, the assumption guiding the work of the map is that the territory is characterized by a network of municipalities and conurbations of municipalities (centers for the provision of services) around which there are areas located on different levels of spatial peripherality<sup>27</sup>.

The mapping stage is based on three theoretical statements:

1. The Italian territory is characterized by an extremely dense and differentiated network of urban centers. These “poles of attraction<sup>28</sup>” offer a wide range of essential services able to generate a significant distant catchment area.
2. The level of spatial peripherality of the territories in regard to the urban centers network influences the life-quality of the citizens and their opportunity of being socially included.
3. The functional relationship between the poles and the more or less peripheric territories can variate<sup>29</sup>.

The map was built by initially delineating the “centers for the provision of services.” They are defined as municipalities or the networks of municipalities able to simultaneously offer

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<sup>22</sup> Italian National Institute for Statistics.

<sup>23</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 403.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 24.

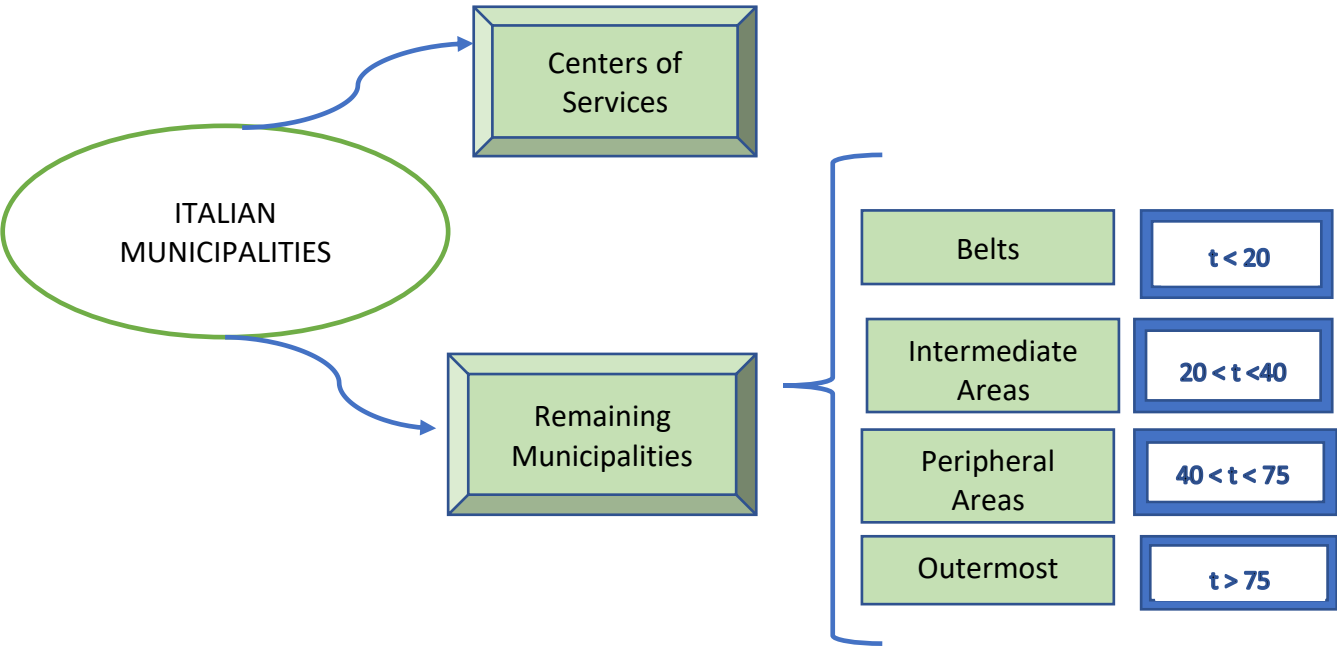
<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

the range of secondary education institutions, one hospital of DEA I level<sup>30</sup> and at least one train station of Silver<sup>31</sup> category<sup>32</sup>.

The introduction of the train station as one of the essential services explains the influence that «mobility» opportunities exercise in the development of the country. In fact, as already stated in the statistical maps<sup>33</sup>, there is the need to connect different parts of the territory not adequately linked to the main urban agglomeration also for the fulfillment of the citizenship right<sup>34</sup>.



**Fig. 29.** Classification of the municipalities vis-à-vis their level of peripherality<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> The hospital DEA I level represents the functional aggregation of operative units which offer the First Aid services, that guarantee the observation, the short-term stay and the intensive care units; that carries out diagnostic-therapeutic interventions of general medicine, general surgery, orthopaedics and traumatology, intensive therapy of cardiology. It also ensures laboratory performance of chemical-clinical and microbiological analysis, diagnostic imaging, and transfusion. (Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato, 2013)

<sup>31</sup> The Italian Railway Net classifies the train stations in PLATINUM; SILVER; GOLD and BRONZE. For what concerns the SILVER typology, it refers to medium and small structured to deliver metropolitan-regional services. (Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26

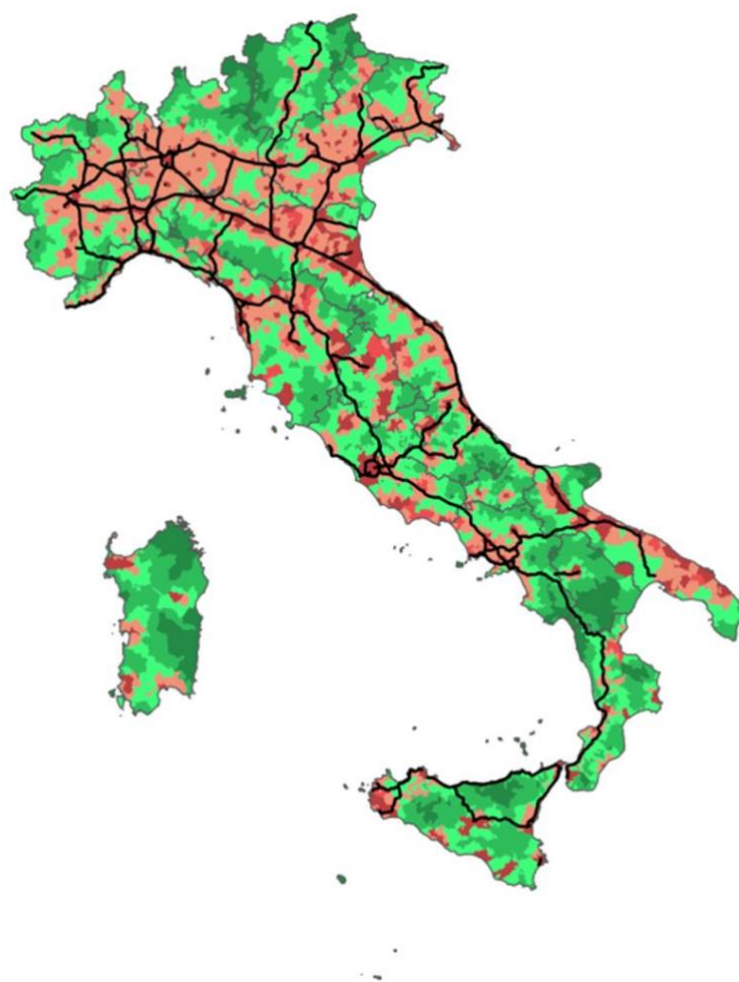
<sup>33</sup> Paragraph. 2.2.2.

<sup>34</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26

<sup>35</sup> Personal re-elaboration of graph in Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26



After the identification of the Centers, the remaining municipalities are classified in four bands: belts areas; intermediate areas; peripheral areas and outermost areas (Figure 2). This classification is obtained through the formulation of an “indicator of accessibility” which defines the distance vis-à-vis the travelling times from the nearest pole: the belts have a distance of less than 20 minutes, the intermediate areas between 20 and 40 minutes, the peripheral areas between 40 and 75 minutes and the outermost area more than 75 minutes<sup>36</sup>. This preliminary classification has been crucial for creating an objective tool which could be employed in the delimitation of the project-areas<sup>37</sup>.



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<sup>36</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26

<sup>37</sup> Carrosio, G., Faccini, G. (2018). *Le mappe della cittadinanza delle aree interne*. In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 75.

**Fig. 30.** Map of the Italian Inner Peripheries<sup>38</sup>.

Figure 30 highlights respectively in: red the “poles” areas, while in light red are the “belts” municipalities. From the map, it emerges that, especially in the Northern part of the Italian territory, the regions gravitate around a “polycentric” nucleus expressed by the continuous sequence of poles and belts municipalities which share “functional” linkages for what concerns the provision of services. In particular, the Northern-Central part of the regions denotes a strong inter-municipality capacity for what concerns the villages’ aptitude of building service networks. Instead, in the Southern region, the “poles” are frequently located on the coastal part and the territory composition presents a lack of continuity among the belt municipalities.

The whole cluster of “inner areas” constitutes 60% of the Italian territory and 52% of Italian municipalities<sup>39</sup>. The inner areas are found to be located mainly along the Alpes, the Apennine and the hilly zones of the territory. Nevertheless, the inner periphery feature does not rely only on geo-morphologic conditions. In fact, the *Pianura Padana* presents a great extension of poles and belts areas, interrupted by an homogenic density of inner areas represented by the abandoned productive farmland, while the Southern part lack of continuity between the poles, the belts and the peripheric areas<sup>40</sup>. Indeed, not all the mountain regions are «peripheral» in the strategy’s terms, as Sondrio for its belts municipalities or Domodossola for the Val d’Ossola are centers for the provision of services even if located on the heights<sup>41</sup>.

#### 4.1.3 The objectives of the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas.

The Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas has been launched *de facto* in 2014, after the identification of one prototype<sup>42</sup> from each Region and autonomous Provinces<sup>43</sup>. The NSIA

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<sup>38</sup> Ivi, pag. 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> Carrosio, G., Faccini, G. (2018). *Le mappe della cittadinanza delle aree interne*. In Riabitare l’Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26

<sup>42</sup> A prototype is a project area selected by the Region-- among those already selected by the region-- as the first to start. Thus, all the areas interested by the SNAI are in the projects, but only one for each region is a prototype.

<sup>43</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia*. *Agriregione*europa anno 12 n°45. Available at

relies on the distinction between two typologies of local growth: the intensive and the extensive development<sup>44</sup>. The former refers to all those changes that increase the per-capita well-being of inner areas' residents compared to the previous productive dimension; thus, the latter comprises all the modifications that not only increase the per-capita wellbeing, but that augment the scale of the local productive processes<sup>45</sup>. The difference between the two development achievements can generate conflict between the local and the national interests. On the national perspective, inner areas own an extraordinary intrinsic potential of extensive development so as to combine the local territorial capital in disuse for remedying unemployment also for the inhabitants of urban centers<sup>46</sup>. Instead, from the local point of view, due to social, demographic and economic characteristics, inner areas are (apart from few exceptions) "suffering territories" due to the gradual reduction of the public services offer and the socio-economic deterioration. The single system of inner areas expects policies aiming at the stabilization of the socio-economic condition of its territories, therefore the view is that further measurements must be oriented towards the achievement of intensive development<sup>47</sup>. The strategy aims at combining both developments logics<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, the long-term goal is to invert their demographic decline and to increase their fertility rate outcomes so as to change the average-age composition in favor of the younger cluster<sup>49</sup>.

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[https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della#footnote4\\_55n7b2j](https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della#footnote4_55n7b2j)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

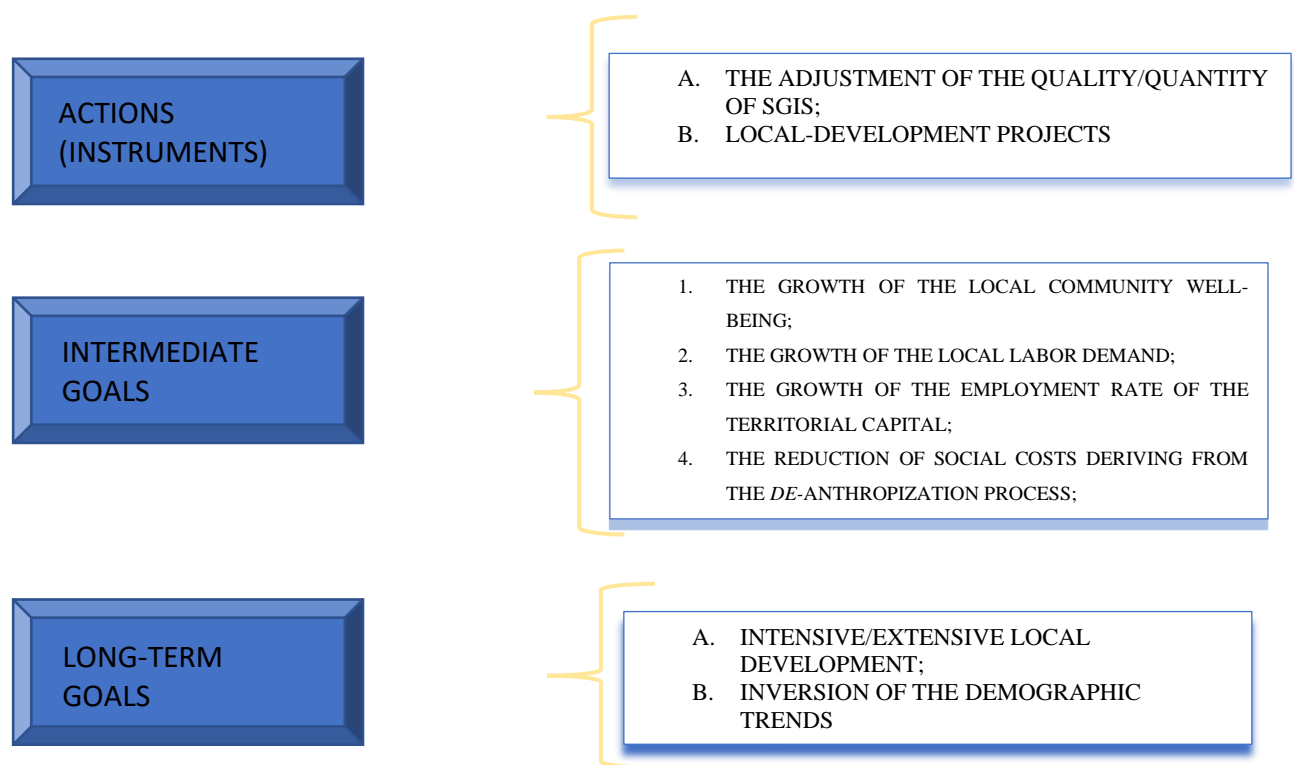
<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 11.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.



**Fig. 31.** Objectives of the National Strategy for Inner Areas<sup>50</sup>.

The intermediate objectives of the Strategy are the following (Figure 7):

1. Growth of the well-being of the local community;
2. Growth of the local labor demand;
3. Growth of the employment rate of the territorial human capital;
4. Reduction of social costs deriving from the *de*-anthropization process;
5. Reinforcement of local-development factors<sup>51</sup>.

