



Globalization and New Challenges of Agricultural and Rural Systems

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Proceeding of the 21st Colloquium of the
CSRS of the IGU, Nagoya, Japan

IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems
Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Nagoya University

Edited by:
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Nagoya(Japan), August 2013

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PREFACE

The chapters in this volume were among papers presented at the 21st Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems(CSRS) of the International Geographical Union, held at Nagoya University, Japan. The chapters were peer reviewed. They are organized under four main thematic headings which reflect key research interests of CSRS: Rural Landscape, Tourism and Tradition; Heritage and Rural Society; Food and Local Production; Conceptualization of Rural Factors. The chapters are preceded by the text of a keynote lecture by Christopher Bryant. He invokes the importance of action research in rural geography. The volume ends with the text of a second keynote lecture by Akira Tabayashi, who illustrates the prospects for a rural future, conceptualizing it as “commodification of rural space”. The 21st Colloquium of the CSRS was held during 29th July - 4th August 2013, with 40 participants from 16 countries and 36 presentations.

The publication of the proceedings involved contributions from many individuals and institutions who are acknowledged gratefully. The editors thank the authors who submitted papers for peer review for the published proceedings. We also thank colleagues who, with the editors, refereed papers for the proceedings: Chris Bryant, Frans Thissen, Holly Barcus, Irit Amit-Cohen, Katsuyuki Takenaka, Mary Cawley, Roy Jones, Scott Hoefle, Serge Schmitz, Su-Yeul Chung and Tony Sorensen. The editors thank the members of the organizing committee for the 21st Annual Colloquium of the CSRS for their great contribution to publishing the proceedings: Makoto Takahashi (Nagoya University), Takahiro Ito (Aichi University of Education), Katsuyuki Takenaka (Aichi Prefectural University), Satoshi Yokoyama (Nagoya University), Takehiro Morimoto (University of Tsukuba), Katsuki Umeda (Chiba University), Daichi Kohmoto (Kobe Shukugawa Gakuin University), Takuya Hayashi (Gifu University). The publication of the proceedings was supported by Tokyo Geographical Society, FUKUTAKE Science & Culture Foundation and Daiko Foundation.

Last but not least, special thanks to the late Professor Koji Kobayashi, the former chair of the organizing committee for the 21st Annual Colloquium of the CSRS. Without his great contribution, these proceedings could not exist.

Doo-Chul KIM, Ana Maria FIRMINO, Yasuo ICHIKAWA

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Challenges for Research and Practice in the 21st Century for the Sustainability of Rural Systems

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Abstract

While much progress has been made in the last 25 years regarding research relevant to the sustainable development of rural systems, the challenges are becoming critical. First, there are increasing pressures influencing the vulnerability of rural systems (climate change, globalization, mounting protests about how government functions ...) in addition to pressures that some rural areas have been experiencing since early in the 20th century, e.g. urbanisation, urban sprawl, rural out-migration Second, there is a need for research to broaden its approach to become more involved in constructing sustainable development solutions. We will focus on the range of approaches that is termed 'action research'.

We first look at the mounting range of pressures that make rural systems more vulnerable and how research has tackled them in the context of rural sustainability. Much research has been undertaken, but frequently without focusing on the real issues of rural sustainability. Furthermore, the research that has dealt with rural sustainability more directly has often been descriptive; even that which has been more analytical using hypothesis testing and quantitative analysis has frequently not focused on the real challenges in a holistic manner. Few solutions have been suggested and consequently approaches to creating more sustainable rural systems (socioeconomic systems, communities and the activities that they are comprised of) have been few and far between. The most significant challenge to understanding processes is related to the fact that decision-making (collective and individual) deals with multiple sources of stress and decision-makers have different priorities which can vary substantially both within and between rural communities. An equally important challenge for research in the sustainability of rural systems is the holistic nature of complex of rural systems which means that effective rural sustainability research needs to adopt a holistic perspective too including

understanding the multiple sources of stress and that this in itself is in itself a major challenge to researchers. The challenges are reviewed and some examples provided of how these challenges have been confronted, drawing upon the author's publications mostly based on research with different research teams. Conclusions are drawn about the roles researchers can assume to meet these challenges.

Key Words: sustainability, progress in research, action-research, challenges, research roles

Introduction: sustainable development research in rural systems

In many respects, much progress has been made in the last 25 years in research dealing with the sustainable development of rural systems. In particular, we now have a much better understanding of the issues in the context of the different dimensions usually used to define sustainability, notably the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Furthermore, the challenges associated with a dimension that can be linked to the social/societal dimension but which is seen increasingly as being on a par with the other three dimensions is the political/governance dimension because it has to do with finding solutions. It is argued below that what should be of major interest to researchers in rural sustainability are the processes associated with the political and governance dimension.

In this review paper, first the pressures affecting the challenges of rural sustainability are discussed, including what appear to be gaps in much of the research. These gaps require much more attention if collectively we are to make a greater contribution to finding sustainable solutions. The focus is particularly on one set of research approaches that are considered as holding great potential in constructing these sustainable solutions, notably action research and especially participatory action research. This discussion focuses on how researchers can contribute to sustainable development solutions by working directly with actors including citizens to help find solutions to their challenges and which therefore involves not treating these actors and citizens as simply the objects of research. This action research approach draws together researchers and various types of decision-makers in ways that places the focus on the decision-makers while having researchers contribute their knowledge in ways that can be considered as constructive and supportive.

Some examples of projects, which begin to approach these challenges in domains in which the author has had some personal experience, are briefly presented: 1. urban and periurban agriculture; 2. the adaptation of human

activities and rural communities to climate change and variability; and 3. rural community development.

Based on these experiences, some conclusions are presented for reflections that are aimed at increasing our collective capacity to help construct sustainable solutions to the many challenges facing rural communities.

The pressures on rural systems, communities, activities and their populations

The challenges for researchers and professionals involved in research on rural systems are becoming critical because of the mounting pressures affecting rural activities, communities and therefore rural systems. It is argued that sustainable development research in rural areas (and in other contexts too) must respond to these pressures in order to contribute to sustainable solutions. It is suggested that at least some of the research must go even further and contribute directly to the construction of sustainable solutions (of course, other pertinent research can still provide important information on specific dimensions of sustainable development).

What are the mounting pressures that are either influencing or relate to the vulnerability of rural systems?

First are two pressures that have influenced and are influencing the vulnerability of rural systems in the last 30 years or so:

1. Climate change and variability, and
2. Globalization.

Second are two related movements linked to the vulnerability of rural systems as well as other systems:

1. Mounting protests about how many governments function; indeed, it could be argued that a good part of the vulnerability of rural systems is in fact related to government actions, and therefore,
2. Increasing demands from the public to become involved.

All of these pressures provide a backdrop to the increasing vulnerability of many rural systems, communities, activities and population. These pressures just mentioned are relatively new. In addition, there are also ongoing pressures during most of the 20th century at least that continue to undermine many rural communities, notably:

1. The continued process of urbanisation that leads to an increasing concentration of population and economic activities in cities, thus undermining the viability of many rural communities. Unfortunately, an important part of this process is encouraged indirectly, and

sometimes directly, by government programs and policies.

2. Rural out-migration is the counterpart to urbanisation and has been a major pressure undermining the viability of many rural communities and regions in many countries.
3. Urban sprawl and ex-urbanisation, processes operating more at the regional level of urban agglomerations and urban spheres of influence. The key seems to be to manage these processes in more effective ways, requiring considerable understanding of the processes involved and a substantial amount of creativity in the search for solutions. On the one hand, it is possible that urban sprawl can be managed and concentrated into development zones, the nature of which is likely to vary according to regional circumstances. Ex-urbanisation, a more dispersed and decentralized set of processes, can also be controlled and managed while still giving people who want to move from the city the ability to do so and enjoy the positive features of countryside living. However, this requires a critical reflection on how such growth can be managed while at the same time reducing any negative externalities on the rural communities affected. There are also several important positive externalities associated with the process of ex-urbanisation, such as the maintenance of population levels and even increasing them, which have positive impacts on the economic base of these communities, including stabilising and even expanding various public and private services.

The challenges of research into rural sustainability (systems, communities, activities, citizens) and the gaps in earlier research

Much pertinent research has been undertaken, but frequently without focusing on finding solutions to the problems faced by rural systems, their communities, activities and citizens (e.g. from the author's research: (Bryant 1984)). Research that has dealt with rural sustainability more directly has, however, often been descriptive and even that which has been more analytical using hypothesis testing and quantitative analysis has frequently not focused on the real challenges. It is suggested that few solutions have been suggested and consequently approaches to creating more sustainable rural systems (socioeconomic systems, communities and their constituent activities) have been few and far between.

The most significant challenge in terms of understanding processes is to recognize that decision-makers (individuals in their families, networks,

businesses, communities, governments at all levels) deal with multiple sources of stress and have different priorities, and these priorities can vary substantially between and within rural communities. Much of the research is however focused on specific issues and questions, which although important do not in most cases take account of the multiple sources of stress facing rural communities and activities, nor the different priorities of communities and decision-makers face given these multiple sources of stress. How can researchers meet the real challenges and then communicate their results to governments (from the local to the national level) so that the actions of governments (programs, projects or initiatives) can effectively take account of this substantial heterogeneity of rural systems including what types of support might be appropriate from the central governments to other levels of government?

It is argued that three challenges for researchers can be identified for which there appears to be a particular set of approaches capable of responding to them:

1. There is a need for research to broaden its approach. While we often have to focus attention on specific pressures and issues, in the long run it is crucial to be able to place such focused research into the more holistic context of rural systems, their communities and ecosystems;
2. To understand how these pressures affect rural systems, their communities, activities and citizens;
3. But mainly to become more involved in constructing solutions.

To tackle these challenges, it is suggested that the range of approaches called 'action research' offers a major way of turning our attention more to searching for and constructing solutions to advance rural sustainability.

Action research and especially participatory action research

Action research is based on research involving working with actors and citizens in a particular domain and/or territory. It involves the researcher assuming the roles (depending upon the particular set of issues being tackled) of accompanying collective actors and citizens, and acting as facilitator, counsellor, and provider of strategic information. The key is that these roles are only undertaken when the other actors request them. Action research is patently not simply preparing reports based on collection and analysis of data and providing these reports to actors (e.g. governments); furthermore, the researcher who adopts an action research approach must never impose his or her own perspectives! In relation to rural sustainability, it is the form of action

research termed 'participatory action research' that constitutes the focus of the remaining discussion.

In terms of rural sustainability, it is the involvement of local citizens and collective actors who take the lead role in developing sustainable solutions; the researcher is there only to help because the key idea is to accompany decision-makers and citizens better understand their own situations and that of their communities and construct more sustainable futures for their rural communities.

Some examples which begin to approach these challenges

1. Urban and periurban agriculture projects

A particularly interesting project financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada from 2008 to 2011 awarded Chris Bryant focussed on reducing the vulnerability of farming in periurban areas. Several cases were identified around Montreal where a doctoral student, Ghalia Chahine, at the Université de Montréal, initiated meetings with farmers and other actors and accompanied them in the development of their own development project to reinforce their agricultural activities. But perhaps the most successful one was that of a small agricultural area in the municipality of Senneville, at the west end of the Island of Montreal. This project was initiated by the farmers themselves who contacted the research team and asked for help. This example shows how farmland protection can be facilitated when non-farm actors and citizens appropriate the value of the multiple functions of farmland.

The project began in earnest in July 2009 when a visioning exercise was organised for the farmers and about 80 collective actors, as well as some non-farm landowners and representatives of the Municipal Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture and even the Commission for the Protection of Farmland and Farm Activities (Bryant et al 2009; Bryant and Chahine 2010). Various working groups were established with the aim of establishing the long term conditions for viable agriculture (in this case, organic farming, local marketing, Community Supported Agriculture, and participation in local food markets). The various non-farm collective actors appropriated the value of this agricultural area, partly because of its multiple functions of benefit to society, and this small project has had implications on a broader scale for the development of an emerging greenbelt in the Montreal region (Bryant 2011).

The farmers and the development of their project was accompanied throughout by the research team, who facilitated meetings, provided strategic

information when asked for it, and helped in the preparation of documents prepared by the farmers. This can be considered to represent a very good example of participatory action research.

2. The adaptation of human activities and rural communities to climate change and variability and co-construction of collective intervention to increase adaptive capacity

Two different projects are introduced here dealing with adaptation to climate change and variability. The first one involved Chris Bryant as the lead researcher with a project on agricultural adaptation to climate change and variability financed by the SSHRC from 2009 to 2012, under an Environment Call. The second one deals with community resilience in the face of extreme climatic conditions in coastal areas; this project is being led by Steve Plante, Université du Québec à Rimouski, and Chris Bryant is one of the co-researchers; the project is financed by the SSHRC from 2010 to 2014 under a program that links universities to communities.

The first project on agricultural adaptation to climate change and variability project has involved the research team working with farmers and various collective actors (government, professional associations, environmental associations, watershed basin management organisations ...) to increase the adaptive capacity of farmers to climate change and variability by exploring the most appropriate forms of collective intervention. The project is interdisciplinary, multi-analytical, and even involved the farmers and other actors in constructively criticizing the modeling techniques that were used to construct climate scenarios and link them to crop growth models. Most importantly, farmers were involved in identifying the types of support that would be most useful to them in adapting to this phenomenon. This project is part of a series of projects undertaken at the Université de Montréal over the last 20 years (e.g. Bryant et al 2008), mostly in Quebec agricultural regions but also in a county in Eastern Ontario in the latest project.

Such co-construction of collective support to help farmers increase their adaptive capacity is necessary because senior governments are not able to perform all of the roles required. The main reason for this is that senior governments for the most part do not have a permanent enough presence on the ground to maintain the confidence of farmers to be able to offer advice that takes into account the territorial specificities of the different agricultural areas (climate and soil conditions, community dynamics and priorities). Senior governments can of course help in other ways by, for instance, providing

support to local and regional organisations which in turn can intervene more effectively to provide support to farmers.

The second project dealing with coastal community resilience, sea level change and extreme climate events has involved working with small town coastal communities in the Gaspé Peninsula (Quebec), New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (ARUC-CURA 2013). One of the principal objectives is to encourage communities and their leaders to incorporate community resilience into their long term strategic planning. Part of this exercise involves providing help to communities, their actors and citizens (when they request it) to help them appropriate the recurrent nature of climate change and variability, especially extreme climatic conditions (storm surges, major flooding ...). The project's web site contains project details in French and English, a regularly published bulletin and information on the project's non-university partners.

3. Rural community development projects

The literature is replete with general analyses on different dimensions of rural sustainability (e.g. Bryant et al 2004). There are also more general references dealing with the more holistic processes of rural community sustainable development (Bryant and Bruce 2009) and the co-construction of collective intervention (Bryant 2010).

Here, we present briefly the specific example of Haliburton County, Eastern Ontario, which had had a series of strategic plans produced by consultants prior to the mid-1990s, but little progress had been made in reducing the vulnerability of the territory. Chris Bryant was then hired in 1997 as a consultant to perform the roles associated with participative action research in order to accompany the County, other collective actors and the citizens to produce a strategic development plan FOR and BY the community, a major difference in relation to previous experiences in the County. The process involved helping mobilise the different segments of interest in the population to encourage their involvement as well as helping the County and the citizens put in place different tools to coordinate and communicate between the different initiatives being pursued in the different strategic orientations. The consultant worked with a local team to mobilise the population, and facilitate public forums that led directly to the establishment of several working groups and the construction of a strategic development plan for and by the community. The main point is that this involved many different types of actors and segments of interest, many of whom had never been involved in discussions about the future of the County before, including a group of teenagers who

participated in all the meetings and subsequent initiatives. This first stage was presented to the IGU CSRS and published in one of its proceedings (Bryant 1999). The implementation of the long term strategic development plan involved continuing the work initiated by the different working groups and putting in place (by the citizens and collective actors) a process to ensure that communications took place regularly between the different working groups. The vision and plan was revised in 2003, again with the help of the same consultant, using the additional tool of the internet to contact both permanent and seasonal residents. The vision was slightly modified to include more explicit recognition of the importance of establishing better communications between the County and other collective actors and the population, and also the setting up of a strategic orientation focused on social development. What is important is that the collective actors, including the County and the population continue to be involved in this strategic planning process which they appropriated after 1997 (Haliburton County 2013). The County, its collective actors and population have been involved in an ongoing process that was necessarily time-consuming at the outset. However, without such a process and commitment, putting these rural communities and their businesses, families and citizens on a sustainable development path would have been much more difficult.

Conclusions

The challenges in these different projects are similar, even though specific ways of organising the mobilisation and participation must always respect local values and ways of doing things – these however can change over time, as people become more engaged in the development processes for their communities.

The principal challenges that emerge are:

1. From the rural people's (including farmers in the periurban and climate change adaptation projects introduced above) perspective: They must come to terms with dealing with people with whom they may not have had much in common in the past or even communicated with;
2. From the researcher's perspective: He/she must put his/her own opinions and perspectives aside in order to accompany the people and the rural communities, provide counselling and information and act as facilitator when asked to do so;
3. From the researcher's perspective: At the same time, the researcher's challenge is also how to collect the information necessary to produce

scientifically reliable analyses to ensure that the experiences can be communicated both to the scientific community and to other rural communities and decision-makers.

From the researcher's perspective, this thus requires particular skills in dealing with people and a considerable deal of patience and time, apparently both scarce resources for many researchers!

Researchers are also individuals with multiple interests, one of which has often been to succeed as a researcher in the eyes of their colleagues and the granting agencies which finance many research projects (though in Canada the SSHRC has certainly recognized the importance of action research in a number of domains). The characteristics necessary to contribute to the development of more sustainable rural communities involve roles (and therefore the allocation of time) on the part of the researchers involved that have not always been properly appreciated or encouraged by granting agencies nor senior governments nor university administrations!

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Participation in Landscape and Local Knowledge: Priorat, Agricultural Landscape of the Mediterranean Mountains

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of public participation in landscape movements. Focusing on the agricultural landscape of Catalan Mediterranean mountains, we analyze a proposal of the association PRIORITAT to inscribe the Catalan county of Priorat in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Our aim is to understand how local inhabitants interpreted the landscape, sought a common policy objective, and how continuity of essential landscape values is assured by a rich local knowledge, inherited and developed by themselves.

Key words: landscape, public participation, local knowledge, Priorat, Mediterranean mountains

Introduction

In the last few decades, Catalonia (Spain) has been producing a large amount of works relating to landscape management, in both scientific literature and policy applications (Nel.lo 2012, Nel.lo ed. 2010, Nogué 2010). The most visible outcome of those collective efforts are the Landscape Charters of some Catalan counties, agreed among a wide range of socioeconomic and institutional agents, and also the Landscape Catalogues, which are now the fundamental technical instrument to integrate landscape management in the Catalan territorial planning (Saito 2011, 2012).

An aspect on which special emphasis is placed in Catalan landscape policy is the participation of civil society, justified by the necessity of public debate in the definition of landscape quality objectives. Deliberation, in fact, is essential so that a majority of citizens assume landscape as a common property of the territory and society in which they live (Nogué 2010: 81-94).

Public participation, however, acquires its real importance, when the participants become conscious of their positive role, not only as audience, observers or protectors of landscape, but also as agents concerned directly in the evolving process of landscape. So, not only can citizens participate in the landscape management, but also in the evolution of the landscape itself.

Departing from the concept of public participation described above, this article focuses on landscape movements in Catalan Mediterranean mountains, where the agricultural landscape represents a controlled penetration of urbanity into its surrounding rural environment. In this complex urban-rural setting, we will be analyzing how participants of the movement interpreted the landscape in their attempt to achieve a common policy objective, and how continuity of the essential values they attributed to their landscape is assured by a rich local knowledge, of which they are both successors and custodians.

Methods

Catalan county of Priorat in Tarragona province is the area chosen to discuss the theme. After selecting some data from our previous research on Spanish and Catalan wine producing areas (Takenaka and Saito 2010), specific inquiries were made to a local association called PRIORITAT, which played an active role from civil society in developing the landscape policy in Priorat. The documentation provided to us by the association include information on organizational aspects, key events until the presentation of the candidacy for UNESCO world heritage, values they attach to the landscape of Priorat and some opinions expressed by experts —Joan Nogué and Eduard Punset, among others—, who collaborate with the association. All this information was complemented by a field survey we conducted in May 2013 to collect some landscape analysis data.