These objectives are interdependent, and they all contribute to the intensive and extensive local development. The last intermediate objective of “reinforcing the local-development factors” relies on two factors: the market and the labor force. The former implies that the local systems and their chief economic actors must dwell with the demand and the preferences of the national, the European and global investors and consumers through the local productive chain of goods and services. The latter, instead, because of the damage caused by the exodus of the working-age cluster, must be restructured through the

<sup>50</sup> Personal re-elaboration of graph in Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 12.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

management of the immigration flows that can rebuild a solid working-age band of the population, through the training for innovative skills for producing goods and services; thus, an adequate remuneration of the labor must also be guaranteed<sup>52</sup>.

In order to achieve these results, two different class of actions and instruments are employed, each of them having a national and a local dimension:

- a) The adjustment of the quality/quantity of the local service offer (in particular, the health care, education, vocational training, and mobility services<sup>53</sup>);
- b) Local-development projects for the valorization of the cultural heritage<sup>54</sup>.

For what concerns the funding, the first tool is funded by the national budget provided by the Stability Act, while the second is pursued through the resources allocated by the Structural Funds (EFRD, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF) for the current programming period of 2014-2020<sup>55</sup>.

The efficient provision of essential services constitutes a *conditio sine qua non* for the development and the flourishing of new economic activities. Indeed, the actions in pursuit of the local development aim must be oriented towards the creation of a stable labor demand through the increase in the service assets forming the territorial capital<sup>56</sup>.

Both the class of actions are realized in “project-areas”. Their formulation is decided by groups of Municipalities (which can be composed by villages administrated by different Provinces or Regions) and are identified by the Regions and the main Centers, through the method of the open diagnosis process<sup>57</sup>. Indeed, by starting from the proposed areas nominated by the territories or by the Regions, the open diagnosis analyses stage consists in the analyses of the data and the information on each candidate-zone<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia*. *Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>54</sup> Documento tecnico collegato alla bozza di Accordo di Partenariato (2013). *Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne: definizione, obiettivi, strumenti e governance*. Pag. 26

<sup>55</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. Pag. 406.

<sup>56</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia*. *Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> Paragraph 4.1.4.

The project has to have an integrated nature directed towards the main objectives:

- valorization of the natural, cultural and tourist resources;
- sustainment of farmer system initiatives;
- energy saving and the local chain of sustainable energy;
- know-how and craftworking<sup>59</sup>.

The long-term goal of inverting the current demographic trend of the national inner areas' populations is translatable into the intent of creating acceptable living conditions and the equal respect of citizenship right which must be enjoyed by each citizen regardless of the place of birth.

#### 4.1.4 The selection of the “project-areas”.

The strategy has been applied to a limited number of areas (project areas), which are selected by the Regions in agreement with the Centers and the interested territories<sup>60</sup>. Indeed, they negotiate on a series of prototype objectives, one for each Region<sup>61</sup>. The policy areas are thought of as laboratories from which to start a learning process for replicating the “policy experiment”. Therefore, the Regions have selected the areas subjected to the policy intervention for the programming period of 2014-2020 and, thus one area (called “prototype”) is the first to start the territorial «laboratory»<sup>62</sup>. The inner areas selected for the Strategy must have the following characteristics:

- belong to the inner area classification as defined by the national map<sup>63</sup>, with priority given to peripheral and outermost areas;
- presenting critical values vis-à-vis the demographic, economic, social and environmental indicators;
- having promoted (or willing to promote) Unions or Associations of Municipalities for efficiently providing SGIs;

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.

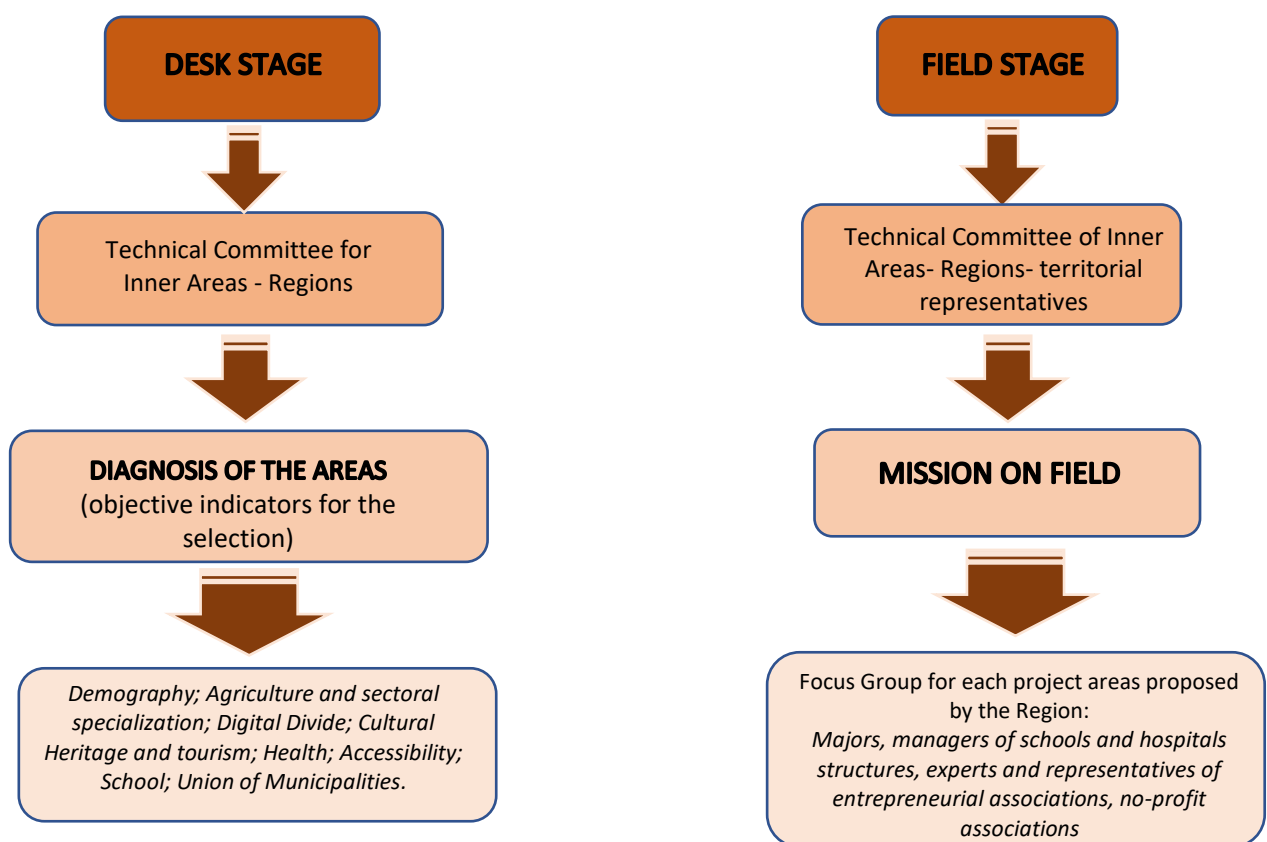
<sup>61</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia*. *Agriregionieuropa* anno 12 n°45. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>63</sup> Figure 6.

- have adequate capacity of projecting local development programs and having already formed partnerships for the implementation of the project itself (i.e. through partnerships between municipalities and local entities/institutions as Parks, mountain communities, LAGs, districts, river contracts, etc.)<sup>64</sup>.

The preliminary investigation consists of an open public institutional and participatory process aiming at identifying --in an objective and transparent manner and using an open methodology-- the territories to be impacted by the Strategy<sup>65</sup>.



**Fig. 32.** The “open diagnosis” selection of project-areas<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>66</sup> Personal elaboration of graph in Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia. Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

The “open diagnosis” process is performed jointly by the Region and the Technical Committee for Inner Areas,<sup>67</sup> and it starts through the examination of the areas proposed by the Regions<sup>68</sup>. It is articulated in two phases (Figure 32): the desk and the field. In the former, the Region analyses, with the support of the Committee, the general characteristics, the demographic trends and the number of inner areas present in the territories. Giving priority to critical territories vis-à-vis their demographic rate and land usage, the Regions proposes to the Committee the zones and the stage concludes with a first hypothesis on the delineation of suggested inner areas of the Region<sup>69</sup>.

Thus, the Committee proceed in the elaboration of the “diagnosis” of the areas which portrays the economic, social, demographic and environmental status of the territory and the state of the essential services offer (including digital infrastructure)<sup>70</sup>. Each area’s condition is then compared with the average status of the Region and the whole national status of inner areas<sup>71</sup>. The diagnosis confronts the contest variables<sup>72</sup> with other “outcome” ones which rely on the quality of the SGIs<sup>73</sup> and the economic success<sup>74</sup> of specific activities in the territory<sup>75</sup>. These indicators are analyzed in the technical meetings which are conducted along with the competence centers and the most relevant municipalities<sup>76</sup>.

Afterwards, the stage of the field analysis is conducted in order to compare the variables collected during the desk moment<sup>77</sup>. These outcomes are discussed with the relevant actors of the territory in order to assess the feasibility of a long-term action for changing

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<sup>67</sup> The Technical Committee for Inner Areas follows a technical-methodologic direction and it coordinates the implementation of the Inner Areas Strategy. It is directed by the Prime Minister's Office along with the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Mef, Miur, Mpaaf, Health Ministry, MIps, Mibact, Mit and it is actively sustained by technical subjects/entities.

<sup>68</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia. Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>72</sup> The contest variables rely on the dynamism of the agricultural parameters, the cultural attractors, etc..

<sup>73</sup> i.e. teachers’ mobility, the math competences of the students, time of arrival for the emergency number, number of citizens possessing the broadband WIFI internet connection etc..

<sup>74</sup> I.e. number of younger employed in the agricultural sector, accommodation rate.

<sup>75</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia. Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*.



opportunities and to understand the cohesion rate (not only on geographical terms) of the various municipalities of the area. Therefore, in this phase of the process, a Mayor of Reference is elected. His role embodies the institutional counterpart of the operation and he represents the other mayors of the delimited area under the Strategy<sup>78</sup>.

The crucial participatory moment of the “field phase” consists in the creation of a focus group which is composed by the mayors of the areas and the relevant citizens for pursuing the objectives of the Strategy (workers, teachers, students, doctors, entrepreneurs, artists, representatives of the health caring institutions and mobility<sup>79</sup>).

Then, the Committee and the Regions jointly evaluate the modifications suggested by the “focus groups” also for what regards changes in the delimitation of the areas. For example, this opportunity for discussion is beneficial as in many cases the municipalities have expressed the need to associate with less critical territories (i.e. areas on the heights have often asked to be included in the areas located on the valleys) in order to guarantee a successful implementation of the project in the pilot area<sup>80</sup>.

After reaching an agreement, the Region and the Committee elaborate a preliminary document which includes the data and the valuation of the functional criteria for the proposed co-planning process, its aims and the expectations. Once the eligibility of the areas is approved, the Region and the regional Committee choose the prototype and the “pilot” area which will start first with the project<sup>81</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem.*



**Fig. 33.** National Strategy for Inner Areas: the pilot areas selected<sup>82</sup>.

The Regions have selected four areas each, with the exception of Sicily (that has selected 5 areas as it is conducting an experimental project<sup>83</sup> in the area of Simeto).<sup>84</sup> In 2016, the territories selected were 68, but on the course of 2017, four areas were further included: three of them located in the Apulia Region and one additional area in the Abruzzo Region, the Alto Aterno-Gran Sasso Laga, the only territory connected to the 2016 and 2017 seismic events<sup>85</sup>.

Currently (Figure 9), the areas selected are 72 which are composed of 1 077 municipalities for a total of 2. 072 .718 inhabitants and a whole territory of 51 366 km<sup>2</sup><sup>86</sup>. Of these

<sup>82</sup> Barca, F. (2017). 'Disuguaglianze, rabbia e dimensione territoriale. La faglia-città campagna, le cause e la strategia italiana per affrontarla', conferenza "Trends in inequality", Istituto Cattaneo, Bologna.

<sup>83</sup> The experimental project is defined as the intervention conducted by the Committee for the implementation of a special strategy in its methodology that takes into consideration to the uniqueness of a specific territory.

<sup>84</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia. Agriregioneuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>86</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. Pag. 406.

municipalities, 57,7% belong to the peripheral and outermost cluster<sup>87</sup>. The average number of inhabitants for each region is 29. 400 and each zone is composed of an aggregation of 15 municipalities. Over the course of the last census (2018), the demographic decline in these areas was of – 4,4%, which reports an increase of 4,5 % with respect to the 2001-2016 period and of 2,3 % in respect to the 2011-2016 phases<sup>88</sup>.

In regard to the functional linkages between areas and methodology<sup>89</sup>, some territories own strong geographical and functional linkages with at least one near relevant city. For instance, Antola Tigullio is linked to Genoa and Bisenzio; and Mugello and Valdisevie to Florence. Instead, other areas have built a network composed of small and medium cities, as the North-East areas of the Umbria Region, or the Madonia region in Sicily and the Irpinia area in Campania. Indeed, other areas have a low demographic density character and include particularly small municipalities as the Grand Paradis in Aosta Valley and the Val del Canale in Friuli<sup>90</sup>. Differences emerged also in terms of the municipalities' willingness to associate during the preliminary stage. Indeed, some areas already had Unions of Municipalities, thus collaboration among the villages, or a cohesive and active Mountain Community<sup>91</sup>. As requested by the Strategy, the municipalities should converge and collaborate in a solid associational structure and the Mayor of Reference should carry on the purpose of transforming the “experiment” in a permanent inter-municipality system<sup>92</sup>.

#### 4.1.5 The innovations of the Strategy.

The first innovation of the Strategy regards the joint action in favor of market development for the efficient provision of SGIs<sup>93</sup>. The municipalities are realizing the linkages between an efficient provision of services and the investors' offer in advancing economic activities in

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. Pag. 406.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>90</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia*. *Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>93</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. Pag. 413.

the area. Indeed, many municipalities are redefining their strategy by beginning with a reflection on the provision of the services<sup>94</sup>.

The second innovation of the Strategy is its focus on the results of the policy<sup>95</sup>. Before going through the project stage, each selected area develops a medium-long term vision. In order to avoid an atomized policy intervention, the pilot-areas formulate a document which defines a guiding idea for changing the area through a dominant «cognitive» supply chain.<sup>96</sup> The document is based on the identification of the «innovative actors» and competence centers inside (or outside) the area. The results expected by the strategy are measurable and they are evaluated through an open method<sup>97</sup>.