Results

Priorat as a wine producing area

Priorat is a Catalan county with some ten thousands inhabitants. With a long tradition of wine production, the area is today world-famous for its quality wine, thanks to the entrepreneurs who invested in improving the production process. Many landscape elements of the county can be identified with this product, as is the case of the *llicorella* (slate) that gives the soil a distinctive dark tone, vineyards clinging to mountainsides in the form of elephant backs, or uniqueness of architectural composition expressed typically by wineries constructed in modernist style.

The major instrument in Spain to recognize and visualize territories with distinctive wine making traditions is the Denomination of Origin (DO). Today, Priorat county has two DOs approved: Qualified Denomination of Origin (DOQ) of Priorat and DO Montsant (Figure 1). First recognized in 1932, DO Priorat enjoyed the higher DOQ status after 2000. It contains 11 municipalities

of which seven were once under the rule of the prior of Scala Dei. Although the monastery played an important role in developing and preserving the wine producing tradition in the area, what defines most clearly the physical character of DOQ Priorat is the *llicorella* soil, dominant in the entire producing area.

As for the Montsant area, it seceded from DO Tarragona, a much more extensive area covering the greater part of Tarragona Province, and was then

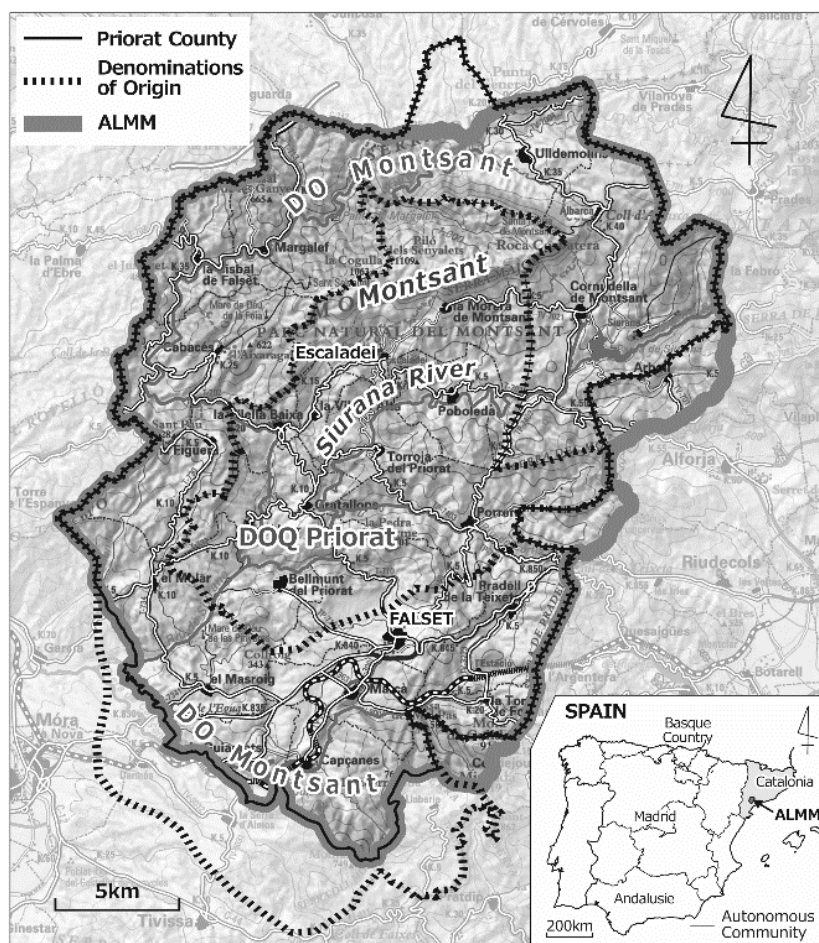


Figure 1 Three concepts approaching Priorat (Source : Elaboration based on cartographic data provided by the Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya)

recognized in 2002 as an independent DO. With a characteristic ring-form producing area around DOQ Priorat, its soil composite is predominantly lime and granite with a certain presence of *llicorella*. The two DOs as a whole cover the totality of Priorat county, with a large additional area to the south.

Priorat, Agricultural Landscape of the Mediterranean Mountains (ALMM)

Despite the widespread image of Priorat as a wine producing area, we found quite a different concept of territory in the landscape movement which emerged some 15 years ago and eventually nominated in May 2013 Priorat-Montsant-Siurana, Agricultural Landscape of the Mediterranean Mountains (ALMM), to be inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The area is defined by mountain ranges and river basins, that is, the totality of Priorat County with some additional areas to the east belonging to the basin of Siurana river and its tributaries. This area delimitation accounts by itself for the philosophy of the proposal, clearly inspired in geo-social unity.

The ALMM is an excellent example of positive collaboration between civil society and public administration. In 1999 the Platform for the Defence of Priorat's Natural Heritage was created; in 2007 the association PRIORITAT was constituted; and in 2011, an international conference was held in Escaladei on the theme of "Talking of landscape and the declaration of Priorat-Montsant-Siurana as UNESCO World Heritage". Public administration also made considerable efforts to mobilize local resources. First, the Priorat County Council carried out in 2000-2006 a Leader Plus program focused on wine culture. In 2007-2013, a more general Leader Plus program was launched by Priorat County in collaboration with the neighbor county of Baix Camp. The Natural Park of Montsant was created in 2002 and in 2010, the Catalan Government approved the Partial Territorial Plan for Tarragona Plain, including landscape management among the most outstanding objectives.

A close partnership between government and civil agencies resulted in the

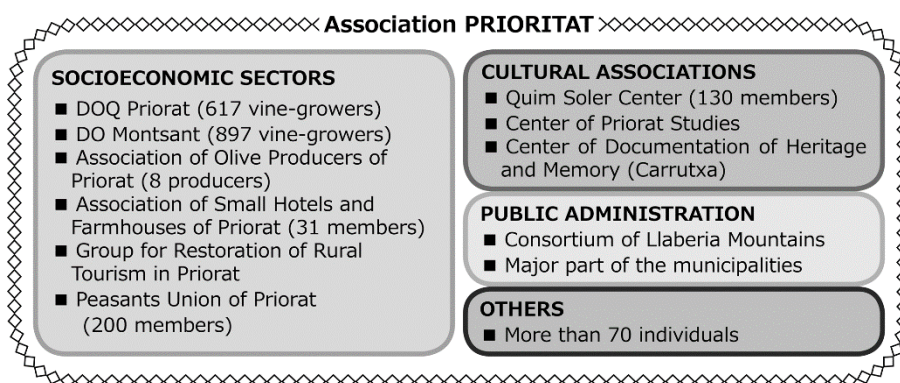


Figure 2 Participants in the association PRIORITAT

(Source : Elaboration based on documentation provided by the association PRIORITAT)

signature of the Priorat Landscape Charter in 2012 and the official recommendation in 2013 of ALMM to the Catalan Government. We should

note, however, that what gave the real driving force to the candidacy was the association PRIORITAT, in which a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural sectors of the county participated (Figure 2). The involvement of agricultural producers is critical, since they are those who give economic value to the land, ensuring the sustainability of a landscape that is not expression of wild nature, but is fruit of an intelligent agricultural exploitation.

Legibility of landscape in the Mediterranean

Reading historical continuity carved on the landscape is an essential step, when citizens of a territory decide to reaffirm the value of their landscape and project it outward. Priorat enjoys a favorable condition to address this collective task, a condition that Joan Nogué, director of the Catalan Landscape Observatory and collaborator of PRIORITAT, synthesized with the concept of landscape legibility. Nogué asserts that Priorat is hardly affected by negative processes which gave severe damage to the landscape in many other parts of the Mediterranean.

In selecting just three viewpoints around the village of Porrera, we can find some of the outstanding features relating to landscape legibility in Priorat

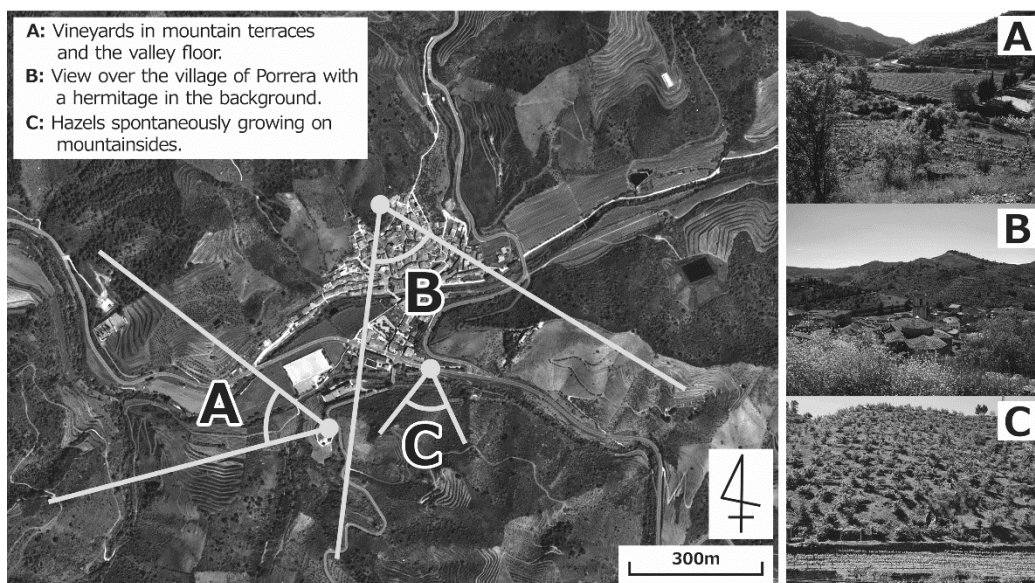


Figure 3 Landscape around the village of Porrera

(Source : Left: Elaboration based on cartographic data provided by the Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya; Right (A-C): Photography by the author)

(Figure 3): compact settlement without dispersion overlooking the river; agricultural land uses adapted to the topographical and soil conditions, where,

despite the common image of Priorat's vineyards always clinging to steep slopes, relatively flat valley floors are sometimes used to plant vines; or a large number of hazels on mountainsides, a plant which often grows spontaneously, adapting perfectly to the local physical conditions.

Legibility ensured by local knowledge

The proposal of ALMM highlights the diversity of Mediterranean agricultural landscape, and also the marriage of material and immaterial components, that is, a close relationship between the physical character of the land and the spirituality of the inhabitants. From this viewpoint, the proposal finds in landscape a great ability to represent symbolically a social and cultural identity, and leads us to an understanding of landscape as heritage. In fact, most of the photographic images presented in the ALMM proposal interpret viewpoints of the peasants who, with deep knowledge of the territory, are not necessarily

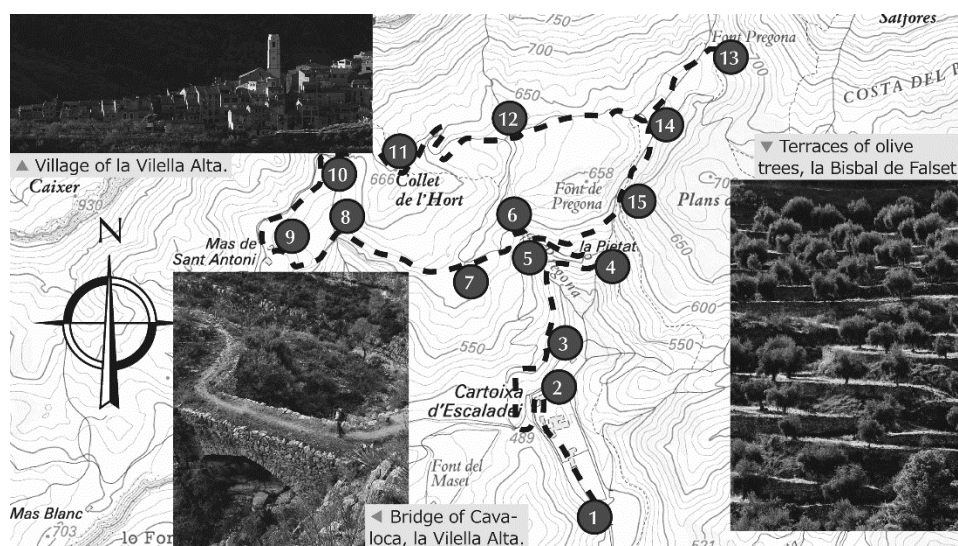


Figure 4 A guidebook inviting to discover landscape of Priorat

(Source: Extract from López-Monné, Rafael and Orensanz, Toni (2012): *A peu pel Priorat del vi i l'oli*. Arola Editors, Tarragona, pp. 42, 74, 97, 109)

aware of their own perceptions of the land they cultivate. Almond trees in the middle of vineyards, steep mountainsides plowed by a mule or dry-stone huts resisting the tempestuousness of nature are some of the most relevant images appearing in the proposal documentation.

Once assumed the broader concept of landscape, its legibility cannot any longer be given by merely material elements. What ensures that is validity of the local knowledge, capable of guiding the relationship between humans and

the land. A whole setting of ideas born in the consciousness and unconsciousness of local inhabitants that, obviously, will evolve over time, putting on new layers at different scales as response to the changing times. In this sense, the proposal is fully suggestive, when it turns our attention to the silhouette of villages fitted to the relief, small shrines humanizing the horizon or old paths and terraces made of stone (Figure 4). These elements symbolize probably the most durable part of the knowledge shared by local people, in the general context of the Mediterranean, where water shortage and steep terrain led to a type of urbanity that extend arms to the surrounding nature to be nourished of it.

Conclusions

When Eduard Punset, scientist, writer and an active politician in the period of Spanish transition to democracy, wrote the introduction to a guidebook for hiking around Priorat (López-Monné and Orensanz 2012), he said referring to his experience in la Vilella Baixa, a village of Priorat: “It was impossible not to see the past in that landscape modeled along a long time in a imperceptible manner” (translation from Catalan to English by the author of this article). Certainly, contemplating the landscape of Priorat, we cannot ignore the past. However, when that guidebook, written by collaborators of PRIORITAT, invites us to reactivate the old local paths with our own footprint, we realize that the people living in Priorat have always explored different possibilities in their relationship with the territory they live, attempting to increase yields but never putting in danger their ties to the land.

It is within this framework of relationship between humans and the territory where the different layers of landscape, especially vine and olive, acquire real importance not only for their aesthetic value, but also because of their ability to reinforce that same relationship. Awareness of this relationship will also assist in controlling the intrusion of such hardly assimilable artifacts, as wind turbines, power lines or developments of isolated residential areas.

It takes a lot of efforts to promote cultural landscapes, especially when it comes to an area like Priorat, where the land is worked in modest proportions, without any extravagance. The decision of the promoters of the UNESCO candidacy was pertinent, when they chose the name of agricultural landscape of the Mediterranean mountains, without falling into temptation of putting easier names, such as “vineyard terraces” or “viticulture region”. Priorat is something more than just wine and olive. What we can learn from the proposal is the necessity of enhancing our capacity to understand landscape as

expression of the local knowledge participated by inhabitants, in this case, by those who feel identified with the soul of the Mediterranean mountains.

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An Alternative Model of Tourism Development in Marginal Border Areas: Giving Voice to Locals in the Western Galician-Portuguese *Raia Seca*

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Abstract

Governments all over the world have invoked tourism with aspirations for regional development, especially in rural areas experiencing marginal social and economic circumstances. This paper focuses on a case-study area in order to carry out a critical assessment of rural tourism development, leading to an alternative model. The chosen area is located around the boundary between Galicia (Spain) and Portugal, popularly called the *raia seca*, i.e. the eastern section of the international border running through a mountainous and economically depressed rural area. This paper centres on the western section of the *raia seca*, an area that was officially designated as National Park (Portugal) and Natural Park (Galicia), and recently identified as a Biosphere Reserve (Gerês-Xurés) by UNESCO. The paper begins by considering, theoretically, the relationship between tourism and borders. The following sections outline the case-study area, first assessing the tourism implementation, and then proposing a different way for tourism to develop drawn from local people's feedback and opinions.

Key words: rural development, rural tourism, borders, Biosphere Reserves, *raia seca* (eastern Galician-Portuguese border).

Introduction

Tourism is often seen as a solution to acute social and economic problems in rural areas, especially for places in marginal social and economic situations. Haslam McKenzie (2011) has referred to tourism as a "panacea", invoked by governments all over the world with aspirations for regional economic

development. All too often academic research has held a non-critical position and, in part, has been a follower of government policies. Thus, we can find tedious long catalogues with fairly dubious potential tourism resources, or papers which accept the presupposition that investments in rural tourism are adequate *per se* and therefore lead to the much-touted “rural development”.ⁱ

This article proposes an alternative view that steps back from these approaches and presents a critical analysis by focusing on a case-study area. The chosen area is located on the border between Galicia (Spain) and Portugal. This border, popularly called the *raia*, is divided into two large stretches (Trillo-Santamaría and Paül 2014). To the west, the *raia húmida* (‘wet line’) meets the lower course of the River Minho. This is a dynamic area set in an urban axis joining the metropolitan areas of Porto (Portugal) and Vigo (Galicia). To the east, the *raia seca* (‘dry line’) runs through a mountainous and depressed rural area, as will be shown below. This article centres on the western section of the *raia seca*: we have chosen four Portuguese municipalities, plus two parishes in the Melgaço Municipality, and six municipalities in Galicia (five of which

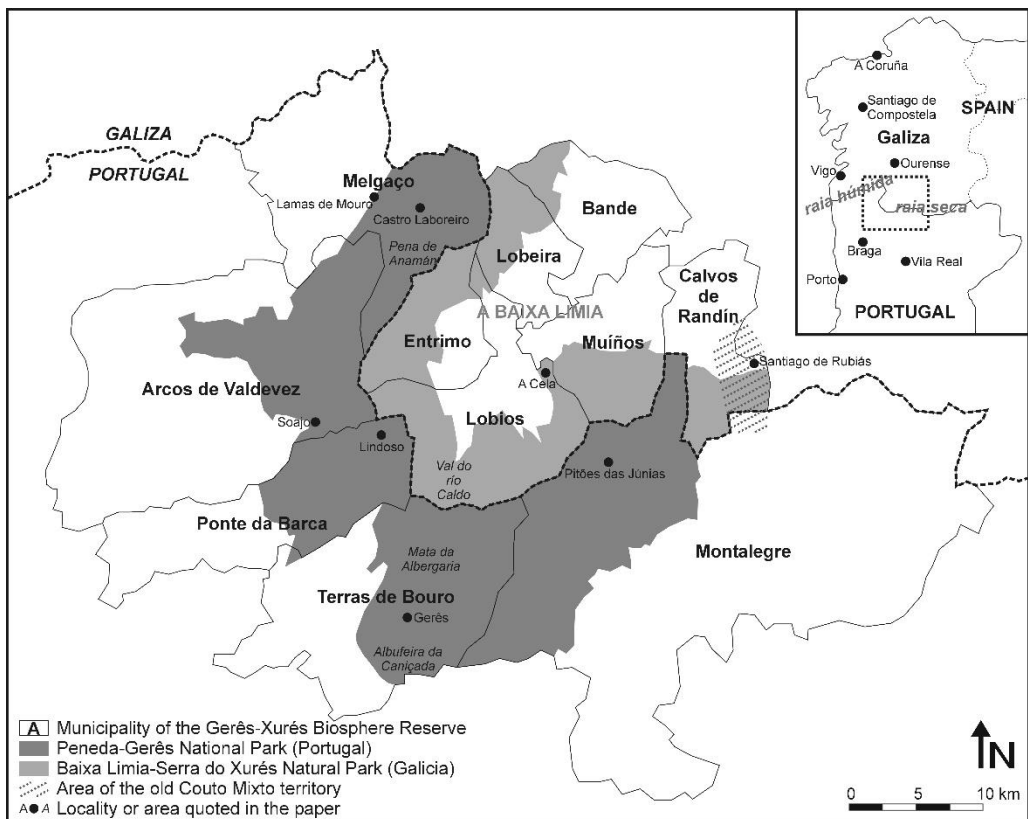


Figure 1 Location Map

form the Baixa Limia District, in addition to Calvos de Randín) (see Figure 1). The settlement pattern is dispersed, with hundreds of hamlets, some of which are now abandoned.

The study area forms part of the *raia seca*, conceived almost 900 years as a borderland between Galicia and Portugal (Trillo-Santamaría and Paül 2014). In addition, the area has been officially protected: Peneda-Gerês National Park (Portugal) and Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Natural Park (Galicia), designated in 1971 and 1992 respectively; and in 2009 it was identified as a Biosphere Reserve (Gerês-Xurés) by UNESCO, covering 11 municipalities (see Figure 1) and an area of 259,496 km². These designations give the study area coherency and the opportunity for individualised tourism management: investment, promotion, quality standards, etc. However, the Biosphere Reserve, despite being internationally recognised, cannot be seen as a protection and conservation device as it lacks a specific management body of transnational cooperation. The action plan was principally a document sent to Paris (UNESCO's headquarters) for the designation, but in reality, it is not being implemented. Rather, it is used as a “label” for promotional purposes.

The study area has low demographic densities (the average is 25 inhabitants/km² in 2011) and a contracting population. There was a peak of more than 125,000 inhabitants in the mid-19th century but now there are just

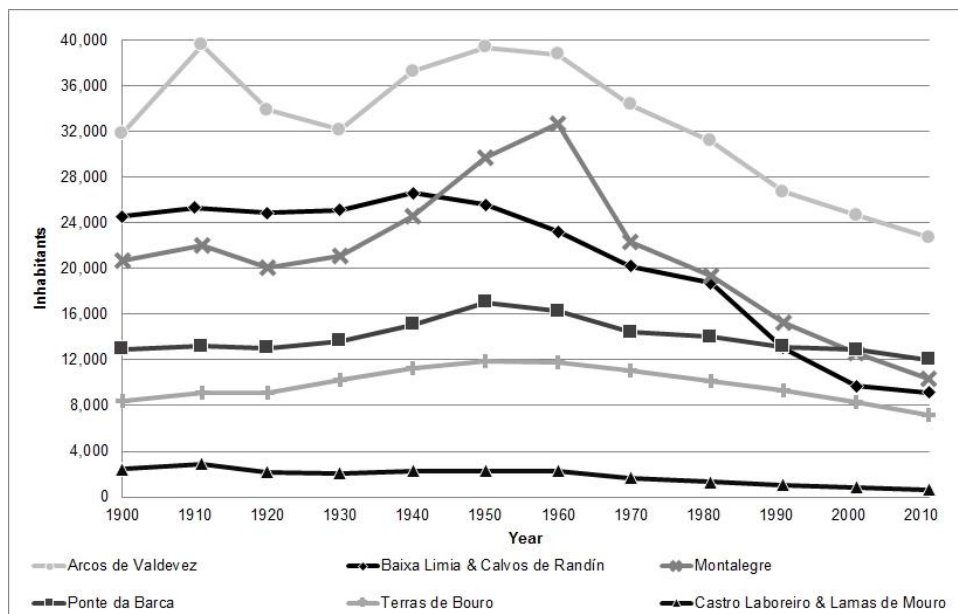


Figure 2 Demographic evolution of the case-study area (1900-2011).
Sources: <<http://www.ige.eu>> ; <<http://www.ine.pt>> ; <<http://www.ine.es>>.

over 60,000 people. There has been a population decline due to high emigration, as shown in Figure 2. From an economic perspective, the primary sector has shrunk given the mountainous terrain of the region, with most of the population retired and surviving on pensions and agricultural subsistence. Given these circumstances, tourism has been presented as the area's "saviour". Indeed, in some places (especially the areas around the Gerês Spa) it plays a relevant role. Nevertheless, in general terms, and as this article will show, tourism has been introduced with mismatches, excesses and deficiencies.

The aim of this study is to carry out a critical assessment of rural tourism development in the case-study area, leading to an alternative model. The paper begins by considering, theoretically, the relationship between tourism and borders. The following sections outline the case-study area, first assessing the tourism implementation, and then proposing a different way for tourism to develop, according to the "participatory action research" approach.

The "participatory action research" approach proposed by Bryant (2013) and Kindon (2010) allows researchers to become involved in assisting communities to better understand their own situations and construct their futures, with the aim of achieving real change on the ground. Researchers do not seek to impose their point of view, but rather, accompany individuals, community representatives, businesses and others in building solutions, that is, "tangible benefits for those who are the subjects of research" (Cameron and Gibson 2005: 316). A typical case is when there are community debates where public agencies do not participate in these discussions; researchers can then be involved in different ways by participating in non-governmentally funded informal projects (Bryant 2013). Although this formula of "participatory action research", as just described, was unknown to us before undertaking the work, it was indeed a *de facto* application to the case-study area with some success. For example, it has helped to identify a sector's tourism potential in a border region through a PhD student's master-thesis (presented in 2008); and, from 2010, as authors we have practised participant observation and interviewing to make a practical contribution to fostering alternative tourism in the area, assuming that "everyday knowledges are used to shape the lives of ordinary people" (Cameron and Gibson 2005: 317). In this sense, the model proposed below is drawn from local people's feedback and opinions.

Tourism in Border Areas: A Theoretical Model

Borders hold an interest linked to their double characteristic of "the opening and closing of two worlds", a place of (mis)match between towns, nations, etc.

This is why borders can exert a certain tourist attraction, whether they are current, or historic, as can be seen by those marking the divides between empires (Hadrian's Wall, the Great Wall of China) or world blocs (Berlin Wall). Another worldwide relationship between borders and the tourism phenomenon is cross-border shopping, not only motivated by differences in terms of prices and/or taxation, but also by the presence of different products on both sides of the border. Other examples are the more controversial gambling or smuggling. Millions of tourists like to visit privileged natural sites, such as Iguazu Falls, Victoria Falls and Niagara Falls, which are located on borders and offer another example of the relationship between tourism and borders. In any case, beyond these experiences reported individually by dispersed contributors, the theoretical work by Timothy (2001, 1995) proposes a model that encompasses all possibilities, as follows:

- The border as a barrier. There are tourist areas near the border. However, the tourist flows in these areas are always domestic in each country, without interaction between adjacent states. There may be extreme cases where tourists crossing from one side of the border to the other is restricted (Romania-Ukraine), or even impossible (North-South Korea). Nonetheless, this "border as a barrier" situation is seen even in borders between countries without geopolitical tensions.
- Only one area attracting tourists to one side of the border. If this border is unsealed, tourists from both sides can head for one destination. Thus, tourist flows are international, but always in the same direction. This used to be the case of activities such as hiking or mountain climbing in the Pyrenees, where the French side used to be developed (Martínez de Pisón, 2004), attracting tourists from Spain. Over time, tourists from the country hosting the tourist attraction can end up visiting the bordering country, in a way in which the former captures the latter and goes on to generate one common destination. This trend evolves into:
- The border region as a joint destination. In this case, the two sides of the border offer a coherent attraction, with a coordinated operation in terms of tourism supply (accommodation, resources, etc.). This situation is only possible when there are neighbouring countries that do not have any geopolitical tension between them. A clear case is the trans-boundary protected areas, under joint management and working as a mutual tourist attraction, despite many cases being highly criticised (Büscher 2010; Ramutsindela 2007).

A peculiarity derived from this third situation is when the border

becomes a tourist attraction in itself. Timothy (2001, 1995) considers different possibilities to this regard, based, according to him, on the human fascination of collecting places (e.g. having photographs taken in front of signs, walls or customs buildings). This may also be extended to the tourists' desire to visit built heritage composed of forts and castles, military remains and even battlefields. In these cases we could talk of "the political landscapes of borders" in the sense given by Timothy (2001: 91).

The Current State of Tourism in the Case-Study Area: A Critical Assessment

In terms of Timothy's theoretical model, we can argue that the case-study area corresponds to the second situation. As mentioned above, Gerês Spa is a prominent focal point in Portugal's history. Indeed, its importance is connected to the particular consideration devoted to these mountainous zones in the Portuguese nation's imaginary (Regalo, 2011), which ultimately led to the designation of the country's only national park. The spa, together with a surrounding area that includes the banks of the Caniçada Dam — where tourist development has occurred (Lourenço et al 2009) — and the Mata da Albergaria Forest (the true core asset of the national park), form a very popular area. In this sense, this small destination has been crowded for decades in high season (summer), due to a tourist inflow that in part has been channelled towards the Galician park, especially the Río Caldo Valley. Notwithstanding, the Galician perception is that of exceptional visits, crossing the boundary for a few hours in July and August, and then returning to Portugal without any revenue being generated. According to the estimates carried out at the time of



Photo 1 Evidence of European financing and multiple certifications on a rural tourism accommodation business in Soajo (23-4-2013)

the candidature for the Biosphere Reserve at UNESCO, the Portuguese side accounted for 76,000 yearly visitors while the Galician side had 20,000 (Figueirido and Amoeiro, 2009: 188-189).

In terms of accommodation, the Portuguese side offers 96 rural tourism businesses while

the Galician side offers 21. The inequality is, therefore, evident. Indeed, the Portuguese side does offer more accommodation, but these 96

businesses form part of a joint National Park Reservation Centre run by ADERE.ⁱⁱ This centre's role is crucial as it allows for a structured supply (in terms of promotion, packs, etc.) and distinguishes it from the accommodation outside the National Park. In contrast, the Galician Natural Park's supply is not distinguished from the rest of Galicia; this is largely because there is not any specific reservation centre for the Park, but instead, one for Galicia as a whole.ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, the 21 businesses (according to the accommodation catalogue of Galicia)^{iv} are not listed in the Galician reservation centre, as this only covers the businesses officially classified as rural tourism (8). In any case, there is no joint accommodation supply for the two sides of the border.

Accommodation has benefited from European Union (EU) funds such as LEADER, INTERREG o ERDF, used to co-finance (or wholly finance) the restoration of rural houses or the construction of *ex novo* tourism businesses (see Photo 1). These funds have been channelled to business start-ups, but they have often been used in Galicia in a way that is non-commensurate with its true purpose. This applies, for instance, to the restoration of private houses, in theory intended for accommodation, but, in fact, never used as such (although they do appear in the reservation centre catalogue); and, even used for restoring rural houses converted into businesses (sic) run by municipal councils (see Photo 2). On the Portuguese side, there is no evidence of these practices and, in general, many of these businesses are profitable — something not achieved in a large number of Galician rural tourism accommodation businesses.

EU financing has not solely been aimed at accommodation, but has also been directed to the creation of tourism infrastructure for reception and information.



Photo 2 A rural tourism house financed by European funds, managed by a municipal council, Galicia (20-2-2010)

On the Portuguese side, there are five visitor centres managed by municipal councils. These facilities are underused. Created to also accommodate businesses (active tourism, etc.), they have ended up being mere information points (see Photos 3 and 4). These observations lead to the conclusion that these visitor centres' have marginal influence on the regional tourism. There is a perception of working each one

in isolation, without constituting a network, despite being termed “National Park Visitor Centres”.

Hence, a joint management model is being proposed by means of a new EU project called “Valor Gerês-Xurés”, in which Galician partners also participate.^v

Indeed, the main part is destined to the *ex novo* creation of six visitor centres on the Galician side (where previously, there were none), financed with 970,000€.^{vi} Although they are in the construction phase at the moment, nobody has considered who is going to manage them in the future, and neither has the personnel or the information needed been given any consideration: the money has only been allocated for their construction. The investment in the creation of six new visitor centres is surprising, considering the criticism the five in Portugal have received. The uncoordinated approach between the two sides is patent, and the Galician case must be highlighted for the



non-participation of the Natural Park in the project, despite the visitor centres bearing its name and being constructed, in theory, as park visitor information centres.

Lastly, our case-study area cannot be considered a tourist destination for two main reasons. Firstly, due to the visitors’ spatial concentration in some places, the unequal development of both sides of the border and their poor integration. Secondly, there is a lack of trans-boundary coordination. Although the two parks have had a partnership agreement since 1997, the tourist agenda remains underdeveloped. There is, for example, neither a joint tourist map nor any hiking



Photos 3 and 4 National Park Visitor Centres, in Lindoso and Lamas de Mouro (2-3-2013 and 13-7-2013)

trails that cross the boundary. The Biosphere Reserve is an opportunity, but the recently published pamphlet, financed by

the Galician government, only makes reference to the Galician Natural Park's hiking trails and excludes the Portuguese ones. The Biosphere Reserve webpage^{vii} is not updated and is merely informative, offering no links to accommodation or active tourism companies.

This assessment infers that tourism is based on the public sector and that parks policy and promotion have given preference to environmental issues (waterfalls, hiking in scenic natural areas, etc.) rather than the entire tourist experience. However, this is really a way to see the area from a distance — the parks, as stated by Ojeda (2006: 194), are “official expressions”, “institutionalised nature” —, without understanding the area's identity, or how it is perceived and how local communities feel about it. This effectively excludes the locals from tourism planning, leadership and development.

An Alternative Tourism Model Obtained through Participatory Action Research

Our hypothesis is that there are highly relevant assets in the *raia* that have been ignored when implementing tourism, which, nevertheless, the local communities know and value. For the sake of this text we will briefly examine them by means of the following typology: areas, specific elements and routes. With respect to areas, we consider there are two that have an enormous value, full of meaning and connotations for the local population. Visitors pass by them, cross them or sporadically use their services (restoration, accommodation, etc.), but without realising their uniqueness. The two areas are:

- The Couto Mixto (literally meaning ‘mixed domain’ or ‘combined fief’) was a tiny state of three hamlets that were independent from Portugal and Galicia (covering an area of only 25 km²), with self-government and many similarities to Andorra (Paül and Trillo-Santamaría 2014). There were several privileges for the Couto



Photo 5 The bench in the church of Santiago de Rubiás graveyard is where the Couto Mixto government used to meet, Calvos de Randín (5-5-2007)

Mixto people, such as free trade in their territory. In the second half of the 19th century the Couto Mixto was abolished, its hamlets eventually being ascribed to Spain. In terms of physical heritage, the remnants of this old state are apparently worthless, but they hold a particular historic value which the local community is aware of (see Photo 5). This community is increasingly empowered and self-conscious of its historical uniqueness (Paül and Trillo-Santamaría 2014).

- Castro Laboreiro Parish is located at more than 1000 m, in a world “suspended in the heights”, and surrounded by ravines that hinder communication with neighbouring areas. It was an isolated community for many centuries and this fact meant that a uniqueness and a strong sense of individuality has been retained, resisting the mechanisms of political-institutional integration and the assimilation of innovations. Thus, the area came into the mid-20th century anchored in a rudimentary agropastoral survival system, based on the general transfer of the whole population between winter hamlets (at the bottom of the valley) and summer hamlets (in the flat highlands known as *planalto*, ‘plateau’). It is a much studied way of life due to its originality (Geraldes 1996; Lima 1996). These practices, which were documented for centuries, have now been lost and the population has become permanently settled in one place or, more precisely, has emigrated en masse (see Figure 2). Nevertheless, the community maintains a strong cohesion, shown for instance by the local dialect or by a native breed of dog that evolved from this isolation (*cão de Castro Laboreiro*). Although no longer useful, the people in the parish identify with



Photo 6 The *planalto* in Castro Laboreiro, with stone walls in abandoned fields and meadows, “the stamp of a reality extended through time, complex and difficult to follow” (Lima 1996: 45) (13-7-2013)

landmarks of this world such as paths, bridges or stone walls limiting properties. These could, in turn, be useful for tourism if adequately interpreted and given their revelatory value (see Photo 6).



Photo 7 The hamlet of A Cela, “with its totally conserved rural shape and its splendid traditional architecture” (Pérez 2008: 70) (20-2-2010)

With regard to specific elements, we could choose many relevant cases. Among all of them we have opted to highlight two, as both lack roadside signs and are neglected in tourism promotion. Firstly, the hamlet of A Cela, whose habitat is highly original as it is constructed amidst granite rocks (see Photo 7). Its origin dates back to early medieval hermits, later converted into a monastery linked to the Pitões das Júnias Monastery, currently in Portugal (Pérez 2008). Secondly, Pena de Anamán/Numão, a place of enormous scenic beauty (see Photo 8), and the origin of ancestral festivities common to both sides performed in an old sanctuary. It is the source of legends related to the hidden and the atavistic, perhaps due to the rough landforms, its isolation and its location on the border. The local communities from both sides celebrate the Anamán/Numão mountain as a landmark and they have recently popularised hiking to the peak as an annual “tradition”.



Photo 8 The sanctuary of Anamán/Numão, sitting below its namesake peak (26-12-2012)

Lastly, the routes we want to call attention to are precisely those that cross

the boundary. As already noted, the management of both parks has privileged environmental track design aspects on both sides of the border. However, the historic practices of the people who lived in these places were precisely defined by border crossings that have been long omitted. The world of smuggling should be noted here, as it wove its own geography for centuries by way of a dense network of trails. Many people still remember these routes, even though they are now abandoned and no official efforts are being done to preserve them. Were new trails to be designed, it would be more sensible to map and recover these itineraries than to introduce new ones. For instance, the path between A Cela and Pitões, through the mountains, with historic roots within its origin for intermonastic communication, was subsequently highly exploited for smuggling, and there is a rich oral story in this respect (Pérez 2008) (see Photo 9). Furthermore, the *caminho privilegiado* ('privileged road'), of approximately 10 kilometres, enabled trade between the Couto Mixto, Portugal and Galicia; confiscating or taxing any merchandise that Couto's inhabitants were carrying with them along this route was prohibited. Likewise, the routes between winter hamlets and summer hamlets in the Castro Laboreiro Parish are still meaningful for the local community, which values them as a remnant of their nomadic past (see Photo 10).



Photo 9 The path between A Cela and Pitões das Júnias (2-1-2013).



Photo 10 Ponte Nova, or Ponte da Cava da Velha, traditionally used for temporary migration flows within the Castro Laboreiro Parish (16-3-2013).

Conclusion

The routes, the elements and the areas that have been examined in this paper are all sources of meaning for the inhabitants of the *raia seca*. In our vision, the roots of identity have their origin in a border area which has been in existence for about 900 years (Trillo-Santamaría and Paül 2014). We argue that it is logical that the boundary must cease to be a passive element that visitors just cross and instead, become a reason for visiting the area in itself. It has intrinsic value and, more importantly still, the inhabitants in the area value it. We believe that, in order to pass from the second to the third stage of Timothy's model (2001, 1995), it is necessary to place the *raia* in the spotlight. The border can no longer continue to be an imaginary divide between the two parks, but key to the tourism supply itself.

Physical heritage is increasingly globally scarce, but it is based on meanings, readings and interpretations from the local population. The findings of Gelbman and Timothy (2011) with regard to international exclaves are particularly relevant to these areas' tourist development. We show that, although small physical size limits these areas' potential tourism resources, attractions do exist precisely because of the border itself. We speak, then, of "the political landscapes of borders" (Timothy 2001: 91).

We started this paper by referring to "tourism as a panacea" (Haslam McKenzie 2011). It is evident in our case-study area that, especially since the implementation of the parks designation in 1970, and since the institutionalised tourism design started, it has not been possible to stop the demographic decline, indeed it has increased (see Figure 2). Perhaps this has a direct connection with the fact that the parks respond to a model of "natural protected spaces located in peripheral areas so that sustainable development can be euphemistically orchestrated" (Ojeda 2006: 194). In this sense, a rethink about the strategy should be made, in particular about basing the whole development model on generous European funding. We consider that the Biosphere Reserve, despite the shortcomings detected in this article, can be an adequate starting point for two reasons. Firstly, because it is embedded in the "Man (sic) and the Biosphere" programme, that is, the need to overcome contradictions between protection and the local population. Secondly, because being trans-boundary it involves overcoming rigid national status frameworks. However, Büscher (2010) and Ramutsindela (2007) have already highlighted the interests that might be behind trans-boundary protected areas and the need, before anything else, to take the local population into account.