The third innovation is the purpose of working only with association of municipalities. The associations of municipalities represent the base unit of the political decision-making process in the form of an aggregation of contiguous villages (*sistemi intercomunali contigui*)<sup>98</sup>. Their function is to realize a collaborative system for the provision of the SGIs that is functional to the long-term objective (the inversion of the demographic trend). The aggregation of municipalities must be converted into permanent entities<sup>99</sup>.

The fourth innovation regards the adoption of the place-based method. Nevertheless, as the “territorial density” is not sufficient for ensuring an adequate set of financial and human capital, the strategy selects few areas so as to concentrate all the available resources in each region<sup>100</sup>.

The fifth and last innovation is the «open method», that is to say the participatory approach, adopted for the territorial partnerships and for the involvement of local stakeholders through all the various stages of the policy design process<sup>101</sup>. Indeed, the role of local actors and the

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>98</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 414.

<sup>99</sup> Lucatelli, S. (2016). *Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne: un punto a due anni dal lancio della Strategia. Agriregionieuropa anno 12 n°45*. Available at <https://agrireregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/45/strategia-nazionale-le-aree-interne-un-punto-due-anni-dal-lancio-della>

<sup>100</sup> This point explains the reason behind the choice of selecting only 72 pilot areas in the preliminary phase of the Strategy.

<sup>101</sup> Lucatelli, S., Tantillo, F. (2018). *La Strategia Nazionale per Le Aree Interne*. In *Riabitare l'Italia, Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. Pag. 414

active citizenship organizations has been enhanced for the purpose of creating a direct link with the information on the deficiencies and their solution of each area.

***The co-design phase: the role of the active citizenship and the nonprofit organizations.***

The co-design stage is definitely one of the most relevant innovations that the Strategy has pursued. Indeed, in the definition of the project-area, all the relevant entities of the specific pilot-area ought to participate in the formulation of the specific project. The active-citizenship organization includes, nonprofit associations, single *innovateurs* and informal groups defined by the SNAI as «relevant individuals» for the policy design of the area. In fact, their contribution is cognitively significant. for the possibility to garner more information about the territory that the public administrations alone could not collect<sup>102</sup>.

Indeed, it is relevant to comprehend the weight that nonprofit organizations should have in the co-design process. At the beginning of this stage, the Technical Committee of Inner areas coordinates a “scouting” moment for identifying the relevant stakeholders of the territories. For instance, in 2011, Istat conducted an analysis of the typology and of the characteristics of nonprofit organizations active in inner areas. Firstly, the data showed that the number of active citizenship organization is higher in inner areas than in the poles of attraction and in the remaining part of the Italian territory<sup>103</sup>. Indeed, it appears that they are mostly present in those inner areas hit by natural catastrophes or constrained by potential damaging political or entrepreneurial choices or in localities which were the scenarios of historical events or the ones which own a strong identity connotation<sup>104</sup>. Secondly, even though inner areas’ population shows a strong old-age dependency, their civic organizations are predominantly constituted by the younger cluster compared to the associations located in the poles and in the rest of the Italian territory<sup>105</sup>.

Thirdly, the inner areas’ active-citizenship organizations tend to act within operative locations limited to their respective municipality, while the ones that are active in the poles

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<sup>102</sup> Carrosio, G., Moro, G., Zabatino, A. (2018) *Cittadinanza Attiva e Partecipazione*. In *Riabitare l’Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. pag. 447.

<sup>106</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 448.

<sup>106</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 448.

<sup>106</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 448.

or in the remaining regions of the Italian territory show a broader action camp, both local and national<sup>106</sup>.

Lastly, the Istat data show that the nonprofit organizations located in inner areas deal predominantly with four ranges of policy: culture, territorial animation intended as recreational and social initiatives, health care and environment. Indeed, it emerges a clear positive coincidence between these fields of policy and the central themes of the NSIA: those are the fields largely ignored by the national and the local administrations in the last twenty years of governance<sup>107</sup>.

Nevertheless, the nonprofit organizations of inner areas also show critical points:

1. During the co-design phase, the active-citizenship organizations have frequently crushed with the rigid tools of the Strategy, limiting the experimental attitude of the associations. An explanation is likely that both, the programming of the resources and the tools are planned from the top levels of administrative hierarchy <sup>108</sup> and have not involved the organizations.
2. Many locally based active-citizenship groups are not used and not willing to cooperate with other similar associations acting on the whole territory. Therefore, there is the need to work on understanding the different relational dynamics between the nonprofit organizations<sup>109</sup>.
3. The nonprofit organizations do not necessarily have a strategic and comprehensive vision. Indeed, as they use to work with limited projects, the SNAI's aim is to introduce them to a new inclusive and wide-ranging outlook towards the area-strategy<sup>110</sup> is a challenge.

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<sup>106</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 448.

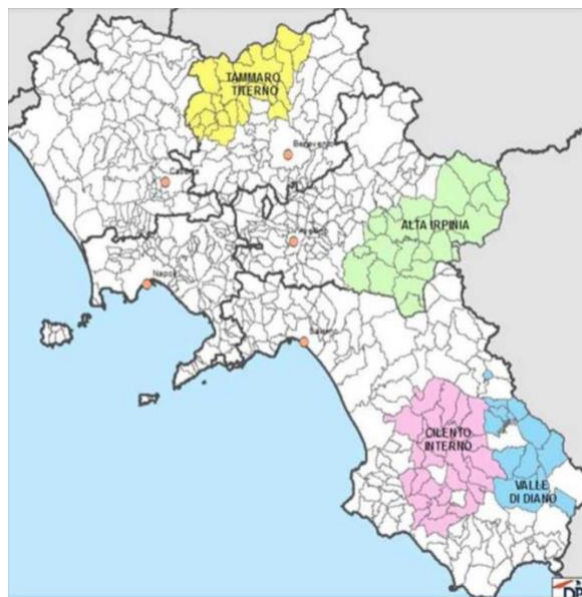
<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>110</sup> *Ivi*, pag. 456.

#### 4.2 The Strategy inside the Cilento Area: the Vallo di Diano case of inter-municipality.



**Fig. 34.** The pilot areas in the Campania Region

The Campania Region and the Technical Committee have chosen to adopt the strategy in four pilot areas: the Tammaro Titerno area, the Irpinia, the Cilento Interno and the Vallo di Diano areas. The last two are located in the Cilento National Park.<sup>111</sup> (Figure 34). This paragraph investigates the impact that the National Strategy of Inner areas has produced in the area of Vallo di Diano, in particular for what concerns the “network” of municipalities exceptionally successful, as it will be seen. In doing so, the paragraph describes the course of action taken by the municipalities and the institutional structure that the Vallo di Diano area has established for the creation of *sistemi intercomunali contigui*.

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<sup>111</sup> Regione Campania, (2019). *La Strategia Nazionale delle Aree Interne in Campania*. Relazione sullo stato di attuazione. Pag. 11.

**Legenda**

- Sistemi Territoriali di Sviluppo
- Comuni obbligati ad associarsi
- Aree Interne
- Vallo di Diano

**Unione dei Comuni**  
Nell'area interna Vallo di Diano non sono presenti Unioni di Comuni

**Associazione dei Comuni**  
Le associazioni già definite, o in via di definizione, sono indicate con colori differenti

**Formez PA**  
UTG di Salerno (aggiornamento del 20 Gennaio 2015) - Ufficio Speciale per il Federalismo - Formez PA  
Regione Campania - Sistema di riferimento EPSG: 32633 (WGS84 UTM 33N)  
Linea 6 - "Rafforzamento degli STG - Programma Integrato di Interventi Capacità Istituzionale della Regione Campania"

The Vallo di Diano is one of the two pilot-areas of the Cilento National Park located in the Campania Region and selected by the National Strategy for Inner areas (Figure 35). It is composed of 15 inner-area municipalities, all located in the Salento province. Indeed, the 75% of the villages reports a population not exceeding 5.000 inhabitants<sup>113</sup>. In 2017, the resident population inhabiting the whole area was 59.899 inhabitants and it registered a 22,5%<sup>114</sup> population rate of the over 65 years. The area is significantly losing the under 39 years farmers' cluster of the population as in the decade 2000-2010, it registered a -59,7% loss of farmers<sup>115</sup>, therefore highlighting the absence of generational replacement in the agricultural workforce. The percentage of the population enjoying broadband access not less than 20 mbps is 21,7%, which is less than half the national average (46,3%)<sup>116</sup>. In these territories, the «mobility» issue presents various fragilities, both for the inner commuting and for the outside commuting (even if the latter is favored by the SA-RC highway)<sup>117</sup>. For what concern the education sector, the territory presents issues in regards to the school transport as well as the school-work linkages for high school students, but the range of secondary

117 *Ibidem.*



schools is well-assorted: the entire range of *licei* and vocational training schools is present in the area<sup>118</sup>.

#### 4.2.2 The first step towards the formulation of the area-strategy in the Vallo di Diano pilot-area.

The implementation process of the NSIA in the Vallo Di Diano began in 2014 and it was formalized during the meeting at the Certosa of Padula with the Technical Delegation for Inner Areas<sup>119</sup>. Once adopted the Protocol of Understanding, the “Local Partnership of Vallo Di Diano” has been instituted with the aim of creating a meeting place where the subjects of the territory could assemble<sup>120</sup>. The purpose of the association is to jointly formulate strategies and projects aiming at stopping the outflow of local residents and the social marginalization of the territory<sup>121</sup>. Indeed, the co-design process was structured through the creation of a “Workshop of Listening” (*laboratorio d’ascolto*) with whom to formulate the first draft of the area-strategy. The Workshop of Listening has been organized through the identification of three local actors per municipality<sup>122</sup>. This step was facilitated by the carrying out of semi-structured interviews in order to collect the common perception of local issues, suggestions about possible solutions and a development proposal. Finally, 53 “social innovators”, mainly local stakeholders and socio-economic local actors, have been included in the co-design stage<sup>123</sup>. Indeed, a series of focus groups on different topics were organized so as to include the principal fields the Strategy had to deal with<sup>124</sup>. The focus groups have deliberated on four different subjects: culture, environment, agriculture, health and education<sup>125</sup>.

#### 4.2.3 The courses of action developed by the area-strategy of Vallo di Diano.

The area-strategy of the Vallo di Diano territory is oriented towards 4 main priority objectives:

1. territorial cohesion;

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>119</sup> Regione Campania, (2016). *Lo sviluppo delle aree interne in Campania*. Pag. 88.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>125</sup> Regione Campania, (2016). *Lo sviluppo delle aree interne in Campania*. Pag. 90.

2. the area's biodiversity;
3. social capital increase and innovative stimula from the new generation;
4. livability of the Vallo di Diano area through the fostering of local development policies.

Thus, the area-strategy follows 9 courses of action that are correlated to expected results<sup>126</sup>:

1. *Reinforcing the territorial cohesion and the innovation and digitalization of the services*: this course of action regards the streamlining of the administrative process. Therefore, it is purported that the combined management of the main administrative functions may reinforce the public administration. Indeed, the Vallo di Diano area has pursued the permanent inter-municipality system, the digitalization of the services through the creation of a “community of Vallo di Diano” which ensure free access to open data and services. Also, this course of action plans to structure an integrated and networked cooperation of the Civil Defence and the coordination of the First Aids' service so as to efficiently monitor the territory.
2. *Vallo di Diano as an international tourist attraction*: as many of the tourist attractions of the territory<sup>127</sup> are known only to the 42% of the national tour operators (the majority of them from the South of Italy)<sup>128</sup>, the aim is to include the Vallo di Diano Area in an international network of cultural attractions in order to valorize the three UNESCO's World Heritage sites: the Certosa of Padula, the Cilento and Vallo di Diano Park and the immaterial patrimony of the Mediterranean Diet. Additionally, one major achievement is the interaction between entrepreneurs in order to create a “Club Product” which is a network among the local actors and the territories so as to generate scale economies and to ensure an efficient cooperation of the local enterprises for the production chain of the typical products of the Mediterranean Diet.
3. *Protect the areas and the habitat of the park*: the area-strategy aims at collecting and sharing the cognitive capital through the collaboration of public entities (for what regards the maintenance and the security of the territory), private groups (for the valorization and the accessibility to tourist attractions) and the targeting of a niche scientific tourism.

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<sup>126</sup> Ivi, pag. 18.

<sup>127</sup> Certosa di Padula, Grotte di Pertosa, Teggiano.

<sup>128</sup> Regione Campania, (2016). *Lo sviluppo delle aree interne in Campania*. Pag. 90.

4. *The Certosa of San Lorenzo-Cultural and Creative Laboratory*: the aim is to enhance the role of the Certosa of Padula through the support of FABLAB: a group of graphics, architects and designers. The aim is to create a cultural pole of attraction in the territory which pursues an innovated vision of its arts and craftsmanship<sup>129</sup>.
5. *Reinforcing the quality supply chain and the Mediterranean Diet*: the course of action pursues the construction of a new network of producers cooperating in a structured RURAL HUB which aims at reinforcing the ancient corn and bread manufacturing.
6. *The interaction between the education sector and local entrepreneurship*: indeed, the FABLAB also provides tutorship, assistance and vocational training services for developing and innovating local start-ups and enterprises.
7. *The improvement of the training services for the whole educational cycle*: the course of action aims at supporting migrant teens and unaccompanied minors;
8. *The streamlining and the enhancement of the Local Public Transport offer*: besides reinforcing the already existing providers, the “social taxi” has been instituted for the infrequent or disable users.
9. *The reorganization and the strengthening of the territorial network for the diagnosis, the assistance and the health care services*: given the absence of the counseling center in the whole territory, the action pursues creating three counseling centers dislocated in the territory and ensuring the sustainability of a domiciliary health care service for the elderly<sup>130</sup>.

#### 4.2.4 Assessing the *inter-municipality*’s achievements of the area.

The Vallo di Diano pilot-area is composed of 15 municipalities; 93% are peripheral villages and 7% are intermediate ones. The Strategy addresses the villages with less than 3 .000 inhabitants in their need to create one single *inter-municipality* aggregation. This network has been rather easily created, because of the presence of the Mountain Community which was designated as the “promoter” of the *inter-municipality* purpose. Indeed, its role regards

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<sup>129</sup> The Mayors, Citizens of the Municipalities of the Vallo di Diano area. (2017), La Strategia D’Area del Vallo di Diano.

<sup>130</sup> Ibidem.

pursuing the concepts of unity, homogeneity and the assurance of an adequate redistribution of SGIs provided by the local public administration as requested by the National Strategy<sup>131</sup>.