Notes

- ⁱ This is not the place to review this perspective. However, there is quite a lot of research in Spain practically without any intention to criticise the European rural development projects implemented since the decade of 1990, in which tourism has commonly been the most favoured sector. As an example García-Rodríguez et al (2005) for the whole of Spain, and Doval (2002) for Galicia in particular.
- ⁱⁱ <<http://www.adere-pg.pt/central/>> (Accessed on 1-11-2013).
- ⁱⁱⁱ <<http://www.turgaliciarural.com/>> (Accessed on 1-11-2013).
- ^{iv} <http://www.turgalicia.es/onde-aloxarse...?langId=en_US> (Accessed on 1-11-2013).
- ^v <<http://www.valorgeres-xures.pt/>> (Accessed on 1-11-2013).
- ^{vi} <<http://www.poctep.eu>> (Accessed on 1-11-2013).
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Qu'entend-on par paysage de qualité ? Résultats d'une enquête auprès d'experts roumains et wallons

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Abstract

The European Landscape Convention stresses that “the landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity”. Among other recommendations, signatory countries are committed to assess their landscapes, “taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned” (Council of Europe 2000). However, assessing landscapes out of a specific framework is not an easy task due to the multiple functions that landscapes perform. Brandt, Tress and Tress (2000) pointed five basic functions: ecological, economic, sociocultural, historical and aesthetic. Relating to these multiple functions, stakeholders may have different points of view on the quality of landscape. In a current bilateral research project funded by Wallonie Bruxelles International and the Romanian Academy, the authors exchange practices concerning landscape monitoring in high value rural landscapes. The paper presents the results of a survey among landscape experts in both countries. Forty-two landscape experts, from Wallonia and Romania, had to specify their level of agreement on fifty-two Likert items regarding landscape quality indicators. A consensus appears about an idyllic landscape characterised by a small human influence. Experts point unanimously the absence of pollution, sustainable farming, the awareness of the inhabitants about landscape, and the aesthetic value as necessary characteristics. Even if the consensus is weaker, both landscape connectivity and regional heritage seem to be other important

indicators to assess landscape quality. At the opposite end, the species rarity, the hilliness, a mention in tourist guides, or the presence in the art matter little. The survey stresses also that experts' advice differs concerning biodiversity indicators, economic potential, and the presence of modern items in the landscape. Generally, Romanian experts stress more the biocentric approach of landscape while Walloon experts may assign importance to urban or industrial landscapes. Finally, the paper suggests nine features worth to be considered when assessing landscapes.

Key words: Landscape, Assessment, European Landscape Convention, Romania, Wallonia

Mots clés: Paysage, évaluation, Convention européenne du paysage, Roumanie, Wallonie

Introduction

Depuis les années 1950, le paysage est un champ de recherche en développement croissant. Plusieurs grands réseaux se réunissent régulièrement en Europe et dans le Monde pour discuter de son analyse mais également de sa gestion. L'Association internationale d'architecture du paysage (IFLA) créée en 1948 organise de nombreux ateliers et réunions, la Conférence permanente européenne pour l'étude du paysage rural (PECSRL) se réunit depuis 1957 pour étudier le passé, le présent et le futur des paysages européens, l'Association internationale pour l'écologie du paysage (IALE) promeut la recherche en écologie du paysage depuis 1982. Le but des études et recherches paysagères n'est plus seulement, comme dans l'école française du début du 20^{ème} siècle (ex. Tulippe 1942) ou dans les travaux de Sauer (Sauer 1925), d'étudier les mutations des espaces ruraux mais de proposer des outils et des méthodes pour la gestion de paysages de plus en plus menacés. La Convention européenne du paysage est à la fois un aboutissement de plusieurs décennies de recherches et de sensibilisation mais aussi une occasion pour les administrations, le personnel politique et les chercheurs d'accroître leurs connaissances et d'améliorer leurs pratiques de gestion des paysages. Elle déclare que le paysage est une composante importante du patrimoine européen et constate que sa diversité s'appauvrit suite à la mondialisation et la modernisation des pratiques architecturales, agroforestières et autres. Selon la Convention européenne du paysage, les politiques paysagères doivent être transversales parce que le paysage est le résultat de l'interaction de nombreux facteurs et acteurs géographiques (Pinchemel and Pinchemel 1988) et parce

qu'il présente un intérêt majeur des points de vue culturels, environnementaux, sociaux et économiques. Outre le fait de proposer une définition commune, d'imposer une reconnaissance légale du paysage, d'encourager à la gestion de tous les paysages, qu'ils soient remarquables ou ordinaires, ruraux, urbains ou même industriels, la Convention européenne du paysage propose un plan d'action commun. Elle recommande notamment que les pays signataires identifient, caractérisent et qualifient leurs paysages « en tenant compte des valeurs particulières qui leur sont données par les acteurs et les populations concernées ». (Council of Europe 2000). Cependant, évaluer et qualifier le paysage en dehors d'un contexte de travail spécifique n'est pas une tâche facile à cause des multiples fonctions que le paysage remplit. En 2000, lors de la conférence sur le paysage multifonctionnel à Roskilde, les chercheurs (Brandt, Tress and Tress eds 2000) pointaient déjà cinq fonctions majeures : écologique, économique, socioculturelle, historique et esthétique. Compte tenu de ces diverses fonctions, acteurs et populations peuvent avoir des opinions relativement différentes sur la qualité d'un paysage. Or, dans une société où la culture de l'évaluation des politiques et programmes d'action est omniprésente, la détermination de ce qu'est un paysage de qualité est une question d'actualité (ex. Carvalho-Ribeiro et al 2013; Fontana et al 2013; Yao et al 2012; Cassatella and Peano eds 2011; Fry et al 2009). Cette question devrait cependant rester ouverte compte tenu de la diversité des parties prenantes du paysage.

En Wallonie, par exemple, la proposition pour repérer les paysages patrimoniaux est de combiner la lecture scientifique, un paysage présente une structure particulière qui est le reflet d'un système d'organisation du territoire passé, la lecture esthétique notamment par le recours à l'analyse de leurs représentations dans les œuvres d'art ou leurs mentions dans les guides touristiques et la lecture des habitants qui attachent du sens aux paysages (Dubois 2005).

Dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche bilatéral financé par Wallonie Bruxelles International et l'Académie roumaine, les auteurs de cette communication échangent leurs pratiques en matière de monitoring paysager. L'objectif est de contribuer à la création d'un tableau de bord adapté aux différents acteurs de terrain pour monitorer les paysages ruraux. Plutôt que de choisir une série d'indicateurs en se basant sur les connaissances et les pratiques des deux laboratoires, les quatre chercheurs ont privilégié une approche participative en consultant un large panel d'experts, utilisateurs potentiels du tableau de bord, à propos des caractéristiques d'un paysage de qualité.

L'évaluation de la qualité des paysages peut s'envisager selon plusieurs paradigmes, dont les principaux sont expert et expérientiel (Zube et al 1982 ; Vouligny et al 2009). L'approche expérientielle, impliquant la population, est très pertinente quand il s'agit de mettre en évidence les dimensions multiples du paysage, au-delà des simples caractéristiques visuelles. Cette approche intègre fortement les significations données aux éléments du paysage et aux vécus des lieux (Vanderheyden et al 2013). L'approche experte se focalise plus souvent sur les aspects mesurables du paysage, majoritairement du visuel sans pour autant négliger d'autres sens (Vouligny et al 2009). Désireux de construire un tableau de bord d'indicateurs mesurables, nous avons délibérément opté pour un travail en mode expert, d'autant plus que notre démarche questionne les critères, quelquefois techniques, et non l'appréhension générale de la qualité d'un paysage particulier.

La communication présente les résultats d'une enquête auprès d'experts en matière paysagère des deux pays. Quarante-deux experts, de Wallonie et de Roumanie, devaient marquer leur niveau d'accord à propos de cinquante-deux propositions quant aux caractéristiques d'un paysage de qualité.

Méthodologie

L'enquête est composée d'une question ouverte qui demande aux experts d'exprimer en deux phrases l'importance du paysage dans l'exercice de leur profession et de cinquante-deux items de Likert à six niveaux d'accord qui abordaient différentes caractéristiques que devrait posséder un paysage de qualité. Les propositions résultent de plusieurs séances de travail entre les quatre auteurs et ont été rédigées en français et en roumain. Les questions portaient sur de nombreuses caractéristiques du paysage juxtaposant des propositions issues tant de l'architecture du paysage, de l'écologie du paysage que de la géographie régionale ou de l'aménagement et du développement territorial. « Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les bâtiments respectent la tradition architecturale locale », « Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la structure générale n'a pas évolué au cours du temps » ou « Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui comporte de vastes étendues de nature sans coupures anthropiques » sont quelques exemples des propositions soumises aux experts (voir tab. 1).

Tableau 1 : items soumis aux experts :

1. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui a peu évolué au cours du temps*
2. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la structure générale n'a pas évolué au*

cours du temps

3. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui abrite une faune et une flore abondante*
4. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui n'est pas influencé par l'activité humaine*
5. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage peu fragmenté*
6. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui comporte de vastes étendues de nature sans coupures anthropiques*
7. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui héberge des espèces végétales ou animales rares*
8. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont l'indice de végétation (NDVI) est élevé*
9. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les espèces animales et végétales sont en équilibre avec le milieu*
10. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui présente une haute connectivité du réseau écologique*
11. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la qualité de l'air est élevée*
12. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la végétation est en bonne santé*
13. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage exempt d'espèces invasives*
14. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui comporte peu d'espaces urbanisés*
15. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage exempt de déchets anthropiques*
16. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui répond aux besoins de développement économique des habitants*
17. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage valorisable d'un point de vue économique*
18. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la protection ou la gestion n'est pas coûteuse*
19. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui présente un relief prononcé*
20. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui offre aux promeneurs des ambiances variées*
21. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage sans voies de communication visibles*
22. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les voies de communication participent à la structuration du paysage*
23. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les réseaux de transport d'énergie ne sont pas visibles*
24. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage non pollué par les sons de l'activité anthropique*
25. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui offre des possibilités de parcours pour la promenade*
26. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage attractif grâce à sa valeur esthétique*
27. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage attractif grâce à sa valeur pittoresque*

28. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui comporte des points de vue remarquables*
29. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage mentionné dans les guides touristiques grand public*
30. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage souvent représenté dans l'art*
31. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les bâtiments respectent la tradition architecturale locale*
32. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les pratiques agricoles traditionnelles sont maintenues*
33. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où l'érosion des sols est limitée*
34. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui joue un rôle de tampon régulateur face aux excès des sociétés urbaines*
35. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui participe à la régulation de l'écoulement des eaux*
36. *Un paysage urbain peut être un paysage de qualité*
37. *Un paysage industriel peut être un paysage de qualité*
38. *Un paysage de qualité peut inclure de l'habitat*
39. *Un paysage de qualité peut inclure des éoliennes*
40. *Un paysage de qualité peut inclure des bâtiments agricoles modernes*
41. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui bénéficie de mesures de protection*
42. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont les habitants sont conscients de ses qualités*
43. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui respecte les valeurs du passé*
44. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui offre une diversité d'occupations du sol*
45. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où l'urbanisation n'entraîne pas un mitage du paysage*
46. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui alterne milieux ouverts et milieux fermés*
47. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui présente une physionomie sauvage*
48. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les différentes occupations du sol occupent les biotopes les plus adaptés*
49. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage où les pratiques agricoles sont raisonnées*
50. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont les eaux sont de bonnes qualités*
51. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage dont la végétation est composée d'espèces indigènes*
52. *Un paysage de qualité est un paysage qui permet la lecture de ses transformations*

Soixante experts ont reçu par courriel l'invitation à répondre à l'enquête en ligne, quarante-deux ont répondu. Pour être considéré comme expert, ils devaient intégrer le paysage dans leurs pratiques professionnelles et exercer en Roumanie ou en Wallonie. Plusieurs secteurs ont été ciblés : la conservation de la nature, le tourisme, le patrimoine culturel, l'aménagement du territoire et l'analyse et la gestion paysagère. De même une diversité des organisations d'appartenance a été recherchée : ministères, universités, parcs naturels, administrations locales, associations non gouvernementales.

L'analyse des résultats s'est faite en trois temps. Premièrement, la recherche de consensus entre les experts concernant l'une ou l'autre affirmation et l'analyse de la distribution des réponses grâce à la construction et l'analyse des cinquante-deux histogrammes. Deuxièmement l'analyse du positionnement des experts par groupe suite à une classification hiérarchique. Troisièmement, la recherche de redondances entre les affirmations via une matrice des corrélations des rangs de Spearman.

Résultats

Il appert que, même si les conceptions d'un paysage de qualité sont nombreuses, des consensus sur certaines caractéristiques d'un paysage de qualité ont pu être trouvés et que les divergences entre experts peuvent être expliquées par le contexte géographique ou l'appartenance disciplinaire.

Certaines propositions présentent un fort consensus entre les experts qu'ils soient roumains ou wallons. Pour les experts, un paysage de qualité doit être attractif grâce à sa valeur esthétique ; il doit être exempt de déchets anthropiques, connaître des pratiques agricoles raisonnées et ne pas subir de mitage par l'urbanisation. Les experts s'accordent aussi sur le fait qu'un paysage habité voire urbain peut être de qualité. Un consensus existe aussi entre les experts pour reconnaître une relative importance au fait qu'un paysage de qualité comporte des points de vue remarquables, qu'il offre une diversité d'occupations du sol ou que ces occupations du sol se localisent sur les biotopes les plus adaptés.

Par contre, quelques affirmations ont particulièrement divisé les experts, celles concernant la qualité de l'air, l'abondance de la faune et de la flore, l'indice de végétation (NDVI), la persistance de la structure générale du paysage au cours du temps, les mesures de protection, la présence d'espaces urbanisés ou le fait qu'un paysage industriel peut être un paysage de qualité. Pour l'ensemble des questions, on peut constater que les experts roumains sont plus orientés vers une approche biocentrique du paysage alors que les experts

wallons sont plus réceptifs à des paysages marqués par l'homme. Au-delà de possibles biais liés à l'échantillonnage et la traduction du questionnaire en roumain, les contextes paysagers des deux pays participent à ces différences : quand la Roumanie possède encore de nombreux espaces de nature, la Wallonie est caractérisée par des paysages façonnés par plusieurs siècles d'utilisation assez intensive du milieu.

L'analyse de la classification hiérarchique des experts selon leurs jugements des cinquante-deux propositions confirme les analyses déjà réalisées. Les experts roumains sont concentrés dans une partie du tableau où ils sont associés à des experts wallons sensibles aux approches naturalistes. La classification automatique fait clairement apparaître une « école wallonne » du paysage plus sensible à des paysages marqués par les activités anthropiques. En marge, on retrouve un expert wallon qui insiste sur l'approche participative du paysage et sur le fait que c'est aux habitants de s'approprier leurs paysages et de déterminer leurs propres critères de qualité et deux experts roumains qui ont une approche très partielle du paysage, l'un est spécialisé en conservation de la faune, l'autre modélise l'environnement.

L'analyse de la matrice des corrélations des rangs de Spearman épaulée par une analyse factorielle permet d'analyser la façon dont les experts interprètent les différents items proposés et de distinguer les items qui obtiennent les mêmes niveaux d'accord auprès des mêmes experts. Il ressort clairement de l'analyse trois approches paysagères. Premièrement, une approche biocentrée où l'on retrouve les items concernant l'abondance et la rareté de la faune et de la flore, l'indice de végétation NDVI, la qualité de l'air, l'absence de déchets anthropiques, l'aspect sauvage, des pratiques agricoles traditionnelles et le respect de l'architecture traditionnelle. Deuxièmement, une approche où le paysage est adaptée aux besoins de l'économie locale avec des caractéristiques comme de répondre aux besoins des habitants, la possibilité d'intégrer des bâtiments agricoles modernes ou des éoliennes, une utilisation du sol adaptée aux biotopes et des réseaux de transports peu visibles. Troisièmement, une approche plus esthétique du paysage reposant sur les items liés à l'importance de la valeur esthétique, au côté pittoresque du paysage, à la mention dans les guides touristiques, aux possibilités de promenade et à la présence de points de vue.

Finalement, la synthèse des trois analyses précédentes permet d'individualiser neuf caractéristiques d'un paysage de qualité qui mériteraient d'être particulièrement analysées et intégrées dans un tableau de bord en vue d'un monitoring de la qualité du paysage, à savoir : la connectivité, la qualité

de l'eau, une végétation saine et adaptée au contexte local, l'absence de déchets anthropiques, le respect de l'architecture locale, une agriculture raisonnée, une population sensibilisée aux qualités du paysage et une valeur esthétique. Ces caractéristiques sont à la fois reconnues comme importantes par la plupart des experts interrogés et peu redondantes entre elles.

Conclusion

Si grâce à la Convention européenne du paysage, une définition commune du paysage, partagée par plusieurs pays et disciplines, semble se dégager, il demeure de nombreuses approches et définitions de ce qu'est un paysage de qualité. L'enquête auprès d'experts roumains et wallons a permis de repérer certains consensus mais également divergences à propos des caractéristiques d'un paysage de qualité entre des experts issus de pays, de disciplines et d'organisations variés. L'analyse de la classification hiérarchique montre des regroupements entre experts selon leurs niveaux d'accord à propos des cinquante-deux propositions qui peuvent principalement s'expliquer par leur appartenance disciplinaire mais également par les caractéristiques des paysages de leur pays. Quand les experts roumains sont particulièrement centrés sur les paysages « sauvages » rejetant l'idée qu'un paysage fortement anthropisé puisse être un paysage de qualité, les experts wallons confrontés quotidiennement à des paysages marqués par plusieurs siècles de transformations anthropiques sont également sensibles aux aspects patrimoniaux de ces occupations successives du territoire. Qu'entend-on par paysage de qualité ? La réponse à cette question devrait rester ouverte. La présente recherche propose cependant une approche méthodologique qui prend en compte la diversité des experts et des vécus et va jusqu'à suggérer neuf caractéristiques qui devraient particulièrement être analysées lors d'une évaluation de la qualité du paysage.

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The Effects of Tourism on Functional Diversification of Rural Settlements: The Case of *Ayder Yaylasi* (North-Eastern Turkey)

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Abstract

This study is focused on functional transformation of a seasonal rural settlement in Turkey.

Ayder Yaylasi, which is located at 1200 m altitude in a mountain region at the north-east of Turkey, was a temporary rural settlement which resulted from a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Following the opening of a thermal spring facility in 1967, it developed a different character as tourism began to compete with stock breeding. Growing interest in, and demand for, rural tourism in Turkey, which is also observed in *Ayder Yaylasi*, led to the settlement's re-branding as the "Yayla Tourism Center" in 1987. This further increased *Ayder Yaylasi*'s tourist profile creating some problems too. Neither the proclamation of the settlement as a "National Park" in 1994, nor its status as a "Natural Protected Area" from 1998 has prevented environmental deterioration. The locality was, finally declared a "Cultural and Tourism Protection Development Region" in 2006. Increasing functional diversity has brought radical changes to the structure of *Yayla* settlement. Intensive construction on the one hand caused some infrastructure problems, while on the other hand it led to the displacement of local dwellings which have a traditional architecture with reinforced concrete houses which are not environmentally friendly. On account of its rich fauna and flora, dwellings in local architectural style and waterfalls, *Ayder Yaylasi* has a great rural tourism potential, and this potential should be used in a suitable and environmentally friendly way. Otherwise, losing these characteristics will end the traditional side of settlement. Alongside traditional stock breeding activities, different tourism activities have developed intensively in *Ayder Yaylasi* and currently 26 hotels, motels and pensions support tourism activities throughout the year.

Key words: Tourism, Functional Transformation, Temporary Rural Settlement, Turkey, *Ayder Yaylasi*

Introduction

There is an evident change and transformation currently being undergone concerning the rural population and economic activities in Turkey. This transformation sometimes involves functional diversification and other occasions extend to cultures, lifestyles, and environmental quality. It occurs not only in permanent settlements but also in seasonal rural settlements that are associated with semi-nomadic lifestyle.

Rural transformation results from both external and local dynamics. The most significant factors concerning the occurrence of the aforementioned change is that traditional, rural and economic factors are far from ensuring income with their current structure as well as the access to the services is limited.

The disadvantages experienced in rural areas cause an even more intense immigration to urban centers to take place and this causes not only the depopulation of rural settlement and structural changes but also the accumulation of the population in urban areas and numerous spatial and socio-economic problems to be encountered.