At the current stage, this thesis has assessed that the following are the achievements attained by the inter-municipality experience:

- the inauguration of the convention between municipalities and the Mountain Community. The latter is in charge of coordinating through Common Offices the Urban Planning function. Additionally, Common Office has been created in regard to the land-registry and the Statistical Office functions;
- the creation of the Environmental Strategic Evaluation Office located in the Mountain Community's seat of Vallo di Diano;
- the institution of a common central purchasing office;
- the creation of new associated social services;
- the signing by the Mountain Community and the municipalities of the *Accordo Quadro*<sup>132</sup> regarding the information and communication technologies (ICT) financed by the Project for the Agency of Innovation and Territorial Research (AITR) for promoting the Digital Agenda of the territory;
- The inter-municipal waste management "EcoDiano"<sup>133</sup>;

Therefore, it is clear that the inter-municipality process developed in the Vallo di Diano area is being pursued in three different fields:

1. *Institutional*: on this level, the signing and officialdom of the Protocol of Understanding by all the municipal councils was helpful for sharing short and long-term political and strategical choices regarding the entire Vallo di Diano area;
2. *Administrative*: the common and shared management of the services and functions of the public administration in an associated approach was formalized through the Convention. These functions are planned to be coherent with the NSIA's purpose, but also with the aim of innovating the PA.
3. *Economic-Social*: this level of inter-municipality accord became achievable through the establishment of the Local Institutional Partnership defined as permanent "locus"

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ivi*, Pag 105.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*.

for the communication of the local actors. Indeed, the aim of the partnership was emphasized also during the co-design stage of the policy with the establishment of the “focus groups”<sup>134</sup>;

Additionally, it is relevant to highlight the institutions that have been formed in order to ensure territorial cohesion and administrative performance:

- *Conference of the Mayors*: this assembly is in charge of providing the general lines of direction and of supervising the actions promoted by the other bodies;
- *A common office for planning*: which provides technical and administrative capacity and has responsibility for the promotion of the area-strategy;
- *Convenzione Quadro*: the agreement pursues the aim of ensuring a common management of fundamental functions as: ICT, land registry, statistical services, civil protection planning and the coordination of the first aid service, and urban and territorial planning at the inter-municipality level<sup>135</sup>.

The bond between the villages appears to be highly developed and the last actions promoted on the territory have led to a collaborative managing of the functions and of the fundamental services. For instance, common development projects have already been launched, such as the Integrated Project for the Great Territorial Attractor of the Certosa of Padula (2000-2006), the territorial pacts of Vallo di Diano and the LAG of Vallo di Diano<sup>136</sup>. Nevertheless, the inter-municipality's structure still needs to be consolidated through the strengthening of its institutional governance setting and the acquisition of legal status in order to entirely fulfil the function as entities in charge of implementing the inner territorial projects<sup>137</sup>. The “*Città Montana Vallo di Diano*” is entirely delineated in its function as an inter-municipality system aiming at reaching the general aims recommended by both the European and the National Strategy for Inner Areas, but the challenge consists in providing continuity to this experience at the institutional, administrative and economic levels. Indeed, from these achievements it clearly results that the administrations as well as the local actors have been involved in the

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<sup>134</sup> The Mayors, Citizens of the Municipalities of the Vallo di Diano area. (2017), *La Strategia D'Area del Vallo di Diano*.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem*.

creation and in the implementation of the policy as for the creation of the Workshop of Listening as well as for the FABLAB support for the Certosa of Padula.

#### 4.3 Morigerati: the impact of the strategy outside the border of the pilot areas.

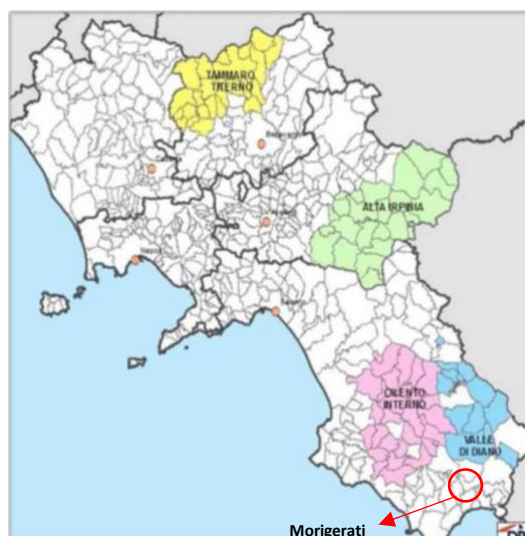
Having analyzed the actions pursued by the Vallo di Diano Mountain Community, the question is posed whether the Strategy has had an impact “over the borders” of the pilot areas. For this purpose, the case of Morigerati was chosen as it is located between the “Vallo di Diano” and the “Cilento Interno” pilot-areas and because it is included in the *Transluoghi* project, which conducts territorial analysis and boosts the creation of a network between the different villages of the area (Casaletto Spartano, Tortorella). Thus, the investigation has been pursued through the interviews with three local actors active in the area: Cono D’Elia, the vice-mayor of Morigerati, Liviano Mariella, a local stakeholder which has been conducting for 4 years the *Transluoghi* project through its association “Recollocal”, and Luigi Puglia, an historian. All three respondents have provided their consent to be named in this work. Their interviews have been translated into English by the author of this work.

Morigerati is an inner village located in the Southern part of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park (Figure 36). Istat reports that the current demographic indicator records a population of 653 inhabitants<sup>138</sup> with a density of 30,82 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. Since 1971, the inhabitants of Morigerati have diminished by 377 units (or 36,60%)<sup>139</sup>.

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<sup>138</sup> I comuni Italiani (2018). *Morigerati*. Available at [www.icomuni-italiani.it](http://www.icomuni-italiani.it)

<sup>139</sup> I comuni Italiani (2018). *Morigerati*. Available at [www.icomuni-italiani.it](http://www.icomuni-italiani.it)



**Fig. 36.** The location of Morigerati in the middle of the Pilot Areas<sup>140</sup>.

**a) LIVIANO MARIELLA:** stakeholder

Liviano is an architect and a facilitator who works on projects related to the connections between geographical and virtual spaces and their communities. The aim is to create new relations between the territory and the resident community through a series of data and statistical analysis conducted on the territory. Recollocal is the association which started the Transluoghi<sup>141</sup> and the Jazzi<sup>142</sup> project and that has collaborated with Matera European Capital of Culture for 2019.

*What is the essence of your work?*

Liviano defines Recollocal as a «bottom-up regeneration platform». During the Matera experience, Liviano has worked along with 24 pilot-municipalities selected for the National Strategy for Inner Areas. Usually, he works on abandoned spaces or villages or a park (i.e. the National Park of the Cilento Area). In particular, the *Transluoghi* project was founded by Liviano, Rosa Lo Monte and Daniele De Stefano. It takes place every year in Morigerati and attracts people from all over the nation (but also from all over Europe). As he states «the project of Transluoghi is based on a temporary community which works along the permanent

<sup>140</sup> Personal re-elaboration of Regione Campania, (2016). *Lo sviluppo delle aree interne in Campania*.

<sup>141</sup> Recollocal website available at: [www.recollocal.it/transluoghi/](http://www.recollocal.it/transluoghi/)

<sup>142</sup> Jazzi website available at: [www.jazzi.it](http://www.jazzi.it)

one (the residential community of Morigerati) through the employment of different kinds of research tools (which can vary from the local kitchen lab, media, territorial analysis, landmarking). Not through an exotic methodology, but as anthropologists of the new century. The place-based approach is our discriminant in order to create a relationship with the permanent community». Transluoghi is part of the informal network of artist residences which is acting in small villages in order to create «a constant flux of artists and curators in spiritual retirement.<sup>143</sup>» The artist residence's aim is to share practices and to institute an informal network of knowledge in order to preserve the cultural know-how of a specific territory.

*How was the relationship with the local administration of Morigerati when you first started the project of Transluoghi?*

«Morigerati did not know us. **We chose Morigerati because it is an inner village** and we knew that the village was keen to consider and finance our project. **Indeed, the idea was that of creating a network between the different communities of the area in order to start a collaboration among them, both on an institutional and on the stakeholder levels; we started working also in Tortorella and Casaletto Spartano villages, even if Morigerati is the major municipality.** As Morigerati is not a pilot area, we were never able to discuss with the participants in the meetings regarding the National Strategy for Inner Areas in the area of Vallo di Diano.

During those meetings, the municipalities, the hospitals, the representatives of the schools and of no-profit organizations participate in round tables. Nevertheless, the nonprofit organizations that are usually called to participate in the meetings do not always fully know the territory».

*Why wasn't Morigerati chosen for the strategy?*

«Based on the indicators, the Inner Area of the Cilento and the Vallo di Diano were privileged. This reason relies on the dominant role of Vallo della Lucania (n.d.r. Vallo della Lucania is located in the Inner Cilento pilot-area) in the territory. This power derives from its geographical location, as it is located in the middle of the Cilento area, and because it is the main center for the provision of SGIs. Indeed, Vallo della Lucania has a DEA I level

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<sup>143</sup> Scarpella, S. (2019). Breve viaggio nelle residenze artistiche in Italia. Available at: <https://www.rivistastudio.com/residenze-italia/>



hospital and the full range of education services. Nevertheless, it does not have a SILVER station which instead is located in Salerno.

Two conditions of three are respected, but all the different realities rely on Vallo della Lucania also for its political power. **They (the Committee and the Region) may have thought of not including the real “marginal” zones of the Cilento area and to start with the realities which were in a better condition. For instance, Vallo di Diano may form a single municipality of more or less 60. 000 inhabitants. There are not villages in extreme need in the area of Vallo di Diano, nevertheless they were included. »**

*As in Matera you have worked alongside with pilot municipalities, could you give a general outlook of the impact of the Strategy in those areas?*

« The Strategy and the policy are worthy in their purpose and in their aims. **It is a policy that looks differently at teamwork** and at the allocation of resources. If I have to identify negative points in the Strategy, **I may express my concern in the effective identification of the subjects** who could facilitate the action on the ground inside the nonprofit associations, instead of talking to the mayors. With Rural Lab they have tried, but today it does not exist anymore; today it is Rural Hac <sup>144</sup><sup>145</sup> and it works alongside the University of Federico II in Naples. They were called for the Calvanico<sup>146</sup> area. For example, Luigi Puglia knows perfectly the territory and he knows the subjects who act in the area, but he was never called. Additionally, another point may be **the illusion of leaving everything in the mayor’s hands, in the territorial assemblies** and reaching an agreement **without a mediator**. Indeed, the creation of areas and the agglomeration of municipalities (especially the minor ones) is very difficult in the negotiation stage because of **historical conflicts among the municipalities**. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to reach an agreement which favors all the parts in the long run. There was the need of realistically understanding the local realities of an entire area through a deeper knowledge of their needs. »

*What do you reckon on the possibility of the training of the mayors?*

«There are already courses for training the public administration. The issue is that, realistically, there are few sensible administrations and a lot of “classic” ones. This is the

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<sup>144</sup> It is a project which investigates the linkages between Open Hardware and agriculture, their aim is to introduce the local farmers to new digital resources and tools

<sup>145</sup> Rural hack web site available at: <http://www.ruralhack.org/network/>

<sup>146</sup> Calvanico is an inner village located in the pilot-area of the Irpinia region.

result that the Strategy can be proud of having achieved: **a partial eradication of ancient groups of power in small areas and in small municipalities**. Additionally, there is territorially based resistance whereby people are not willing to cooperate as **they do not want to think themselves as a “district”**. Indeed, the mayor has always had a direct relationship with the citizens, and he is the mayor of his community. Obviously, the agglomeration of municipalities is not homogeneous. **Often, the disadvantage is of the small communities and the small municipalities as they have fewer representatives.** »

*As you have worked on projects alongside both pilot and not pilot areas of the National Strategy for Inner Areas, could you explain what perception do the villages hold in regard to the depopulation phenomenon?*

« In the pilot villages that have seriously adopted the NSIA's recommendations, **the policy has left its marks**. Obviously, everything is relative. Surely, we have seen a gradual **increase in awareness among the villages and the institutions** on the consequences of depopulation on the life-quality of the local residents. On one hand, everybody is aware of the low birth rate, of the old-age dependency. On the other, not everybody is aware that the **80s projects' solution are not efficient in the long run. The system of scattered accommodation does not work, the local restaurants and the local bar are not networked**. Additionally, many villages are focused on being included in the European calls but without adopting an integrated and comprehensive approach to the project for the area. Surely, as we (Recollocal, Transluoghi) are detached from the calls' logic, we had the possibility to spend more time on the analysis of the territory. Also, Morigerati has begun this kind of accommodation offer, and surely the WWF Oasi of Morigerati has seen an increase of visitors. But, the NSIA focuses on macro and on long-term impacts. By now, the **Strategy has been able to change the way in which the villages perceive themselves**. The Strategy has pursued collegiality and cooperation between villages. Indeed, **the mayors are more and more inclined towards the collaboration among themselves**; I have experienced it in Basilicata. Indeed, in Vallo di Diano, the Strategy has been successful in the aim of agglomerating the single municipalities. Surely, in order to comprehend the success of the NSIA, we must wait another programming period as not all the pilot areas have begun to implement the strategy».

**b) Luigi Puglia:** architect, historian, local guide.

The interview with Luigi Puglia was useful also because it discussed the historical divisions inside the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park. The respondent underlined, that the park is one unified area, but it is strongly divided in terms of its local communities, as it may be manifested from the division that the NSIA has applied for the selection of the pilot areas. The “common ground” relies on the infrastructure built at the end of the previous millennium: the highway and the *Tirrenica* trainway which refers to the territory as “Cilento”. Puglia pointed out that, while the communities are united within one park, “the poles for the provision of the SGIs are dislocated, therefore the villages converge on different «gravitational poles. » The *file rouge* that unifies the park comprises the mobility poles, the landscape and the dialect spoken in the area.

For what regards the policy applied for the development of the territory he states that due to these divisions of the territory, “it is extremely difficult (for the municipalities) to adopt a «common vision of the future. » The depopulation phenomenon in the macro area of the Cilento park has been felt from the start of the new millennium, with an acceleration derived from the financial crisis which hit the territory in 2010. Indeed, he affirms that there is the need to control the public administration in its work because of the corruption that persists “in the whole Mediterranean Area”.

In order to better involve, without skepticism, the local community, it is relevant **to open up and to make the population perceive that the policies are not planned from the top downward**, but that they are planned in view of the local territory with an eye for the specificities of the single areas. For what concerns, instead, the Transluoghi project, he states that « Trasluoghi has chosen, as a matter of principle, to act in a depopulated area which cannot be rescued anymore. Indeed, as **the Transluoghi project is planned by young people who decided to stay in their villages, it is relevant to involve the younger cluster of the local population, but it is largely already gone.** Transluoghi should be part of a network based on the poles of attraction of the Cilento area. Now, it is not a stimulus within the territory, but it is an attraction for people from the outside». Its suggestion is indeed to comprehensively adopt policies which can be integrated in the existed surrounding in order to aid the small realities that cannot be saved acting by themselves.

c) **CONO D'ELIA:** vice-mayor and the “doctor” of Morigerati. He was elected in 2003 and he remained in office for three mandates. Currently, he is a vice-mayor of the administration as he states, «built by himself, in reality, for continuing the project that I had been pursuing for 10 years».