Three-quarters of Turkey's population lived in rural areas in the first years of the Republic (census year of 1927) in Turkey, and little change occurred up until 1955. Subsequent, political (urban based politics) and socio-economic changes (less income and lack of access services) laid the foundation for a rapid migration to take place from rural to urban areas. This migration caused a rapid decrease in the ratio of the rural population to total population which declined to 56% by 1980. After 1980, structural transformations have once taken place in Turkey, in a similar fashion to the 1950's a new wave of migration from rural to urban areas has taken place. As of 2000, the rural population also began to decrease proportionally to 1980 and the percentage of the rural population to the total population was registered as 35%. Rural population decline continues to this day and its share was just 23% in 2012, reversing the ratios in 1930.

Turkey is a country that demonstrates a significant variety not only in terms of rural population but also rural settlement geography. When 26.184 related settlements units (some of which are seasonal) and 31.731 rural district are added to the number of permanent village settlements, the number of which exceeds 18.220, it can be observed that there are more than 76,000 rural settlement units, many of which are very small (Icislari Bakanligi. 2014). Over 30% of the villages have less than 250 people residents. There are numerous seasonal settlements in addition to the permanent villages in Turkey. One of

these settlement types, with its distinct functional structure is called “*yayla*” a name that varies regionally.

In 2012, 17, 3 million people lived in Turkey’s rural settlements and only 24,6% of the work force continued to be employed in agricultural activities. However, the problems (low income) encountered by rural residents encourage them to create new economic activities such as tourism alongside improving the range, quality and price-competitiveness of agricultural output.

Turkey has great tourism potential on account of its rich diversity of physical and human geographical features which support both conventional activities alongside ecotourism or rural tourism alternatives. Tourism activities have therefore begun to supplement the traditional activities of the rural areas and assists their functional diversification.

Ayder Yaylasi constitutes one of the most splendid examples of the functional diversification of rural and particularly seasonal settlements. It has gradually lost its traditional economic structure and become a tourism center.

Methods

This study uses *Ayder Yaylasi* as a study of how *Yayla* settlements have diversified into tourism activities. Information sources included survey works in (years of 1998 and 2010), data which contains observations and partly interviews, extraction from secondary sources, and a search of relevant and recent literature and reports.

Results

Conceptual Framework

Before moving on to the geographical characteristics of the *Ayder Yaylasi* and the influence of tourism on the functional structural transformation, it will be beneficial to shortly describe the concepts of “*yayla*” and “*yaylacilik*”. The fact that this settlement has emerged and subsisted for a long period of time is closely associated with these concepts.

The *yayla* concept has three different meanings in Turkey. First it is used as a topographical unit that corresponds plateau or tableland. Secondly it is attached to the stockbreeding activities being carried out intensely on the meadows and pastures of *yayla* regions. Finally, it is the name attached to seasonal rural settlement which are only inhabited during certain periods of the year (from beginning of May to the end of September) and are completely depopulated at the end of the season. The population movements concerning the utilization of these regions are defined as *yaylacilik*.

In the traditional sense *yaylacilik* means; the population, which mostly live out of agricultural activities, moving laterally and vertically across the land by leaving their villages during the warm season, in order to find plentiful of fresh grass for the stock they are breeding. During this population movement that corresponds to a 3-5 months period, the families also join in this migration together with the herd.

The *yaylacilik* in Turkey is not only an economic activity but also a lifestyle and socio-cultural phenomena. Therefore, preparations are made before moving to the *yayla* and this movement is accompanied by the whole village in the form of a celebration. The movement starts with the melting of snow at the area of greater altitudes than the villages and with the first start of the snowfall to the higher regions of the mountains, the movement is repeated in the opposite direction.

Currently, with the decline of traditional agricultural activities, *yaylacilik* has also begun to lose its previous significance. On the other hand, despite its significance being in decline in the economic sense, the habitual behaviors of the locals cause the traditional structure to continue in different forms. One of these is spending a certain portion of the year on *Yaylas* for recreational purposes. This movement, which was initially solely participated in by the locals, has become more systematic with the government's planning and incentives to develop rural tourism and has become a touristic element.

On the *Yaylas*, with the increase of recreational and touristic participation besides the economic activity of stockbreeding, it has become mandatory for this activity to become systematic. In Turkey, the works performed for the purpose of making the *yayla* tourism more planned has begun to intensify as of 1990, and the Ministry of Tourism has initiated these works, which it plans to spread nationwide, at the Black Sea region, which has the highest potential in terms of *yayla* tourism. Within the specified scope, 21 of *Yayla* settlements in the region have been declared as "Tourism Centers" (ITO 1997:43). *Ayder Yaylasi*, which is one of the abovementioned *Yayla* settlements, is also the most well-known *yayla* of Turkey, in terms of this transformation being able to be observed most evidently.

The General Geographical Features of the Region

Ayder Yaylasi is located at the northeast of Turkey, corresponding to the east of the Black Sea Geographical Region (Figure 1). The East Black Sea Region is characterized by curved slopes and mountainsides that extend in the east-west direction and the altitude of which exceeds 3000 m. The topography, which

steepens rapidly right behind a narrow coastline formed of small plains, in a short distance, turn into peaks the altitude of which reaches 4000 m.

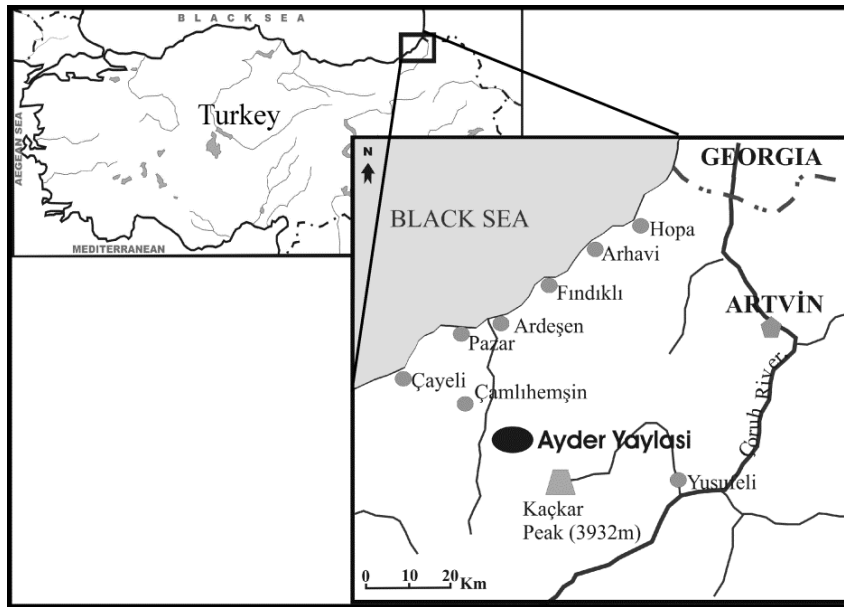


Figure 1 Location Map

In terms of general climate characteristics, the Black Sea climate type, which does not actually have really high average temperature values and is rainy, to be prevalent in all seasons. Despite this general framework, while a humid oceanic climate type is prevalent in the coastal region, continental climate is prevalent in the higher altitudes and the south regions of the highlands.

The average annual temperature on the coastal region is 14-15°C but decreases with altitude. It is possible to observe similar characteristics in average rainfall amounts as well. While the average is above 2000 mm at slopes that are not further from the shore, the amount of rainfall gradually decreases as we move further into the higher altitude mountainsides. Undoubtedly, the rainfall conditions that are present in this region allows a rich network of streams to be formed in the north region of the mountainside. The fact that rainfall takes place during each season in the region, has prepared the foundation for a rich natural flora to be formed at the mountainside slopes of the facing north. The flora pattern, which emerges in zones starting with the coast, contains cultivated plants that hazelnuts and tea in areas close to the coast (up to 600 m altitude), intense and rich forest vegetation can be observed right above this altitude up to 2000 m.

The East Black Sea region has a unique characteristic not only in terms of its

physical geographical conditions but also the human geography conditions shaped by such.

The natural conditions in the region have been influential not only on the formation of settlements and economic activities but the socio-cultural structure as well. In the East Black Sea Region, the challenging physical geography conditions, primarily the topography, has caused the settlement to concentrate mostly in the sections close to the coast, while the rural settlements above the coastline have a dispersed formation. While villages can be encountered continuously up to altitudes of 1500 m, temporary rural settlements are more predominant from this altitude up to altitudes of 3000 m.

There are numerous *Yayla* settlements of varying sizes on the Alpine pastures zone extending over the forest border in the East Black Sea Region. Even though their exact numbers have not been determined, it is a known fact that there are many *Yayla* settlements on the higher altitudes of the mountainside.

The physical conditions of the region limit a widespread and diverse agricultural production. For this reason, the population residing at higher altitudes has resorted to creating economic activities other than agriculture. The most prominent of these is stockbreeding.

In the region, stockbreeding has been continued for a long time, using grasslands and meadows. For this activity, which is performed mainly as bovine raising, the animals are sheltered in the barns in the villages during the cold seasons and are moved to prairies and meadows on higher altitudes when the air temperature rises and the snow melts. However, on the other hand, the effect of the national stockbreeding policies and the insufficiency of the conditions suitable for stock breeding in barns have caused this activity to decline in the general economy of the region. Therefore, this activity, which has shaped throughout a long historical process, has a tendency to decline each day, despite still being performed.

In the region, the inability to create new economic opportunities in parallel to the changes in the economic conditions of the country and the fact that activities such as agriculture and stockbreeding continuously provide less sufficient incomes, cause the rural local population to quest for new sources of income.

Geographical Characteristic of Ayder Yaylasi

Ayder Yaylasi is located at the north of the Kackar Mountain at an altitude of 1200 m and also at the north slopes of the Kavran Stream (Figure 2 and Photo

1).

The units forming the *Ayder Yaylasi*, which is an inland forest settlement, are located on small gaps that have been formed by the partial destruction of the forest and the north slopes of the stream valley.

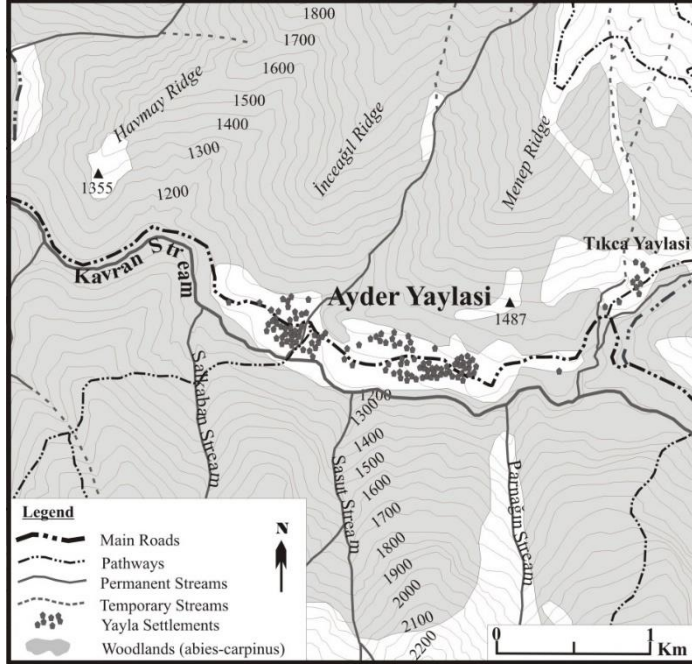


Figure 2 Topography Map



Photo 1 *Ayder Yaylasi* is Located at the North Slopes of the Kavran Stream

next to these dwellings despite the legal decree for the preservation of such (Photo 4).

In *Ayder Yaylasi*, consisting of three separate units, dwellings and facilities are concentrated more on Upper Ambarlik and Lower Ambarlik. While the Upper Ambarlik section includes mostly hotels and Pensions, the Lower Ambarlik section includes Thermal facilities and common service facilities (Photo 2).

The Mid Ambarlik section, which was the first to be put under protection, have more sparse settlements. This region contains the most beautiful examples of traditional dwelling architecture (Photo

3). New buildings continue to be constructed right

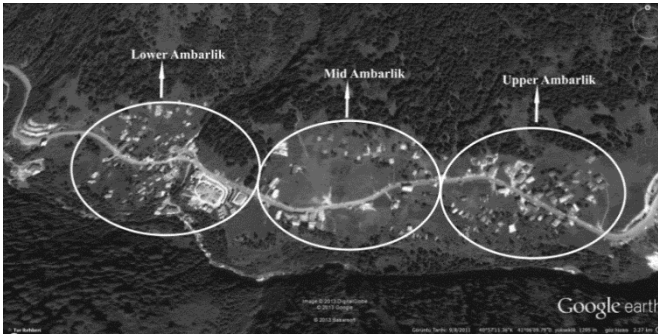


Photo 2 The Units that Consist of *Ayder Yaylasi*
(Source: Google Earth 2011)



Photo 3 Traditional *Yayla* Dwellings in *Ayder Yaylasi* (1998)

In *Ayder Yaylasi*, old dwellings have been shaped by the influence of the stockbreeding activity and natural environmental conditions. The houses are usually constructed as single storey structures or as two storey structures leaning on the hillside at sloped sections, and in two storey dwellings, the ground floor was utilized as a barn. Some of these houses, constructed mostly using wood materials, had their foundation constructed of stone. Most of these dwellings have a garden right in front of them, allowing a small scale agricultural production.

Ayder Yaylasi, utilized predominantly by the Groluk, Kaplica, Asagi Simsirli and Yukarı Simsirli settlements, has also acted as a way station for those that wanted to go to *Yaylas* at higher altitudes (Somuncu 1994:264). During traditional *yaylacilik* activities, the population goes to the *Ayder Yaylasi* at mid-April and returns to the villages by the end of October.

As the *Ayder Yaylasi* maintained its presence within the traditional structure, in 1967, decision to construct buildings for the purpose of utilizing the thermal resources at this location as hot springs, was determined to be the first change in the traditional structure, and the place has turned into a tourism center with the addition of new elements.

Throughout a long historical process, with the opening of the thermal Facility at the *Yayla* field utilized by some villages in the area, non-locals began

to visit the place as well, and this situation caused new needs to emerge. The increasing number of people visiting the hot springs rendered it mandatory for accommodation facilities such as hotel and pension and service units such as bakery, grocery store, tea house and communication (Somuncu 1994:266).



Photo 4 New buildings Continue to be Constructed Right Next to Traditional Dwellings in *Ayder Yaylasi* (2010)

As of 1980's, interest and investments concerning alternative tourism in Turkey began to increase, and the sights were set on spreading tourism throughout the whole year. This situation has been an important factor for the development of *Yayla* tourism in the Black Sea region, which is

disadvantageous in terms of mass tourism. In 1987, the declaration of *Ayder Yaylasi* as a tourism center indicates the beginning of a new stage. The Mid Ambarlik section, which constituted just a small part of the *Yayla*, was included within the scope of a tourism center but the irregular constructional development at the Lower and Upper Ambarlik sections, which remain outside this zone, laid the foundation for the whole *Yayla* to be declared a tourism center (Somuncu 1994:265). The opening of the whole *Yayla* to tourism also caused rapid constructional development and the number of building structures, which were 139 in 1974, has risen to 272 in 2008 with a 95% increase (Atasoy et al. 2009:4).

Certain decrees have been taken by not only the central government but also the local authorities for the preservation of the *Yayla* and within this scope, *Ayder Yaylasi* has been declared a natural protected area by the Province of Trabzon Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board. In 2006, *Ayder Yaylasi* was declared as a Cultural and Touristic Preservation Zone with the decree of the Council of Ministers.

Despite all of the specified arrangements and the decrees for preservation, the insufficiencies, sometimes resulting from legal arrangements, and the weaknesses concerning the application and monitoring of the protection decrees, a multi-storey and ferroconcrete constructional development could

not be prevented. For this reason, certain sections of the Yayla almost resemble a town center (Photo 5).

Today, *Ayder Yaylasi* is known not for its traditional structure but touristic attractions and accommodates a large number of visitors with this aspect. *Ayder Yaylasi*, where previously no one lived on in winter even for touristic purposes in the 1990's (Somuncu 1994:265), has currently become a settlement where people can live any season. On the *Yayla*, where small scale stock breeding activities are also currently maintained, the main economic function begun to be defined as tourism.



Photo 5 Some Sections of the *Ayder Yaylasi* Almost Resemble a Town Center (Source: hurriyet.com)

In 1994, *Ayder Yaylasi* had a bed capacity of 600 low quality beds (Somuncu 1994:266), while according to the data of the Rize Provincial Culture and Tourism, there are 26 hotels and pensions of various qualities, with a room capacity of 526 and bed capacity of 1179 in 2012.

The Touristic Potential and Touristic Resources of Ayder and its Surroundings

When we look at the elements that render *Ayder Yaylasi* and its surroundings attractive in terms of tourism, we see thermal tourism pioneering the initiation of tourism in the *Yayla*. The hot springs which continued its function from the opening of the first facility in 1967 has become able to serve more people with the addition of new structures.

Another element that renders the *Ayder Yaylasi* advantageous in terms of tourism is that it is located in very close proximity to the Kackar Mountain, constituting one of the highest peaks of Turkey and is extremely attractive for mountaineers. This proximity causes *Ayder Yaylasi* to be a center for

mountaineering activities. Visitors that come to the region to climb the peak or trekking, lodge at the *Ayder Yaylasi* for some time and provision the materials they need from here.

Ayder Yaylasi and its surroundings contain significant potentials in terms of natural environmental characteristics. While sometimes the people who visit the area to see the waterfalls, the numerous plant and animal species, glacial and glacial lakes create a significant touristic movement, sometimes any one of the natural elements make it possible for a different touristic activity to be performed.

The fresh air and natural beauties that the region has, creates the foundation for numerous people to come here to travel, view and rest, sometimes daily and sometimes to lodge

Yayla Festivals constitute another one of the resources influencing the tourism in the *Yayla*. We had specified before that the *Yaylacilik* activity has a socio-cultural dimension as well as an economic structure. In this sense, in addition to the movement to the *Yayla* taking place as a celebration, the arrangement of celebrations at a certain time of the *Yaylacilik* season is also a part of this culture. These celebrations, which were only attended by the *Yayla* residents in the traditional structure, have taken on a different quality with the tourism coming into effect. *Yayla* festivals, both in terms of the number of attendants and the qualities of the attendants have a quite different characteristic. The activities, which took place within a traditional structure in the past, are performed in our day in the form of important touristic organizations and the participation of thousands is ensured.

Besides the touristic activities that are currently being held at the *Ayder Yaylasi*, works are also performed to increase the diversity. Within this scope, works are performed to develop activities such as heli-skiing (Zaman and Birinci 2009), jeep safari and photo safari, hunting, horseback riding, line fishing, snow skiing and paragliding.

On the other hand, concerning the *Yayla* tourism, which has been put on the agenda in order to diversify tourism by means of developing the opportunities for alternative tourism throughout Turkey, and particularly the Black Sea region, and spreading of the tourism activities throughout the year, the fact that certain *Yaylas* were declared as touristic centers before the necessary infrastructure works were completed, focused the attention on these sections and the requests that were realized in a short time laid the foundation for attention to numerous problems to arise at such *Yaylas*.

The *Yaylas* being declared as touristic centers has thus caused rapid and

irregular constructional development, instead of promoting protection and regular constructional development. The most prominent problem encountered at the *Ayder Yaylasi* is irregular constructional development. At the *Yayla*, despite all protective measures, an intense and ferroconcrete constructional development has taken and continues to take place instead of the construction of old wood rural houses that are nature friendly and reflect the local architecture.

On the other hand, the intense request for the *Yayla* makes new requests and arrangements mandatory. In this sense, particularly the great number of vehicles visiting the *Yayla* on the weekend, causes a traffic lock and the parking problem reaches the maximum level.

Conclusions

The changing economic conditions cause the agriculture and stockbreeding to turn into insufficient activities in the Black Sea Region and the traditional lifestyle to change rapidly since the region is one of the fastest depopulating zones as a result of migration.

This migration movement that takes place towards the urban areas, causes the rural areas to be depopulated and the traditional structure to disappear.

On one hand, the desire of the locals to preserve their old habit and on the other hand the efforts made to preserve and maintain the traditional structure has caused the goal to utilize the natural structure and beauty of the area in a better manner.

With the incentives and directions provided by the government, the phenomenon of tourism was added to the traditional structure that was shaped around stockbreeding.

The new situation particularly causes a functional transformation on *Yaylas* and this brings certain problems.

These settlements have been subjected to an intense popularization pressure in a short while and certain structural (functional-spatial) changes have taken place.

As a result of the transformation concerning the economic activities, instead of rural houses shaped in accordance with this activity, structures constructed using factory assembled materials for the purpose of providing lodging.

The new situation causes new requirements to emerge on the *Yaylas* and the *Yayla* and its environment to be reorganized (restaurant, shops, parking lots, entertainment spaces etc.).

Despite certain planning activities and legal regulations were carried into

effect for the purpose of resolving the problems caused by touristic activities and the problems it brings about and to prevent new problems from emerging, retrogression can not be fully prevented.

Ayder Yaylasi, which is the best known *Yayla* in Turkey with the greatest rural touristic potential and provides the greatest touristic lodging is one of the regions where the specified regions are encountered most visibly.

The fundamental result that can be ascertained is as follows; it does not seem possible for the region to maintain its presence with its traditional structure and economic activities and the population to be held here. In this sense, it is mandatory for alternative income resources to be created for the region. Among these alternatives the most suitable one is tourism. However, even though a rural tourism that might develop without control would bring about income in the short term, it is evident that such will cause great damage on the long term.

Therefore, the essential thing is to render the attraction revealed by the traditional and natural structure of the region sustainable. Within this framework, the protection of the region's natural and cultural structure and the dwelling architecture and most importantly, taking the necessary lessons from the experiences, for controls and audits to be applied swiftly and maximally for the *Yaylas* that are or will be opened to tourism.

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Important Cultural Landscape List and the Decay of Traditional Agricultural Life: A Case of Dispersed Settlement in the Tonami Plain, Japan

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Abstract

In 2004, Japanese Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was partially revised to include the idea of *cultural landscape*. Based on the revision, the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports and Science became capable of selecting *Important Cultural Landscape* for preservation of a distinctive land use form associated with its regional culture, custom, and beliefs. The new ideology toward landscape, cultural landscape was diffused from UNESCO via the national authority to local governments in top-down manner, at the time of the revision of Japanese landscape law to include the cultural landscape concept in 2004. Consequently, Japanese local authorities have gradually imported the concept via the application process of ICL whereas the Japanese government also had been espoused it from UNESCO. In the light of these circumstances, the purpose of this paper is to assess the effectiveness of the concept of conserving local landscapes, by grading them according to a globalized evaluation system, using the Tonami plain as a case study. In doing this, the author also critically investigates the historical origin, status quo, and prospects of ICL.

Key words: Cultural landscape, Conservation, World heritage, Cultural inevitability

Introduction

In 2004, Japanese Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was partially revised to include the idea of *cultural landscape*. It further defined the landscape as “the scenic place shaped by the people’s lives and vocations as well as regional climate of which are essential to understand Japanese way of life and vocation”.

Based on the first clause of Article 134 of the same law, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science became capable of selecting *Important Cultural Landscape* (ICL) for preservation of a distinctive land use form

associated with its regional culture, custom, and beliefs. As listed on Table 1, ICL consists of rice terraces, villages, and river basins. They are not only chosen because they are rare and wonderful in themselves but represent a local way of traditional life in their land use form. On January 26th 2006, the Wetland in Omi-hachiman was registered as the first ICL. Since then, thirty areas have been on an on-going basis selected as ICL until April 2012.

Before the amendment of Japanese Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, the Agency for Cultural Affairs had done a series of research studies to select possible ICL places from more than 2,000 candidate sites (Section for Monuments and Sites, Division of Cultural Property, Agency for Cultural Affairs 2005). Many municipalities started to act in concert with the new initiative by promoting their potentially valuable assets to be chosen on the ICL list.

In the light of these circumstances, the purpose of this paper is to assess the effectiveness of the concept of conserving local landscapes, by grading them according to a globalized evaluation system, using the Tonami plain as a case study. In doing this, the author also critically investigates the historical origin, status quo, and prospects of ICL.

Origin of ICL

Cultural landscape ideology derived from UNESCO

The term and some fundamental idea of cultural landscape were coined by a famous geographer Carl O. Sauer in 1925 (Sauer 1925). He explained that spatial observation should be based on recognizing the integration of physical and cultural foundations of the landscape. The direct origin of the cultural landscape is traceable back to 1962 when UNESCO adopted the *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscape and Sites* at the 12th general conference of UNESCO. That was 10 years before the coming into effect of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Article 1 of the recommendation defined the landscape worth protecting as “the preservation and, where possible, the restoration of the aspects of natural, rural and urban landscapes and sites, whether natural or man-made, which have a cultural or aesthetic interest or form typical natural surroundings”, and in article 3, they quoted defined the landscape worth protecting as “the preservation and, where possible, the restoration of the aspects of natural, rural and urban landscapes and sites, whether natural or man-made, which have a cultural or aesthetic interest or form typical natural surroundings”, and in article 3, they quoted

that the safeguarding process should “extend to the whole territory of a state, and should not be confined to certain selected landscapes or sites” (UNESCO 1962: 2).

Table 1. Inscribed landscapes on ICL list

No.	Entry names of ICL	Location (Municipality/Prefecture)	Inscription date
1)	Wetland in Omi-hachiman	Omi-hachiman, Shiga	2006/1/26
2)	Farm Village of Hondera area, Ichinoseki	Ichinoseki, Iwate	2006/7/28
3)	Cultural Landscape along the Sarugawa River resulting from Ainu Tradition and Modern Settlement Biratori	Biratori, Hokkaido	2007/7/26
4)	Danbata (terraced fields) in Yusumizugaura	Uwajima, Ehime	2007/7/26
5)	Tono Arakawakogen Farm	Tono, Iwate	2008/3/28
6)	Waterfront of Kaizu, Nishihama, and Chinai in Takashima City	Takashima, Shiga	2008/3/28
7)	Ontayaki Village	Hita, Oita	2008/3/28
8)	Rice terraces in Warabino	Karatsu, Saga	2008/7/28
9)	Landscape with Tsujun irrigation channel and rice terraces in Shiraito Plateau	Yamato, Kumamoto	2008/7/28
10)	Cultural Landscape in Uji	Uji, Kyoto	2009/2/12
11)	Cultural landscape in the Shimantogawa River basin. Villages in the mountains to the headwater region	Tsuno, Kochi	2009/2/12
12)	Cultural landscape in the Shimantogawa River basin. Villages and rice terraces in the mountains at the upstream region	Yusuvara, Kochi	2009/2/12
13)	Cultural landscape in the Shimantogawa River basin. Circulation and traffic among agricultural and mountainous villages at the upstream region	Nakatosu, Kochi	2009/2/12
14)	Cultural landscape in the Shimantogawa River basin. Circulation and traffic among agricultural and mountainous villages at the middlestream region	Shimanto, Kochi	2009/2/12
15)	Cultural landscape in the Shimantogawa River basin. Vocations, circulation and traffic in the downstream region	Shimanto, Kochi	2009/2/12
16)	Cultural landscape in Kanazawa. Tradition and culture in the castle town	Kanazawa, Ishikawa	2010/2/22
17)	Rice terraces in Obasute	Chikuma, Nagano	2010/2/22
18)	Rice terraces in Kashiwara	Kamikatsu, Tokushima	2010/2/22
19)	Cultural landscape in Hirado Island	Hirado, Nagasaki	2010/2/22
20)	Waterfront of Harie and Shimofuri	Takashima, Shiga	2010/8/5
21)	Rural landscape of Tashibunoshu Osaki	Bungotakada, Oita	2010/8/5
22)	Kure port and fishing townscape	Nakatosu, Kochi	2011/2/7
23)	Cultural landscape of the Ojika islands	Ojika, Nagasaki	2011/2/7
24)	Fishing village of Sakitsu, Amakusa	Amakusa, Kumamoto	2011/2/7
25)	Wetland of meeting of Tonegawa and Watarasegawa Rivers	Itakura, Gunma	2011/9/21
26)	Agricultural and mountainous landscape of Sado Nishimikawa trace back to Sado Gold Mine	Sado, Niigata	2011/9/21
27)	Cultural landscape of Oku-Asuka	Asuka, Nara	2011/9/21
28)	Cultural landscape of Kuroshima Island in Sasebo	Sasebo, Nagasaki	2011/9/21
29)	Cultural landscape of Hisakajima Island in Goto	Goto, Nagasaki	2011/9/21
30)	Cultural landscape of Kita-uonome in Shinkamigoto	Shinkamigoto, Nagasaki	2012/1/24

As of April 2012 (Source: Agency for Cultural Affairs 2012. *Policy of Cultural Affairs in Japan – Fiscal 2012*)

The idea of combining cultural and nature conservation was initially proposed in 1965 by a U.S. Committee on Natural Resources Conservation and Development in the White House Conference on International Cooperation. The committee called for a World Heritage Trust to stimulate “international cooperative efforts to identify, establish, develop and manage the world’s superb natural and scenic and areas and historic sites for the present and

future benefit of the entire world citizenry” (Stott 2011: 283). The International Union for Conservation of Nature also developed similar proposals in 1968. Subsequently, The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972.

In 1992, at the time when Japan ratified the world heritage treaty, at the 16th general conference, UNESCO added and redefined cultural heritage to cultural property in the revision of their operational guideline (Takahashi 2009; Rössler 2002: 10-11). Cultural landscape is a local environment which can only be sustained by the dynamic interaction between socio-cultural folkways and nature, such as rice terraces and village forests. According to UNESCO, it consists of three categories: (1) Landscape designed and created intentionally by humans, such as parks and gardens, (2) Organically evolved landscape, and (3) Associative cultural landscape. The second type also consists of (a) Relict/fossil landscape, such as archaeological sites, and (b) Continuing landscape that “retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life” (Rössler 2000: 27-28). These classifications, especially for the last one, equally associate with additional distinctions, such as vernacular assets, as we shall see in the following case study in Tonami, Japan.

Origin of Japanese law for conserving local landscape

The revolutionary period of modernization in which aspects of western systems and culture entered into Japan, called the Meiji-Ishin (Meiji restoration) dated from 1868. Likewise, the modernization in Japanese legal history of environmental conservation also can be dated back to 1897 when the Meiji-restoration government initially started to employ the *Traditional Temples and Shrines Conservation Act* for preserving old architecture of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines and their treasury as national properties. The act was abolished and incorporated into the *National Treasury Preservation Act of 1929*, which accredits cultural properties regardless of their ownership (Kobayashi 2007).

In 1919 the Historical Site, Scenic Beauty and Natural Monument Preservation Law was congressionally-sanctioned and enacted (Edagawa 2002). Although “Historical Spot” and “Natural Monument” imply the indicated objects, it is difficult to represent any figurative referent of “Scenic Beauty”. It can be recognized as the legal birth of landscape conservation ideology in Japan.

In 1950, when the *Cultural Assets Preservation Act* gained approval as lawmaker-initiated legislation, the two previous Acts enacted in 1919 (mainly for natural resources) and 1929 (mostly for national treasury) were united. Subsequently the 1950 act had several revisions. Notably the amendment in 1975 included the institution of *Ju-denken: Important Preservation District of Historic Buildings* and *Ju-Yo- Mukei Bunka Zai: Intangible Important Cultural Property* (Kariya 2008) for comprehensive and unified conservation of important cultural architectures and their surrounding areas.

Initiation of cultural landscape into Japanese landscape law

Up to the major amendment of the cultural assets preservation act in 2004 to include newly-initiated cultural landscape ideology in Japanese Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, local environment had only been viewed to be the set of cultural property and their surrounding neighborhood. Through the amendment, cultural landscape was addressed as a category of cultural property in its first clause of Article 2 (Section for Traditional Culture, Agency for Cultural Affairs 2005). Article 5 of the law further defined the landscape as “the scenic place shaped by the people’s lives and vocations as well as regional climate which are essential to understand the Japanese way of life and vocation”. More precisely, the agency categorized cultural landscapes associated with (1) agricultural life such as rice terraces and dry fields, (2) plant cropping such as Japanese nutmeg fields for traditional roof-thatching and meadowlands, (3) forestry for timber and disaster-prevention forests, (4) culture fishery such as aquafarming of seaweeds and pearls, (5) water usage such as irrigation ponds, canals and harbors, (6) mining and manufacturing industrial plants and collieries, (7) flow and mobilization of people such as road and plaza space, (8) residences such as planting fences and homestead woodlands.

The new ideology toward landscape, cultural landscape was diffused from UNESCO via the national authority to local governments in top-down manner, at the time of the revision of Japanese landscape law to include the cultural landscape concept in 2004. Consequently, Japanese local authorities have gradually imported the cultural landscape concept via the application process of ICL whereas the Japanese government also had been espoused it from UNESCO.

Study area and its adoption process of ICL

The Tonami dispersed village landscape is roughly located in the Tonami plain

field. The field spreads out Tonami, Nanto and some part of Takaoka municipalities of Toyama prefecture. The unique landscape covers over 20,000 hectares and is one of the largest dispersed settlement areas in Japan. The uniqueness of the land use form attracted attention firstly in 1914 by a geographer who introduced it as Japanese version of *Einzelhof* (Ogawa 1914). Since then, many geographers focused on its historical origin as well as the distribution patterns and the attitude of residents (Makino 1915; Matsui 1931; Muramatsu 1931; Hashimoto 1969; Hashimoto 2010).

There are noticeable drains and river channels running from the south-eastern skirts of the mountain to the north-eastern side of the plain. They together construct a huge fan delta. As shown in Figure 1, thanks to the archaeological excavations, classical manors and ruins of ancient land subdivision have been found around the Tonami region. Also, analyses of historical materials revealed the fact that the Tonami fan delta has become a major granary since the ancient Nara era.

One of the main reasons why the Tonami plain could become a long history of grain-growing region is its topographical conditions. Because the huge delta is surrounded by mountains, it is easy for the residents to obtain sufficient water and nutrient supply in the Tonami plain, and they did not need to live collectively. Consequently, in the Tonami region, each farm is surrounded with their arable land and creeks, which isolates them from each other. The origin of such a land ownership system came not only from natural conditions such as abundance of water but the implementation of land

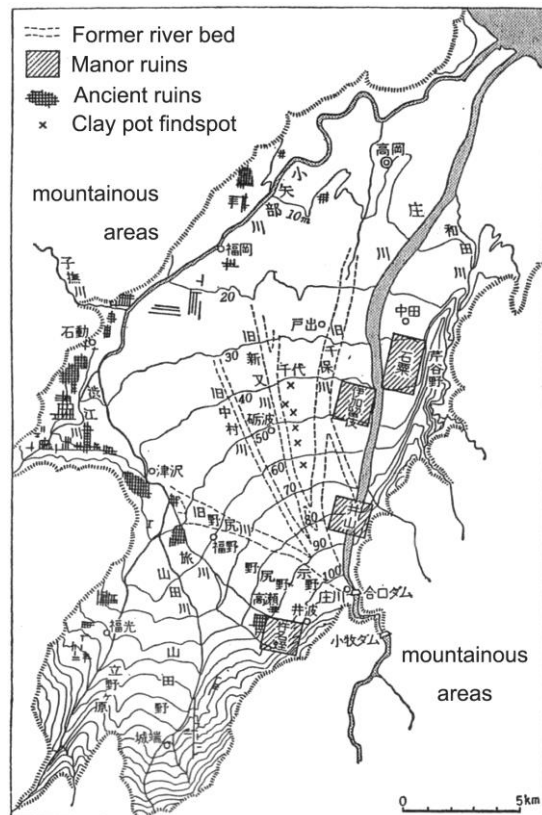


Figure 1 Location of ancient manors and ruins (Source: The Institute of Japan Topography 1970, with slight translation by the author)

allotment by the Kaga-domain: a sort of regional government of Samurais. The name of this system is *Kochi-igyo-sei*.



Photo 1. A typical traditional Azuma-dachi architecture with homestead woodland

The most important architectural characteristics in Tonami dispersed villages consist of three elements. Firstly *Azuma-dachi* is the way to construct the main farmhouses. Secondly, *Kainyo*, that is the homestead woodland for daily resources such as fuel and diet. Thirdly, dispersed settlement, which stem from the abundance of the water supply and the allotment by the Kaga domain as mentioned earlier (Photo 1).

Azuma-dachi is the architecture of main farmhouse, which has a distinctive lattice shaped pattern on gables and has been mentioned scholarly important. The origin of word Azuma-dachi is believed to either came from 'Stand facing east', for sheltering

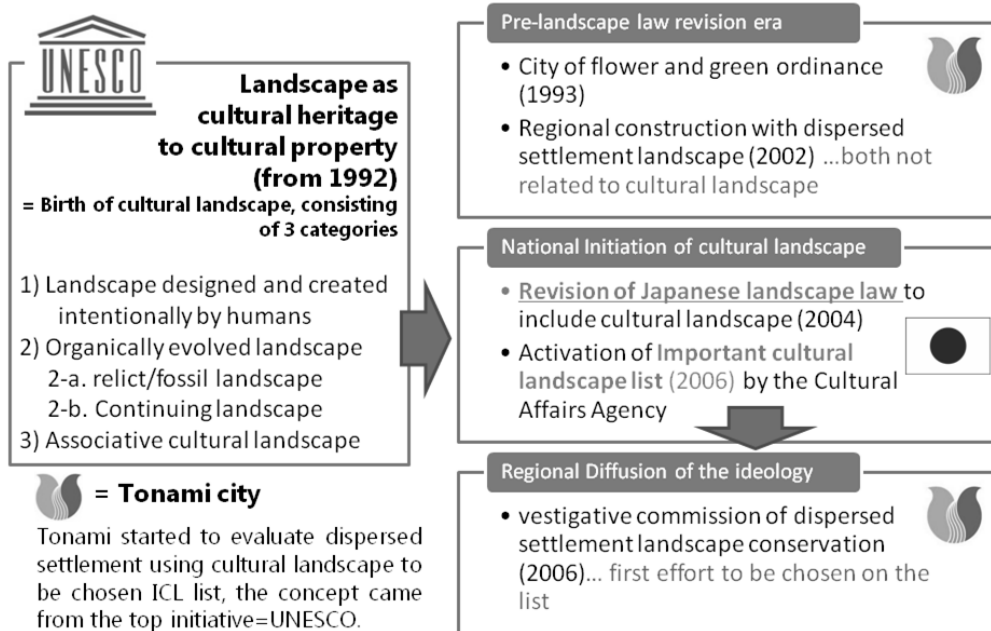


Figure 2. Illustration of the receptive process of cultural landscape ideology from UNESCO to Tonami municipality

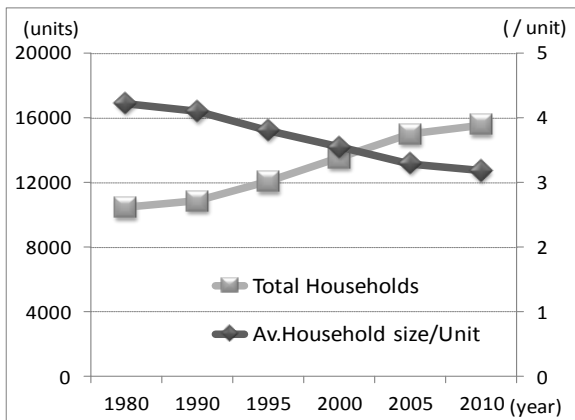


Figure 3. Demographic movement of households in Tonami city

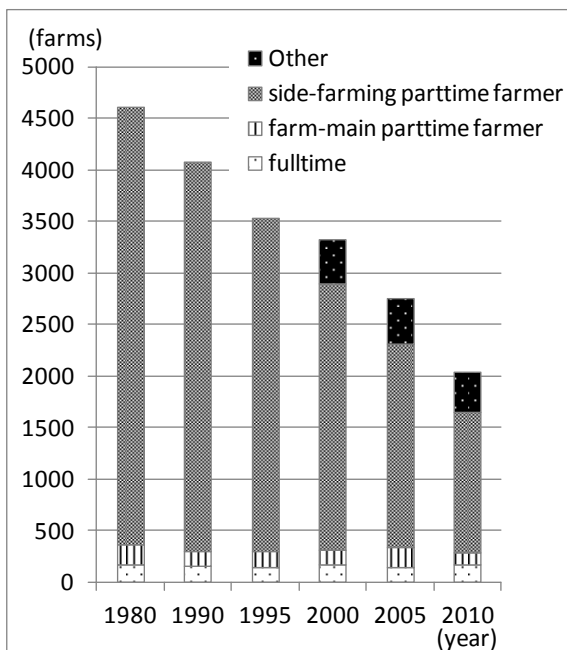


Figure 4. Trends of classified numbers of Farms in Tonami city

the entrance from the seasonal westward wind, or Azuma-date, which implies a construction form of samurai residences in the Kanazawa area (The Institute of Tonami Dispersed Region 2010).