*When you first held the role of mayor, what was the overall condition of Morigerati? Was the depopulation issue already a problem?*

«Morigerati in 2003 was a village which was not able of valorizing the resources that it had. There was only a WWF Oasi of the Bussento area which registered 2 .000 presences a year, one restaurant and nothing else. Maybe one bar in the hamlet of Sicili. Depopulation was already an issue, but **in the last 10 years we have lost at least 100 inhabitants.** Mainly families and younger people who decide to move to the coast (Sapri). **The current population is mainly composed of retirees.** Obviously, being able to address this demographic level and composition is extremely complicated. »

*The NSIA recognizes 72 pilot areas and Morigerati is not part of the area selected.*

«No, Morigerati has not been chosen. I reckon that it is for “territorial” divisions, all the **“Bussento” part of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano Park was not included.** It was hard to figure out the reasons behind these choices. I do not know why, maybe due to various requests that are not “usually” part of the territorial analysis. »

*Have you ever thought to candidate the area yourself?*

«I’ve thought about it, but on the other side I wanted to comprehend if it was possible to design a project with the other municipalities without being forced by a policy design from the top downwards. **I have also recognized the need to merge with the other administrations of our area of the Bussento.** Indeed, speaking with the other mayors, we thought that we could collaborate for at least the next five years. Today, we are experiencing a **“resistance” phase,** our current goal is **to guarantee the same demographic level.** »

*Through the employment of Structural Funds?*

«Yes, in particular **we are focusing on providing «mobility» services in order to link the various villages of the area,** such as the public transport to Sapri (SA), where there is the nearest hospital and the upper secondary school. Indeed, we have been advantaged by the

financing of the Rural Development Programs provided by the Campania Region. These funds were invested in the “Morigerati Paese Ambiente” project (for scattered accommodation) and for the restoration of the historical centre of Morigerati. For what concerns the mobility, all the municipalities of the areas are committed to the green «mobility» issue. In fact, there is only one morning bus line that connects the train station of Sapri to Morigerati. Therefore, the request is to install a car sharing service at the Sapri Station in collaboration with all the other villages of the area. The challenge is to create not only seasonable structures and jobs, but ones capable of organizing the time and activities of the villages during the whole year. **The challenge for us (mayors not included in the NSIA) is to “resist” both demographically and economically. »**

*Do you wish to enter in the NSIA project?*

«Currently, no. By now, I am trying to create an exportable model through the **RDP’s funds.**»

*For what concerns the creation of a network among the different administrations, how are you willing to operate?*

«In order to create a stable network, we are participating in projects with both, **the mayors and the local actors** of the other municipalities. Transluoghi is one of the chief projects for the area, indeed we are hoping that they will transform the logic of the program in a permanent one, which means creating a stable new community in the village. »

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

On March 6<sup>th</sup> 1947<sup>1</sup>, the Italian Constituent Assembly was debating the content of Article 3 of the Constitution for the newly-born Republic. During the discussion, Lelio Basso<sup>2</sup> emphasized the right of all the citizens to equally contribute to the social and civil development of the Italian Republic, independently of their place of birth or social class. In fact, the second subparagraph of Article 3 clearly exposes the duty of the Republic to remove every economic or social obstacles which would limit the freedom and the equality of citizens. During the meetings of the Constituent Assembly, Lelio Basso made a speech which clearly underlines the principles and values which have supported this research (English translation by the author of this thesis; Italian text in footnote):

*«We believe that democracy is defended, that freedom is defended not by diminishing the powers of the State, not by trying to prevent or hinder the activity of the powers of the State, but on the contrary, by involving all citizens in the life of the State; by engaging, all citizens in the life of the State; all, up to the last shepherd of Abruzzo, to the last miner of Sardinia, until the last farmer of Sicily, until the last mountain citizen in the Alps, all up to the last woman in the scattered farmhouses of Calabria, of Basilicata. Only if we achieve that all of us are actually able to participate in the economic and political management of collective life, then we will really achieve a democracy»<sup>3</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Carrosio, C., Faccini, A. Le mappe della cittadinanza nelle aree interne. (2018). In Riabitare l'Italia. *Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste*, Roma: Donzelli. p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Lelio Basso was an Italian socialist antifascist, a lawyer and a politician. in 1946 he was deputy for the Italian Constituent Assembly and in 1947, he was the Secretary of the *Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria* (PSIUP).

<sup>3</sup> « Noi pensiamo che la democrazia si difende, che la libertà si difende non diminuendo i poteri dello Stato, non cercando di impedire o di ostacolare l'attività dei poteri dello Stato, ma al contrario, facendo partecipare tutti i cittadini alla vita dello Stato, inserendo tutti i cittadini nella vita dello Stato; tutti, fino all'ultimo pastore dell'Abruzzo, fino all'ultimo minatore della Sardegna, fino all'ultimo contadino della Sicilia, fino all'ultimo montanaro delle Alpi, tutti, fino all'ultima donna di casa nei dispersi casolari della Calabria, della Basilicata. Solo se noi otterremo che tutti effettivamente siamo messi in grado di partecipare alla gestione economica e politica della vita collettiva, noi realizzeremo veramente una democrazia». (Carrosio, C., Faccini, A., 2018).

Lelio Basso clearly stated that the State must recognize the role that each citizen may play in a democratic society, no matter his/her sex, race, religion and, obviously, no matter where the citizen lives. Even if these words were pronounced more than 70 years ago, the current Italian geography of the social divide still exists, as it did in 1947. For instance, by looking at the data presented in the course of this research, it is possible to conclude that the right to fulfill the citizenship right has not been fully accrued. Accordingly, the classical dichotomy North/South is not as relevant, because the central matter today concerns the guarantee of equal opportunities to all the Italian citizens so as to allow their democratic contribution to the life of the State, no matter how «**remotely**» they live from the centers of the economic growth across the country.

Indeed, Basso's words inspired the present research. The thesis' aim has been to inquire and reflect on the rural depopulation phenomenon which is present all along Italy's Apennine spine, from North to South, by answering three research questions. To this end, the thesis has embraced the objectives to investigate the significant livability gap between urban and rural areas as well as to comprehend the importance and the weight that the «places that do not matter» possess in regards of their contribution to the Italian and European society.

### 5.1 The outcomes of the research.

The first RQ aimed at comprehending the causes and the effects of the population exodus:

*“Which are the reasons and the territorial consequences of the phenomenon of depopulation flows across the EU and Italian territory?”*

Therefore, the research has analysed the triggers of the depopulation phenomenon through the historical events that have changed the overall European and Italian population distribution across these territories and through the definition of the depopulation process as a «systemic phenomenon». Thus, the answers to this question are organized as following:

#### a) *Historical Reasons.*

##### *Europe*

For what concerns the causes of European rural depopulation, the historical explanation of the phenomenon must be framed from the 1975 period onwards, when the post-war “baby

boom” stage stopped due to the economic downturn which hit the whole continent. The crisis incrementally changed the population distribution within the Member States, fostering the migration of several clusters of the European rural population to look for better opportunities towards big cities as well as towards richer Member States. Indeed, the more recent 2009 financial crisis aggravated the trend, boosting a further decrease of the European population rate. Currently, the demographic malaise affecting the EU is not only limited to a rural/urban relationship, but it is augmented by the low-fertility rate and the old-age dependency which do not ensure the generational turnover of the whole European population. Compared to the urban agglomerates, rural and remote European areas are reported to be predominantly affected by the demographic crisis, thus experiencing the most rapid exodus of the productive population cluster of young adults-of a childbearing age.

### *Italy*

For what concerns the Italian case, the earliest variations regarding the rural population distribution and composition have been assessed before the World Wars, when the secular and economic mountain-valleys’ relationship was broken. The research finds that the end of this bond was due to the territorially defined industrialization process of the productive triangle of Turin, Genoa and Milan and to the reclaiming of coastal and stream basin areas which were deemed to ensure a high life-quality standard compared to the liveability in mountain communities. These changes altered the mountain and inner population traditional *status quo*, as population migration started towards the productive centres as well as towards lowland areas of the peninsula. Additionally, the industrial development in the North-West triangle reorganized Italy’s territorial and infrastructural net through the construction of new transport routes which favoured coastal regions and therefore fostered a rapid economic development of those zones as well. From the post-World War II, the *intra* and the *trans*-national migration as well as the «urbanism» pull due to the reconstruction, led to the expansion of cities and their peripheral areas, thus further draining the human capital of the high lands. Moreover, the «green revolution», the Common Agricultural policies of the first 1970s and the end of the sharecropping method in the late 1980s changed the peninsula’s farming techniques in favour of mechanized and chemical monocultures. Recently, the Italian population has suffered from the global financial crisis of 2008 and beyond which has been reducing further the rural as well as the national population rates.



b) *Depopulation is a «systemic phenomenon».*

The research bases the analysis of the causes and the effects of depopulation on the assumption which prevails in the literature that population abandonment is a «systemic phenomenon». This implies that the reasons and the causes related to depopulation are fundamental and firmly correlated, thus boosting the circle of economic decline and population exodus. The general triggers and effects of depopulation are defined by the “vicious circle” of depopulation (→ **Figure 14**).

Each circle can affect the population rate thus actioning a downward spiral which influences the life-quality condition of the territories. For example, the demographic circle can be fed by the old-age dependency of a rural community which unavoidably affects the offer and the demand of its local economy, thus impacting on the migration and on the fertility rate of the remaining population. For what concerns the Italian case, the Italian statistical maps on the demographic dimension (→ **Figure 10**), as well as the McDonald research on the variables that affect the fertility rate, outlined that the Southern area of the Italian peninsula is reporting one of lowest demographic and birth rates of all the European territory. From the McDonald explanation, the fertility rate is highly dependent on the cultural context as well. In fact, in a “familistic” environment, as the Italian *Mezzogiorno*, the fertility rate is reported to record lowest outcomes. Additionally, always in regard to the Italian case, the low demographic and fertility rate is highly influenced by the insufficient levels of State assistance and tax-allowance when dealing with children and families.

The remoteness circle is strictly linked to the quality of the local infrastructure. This concept is connected to two factors: firstly, the physical and geographical remoteness from urban agglomerations which usually contradistinguishes underpopulated territories and secondly, the local governance capacity in providing adequate infrastructure and services for the needs of the local community as well as for the provision of SGIs. For example, because of the remoteness feature, the provision of an efficient railway net is highly expensive for the local administration. Thus, if the latter as it is often the case has a low-governance capacity, it even worsens the condition of local infrastructure and services. Indeed, this deficiency injures the local economy, therefore boosting the population exodus from the territory. The Italian map of the “physical dimension” (→ **Figure 9**), which takes in consideration the quality and the quantity of the infrastructure in each province, demonstrate that the islands of Sardinia

and Sicily as well as the Central and the Southern Apennine regions are not adequately connected to the main urban centres, thus boosting the “remote” character of these areas.

The “education circle” is another loop which can lead to high-poverty rates due to absence of educational institutions or their distance (→ **Figure 27**). Therefore, the local population composition is likely to lack high-skilled workers. Indeed, the majority of the EU Member States that are characterized by a higher presence of rural areas, also present a high percentage of people at risk of poverty. For instance, in the EU, the early leavers (NEET) rate is reported to be higher in the Iberic and Italian peninsula and in the Eastern regions, which are the Member States to be highly composed of rural areas (→ **Figure 17**).

Eventually, the labour market circle is affected by the low market offer. This deficiency is the consequence of the structure of the monoculture economy of rural areas which does not favour economies of scale. The local market of underpopulated areas is usually very fragile and highly dependent on exogenous factors, such as local climate conditions and global market fluctuations. Indeed, the historical explanation demonstrates how the global economic crises have always negatively impacted more so the population rate of rural and remote areas. This struggle for being competitive on the global market induces the local population to look for stable labour opportunities elsewhere. For instance, the employment rate calculated in regions of the NUTS 3 and NUTS 2 levels is recorded to be lower in the rural areas of the EU (→ **Figure 16**), thus again Spain, Italy and Eastern countries report a higher score. Indeed, for what concerns the Italian case, the provinces that have recorded a low employment rate value are principally the Southern ones which also report the worst out-flow rate in the economic map of the Italian territory (→ **Figure 11**).

c) *The CAP effect on small farmers until the Agenda 2000 strategy.*

For the purpose of this research, the Common Agricultural Policy was investigated in order to discuss the Rural Development Pillar and its implementation. The research’s conclusion is that the CAP earliest implementations and reforms were not able to target and to preserve the small-farmers’ income due to the price support apparatus and the direct income mechanism. Indeed, the overproduction logic behind them, affected negatively both the natural environment of rural areas because of the incentive to use petrochemicals, as well as the small farmers’ traditional methods of agriculture because they had to catch up with

the new technologies in order to be competitive on the global food market, therefore boosting the “labour market vicious circle” of depopulation.

The second RQ that the dissertation aims at answering is:

*What have been the EU's strategy and its implementation means of CAP and Structural Funds in regard to the phenomenon of depopulation of rural villages?*

Thus,

*a) The new-millennium Common Agricultural Policy aims at preserving the agricultural goods' quality over the quantity and at safeguarding small farmers and rural areas.*

The Agenda 2000 strategy aimed at promoting the European agricultural model as an environment caring new approach giving relevance to quality over quantity in food production. In doing so, it was necessary to reform the earlier CAP structure and tools. The modifications to the CAP intending to impact positively on the life quality of rural inhabitants and farmers are the following:

1. *The introduction of the sustainability principle as a way to value extra-economic variables in insuring farmers' wellbeing and in agricultural policy;* thus, considering new elements for rural policies' design such as the nature of the territory, its environment and its society.
2. *The introduction of the Rural Development pillar into the CAP structure through the Agenda 2000 Strategy.* Indeed, the strategy has directed all the tools towards the purpose of improving the liveability of rural communities. Even if the budget allocation of the current 2014–2020 period may not be satisfactory to pursue all the Rural Development commitments, the ongoing debate for the following programming period of 2021-2027 is showing a stronger intent to ensure generational turnover in agriculture, among others by facilitating the access to financial resources for the cluster of younger farmers.
3. *The final refinement of the decoupling procedure in the Fischer reform of 2003.* Through that reform more attention was given to the quality of the agricultural goods over their quantity through the norm of the producers' independent sustainment of/responsibility

for agricultural surpluses. Additionally, the *consideranda* of the Fisher reform of CAP procedures recommended a higher consideration and a more active commitment to the areas experiencing a significant decrease of the local population.

4. *The formal institution of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in 2007.* The fund specifically supports small farmers through by funding knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, through the promotion of food chain organizations and the preservation of eco-system related to agriculture and forestry.

5. *The Europe 2020 strategy's commitment towards rural development objectives covering the period 2014-2020.* The thesis has assessed that the goal of reducing the extreme poverty rate and increase environmental responsiveness are two objectives that, in concert with the smart specialization approach appropriate for each geographic area, show how Europe 2020 is considering with greater attention the specificity of local needs in order to promote effective rural improvement.

6. *The 2017 Commission's communication on the implementation of rural development objectives and on the future of food quality and agriculture.* Indeed, the Communication emphasizes the need to foster generational turnover in rural areas through the commitment of national and regional governments in order to facilitate the access to financial instruments for the young interested in working in rural areas.

In particular, the research has found that the means which support the strategies towards the improvement of life in rural villages are:

*b) The integrated and multisectoral nature of the Rural Development Pillar which permits its policy implementation to act on a wide range of sectoral variables.*

The Rural Development pillar adopts an integrated methodology in policy formulation and implementation. Thus, it pursues the protection and the valorisation of each region's peculiarities. An endogenous territorial development analysis is pursued through the involvement of both endogenous and exogenous forces in the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement (PA). The exogenous actors are represented by the external agency which addresses general objectives and conditions, while the endogenous involvement is of the local actors who participate in setting the targets and the design of the PA. From the analysis of the PA stages, it is deemed that the first programmatic moment emphasizes the weight

and the role of local actors in addressing the territory's needs. Indeed, they are in charge of deciding the objectives and the allocation of the resources for the rural development overall set of purposes.

*c) The European Inner Periphery Strategy is the ad hoc modality for targeting the various economically and socially shrinking rural areas.*

The Inner Periphery Strategy has been implemented starting in the current programming period of 2014-2020. Its aim is to support economically and socially shrinking remote areas by identifying them through spatial and a-spatial drivers. In fact, the Strategy targets the peripheries through the employment of the Euclidian definition of space and through the “organized proximity” analysis. Thus, the Strategy considers not only the geographical distance between rural areas and the nearest urban agglomeration, but also the quality of service accessibility and the economic potential of the territory.

Each Inner Periphery (IP) area is planned to be targeted with different tools of action considering the territory's weaknesses and potentials, an approach that is coherent with the integrated nature of the Rural Development Pillar and the Strategy logics. Thus, its aim is to avoid unfavourable side-effects, leveraging the action of different layers of the administrative apparatus and through a multi-sectoral approach for tackling the rural exodus (→ **Figure 23**). Indeed, the classification of the IPs is described in terms underscoring that the vicious circle of depopulation is unique to each context. Therefore, the continuous and meticulous monitoring of the outcomes is crucial in order to avoid the “pump effect” of the policies. For example, if the railways net is improved, but the local economy does not catch the worker's demand, the latter will be absorbed by the urban labour market's offer, thus transforming the rural areas in “dorms” for commuters. Or, if the low institutional performance of the local and the regional administrators endures, the policies may not be implemented efficiently for the local needs of the areas.

*d) The LGAs of the LEADER program are accessible means for the active citizenship in order to pursue a bottom-up approach.*

The LEADER approach is a great example of the application of the endogenous theory's method. Indeed, the smart specialization objective is facilitated through the formation of Local Action Groups that ensure the collective actions of local private and public actors. The impact of the Local Action Groups depends on the LAG capacity of intercepting the local resources and identifying the peculiarities of the territory. For example, the "Area Greganica" LAG has been able to catch the bright side of the Bovésia region's unique and historical isolation from the rest of the peninsula, through the leveraging for development of the unique system, language and culture which resulted from the region's remoteness character. The LAG promotes the Bovésia's culture not only for touristic purposes, but also for research and experimental reasons.

Consequently, the third research question was:

*What is the impact of the Italian Inner Periphery Strategy on Italian villages?*

The Italian Inner periphery strategy aims to reinforce or even create linkages between different municipalities, stimulate the economic and human potential underutilized of the shrinking areas; reduce the social costs deriving from the *de*-anthropization process and, in the long term, energize the democratic trend of the areas now interested by the depopulation phenomenon.

The research found that the intra-municipality system approach is not only directed towards villages and administrations, but also towards local actors. The collaboration between the active citizenship organizations, especially during the co-design stage, permits to engagement of the local human capital, which can be reinforced through the formation of networks between different non-profit associations located in the whole area.

*Civic laboratories, inter-municipality and stakeholders.*

The selection of 72 project areas has been conducted according to the idea of experimenting new civic «laboratories» in which to operate through the participation of institutional as well as informal local actors. Among these, the Vallo di Diano area in the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park have revealed to be a significant example of experimentation of this new approach to tackle problems in territories and underscore their peculiarities. The "Comunità Montana of Vallo di Diano" followed the recommendations of NSIA and it

faithfully aimed to pursue the short and long-term objectives. For instance, from the words of Liviano Mariella (*«there are not villages in extreme need in the area of Vallo di Diano, nevertheless they were included»*) it could be questioned the real motives behind the choice of including the Vallo di Diano area in the first programming period of the NSIA. But Liviano implicitly answers this interrogative: firstly, the Vallo di Diano areas is contradistinguished by an active and efficient Mountain Community which has always acted as glue for the municipalities of the Vallo di Diano Area. Therefore, it was thought that the villages were used to collaborate on common development projects before the implementation of the Strategy itself (e.g. the LAG of Vallo di Diano). Secondly, as the pilot-areas' projects are considered «laboratories» of policy where to experiment new civic forms of collaboration, it is surely much helpful to begin a research on fertile territories, where the new inputs are more promptly absorbed so as to “rapidly” monitor long-term outcomes.

#### *A new governance structure for pilot-areas*

Firstly, the main achievement of the Strategy is the development of the “*Comunità Montana of Vallo di Diano*”. As mentioned above, the Mountain Community facilitated the cooperation between the villages of the area. Indeed, it is revealed that the pilot-area has established new forms of governance and economic collaboration. For instance, on the institutional and administrative level, each municipality has first signed the Protocol of Understanding for the commitment to short-and long-term strategical choices and, with the *Accordo Quadro*, they agreed to the shared management of the SGIs in order to streamline their costs. Additionally, on the economic side, the municipalities have constituted a permanent “locus” for the communication of the local actors as well as the co-production of goods as the development of the old- corn productive chain.

#### *The Inner Periphery commitment modifies the non-pilot villages approach and the perception towards the depopulation issue.*

Liviano Mariella delineated some of the achievements of the Strategy. For instance, the NSIA has achieved *«a partial eradication of ancient groups of power in small areas and in small municipalities»*. Additionally, the Strategy was able to create a new sense of belonging across different villages of the same area, induce the individual administrations to collaborate, create integrated strategies to satisfy the local needs of the territory in a manner that is not any more tied to tourist structures for a short season, but that aims at rebuilding

a new community inhabiting the territories. The Vallo di Diano area is pursuing the growth of the local labour demand in order to reduce the social costs deriving from the de-anthropization process. Indeed, the “Club Product” project aims to generate economies of scale on Mediterranean products, therefore stop the circle of labour depopulation, while the municipalities’ collaboration to improve the SGIs of the area aims to contrast the permanence of their remoteness loop.

Indeed, through the first launching of the Inner Periphery Strategy, even non pilot projects appear to be transversely influenced by the Strategy itself. For example, the “informal” collaboration for the improvement of the transport infrastructure between Morigerati and the nearby villages is pursued by the local administration of the Bussento area through the RDP, after realizing that the cooperation between villages is the only method for surviving during the current demographical and economic “resistance” phase. Also, another achievement for non-pilot areas regards the multiplying of new practices of non-profit organizations which apply the network approach of the Strategy through informal means. The «laboratory» methodology pursued by both the Strategy as well as the *Transluoghi* project creates a virtuous circle of knowledge on different layers of the local civic structure. For example, *Transluoghi* aims to become a permanent residence for researchers, working to understand how to reverse the local depopulation trend, thus pursuing the same long-term objective of the NSIA, with an “informal” network approach.

## 5.2 Challenges and Suggestions.

As the Italian Inner Periphery Strategy pursues the long-term ambitious aim of inverting the demographic trend of rural and inner areas, the research outcomes must be framed on the achievements of the short-time objectives as well as the consolidation of these new collective governance entities. Nevertheless, by analysing the pushing factors of population exodus and rural abandonment, two premises are indispensable and ought to be highlighted:

- Firstly, the inner areas’ labour market clearly depends on agriculture and on small farmers business. Therefore, at the European level the CAP of the next programming period must be synchronized to the aims of the Inner Periphery Strategy in order to protect the small economies and the new forms of co-production of the local agricultural goods.



- Secondly, the Italian government must be committed to assist the family nucleus through family-oriented policies as well as to improve the public administration's performance. Indeed, even if not directly pursued by the NSIA, these combined actions are still a *conditio sine qua non* for the realisation of the long-term goal of inverting the demographic trend of the inner areas of the peninsula. For instance, the Partnership Agreement's policy model aims to support the voices of the local actors, but it is reported to be strongly influenced by the slowness of the PA undermining the effective application of rural strategies.

From the interviews with the local actors in Morigerati and from the analysis of the Vallo di Diano case and the direct observations, some concerns about issues have emerged so that this work closes by offering suggestions of solution for them. .

1. *Ensure the permanence of the inter-municipality structure.* By considering the Vallo di Diano case, concerns are rising in regards of the solidity and the permanence of the inter-municipality's achievements. Indeed, from the variety of interests pursued by each village, by each administrator and by each local actor, it is relevant to provide the new-born entities with an institutional and legal status in order for them to fulfil their function. Additionally, in some cases, the local actors as well as some villages involved are reported not to have agreed to cooperate with other similar associations acting on the territory because some villages are not willing «*to see themselves as a district*». In Liviano's words, it is relevant that «all the parties requests are pursued in the long run», thus a “mediator” and facilitator may be helpful in reaching an agreement.
2. *“Translating” and simplifying the tools of the Strategy.* From the opinions of the non-pilot areas' local actors and from the results of the investigation pursued on the local stakeholder's involvement in the strategy, it is evident how the NSIA's perception may be distorted. Both, the mayor of Morigerati and Luigi Puglia, outlined the need for people to perceive that a policy is not planned from the top downward, but that it is effectively tackling the needs of the territory through a deeper understanding of the villages' peculiarities. Indeed, a more comprehensive research of the territory must be pursued in order to find the relevant subjects able to assess its needs. Nevertheless,

the local actors have frequently crushed with the rigid tool of the strategy; thus, when tackling the “small” and shrinking realities, it must be questioned how to act and to involve the meaningful actors of a territory.

3. *“Time is running out”*. Morigerati records a population of 653 inhabitants and during the last 10 years it lost 100 people. Due to the reported old age-dependency of the inner areas’ population, by 2030 the population rate of Morigerati, as many others inner villages, could exponentially shrink. Even if the length of the programming period is projected so as to effectively achieve intermediate results from the implementation of the policies, it is necessary to suggest and to sponsor the NSIA’s approach. The inner areas must be informed that they can candidate themselves. Additionally, the local actors, as the example of Liviano Mariella teaches, may learn from the networking method of the NSIA by undertaking a bottom up approach which can foster a higher communication between different villages in the same area. For instance, the number and the achievements of the artist residences which act as “experimental laboratories for the territories” are pursuing the teamworking and research methods based on co-operation and on sharing knowledge through the involvement of the young. As many of them are young who decided not to leave their villages (as Luigi Puglia defines Liviano Mariella, Rosa Lo Monte e Daniele De Stefano), their real commitment is to modernize their inner areas without losing the know-how and the cultural heritage of these remote or, in Ardener’s terms, these “imaginary” spaces.

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## **Summary:**

# **The Depopulation of Italian Mountain Villages: Are the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Inner Periphery Strategy Fostering the Repopulation of Italian “Ghost Towns”? A Comparison between the Pilot Area of Vallo di Diano and the non-pilot Village of Morigerati.**

**by**

**Angela Federica De Felice**

The present thesis' aim is to inquire about the rural depopulation phenomenon which is influencing the life of the Italian Apennine's communities, from the North to the South of the peninsula. To this end, the thesis has framed its investigation within the intervention logic of the European Union (EU)'s Structural and Investment Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as well as of the action pursued by the Italian government following the lead of the European Inner Periphery Strategy.

## **Chapter I**

The first chapter encompasses the introduction of the research work. Thus, it describes the aims of the research, the methodology with its range of methods, and it also outlines the research questions (RQs) the work is to address.

There are three RQs to be addressed in sequence, as follows:

- *Which are the reasons and the territorial consequences of the phenomenon of depopulation flows across the EU and Italian territory?*
- *What have been the EU's strategy and its implementation means as CAP and Structural Funds in regard to the phenomenon of depopulation of rural villages?*
- *What is the impact of the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas on Italian villages?*



## Methodological approach

For what concerns the methodology adopted by this thesis, it is inclusive of the following methods:

- the content analysis of scholarly literature and document literature about the depopulation issue;
- the analysis of statistical data of the territorial impacts of the phenomenon; and
- a place-based inquiry approach of a significant case study of an Italian mountain area included among the pilot-areas of the NSIA, the Vallo di Diano in the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park, and of a not-pilot village, Morigerati, which is helpful for comprehending the actions which were pursued without the NSIA implementation.

The document literature analysed for the purpose of this research comprises European as well as national (and local document) sources. Texts taken into consideration are mainly public documents of the institutional online portals of the European Commission, European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) and EU Member States, in addition to public statistical data and analyses. Moreover, additional “introspective” and national self-examining literature sources were examined, such as the Italian books such as “Riabitare l’Italia”, written by leading personalities and researchers of the Italian Inner Areas, together with documents and oral evidence regarding the Morigerati case study and the official Document for the NSIA implementation in the Vallo di Diano area.

## Chapter II

The second chapter aims at answering the first RQ. Primarily, from the European Union’s (EU) perspective, the chapter gives a comprehensive profile of inner communities in Member States losing population and explains the phenomenon, discussing the causes which have led to the outflow of inner area residents toward urban centres.

The chapter firstly dwells with the EU’s distinction between sparsely populated areas mostly located in northern European countries (→ **Figure 1**), defined under the NUTS 3 cluster with fewer than 12.5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, and underpopulated areas analysed through the LAU2 category, covering also most of the Southern and Eastern European territory (→ **Figure 2**). Thus, the illustrative map delineates the concentration of depopulated areas also among the territory of the Iberic peninsula, the Italian Alpes and Apennines in addition to the Eastern countries. Afterwards, the chapter discusses the historical reasons behind the European population shrinkage. Indeed, after the post-war baby boom, the population growth began to decline from the 1970s onwards as well as the contribution to

the trend by the 2009 and post financial crisis. Indeed, the population decline of the whole European cluster changes the overall population distribution across the territories. The countries that are experiencing a worse demographic malaise are the ones which are highly constituted by rural depopulated areas, such as Spain, Italy and the Eastern countries (→ **Figure 3**).