Since the initial launch of the ICL list in 2006 by the Cultural Affairs Agency, the cultural landscape ideology was gradually diffused in the form of a list inclusion process.

In the case of Tonami, when the

Agency announced that the eight sites reached the shortlist for recommending further investigation in 2005, the dispersed settlement landscape in Tonami plain still remained on the list (Section for Monuments

Sites, Division of Cultural Property, Agency for Cultural Affairs 2005). Subsequently, the Tonami municipal office set up an investigative commission of dispersed settlement landscape preservation in August 2006. Although Tonami municipality previously operated some

ordinances independently, the installation of the commission was the first effort to be chosen

on the list (Figure 2). The commission has subsequently conducted measurement surveys on actual condition and attitude of the residents from 2006 to 2007, and detailed model areas analysis in 2008. Then, in March 2009, the Tonami municipality published a research report (Tonami City 2009) demonstrating the historical, cultural, and architectural importance of the landscape which was finalized in line with these achievements as above.

Discussion

According to the research report, there are three key elements that make Tonami dispersed settlement deserving to be ICL: Kainyo; Farmers' house surrounded by residential trees, paddies with dispersed settlement; and Azumadachi, architecture of farm houses. Although all of these three elements still largely remain, there are some challenges for conserving them as constructs of the cultural landscape. All of the three elements are strongly related to traditional way of agricultural life in the region. While the demographic movement in Tonami is slightly in upward trend generally, statistics show an increase in nuclear families and in 'graying' (Figure 3). The trend is not due to the success of traditional farming. In fact agricultural census revealed a continuous decline of farming. Notably, farmers who have smaller farms and who are more likely not to be capable of earning their living, are more likely to quit farming (Figure 4).



Figure 5. Kokan-bungo, before and after (Source: Shindo 2013: 60)

In the case of Yashiki-rin, it was initially planted not only for protecting the farmhouses from southern and western winds, but to utilize dead leaves and branches for fuel resources for the kitchen and bath or as a shade grove. Since modern electricity and gas became available and insulation of houses has been enhanced, to maintain the forest is not cost-effective. As long as the landowner chooses to continue maintaining the house forest, it is necessary to keep pruning overgrown branches and removing fallen leaves. Because the work cannot be done without the help of professional landscape gardeners, it has become a heavy burden for the landlord.

In paddies with dispersed settlement, the agricultural land has gradually been converted to houses built for sale and small industrial plants, mainly due to the recent set-aside policy and price competition with imported crops. It gradually contributes to degradation of the landscape.

The recent reorganization /consolidation of land ownership and readjustment/reshaping of the field plots already differentiated the landscape when viewed close-up although there appears to be no change when viewed from a distance (Figure 5). There was a huge land ownership exchange project called Kokan-bungo that took place from 1962 to 1990 in Tonami. The farmland layout was drastically straightened for mechanization. It is called hojo-seibi. Consequently, although the dispersed settlement form still largely exists there, the detailed configuration of the landscape was changed considerably.

Likewise, the roofs of Azumadachi today are tiled although it was gradually changed from thatched reed from around 100 years ago. They pose a problem of landscape authenticity. However, the house originally had a thatched roof, and then shifted to clay tile roofing from 1887 and totally shifted around the 1960s (The Institute of Tonami Dispersed Region 2010).

In consequence, although Tonami dispersed settlement as a physical appearance still largely exists there, its cultural landscape in practice is gradually transforming into something like a papier-mache tiger. In order to protect the dispersed settlement in Tonami plain practically as a cultural landscape, it is crucial to provide adequate policy support for the landowners to enhance the necessity to maintain the landscape as a reasonable construct of their social and cultural life rather than to try simply keeping the appearance of the landscape.

Concluding Remarks

Although it was more than a half century ago when Sauer (1925) coined the term and the fundamental concept, cultural landscape is rapidly gaining a great significance in conserving our daily landscape mainly due to the designation of by UNESCO and the relevant authorities. In a certain aspect, the certification certainly opens the new possibilities of the target area as the rural and heritage tourism sites with conserving the vernacular assets of the landscape. In fact, previous researches reported the attempts to find the new value of the places in the light of cultural landscape. Buckley *et al.* (2008) intended to re-evaluate the unique steppe plain landscape of Mongolia as the tourism resource by statistic analyses of data and materials provided by tourism-related industries and local governments. Likewise Stenseke (2009) reported a successful maintenance of authorized pasture landscape that is maintained by the participatory approach in the southern Sweden. However, such expansion of the global grading system also enhances potential risk of restricting the living rights of more people in wider region through the

macroscopic interest and the immensely-privileged power to modify the relevant legal systems.

As previously stated, to conserve the vernacular cultural built heritage in the Tonami plain, it is crucial to conserve its dynamic interaction between natural and socio-cultural way of local life. In this paper, the author critically investigated some challenges of diffusing the ICL concept by highlighting Tonami dispersed settlement as a case study. Farmers in Tonami have lived separately, facing east, surrounded by trees, because of their cultural inheritance. Therefore it can be defined as cultural landscape. But the meaning is diminishing because the number of farmers is decreasing at a rapid rate.

Although Azuma-dachi and dispersed settlement still exist, the requirements for them no longer exist. Their houses are too large as nuclear family houses so that they are gradually replaced by smaller ready-built houses for nuclear families. Even for farmers' who still farm, electricity and gas have changed their lifestyles. Therefore the cultural inevitability of keeping the homestead woodland has gone.

To conserve Tonami dispersed settlement as a cultural landscape, implement of policies should provide farmers to have regenerated inevitability, *raison d'être* of the landscape constructs.

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Cultural heritage assets and open space in the rural zone: An Integrated Approach to Conservation

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Abstract

In recent years rural areas, and open space in general, are facing increasing development pressures. Progressing development trends threaten the continued existence of both natural resources and cultural heritage in rural landscape zones. These trends are evident in many countries worldwide, yet they are especially conspicuous and threatening in Israel, a small and crowded country with an exceedingly high population growth and limited land resources. Moreover, the present development trends pose a threat to the continued existence of Israeli rural cooperative settlements, which comprised universally unique settlement models, and are therefore very highly valued cultural heritage assets. This paper examines an integrated approach to conservation of rural areas, considering preservation of cultural landscape fabrics, where holistic cultural complexes of rural settlements form an integral part of a preserved open landscape unit.

Key words: rural landscapes; open space; cultural heritage; conservation

Introduction: Approaches to conservation of rural landscape and open space

In recent years rural areas, namely, agricultural settlements and cultivated land, are perceived as a part of the overall open spatial space system (Melnik, 1984; Draft National Landscapes Typology, 1999; Eetvelde & Antrop, 2005; Fleischman & Feitelson, 2007; Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2007; Stern, 2010). This conception evolved in response to increasing development pressures since the last decades of the 20th century that consumed large tracts of open space and natural landscape resources, while also creating irreversible changes in the rural areas. The impending loss of open space was further strengthened by low density urban sprawl at the rural fringe. In other words, the progressing development trends threaten heritage values that are embedded in the agricultural zone, as well as natural attributes and resources that exist in non-agricultural open landscapes with their ecological, environmental and social amenities (Alanen & Melnick, 2000; Kaplan, Ringel & Admur, 2011).

While the trends described above characterize, to varying extents, developed

and developing countries worldwide, in Israel they are particularly conspicuous for several reasons. First of all, Israel experienced an intense demographic change during the 1990s, due to mass immigration from the former Soviet Union. This, coupled with an exceptionally high natural growth rate, lead to increased demand for development, primarily for housing and employment purposes, thus aggravating the pressure on open space and agricultural land. Moreover, given the limited land resources in a small country like Israel, the conflict and competition for land between various land uses are further intensified.

Another aspect that is specific to Israel is the structure of rural settlement – especially the cooperative settlement types (*kibbutzim* and the *moshavim*). These represent a universally unique model of settlement, distinguished by ideological, social and structural characteristics, which were also tangibly expressed in the spatial organization and built assets of the settlements (Amit-Cohen, 2004; 2006; 2011; Feinmesser, 1984; Kahana, 2011; Kliot, 1980). Thus, in the Israeli rural zone cultural heritage significance lies not only in discrete tangible assets (e.g. public facilities, agricultural structures, tree avenues, groves, etc.) but encompasses whole settlement entities, with their spatial organization and layouts, that reflect a unique combination of principles, values and lifestyle characteristics. Such cultural heritage entities deserve special attention and ought to be considered for preservation in the face of progressing development.

The conservation of cultural heritage in the rural zone is intertwined with the issues that relate to conservation of open landscapes and natural resources in general. This linkage may lead to identification of an integrated fabric distinguished by visual, social, cultural and economic properties that are to be preserved as whole heritage landscape entities.

The link between cultural heritage assets and open landscapes has already been recognized in past documents and studies. For example, in 1999 a classification of rural landscapes that was developed in the UK, based on the European Landscape Convention, assigned considerable weight to cultural heritage assets (e.g., settlement patterns, farm types, field patterns, agricultural facilities, rural built heritage), in contrast to former approaches that stressed primarily the physical-ecological attributes of the landscape (Draft National Landscapes Typology, 1999; Kaplan, Ringel & Admur, 2011). This classification method was driven by the UK Countryside Agency's desire to preserve the character of England as a land of rural landscapes. The Agency argued that the rural character will promote tourism, and strengthen the identification of

the population with the country and its landscapes, thus leading the people to greater involvement in their conservation (Swanwick, 2002).

The U.S. National Parks Authority also classified the landscapes where the natural encountered the created cultural landscape, emphasizing both the historical dimension and landscape characteristics (Birnbaum & Asla 1994). This classification was based on the 1992 decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, which added a new definition, "Cultural Landscape", to its document from 1972 (Charter of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972). According to this, cultural landscape relates to cultural sites that represent the integration of natural landscapes and human cultural creation. It also expresses the concept that natural landscape serves as the background and inspiration for cultural creation (Fowler, 2003). Cultural landscapes reflect the evolution of human society and settlement over time and the manner in which these are affected by the physical environment (Birnbaum, 2005).

The term "cultural landscape" is not new to research. In 1963, the geographer Carl Sauer explained that spatial observation is based on recognizing the integration of physical and cultural foundations of the landscape. Thus, cultural landscapes are "the total of natural resources available to a community sharing a common culture. Mankind cannot add to the natural resources, but can develop them for its needs" (Sauer, 1963:324). However, the 1992 decision to include in the world heritage list cultural landscapes of exceptional universal value, endowed them with a new status and encourage their protection.

The definitions and classifications presented above also dealt with additional distinctions, such as the individual item vs. the whole, or the vernacular asset - handcrafts, technologies, style and everyday way of life, that are characterized by their ordinariness (Jackson, 1997; Stern, 2010).

When cultural heritage items or heritage entities are found within or adjacent to quality open space they form a heritage landscape fabric that links between the natural environment and the socio-cultural characteristics. The English Heritage organization has termed such a fabric as "historic environment" or – in the rural zone – "rural historic environment", thus expressing the holistic perception of the heritage landscape fabric, where cultural components add distinction to the open natural landscape (Draft National Landscapes Typology, 1999). But these definitions are missing an integrated planning approach for conservation of this unique landscape.

Research objectives and methodology

Conservation of natural and cultural heritage landscapes contributes to the quality of life and is currently perceived as an indispensable part of sustainable development (Stephenson, 2008). However, while conservation of nature and natural landscapes have already become customary over the last decades – through various approaches and methods (Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2007) – approaches to the conservation of cultural heritage are still evolving. Moreover, natural and cultural heritage are rarely considered together, even when both are closely linked within certain landscapes and could be conceptualized as inseparable. These are also managed separately, often based upon separate legislative and institutional structures (Speed et al., 2012). In addition, even in cases where planning addresses both natural and cultural heritage in a given area, heritage assets are treated as individual items within the open landscape (Yahner et al., 1995), thus disregarding the potential synergistically increased value of the heritage landscape fabric. The purpose of this paper is to present an integrated approach to conservation of rural areas, their settlements and agricultural lands, together with open landscapes which were declared for preservation because of their ecological and social values (natural reserves and open space for recreation, tourism and public uses). This approach is a challenge to planning systems, which need a guiding framework and criteria for integrated conservation in Israel; a framework which includes three steps:

1. Identify and define the characteristics of the heritage complexes of the cooperative settlements;
2. Identify and define the relationships between heritage complexes of cooperative settlements and natural resources in adjacent open space landscapes - as designated in the national and district outline plans.
3. Formulate criteria, priorities and methodology for planning towards integrated conservation of heritage landscape fabrics, where cultural heritage is inseparably woven into the open landscape.

In this paper I'll analyze only the first two steps and three research stages which were carried out to date (the third is going to end April 2014): *The first stage* included a review of national and district statutory outline plans in order to identify and document the manner in which they treat and relate to open space resources and cultural heritage assets. *The second stage* consisted of: a) interviews with residents of the cooperative settlements in the study area; and b) a field survey in order to document tangible cultural heritage (existing built assets, agricultural fields, groves, settlement lay out etc.) of each kibbutz and

Moshav, describe their physical condition and location, note their former and present function and identify their linkage to events representing national and local memory. The information gathered in the first two stages was assembled, compiled and mapped using a GIS system. *The third stage* focused on analysis of the gathered information, including: classification of the assets, assessment of their cultural heritage value both as individual items and as whole complexes, and identification of their spatial distribution in relation to designated open space resources as marked in national and district statutory outline plans. The understandings and insights gained by this analysis served to draw the target product of the research, which was used to present a guiding framework for integrated conservation of heritage landscape fabrics.

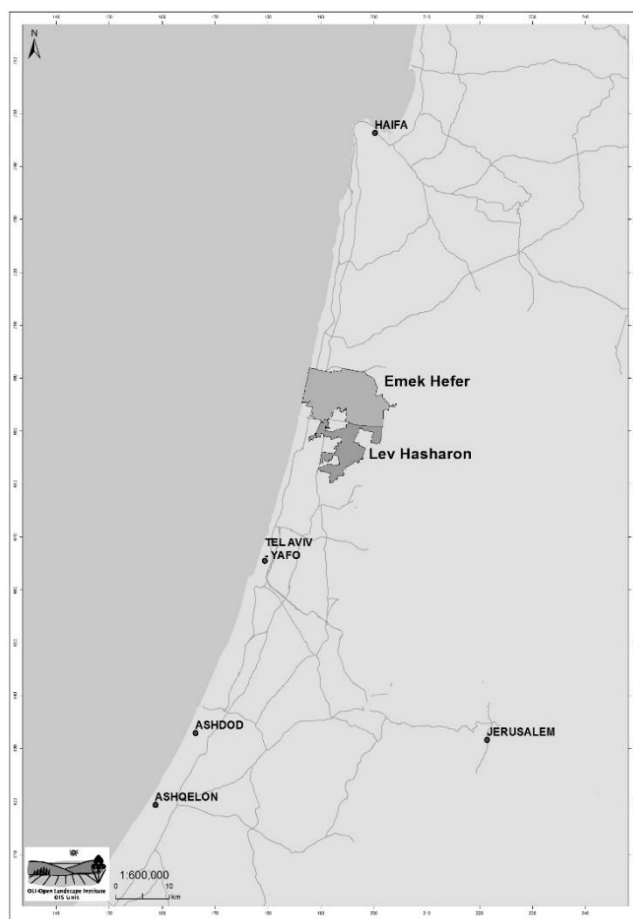


Figure 1 Location Map, Sharon Rural region in the Central Coastal plain of Israel and the municipality of the two regional councils

To describe the need for a special planning system for integrated landscape in rural area, a region was selected in the rural space of the Central Coastal Plain of Israel (Figure 1). This area is located within the jurisdiction of two Regional Councils, *The Lev HaSharon and Emek Hefer* regional councils (Figure 2). Several considerations lead for choice of this area for study. 1. The area is essentially rural, with many *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* (singular – *kibbutz* and *Moshav*, correspondingly) that are representative of the cooperative settlement models which are unique to Israel, and are therefore of special

value for conservation. Moreover, these settlements are characterized by typical structures and elements that reflect a set of underlying ideological, economic and social ideas and principles. As such these are fine examples of heritage complexes that should be considered for conservation as a whole rather than to separately relate to each individual asset. 2. The rural zone is naturally characterized by an abundance of open space landscapes – agricultural cultivated land, rural (not cultivated), and natural landscape. 3. This area is located in the central region of Israel, where development pressures are extremely intense and pose a real threat to the continued existence of natural resources, open landscapes and agricultural land (Stern & Rabinowitz, 2006; Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2010).

Planning in Israel: Attitude to possible link between cultural heritage and open space

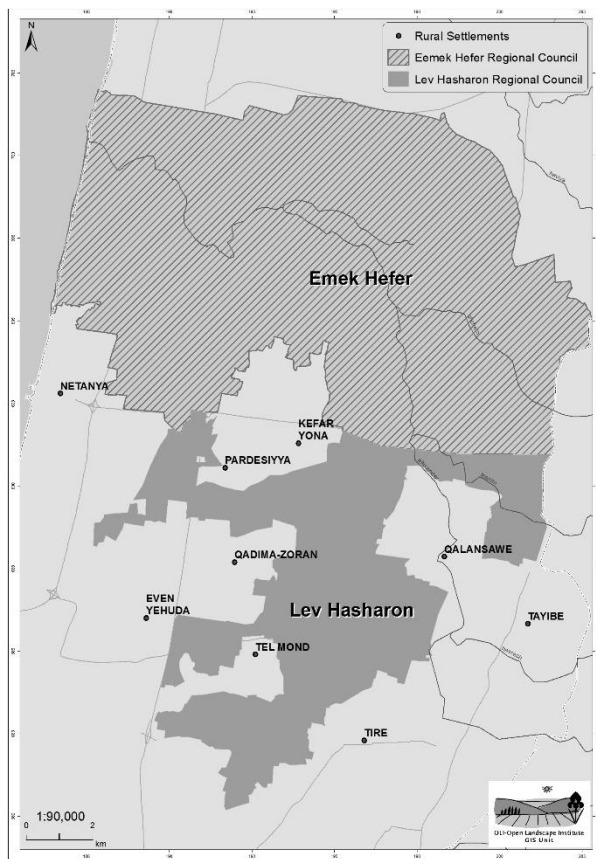


Figure 2 Total area of the two Regional Councils: Lev Hasharon and Emeq Hefer

Over the years, several national and district outline plans presented in Israel were not restricted to merely proclaiming a cultural heritage item or an open space or nature reserve, but related in some manner to the entire heritage complex and possible relationships between cultural heritage and quality open spaces. Following is a review of these plans, citations and attitudes to the encounters between heritage complexes and open space, since these are the object of this article.

The first attempt to create a unique national plan for the preservation of cultural heritage assets in Israel was the 1969 National Outline Plan for Preservation of

Cultural Heritage (NOP 9). This plan showed a preference for settlement sites of historical importance, and did not relate to open space or to heritage complexes. The plan mentioned the layout of the first *Moshav* in Israel (Nahalal) and the first *Kibbutz* (Degania), together with their agricultural fields but there was no mention whatsoever of open space or nature reserves which were adjacent to these settlements.

The National Outline Plan for National Parks, NOP 8 (1981) was intended to consolidate areas designated as national parks, or landscape preserves. Since the plan was not intended to deal with cultural heritage, it merely notes the possibility of an encounter between cultural heritage and open space in the definition of national parks.

National Outline Plan for Memorial Sites (War of Independence Sites) NOP 21 (1982), dealt with built assets as well as battlefields and hills. But open space was not included in the designation of this plan.

The National Outline Plan for Tourism and Leisure, NOP 12 (1983/1989), defined tourism regions as "including areas of tourism quality due to their nature, landscape and historical assets, among others". This plan includes within the rural sites fields and orchards, as well as nature reserves adjoining built textures. In other words, the attitude of the plan represents an approach suggesting the existence of heritage complexes and possible linkage between these and open space.