After the analysis of the medium-term demographic condition clusters (the city “pull effect”, the urban-rural split, the north south split between EU Member States and the regional divergences within individual EU Member States), the European map has shown the «degree of urbanisation», which indicates the status of an area based on the share of the local population living in urban clusters or centres. Eventually, this map identifies three types of LAUs: densely populated areas, which are cities with the majority of the population living in a cluster of more than 20 000 inhabitants; intermediate density areas defined as towns and suburbs with the majority of the population living in an urban centre with more than 5 000 inhabitants and thinly populated areas; and rural areas constituted by the majority of the population living in rural grid cells. Additionally, the data show that 42% of the European population lives in cities, 31% in small urban areas and 27% in rural regions.

The self-sustaining factors that alter the population composition of European rural communities to the benefit of urban centres are singled out. For instance, the declining fertility rates and the increasing ageing trends of the European population in the last decades recorded at the national as well as regional levels are two factors that are structurally impeding the generational turnover of the population. Thus, the old-age dependency of the European population (→ **Figure 5**) is highly reported across the Spanish Pyrenees, the Italian Apennines, as well as in Greece, France, Iceland and the Outermost Regions of Norway.

For what concerns the fertility rate, the analysis has been conducted through the study of the Total Fertility Rates (TRF) which is the minimum level capable of ensuring generational replacement. The alarming data results are due to various factors: the high return for human capital of being childless, the economic uncertainty, or even the “*familistic*” environment can influence the birth rate. In fact, as per the McDonald’s study, the gender equity issue highly impacts on the fertility rate given that the families where the father is involved in child care activities are more likely to be constituted by more than one child. In fact, fertility rate differences at the regional levels (→ **Figure 7**) show data dividing the European territory in three blocks: the North-Western and Anglophone countries, where the fertility rate is close to the replacement level thanks to the migration inflows; Southern Europe and German countries, which experience a birth rate lower at 1.4; and lastly Eastern EU countries which not only experience the fertility decline, but also they report a moderately high mortality level. In fact, in the last two blocks, the social environment constitutes a discouraging factor for union formation and the fertility rate; which is due to infrastructure unavailability, the “*familistic*” context,

and the inadequate level of state assistance or tax allowance when dealing with families and children. Therefore, these results are describing not only an unequal population distribution across the European territory, but also the decline of the overall European population cluster.

Then, an in-depth examination of the phenomenon is carried out, focusing on the Italian case. An historical analysis of the Italian rural population outflow is carried out by focalizing on the XX and XXI century periods. This section highlights the close link which persisted between the mountains and the valleys communities until the first quarter of the XX century regarding the mountain local community's survival and economy. The positive demographic trends of the Northern mountain area were incrementally altered by the industrial development of the productive triangle of Turin, Genoa and Milan, and by the harvesting of rice, which required female farmhands to move to the *Pianura Padana* and the reclaimed valleys nearby Modena, Reggio Emilia and Rovigo. Nevertheless, the central and the Southern Apennine also suffered due to the reclaiming of the valleys, as for the case of the *Abruzzese* shepherds who used to descend into the Puglia Tableland (*Tavoliere*) for practicing the transhumance. Additionally, the sectoral territorial industrial development led to the construction of new railways and highways which favoured coastal regions, thus unequally distributing the wealth and the opportunity deriving from the industrial development.

After WWII, the emigration flows from the mountain communities were directed towards transoceanic lands, highly industrialized European countries or towards the main urban clusters of the Italian peninsula. The factors that have fostered the out-migration flow of the '40s are to be found in the effects boosted by the post-war «green revolution», the CAP's artificial market mechanism of the first '70s and the end of the sharecropping at the end of the 1980s which marginalized even more rural and mountain inhabitants (→ **Figure 8**).

Subsequently, the work moves to investigate the effects of rural abandonment in Italy through the analysis of the statistical data maps elaborated by Domenico Cerosimo, Antonella Rita Ferraro and Rosanna Nisticò. The outcome of the analysis of the data collected clearly portrays the current disparities between «full» and «empty» Italian provinces depending on the results of the various outcomes on four dimensions of analysis which are: the physical, the demographic, the economic and the social.

The first level of analysis (→ **Figure 9**) is the estimate of the outcomes relative to the use of soil in each province, the collection of records on the quality and quantity of infrastructure connecting the various provinces (i.e. public transports, highways); and the number of residents living in residential buildings. Thus, this analysis examines the “remoteness” feature of each province and it has found

that the territories which score a lowest result are located in the Sardinia region due to the low use of soil rate and the inconsistent service of traffic routes and transport present in the island. The macro area which is presenting a high «full» characteristic is the North east part of the peninsula as well as the majority of the Tuscan provinces. On the other hand, the central part of the Italian peninsula appears mostly «empty», for instance even Rome is not well-connected with the surrounding areas as well as the *Mezzogiorno* regions where the infrastructure apparatus is not properly connecting the provinces, but it is only restricted to centre-periphery transports.

For what concerns the demographic dimension (→ **Figure 10**), the analysis has been pursued through the comparison of the statistics between the number of residents of a specific area and the percentage of foreigners, as well as the number of college graduates in the areas and the residents' life expectancy. The higher demographic value is reported in the Northern part of the peninsula, such as Trieste, Prato, Milan, Bolzano and Parma due to the good score in terms of migration incidence. While the lowest value is recorded in the Sicilian provinces of Caltanissetta, Enna, Palermo, Agrigento and Messina. These results clearly demonstrate the difference in quality of the labour offer among the different provinces due to the presence or absence of college graduates. In fact, the percentage of college graduates is reported to be higher in Bologna, Florence, Trieste and Milan, while the Central and the Southern part of the Italian Apennine is completely «empty».

The economic dimension (→ **Figure 11**) indicates the strength of the economic activities and the export incidence vis-à-vis the local market structure. The map shows the dramatic gap between the North and the South of the peninsula. In fact, the Centre and North-East triangle of Arezzo, Como and Bolzano absorbs almost the 40% of the national income, while the economically weaker provinces are located in Calabria and in Sicily as well as the whole Southern part of the territory. Indeed, for the younger cluster, the Neet results is 36% in the «empty» areas against the 15% of «full» areas.

Lastly, for what concerns the social dimension (→ **Figure 12**) it is configured through the analysis of the social service provision for each specific province. Also in this case, the map displays a high gap between the Northern and the Southern provinces; in fact, more than the 90% of the Northern municipalities offer child-care services, while only 30% of the «empty» ones provide infant assistance. From Rome moving to the South of the peninsula the worst scores are recorded in Caserta, Benevento, Vibo Valentia, Crotone and Cosenza.

The average between the synthetic indicator is finally provided (→ **Figure 13**). It shows that the majority of the Italian population lives in «intermediate» areas, while 38% of the Italian population lives in «full» provinces, and 18% lives in the empty ones. It clearly appears that all the areas located on the Apennine mountain range, from Arezzo to Reggio Calabria, are «empty», in addition to the

«remote» character contradistinguishing all the Southern parts of the Peninsula, in particular when considering the Sardinia and the Sicilian islands. The low outcomes are a consequence of the unsatisfactory and deficient governance of those areas for what concerns the provision of essential services; thus, the unsatisfactory administration contributes to the demographic exodus and therefore to the weaknesses of the economic structure, while it feeds the loop of depopulation of these areas.

The last paragraph focuses on the causes and the effects of depopulation through the introduction of the “vicious circle” theory applied to data collected at the European level. This cycle is useful to explain the variables that trigger the continuous and unstoppable cause-effect loop and that impact on the financial viability of rural areas (→ **Figure 14**). The circle can be boosted by various cycles as the demographic one, as well as the remoteness, the education and the labour market loops. Indeed, the cycles are interconnected and they feed on each other. Therefore they do not follow a specific order, but each territory presents its own “vicious circle” of depopulation and economic decline, by taking into consideration the influence of local governance efficiency; the poverty rate; the fragile environment and the natural biodiversity of those lands; the economic stagnation and, therefore, the low employment rate. For example, the demographic circle can be fed by the old-age dependency of rural community which unavoidably affects the offer and the demand of the local economy, thus impacting on the migration and on the fertility rate of the remaining population.

The remoteness circle is strictly linked to the quality of the local infrastructure. This concept must be connected to two factors: firstly, the physical and geographical remoteness to urban agglomerations which usually characterizes underpopulated territories and secondly, the local governance capacity to provide adequate infrastructure for the needs of the local community as well as for the provision of SGIs. For example, because of the remoteness feature, the provision of an efficient railway net is highly expensive for the local administration. Thus, if the latter presents a low-governance capacity character, it can even worsen the condition of the infrastructure. Indeed, this deficiency injures the local economy, therefore boosting the population exodus from the territory.

The education circle is another loop which can lead to high-poverty rates due to the absence of educational institutions or their distance (→ **Figure 27**). Therefore, the local population composition may lack high-skill workers. Indeed, the majority of the EU Member States that are characterized by a higher presence of rural areas, also present a high percentage of people at risk of poverty. For instance, across the European territory, the early leavers rate is reported to be higher in the Iberic and Italian peninsula and in the Eastern regions of the European continent, which are the Member States highly composed of rural areas (→ **Figure 17**).

The labour market circle is boosted by a low market offer. This deficiency is a consequence of the structure of the monoculture economy of rural areas which does not favour economies of scale. The local market of underpopulated areas is usually very fragile and it much depends on exogenous factors, such as local climate conditions and global market fluctuations. Indeed, the historical explanation demonstrates how global economic crises have always negatively impacted the population rate of rural and remote areas. The struggle to be competitive on the global market induces the local population to look for stable labour opportunities elsewhere. For instance, the employment rate in NUTS 3 and NUTS 2 levels is recorded to be lower in the rural areas of the EU (→ **Figure 16**), thus again Spain, Italy and Eastern countries report a higher score.

### **Chapter III**

Addressing the second research question, the purpose of the third chapter is twofold: on the one hand it aims to portray the Common Agricultural Policy's effects on rural communities and, on the other, to depict the strategies currently in place for the development of inner territories. Firstly, it outlines the evolution and the consequences of the Common Agricultural Policy. Indeed, the CAP's path is portrayed through an historical and chronological evolution of its reforms, from the 1957 Rome Treaty until the present days. As the first CAP's structure aimed at protecting the farmer's income, it adopted an approach which combined a "variable levies" strategy, applied to foodstuffs of non-member countries, to realize target prices. Additionally, the national intervention agency acted as a "stock guarantee" when a commodity's price market fell below the twenty percent of the established target price to prevent a further fall of value. This artificial price mechanism, the storage arrangements and the control of the imports by facilitating exports through the application of subsidies, induced the farmers to produce a large quantity of agricultural goods also through the usage of petrochemicals. Despite the achievements of significant quantitative agricultural results on the production side, the price mechanism and the distortion of the market were to the advantage of industrial scale farmers at the expense of the smaller-size ones, because the large producers were induced by the price mechanism to act according to a rent-seeking logic instead of a profit-making one, thus to overproduce. The modifications in the CAP structure brought about by the Agenda 2000 Strategy is reported to have been the first real step in favor of small farmers' production, with the introduction of the Rural Development pillar as well as the refinement of the decoupling procedure through the norm of the producer's independent responsibility for agricultural goods surplus.

The second paragraph firstly concentrates on the birth of the integrated approach as the key intervention logic in the pursuit of rural development. Various documents are analyzed, such as the

1987 documents for “the future for rural society”, the Cork’s conferences of 1997 and 2016 and the Salisbury meeting of 2003. These are considered the pioneers in rural development, settling the principles and the “political orientation” to innovate rural policies. In fact, the integrated nature of the Rural Development pillar applies the endogenous development analysis in the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement. In particular, implementation by the public administration aims to pursue the local objectives through the agreement among local actors on a common policy formulation. Nevertheless, due to the low performance capacity of the local administration, frequently this process is reported to be negatively influenced by the slowness of the public administration undermining its effectiveness.

Lastly, the Inner Periphery Strategy is discussed in concert with other rural development tools such as the LEADER project and the Community-led local development (CLLD). The a-spatial definition of periphery is given through the analysis of the different meanings attributed to the concept by different authors. For example, the concept of peripheralization separate from that of marginalization; the former is a dynamic process which expresses the interactions across different agglomerations, while the latter states a static socio-economic status and setting. Thus, the concept of periphery is linked to its degree of social marginality and not necessarily to its distance from the urban center or the densely agglomerated economic hubs; indeed, the Euclidian definition of periphery influences the social attitude and the allocation of the resources of the territory.

Therefore, the European Inner Periphery Strategy’s aim is to support shrinking remote areas by identifying them through spatial and a-spatial drivers. The Strategy targets the peripheries through the employment of the Euclidian definition of space and through the “organized proximity” analysis. Thus, the Strategy considers not only the geographical distance between rural areas and the nearest urban agglomeration, but also the quality of service accessibility and the economic potential of the territory.

The Strategy has been implemented in the current programming period of 2014-2020 and it outlines each Inner Periphery (IP) area by targeting them with different tools of action that consider the territory’s weaknesses and potentials. Its aim is to counter unfavourable side-effects through the action of the different layers of the public administration and through a multi-sectoral approach tackling the rural exodus (→ **Figure 23**). The classification of the IPs underlines that the vicious circle of depopulation is unique to each rural context. Therefore, the continuous monitoring of the Strategy’s outcomes is crucial in order to avoid the “pump effect”.

The implementing instruments are outlined and in particular the achievements of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) and their effective action on the territory. The LEADER' approach is a great example of endogenous theory's method as well as the Community led-Local Development (CLLD). Founded in 1991, the LEADER's aim is to explore new approaches for the fostering of rural development through the interconnection of local communities for the formation of private and public partnerships defined as "Local Action Groups" (LAG) and co-financed by the EARDF or by the Structural Funds and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. the CLLD selects the Local Action Groups who are the owners of, and therefore, responsible for, the local projects: they identify the action place, fix the goal, the form and the governance of the partnership and they select the projects to be financed, all of which ensures the collective actions of local private and public actors. The impact of the Local Action Groups depends on the LAG's capacity of intercepting the local resources and the peculiarities of the territory. For example, the "Area Greganica" LAG has been able to leverage the Bovésia region's historical isolation from the rest of the peninsula, through the enhancement of the unique system, language and culture which have resulted from the region's remoteness character. The LAG promotes the Bovésia's culture not only for tourism purposes, but also for research and experimental reasons.

## Chapter IV

The fourth chapter dwells on whether the translation of the Inner Periphery Strategy inside the national agenda has produced outputs in the villages in which it operates. Thus, it is analysed in depth the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA) as well as the structure and the scope of the policy for the 72 pilot villages. The Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas has been launched *de facto* in 2014, after the identification of one prototype from each Region and autonomous Provinces. Before selecting the pilot-areas, between 2012 and 2014, the Italian Department for Development Policies in collaboration with Istat and the Italian National Bank, worked to construct the map of the inner peripheries of the country (→ **Figure 30**). The NSIA develops the map of the territory through a "polycentric" lecture of the nation.

The mapping stage is based on three theoretical statements: the Italian territory is characterized by an extremely dense and differentiated network of urban centers; these "poles of attraction" offer a wide range of essential services able to generate a distant catchment area; the level of spatial peripherality of the territories in regard to the urban centers network influences the quality of life of citizens and their opportunity of being socially included. The functional relationship between the poles and the more or less peripheral territories can variate. In fact, the map was built by initially delineating the



“centers for the provision of services.” They are defined as municipalities or the networks of municipalities able to offer the range of secondary education institutions, one hospital of DEA I level and at least one train station of Silver category.

After the identification of the Centers, the remaining municipalities are classified into four bands: belt areas; intermediate areas; peripheral areas and outermost areas (→ **Figure 29**). This classification is obtained through the formulation of an “indicator of accessibility” which defines the distance vis-à-vis the travelling times from the nearest pole: the belts have a distance of less than 20 minutes, the intermediate areas between 20 and 40 minutes, the peripheral areas between 40 and 75 minutes and the outermost area more than 75 minutes. This preliminary classification has been crucial for creating an objective tool which could be employed in the delimitation of the project-areas. The inner areas are found to be located mainly along the Alps, the Apennine and the hilly zones of Italy.

For what concerns the goals, in the short term the Strategy has the following objectives, to: increase the well-being of the local community, the local labor demand and the employment rate of human capital, and to reduce social costs deriving from the *de*-anthropization process. While the long-term objectives are related to the achievement of intensive and diffused local development and the inversion of the demographic trends of the inner areas. Both types of actions are realized in “project-areas”. Their formulation is decided by groups of Municipalities (which can be villages administrated by different Provinces or Regions) and they are identified through the method of the open diagnosis process (→ **Figure 32**).

The preliminary investigation consists of an open public institutional and participatory process to identify in an objective and transparent manner, the territories to be impacted by the Strategy. It is articulated in two phases (→ **Figure 32**): the desk and the field work. In the former, the Region analyses, with the support of the Committee, the general characteristics, the demographic trends and the number of inner areas present in the territories. Giving priority to critical territories, the Region proposes to the Committee the zones and the stage concludes with a first hypothesis on the delineation of suggested inner areas. Afterwards, the stage of the field analysis is conducted in order to compare the variables collected during the desk work. In this phase of the process, a Mayor of Reference is elected, representing the mayors of the delimited area under the Strategy. The crucial participatory moment of the “field phase” consists in the creation of a focus group which is composed of the mayors and citizens for pursuing the objectives of the Strategy (workers, teachers, students, doctors, entrepreneurs, artists, representatives of the health care institutions and mobility). Once eligible areas are approved, the Region and the regional Committee choose the prototype and the “pilot” area which

will start first with the project. The total areas selected are 72, composed of 1 077 municipalities for a total of 2. 072 .718 inhabitants.

The local actors' role and their relationship with European and national institutions is examined. As the Strategy pursues an approach based on the relevance of the local actors, this means that in the project-area, all the relevant entities of the specific pilot-area ought to participate in the formulation of the project. This research has found that nonprofit organizations of inner areas at times show critical points: during the co-design phase the active-citizen organizations have frequently opposed the rigid tools of the Strategy; locally based active-citizenship groups have shown not to be used and not to be willing to cooperate with associations acting at the wider level; and nonprofit organizations do not necessarily have a strategic and comprehensive vision of the territory.

Ultimately, in order to present a local viewpoint and to assess the impact of the Strategy, the chapter analyses the action implemented by the Vallo di Diano Area and the different programs developed by the Morigerati village. These two areas are located in the same macro area delineated by the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park. For what concerns the former, the implementation process of the NSIA in the Vallo Di Diano began in 2014. The area has established a new institutional structure in the creation of the "*Città Montana di Vallo di Diano*" (→ **Figure 35**), a new inter-municipality system. This new configuration was ensured by the action pursued at three different levels: institutionally , the municipalities of the area have signed the Protocol of Understanding for sharing short and long-term political and strategical choices regarding the entire Vallo di Diano area; administratively , the common and shared management of the services and functions of the public administration in an associated approach was formalized through the Convention; while economically and socially , the inter-municipality accord became achievable through the establishment of the Local Institutional Partnership defined as a permanent "locus" as well as the creation of a Club Product in order to reinforce the productive chain of the ancient corn.

This new overall configuration was made possible thanks to the strong leadership that the Mountain Community of Vallo di Diano has exercised, acting as a glue for the villages of the areas. Indeed, the co-design process was structured through the creation of a "Workshop of Listening" (*laboratorio d'ascolto*) with whom to formulate the first draft of the area-strategy. The Workshop of Listening has been organized with the identification of three local actors per municipality. For what concerns the area-strategy, the Vallo di Diano has followed 9 courses of actions pursuing the environmental and the economic development of the area through the reinforcement of the quality supply chain for the re-launching of the ancient corn and bread manufacturing. Progress has been made in the development of the area-strategy, while new entities were established such as the conference of the

Mayors, which is the assembly in charge of providing the general direction and monitoring of the actions promoted, a common office for planning to provide the technical capacity for the area-strategy, and the *Accordo Quadro* for the common management of key functions for the villages.

In regard to the actions pursued by the Vallo di Diano Mountain Community, the question is posed in the chapter of what impact the Strategy may have had “over the borders” of the pilot areas. For this purpose, the case of Morigerati was chosen because it is located between the “Vallo di Diano” and the “Cilento Interno” pilot-areas and because it is included in the *Transluoghi* project, which conducts a territorial analysis and boosts the creation of a network between the different villages of the area (Casaletto Spartano, Tortorella). Morigerati is an inner village located in the Southern part of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park (→**Figure 36**). It has a population of 653 inhabitants and since 1971, the inhabitants of Morigerati have diminished by 377 units.

The investigation has been pursued with interviews with three local actors, very active in the area: Cono D’Elia, the vice-mayor of Morigerati, Liviano Mariella, a local stakeholder who has been conducting for 4 years the *Transluoghi* project through its association “Recollocal”, and Luigi Puglia, an historian. All three respondents have provided their consent to be named in this work. Their interviews have been translated into English by the author of this work.

Firstly, the interview with Liviano Mariella is reported and discussed. Liviano is a facilitator who works on projects related to the inner periphery cause. Indeed, Liviano, Rosa Lo Monte and Daniele De Stefano founded the *Transluoghi* project. The latter takes place every year in Morigerati and attracts people from all over Italy (but also from Europe). The project of *Transluoghi* is based on having a ‘temporary community’ working alongside the permanent one (the residential community of Morigerati) through the employment of different kinds of research tools (which vary from the local kitchen lab, media, territorial analysis, landmarking). Its relationship with the local administration of Morigerati has evolved during the last four years. The founders choose Morigerati because it is an inner village and thus it could be involved in a development project with the idea of creating a network between the different communities of the areas to have them to collaborate, both on an institutional and on a stakeholder level. Liviano then explains the reason why Morigerati was not selected for the Strategy. Firstly, he argues that the Inner Cilento pilot-area was chosen because of the dominant role of Vallo della Lucania in the territory, which derives from its geographical location, being located in the middle of the Cilento area and because it is the main center for the provision of SGIs. Instead, the Vallo di Diano was selected for the potential success in forming a single municipality of about 60.000 inhabitants, despite the absence of villages in extreme need in the area.

Liviano also assesses the impact of the Strategy on those areas. He explains that the Strategy works differently in terms of teamwork and the allocation of resources. A concern he expresses is in regard to the identification of the actors who could facilitate the action on the ground to be made by members of the nonprofit associations, instead of talking to mayors. Leaving everything in the mayors' hands in the territorial assemblies, it is hard to achieve success without the involvement of a mediator, especially when taking into consideration historical conflicts among them. Importantly, Liviano also assesses that the NSIA has been able to partially sideline the ancient groups of power in small areas and in small municipalities.

When asked what perception the villages have of the depopulation phenomenon, he states that there is a growing awareness in the villages and inside the institutions about the consequences of depopulation on the life-quality of the local residents, but at the same time that not everybody is aware that the older solutions have not been efficient. Many villages, he assesses, are focused on being included in European tenders, but without adopting an integrated and comprehensive approach to the project for the area. Altogether, by now he states that the NSIA has been able to significantly change the way in which the villages of the area perceive themselves so that they are more inclined to collaborate.

The interview with Luigi Puglia was useful also because it discussed the historical divisions inside the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park. While the area is strongly divided, a "common ground" of interest is found in the connecting infrastructure built at the end of the previous millennium: the highway and the *Tirrenica* trainway which refer to the territory as "Cilento". Puglia pointed out that, while the communities are within one park, "the poles for the provision of the SGIs are dislocated, therefore the villages converge on different 'gravitational poles', thus infrastructure is important. Additionally, he makes the point that there is the need for the project to control the public administration in its work because of the corruption that persists "in the whole Mediterranean Area". Thus, it is key to open up the process and to make the population perceive that the policies are not planned from the top downward. Regarding the *Transluoghi* project, he states that as it is planned by young people who decided to stay in their villages, it is aimed to involve what remains of the younger cluster of the local population. Therefore, *Transluoghi* should be part of a network based on the poles of attraction of the Cilento area in order to catch a wider younger's cluster.

The interview with Cono D'Elia, the vice-mayor of the current administration of Morigerati, explains the means and the tools adopted by a non-pilot area to "resist", democratically and economically fighting against the depopulation phenomenon. Firstly, he explains that in the last 10 years,

Morigerati has lost 100 inhabitants, mainly the younger cluster who decided to move to the coast. He also explains that, to survive in this population abandonment stage, the administration of Morigerati has thought of collaborating with the other municipalities of the area for at least the next five years on a development policy-design not planned from the top down. In particular, they are focusing on the provision of mobility services to link the various villages of the area through the employment of the Rural Development Programs provided by the Campania Region. Additionally, when asked if he wishes to enter in the NSIA projects, he states that it is not necessary as the administration of Morigerati is already involved in developing projects with the mayors and the local actors of the other municipalities through the employment of different approaches, such as the *Transluoghi* project.

## Chapter V

The last chapter elaborates on the conclusion of this research. The analysis and discussions have provided information to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the work as well to underline some issues that have emerged and offer suggestions of solution. This chapter is structured by interconnecting the different answers and relating them to the suggestions.

The answer to the first question about the reasons and the territorial consequences of the phenomenon of depopulation flows across the EU and Italian territory, has been found in a number of different points of analysis: clear historical reasons, depopulation understood in its nature of a «systemic phenomenon», and the negative CAP effects on small farmers until the changes brought about by the Agenda 2000 strategy.

The historical reasons point to both the more general framework of the European depopulation phenomenon and the specific historical path of rural population abandonment experienced in the Italian inner areas. The former has been experienced from the 1975 period onwards, when the post-war “baby boom” stage stopped due to the economic downturn which hit the continent, and the consequential unequal distribution of population between and within the EU Member States. Instead, the latter primarily derives from the combined effect of the industrialization of the productive triangle of Turin, Genoa and Milan and the reclaiming of coastal and stream basin areas which broke the secular and economic relationship between mountains and valleys. After the WWII, the *intra* and the *trans*-national migration as well as the «urbanism» pull due to the reconstruction, led to the expansion of cities and their peripheral areas, thus further draining the human capital of the high lands. Moreover, the «green revolution», the Common Agricultural Policy in the 1970s and the end of the sharecropping system in the late 1980s were instrumental in changing Italy’s farming techniques in favour of mechanized and chemical monocultures.

The second explanation derives from the assumption of depopulation as a «systemic phenomenon». This implies that the reasons and the causes related to depopulation are fundamental and firmly correlated, thus boosting the circle of economic decline and population exodus. The general triggers and effects of depopulation are defined by the “vicious circle” of depopulation (→ **Figure 14**). Therefore, again, the demographic, the education, the labour and the remoteness loops are all causes and effects which produce the same outcome: the population abandonment of the territories and their economic decline. Additionally, as stated, also the CAP earliest implementation and reforms were unable to target and to preserve the small-farmers’ income because of to the price support and the direct income mechanisms that advantaged big farmers at the expense of the small ones

The second research question about the EU’s strategy and the implementation means of CAP and Structural Funds to counter the phenomenon of depopulation of rural villages has found the answer in the major changes brought to the CAP. Firstly, the Common Agricultural Policy of the new millennium aims at protecting the rural communities through the Rural Development Pillar and also through the refining of the decoupling procedure which gives a higher consideration to the quality of the agricultural goods over their quantity. Then, the Rural Development Pillar’s nature is particularly effective in its policy implementation through the application of the ‘endogenous territorial development analysis’. Additionally, the European Inner Periphery Strategy is now the *ad hoc* modality for targeting the economically and socially diverse ‘shrinking’ rural areas, by considering the peculiarities of each “vicious circle of depopulation” and eventual side-effects of the policies adopted. And lastly, the LGAs of the LEADER program has been shown to be accessible means for the active citizenship in the pursuit of a bottom-up approach to rural development.

The answer to the last RQ to examine the impact of the Italian Inner Periphery Strategy on Italian villages, has been given by a comparative discussion of the pilot and the non-pilot areas. The Strategy has created a new governance structure for pilot-areas such as the “*Comunità Montana di Vallo di Diano*”. This case study has demonstrated that the Strategy has also fostered a new «laboratorial» and «collective» approach for tackling the long-term depopulation phenomenon. This approach takes into consideration not only the administrative apparatus, but also the stakeholders’ role. As Morigerati shows, these laboratorial experiences are influencing in a positive manner the action of local actors and of mayors of the areas not included in the NSIA.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the pilot and non-pilot areas’ experiences, has highlighted some important issues and what needs to be done to address them. In conclusion, this work points to and recommends the following:

- It is clear that to effectively counter the depopulation phenomenon, there is the need for a dual action from the top:
  - a stronger action by the CAP in order to protect more effectively small farmers
  - and by the Italian government to assist families through family-oriented policies.
- But there is also the need for a third action which becomes a pre-condition: to improve the public administration's performance.
- Additionally, it is fundamental to provide the new-born inter-municipal entities with an institutional and legal status so that they fulfil their collaborative function.
- And it is advisable to involve a mediator to ensure the respect of the agreements between the villages in the long run.
- Another concern regards the rigid tools of the Strategy which are not the most suitable to accompany the cooperation among the local actors; who share the view that the Strategy is planned too much from the top-down.
- Lastly, as the population abandonment of inner areas continues, the inner areas must be informed that they can become candidates for EU policy tenders; and that the local actors, as the example of Liviano Mariella teaches, may learn from the networking method of the NSIA by undertaking a bottom up approach fostering a higher communication between different villages in the same area.