The National Outline Plan for Memorial Sites, NOP 29 (1995), although relating to the "surroundings", did not delineate these areas or mentioned their influence on the memorial sites.

The National Outline Plan for Forest and Afforestation, NOP 22 (1995), deals with maintenance and protection of forests but hardly mention cultural heritage within there.

NOP 31 – Combined National Outline Plan for Construction, Development and Immigrant Absorption (1998) was created in response to the need to cope with the large immigration waves of the early 1990s and the consequent development momentum. The plan called to protect open spaces and was the first outline plan that also designated these as "open rural landscape". Eventually, this designation contributed to an inclusive approach presented in the National Outline Plan for Construction, Development and Preservation, NOP 35 (2005).

NOP 35 stressed the social, cultural and environmental importance of open spaces, while presenting at the same time the necessary balance between areas slated for development and areas slated for preservation. In seeking to

present the "image of the land" the plan considers the open spaces to be not only as nature and ecology, but also their contribution in reflecting culture and historical social processes. The plan divided the Israeli space into five textures, one of them rural texture which included "areas of occupation, agricultural areas and tourism areas". The plan mentioned the importance of a continuum of open and agricultural spaces and titled it "combined landscape" which unites the values of nature, agriculture, landscape, settlement and heritage. It also stated that the aim is to preserve the ecological and cultural values of these continuous areas but also to develop the land for tourism, leisure and vacation purposes - on one condition that the development integrates to the landscape and causes minimal damage.

The approach of bringing together open spaces and cultural assets and, in the case of rural areas, the built texture and agricultural fields, has also been presented in recent years in the district and specific outline plans. Such are the Central District Regional Outline Plans which in relating to rivers detailed the historical assets scattered along their banks (CDROP, 21/3 2002; Outline Plan for Alexander River, 27/3 2005).

Notwithstanding the expanding discussion of the landscape-cultural uniqueness of Israeli space, as well as attempts to define these landscapes, there is a lack of a plan focusing on the cultural heritage of cooperative settlement. Never the less, there is a lack of reference to synergetic contribution observed when a continuum exists between the heritage complexes, built texture, tilled fields and the open space whose importance has been stressed in the various outline plans.

The study area – planning and description of the link between cultural heritage and open space

Planning

The Lev HaSharon and Emek Hefer regional councils encompass open space of considerable preservation value from the standpoint of national as well as regional planning (NOP 31). These areas are perceived to be a link in the national "spinal column" of open space in Israel. This link is also important for maintaining open space between the metropolitan areas in the Central Coastal Plain of Israel.

In several National Outline Plans (NOPs' 8, 22, 31 and 35) eight protected open spaces were declared, most of these as national parks. Only 5 areas are designated as protected areas. The explanation for this small number is due to the extensive agricultural activity in the area, primarily citrus orchards planted

from the 1920s onward. Therefore the planners of NOP 35 believed that the Sharon citrus orchards and the cooperative settlements were among the most important historical elements of the country in the past 100 years. Their concern about their disappearance led to a decision to "mark" and place them under the definition of "a rural landscape complex" worthy of preservation.

Regional and Local Outline Plans of the two regional councils, in general, are not aimed at identification and protection of the "Image of the Land" as stressed in the national outline plans. The regional plans are partial and their treatment of unique landscapes, textures or assets of prominent design or historical value is very general, lacking direction and details of the means for their protection. The emphasis in these plans is mostly on streams and their rehabilitation. For example the Central District Regional Plan 21/3 (CDRP 21/3 2002), in the definition of rural development area it relates in general terms to conservation of the rural character. For the open agricultural/rural landscape it states that the "planning body needs to consider, inter alia, to avoid causing harm to the character of the open rural space". In the section of the *river and its surroundings* – it relates to issues of preservation of natural systems only. The plan also relates in a focused manner to historic buildings: "A planning body discussing the use or expansion of an existing historic building is to relate, inter alia, to aspects of its preservation". It continues by stating that the local outline plans are to include guidelines and instructions for mapping and designating sites for preservation.

The Outline Plan for the Alexander River (27/3, 2005) and Outline Plan for the Poleg Park and River (2009), two rivers crossing the region, stated the importance of a survey of natural landscape and human heritage but the overall aim of the two plans was to preserve the area of the creeks and their tributaries as a contiguous open space system. The plans served as basis for the Outline plans for the Central and Southern Sharon Metropolitan Leisure Area (*Outline Plans 57/3 and MH/270*, 2012) which are in preparatory stages. Neither plan includes a discussion of the cooperative rural settlement heritage except mention of cypress avenues that served as windbreaks for citrus orchards, and the remaining orchards, remnants of the extensive plantings that characterized the entire region until the late 1980s.

The Master Plan for environmental, communal and tourism development ("Road through the Heart", 2007, 2012) was approved as a Guideline Master Plan (non statutory) by the two regional councils. It primarily deals with developing a wide-ranging network of trails for non-motorized vehicles connecting various points of interest within the regional council area, including

historical buildings, archeological sites and other. One section of the document presents photographs of sites that could serve as a potential for creating a "Conservation complex", defined as a group of buildings representing a common subject and should therefore be preserved as one complete unit. The proposed tool for rehabilitating the sites is "adopt a site" by the local community, whose memories are related to these assets, but the plan makes limited reference to rural/agricultural landscapes and their cultural heritage assets.

The all plans which were mentioned above are lacking in examination and characterization of the continuum between the rural landscape textures and the open spaces in this region.

Heritage complexes of cooperative settlements

The cooperative settlement heritage presents two spatial expressions. The first expresses the relationship between agricultural and built areas (the area allocated for building in each settlement). The other is detailed, examining heritage assets related to the local memory of each settlement as well as the national memory. The first is the result of planning in the *kibbutzim*, stressing the division into functional spaces, and in the *moshavim*, the division into residences and their farming areas (Lot A for residence, Lot B for farming), as well as areas slated for public services and functions.

Heritage assets related to local and national memory of cooperative settlement have been identified through a field study, classification and mapping. A minority of the assets is deemed to be a monument linked to a very influential historical person, a unique occurrence or represent a rare occurrence, exceptional architecture or a unique construction technology. As opposed to these few unique monumental assets, the area encompassed by the two regional councils contains many vernacular assets that reflect the continuous everyday lifestyle and activity over many decades in the areas allocated to the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*. These assets are distinguished by their ordinariness, broad distribution and uniform functionality.

The vernacular assets are scattered throughout the settlement texture – built areas and fields – in three forms: cluster, axis and solitary item. In the *moshavim* it is possible to identify a heritage cluster encompassing public buildings and agricultural services in the center of the *moshav* (water tower, silo, agricultural sheds, cold storage warehouse, synagogue, grocery, community center). Found also are memorial sites, a memorial park or monument, located usually at the center of the *moshav* or at the edge of the built area.

Identifiable in the *kibbutzim* are groups of heritage assets in three areas: the production area, otherwise known as the "yard", located at the *kibbutz* entrance, adjoining the public space. In the "yard" are located agricultural structures many of which have lost their original designation – water tower, silo, barn, poultry houses, bakery, garage, carpentry shop, shoemaking shop and the secretariat. The public space, the heart of the *kibbutz*, includes the dining room, central lawn, kindergartens and children's houses (where in the past children lived separately from their parents), cultural center, memorial center and memorial park, and the residential area. School classrooms are usually located at the edges of the public area, adjoining the residential area, or as a separate education area adjoining the residential area or between it and the production area. At times sports facilities are also located in this area.

Identifiable as part of the heritage asset clusters are the "tangible heritage avenues". These are the tree alleys at the entrances to *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, the sidewalks in the *kibbutz* and historical roads, security roads and trenches for defense purposes. Included are items of some physical prominence (architectural, construction material, construction technology), a tree or bush tied to some event or person that are part of the local memory of the *kibbutz* or *moshav* or the national memory (Amit-Cohen 2011). In the *kibbutz* such assets are located within the various spaces, while in the *moshav* – within the built area or in the agricultural space. These can be a guard post, hidden armament store, a solitary tree, train station, bridge, etc.

Within the agricultural areas in the two regional councils are "spots" of citrus orchards that once covered the entire *hamra* (red sandy clay loam) area typical of the central coastal area of Israel. A few of these spots represent the Arab settlements of the area, while others are typical of Zionist settlements in the Sharon. The latter include remnants of private agricultural activity in the Sharon region in the 1920s and 1930s. Shortage of water and reduced profitability of citriculture led to the uprooting of orchards, yet it is still possible to identify components related to this vanished landscape: avenues of trees, primarily cypresses that separated the groves and served as windbreaks, packing houses, pools, water well structures. These components remained in the landscape as groups, avenues or a solitary item.

Here I should note that it is impossible to separate the heritage assets within the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* from the many green areas that characterize these settlements, some demarcated and others unbounded. These green areas, as well as the agricultural fields and orchards, endow the cooperative heritage complex with its unique green and open character.

Within the two regional councils, which are the case study for this paper, encompassing 50 cooperative settlements, *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, some 950 cultural assets, representing private as well as national memory, were surveyed in the years 2011 and 2013. These assets were separated into three periods: prior to commencement of Jewish settlement (structures linked to Arab settlements and archeological remains), assets created or built in the Sharon area from the commencement of Jewish settlement and up to the founding of the State of Israel (veteran settlements), and finally assets created or built following the establishment of the state (relatively young settlements, most established in the 1950s). Within the two regional councils five heritage complexes were observed (see **Figure 3**: "Integrated Cultural Rural Landscapes"). All five included cooperative settlements, built and vegetative

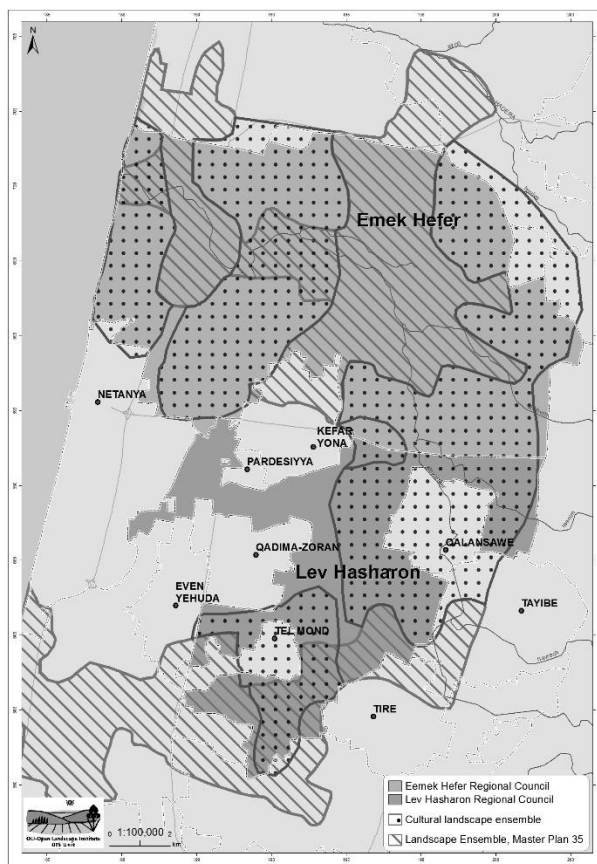


Figure 3 Integrated Cultural Rural Landscapes

cultural heritage assets within the settlement textures and in the agricultural fields. Four complexes were characterized by a high concentration of assets linked to the history of the *kibbutzim* and the *moshavim*. A single complex also includes, in addition to settlement assets, the various remains within the landscape – antiquities and structures dating from ancient times. All complexes contain many vernacular assets and their distribution within each settlement is similar as well. Notwithstanding the landscape "uniformity", the unique characteristics of each complex can be identified.

Open areas and heritage complexes continuums

Most of the area encompassed by the two regional councils examined in this study consists of open space. It contains natural areas recognized in NOP 35 as being worthy of preservation due to their quality and ecological sensitivity. These areas are few and of limited extent. On the other hand, rural settlements dot this open space, with *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* being most predominant. The land cover of the study area can best be described as a patchwork with open spaces in many the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, various forms of land use, heritage assets and small protected areas. While on the face of it, *moshavim*, *kibbutzim* and heritage assets scattered within them, interrupt the open space continuum, the recognition of agricultural areas as part of the open space and part of the *kibbutz* or *moshav* heritage complex, actually creates continuous landscape units unique due to the encounter within them between open space and the cooperative settlement complexes (Figure 3).

According to the map, this continuum covers more than 80% of the area of the two regional councils, in the form of a crescent with its two horns in the coastal plain and surrounding the built texture of the city of Netanya and its suburbs. Within this continuum, are heritage complexes of the cooperative settlement, including the built texture, the agricultural areas and the heritage assets representing the local and national memory. Since these complexes overlap the defined municipal borders of each *moshav* or *kibbutz*, they could also be referred to as heritage villages or focal points of rural heritage while also distinguishing between the *moshav* heritage and the *kibbutz* heritage.

Conclusions

Israel, as other countries, promotes local or universal recognition of cultural heritage assets, cultural landscapes and landscape complexes worthy of preservation, including rural complexes (NOP 35). However, unlike other countries, the rural complexes in Israel present a unique manifestation, not observed elsewhere, the cooperative settlement complex, the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*. This complex, not only expresses a functional interdependence between its land designations, but also a settlement ideology displayed in two dimensions: the textural dimension – the settlement outline and its internal division for land use, as well as a point by point dimension – heritage assets ensconced within the settlement texture, in the built areas as well as in the fields. These assets express the local memory of the community of each and every settlement, as well as the national memory.

Heritage assets of cooperative settlement in Israel are a common manifestation reflecting folk architecture and common crafts. Yet it is precisely this common incidence that expresses its uniqueness. At present, the survival of these cultural complexes is threatened by economic, social and ideological developments, having implications on the planning structure of the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* and the cultural heritage assets within them. Recognition of the importance of these complexes would bestow upon them the status of cultural heritage and thus include them in the list of assets worthy of preservation. Due to development needs, the planning authorities are not favorably predisposed to declare the cooperative settlement heritage complex, covering a substantial land area, as deserving of preservation. However, an additional examination of the relationship of these complexes to open space could change this situation.

The national and district outline plans published in Israel in the past two decades, refer extensively to open space as well as to agricultural land. Although these plans linked the agricultural areas to open space, they did not express the uniqueness of cooperative settlement nor recognize it as part of a unique continuous complex within the mosaic of Israeli rural landscape. The current study revealed this unique continuum within the boundaries of two regional councils. Notwithstanding the continuing social and economic changes within them, the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* retain the historical outlines of the built textures, the family farms within the *moshavim* and the fields and orchards of the *kibbutzim*. Furthermore, many of the outline and district plans emphasize the status of open space in this region.

This situation, however, is threatened by real estate development pressure from the urbanisation, as well as by the opening of the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* to new populations moving into newly created adjoining "expansion" and "community" quarters.

Since the planning bodies and the new populations seeking to develop extensive areas within the space of the regional councils are often unaware of the importance of the values that are part of both local and national values, their attitude to the heritage assets expressing these values depends on their landscape and design prominence. Since most of these assets are vernacular, their value is not sufficiently recognized while their importance is even less so. Compared with the low awareness of the historical or design value, there is considerable awareness of the importance of open space, due to its perception as "alternate landscapes" compared with urban landscapes and the growing demand for quality of life. This situation encourages emphasis on continuums

containing open space and settlement space entitled to preservation – and in the case of the present study, the cooperative settlements. Defining the conservation focal points within these continuums endows this entire manifestation with synergetic qualities leading to several conclusions:

1. The various planning procedures should properly address the linkage between quality open space declared in the national and district plans as worthy of a high degree of preservation and cooperative settlement heritage complexes – the built environment, the rural area, the agriculture fields, settlements' layout and assets, that due to their unique value are worthy of preservation. Such linkage could encourage preparation of local plans that integrate the preservation and development programs promoted by some of the settlements with the local plans promoted by the regional councils themselves.
2. Comprehensive economic development planning for open space and cultural heritage sites. Economic development in built heritage assets which are located in the midst of open space should be minimized. Economic development of such assets can cause harm to open space of high ecological sensitivity. Such assets deserve to be stabilized, preserved and under continuous supervision and examination of their physical condition, but without any attempt to imbue them with any economic content whatsoever. The presence of these assets contributes to the landscape and cultural character of open spaces and is worthy of being viewed as a "memory reserve" within the open space.

The development may be directed to heritage assets within the built texture of the heritage complex of a *moshav* or *kibbutz*. Thus, for example, assets such as a silo, water tower, farm buildings and public buildings located within the built texture of the *moshav* and *kibbutz*, which are owned by the cooperative society can be rehabilitated by using their value potential (ability to express their historical values and settlement's ideology) as well as their inherent economic potential (size and location). The fact that they are owned by the cooperative society simplifies the decision making process and increases the likelihood of broad consent regarding their preservation and development.

3. The likelihood of overall planning devoted to "preservation space" is high, precisely because of the multitude of public bodies involved therein: national and district planning authorities, regional councils and local committees. In the case of heritage complexes within a *kibbutz* or *moshav*, since these also constitute heritage assets representing the local memory of each and every such settlement, it is highly possible that the population of

these settlements will also become involved in this process. By having so many involved in the process removes economic and/or social concerns and facilitates the decision to join in its realization.

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National, Regional and Local Outline Plans in Israel

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2. NOP 8 National Outline Plan for National Park, 1981
3. NOP 9 National Outline Plan for Preservation Cultural Heritage, 1969
4. NOP 12 National Outline Plan for Tourism and Leisure, 1983/1989
5. NOP 21 National Outline Plan for Memorial Sites, 1982
6. NOP 22 National Outline Plan for Forest and Afforestation, 1995
7. NOP 29 National Outline Plan for Memorial Sites in Haifa and Jerusalem Districts, 1995
8. NOP 31 National Outline Plan for Construction Development and Immigration Absorption, 1998
9. NOP 35 National Outline Plan for Construction Development and Preservation
10. Outline Plan for Alexander River 27/3, 2005
11. Outline plans for the Central and Southern Sharon Metropolitan Leisure Area, 57/3 and MH/270, 2012
12. Outline Plan for the Poleg Park and River, 2009

The Politics of Sustainability and Heritage in Two Western Australian Coastal Shack Settlements

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Abstract

In the early twentieth century many shack settlements were established around the Western Australian coast as families discovered isolated camping and fishing sites on Crown (public) Land and began to construct holiday shacks for themselves. Settlements of several hundred shacks developed in many places and they frequently displayed a number of highly sustainable characteristics. The shacks were constructed at low cost, usually from recycled materials. As time went on, they incorporated increasingly ingenious methods of wind and solar power generation and of water supply and sewage disposal. Over time also, extremely close social bonds developed between the 'shackie' families. Several generations of the same families occupied the same shacks and developed long term friendships and local social rituals. However, the shacks had been built on public land without any official permission so their builders (and their descendants) had no legal title to them. As the state's population grew and as the shack sites became less isolated, development pressures on these localities increased and many of the shack settlements have been demolished, often to make way for mainstream recreational and residential developments that were more expensive, less restrained in their building material, energy and water use and with looser social bonds between the inhabitants. This paper focuses on the political struggle for survival/sustainability of two coastal shack settlements, Wedge and Grey, which are located about 200 kilometres north of Perth, the state capital. Both have been recommended for demolition by the state government. However, their community associations are fighting this decision, notably by liaising with the National Trust of Western Australia to gain heritage listing for these two settlements. Should this move succeed, it will be, to a large extent, because of the environmental sustainability of their distinctive building techniques and

the social sustainability of their community ties.

Key Words: Shack settlements; sustainability; heritage; coastal development; Western Australia

Introduction: the coastal shack settlements of Wedge and Grey in historical context

Wedge and Grey are two coastal shack settlements located approximately 200 kilometres north of Perth, the Western Australian state capital (Figure 1). They are, in many ways typical of large numbers of informal recreational settlements that were established at scenic coastal and riverine sites around the state in the early and mid-twentieth centuries (May and Selwood, 1992; Selwood and May, 2001; Selwood and Tonts, 2004; Jones and Selwood, 2012). Characteristically, such settlements evolved from campsites at popular fishing, swimming and boating spots as recreationists visited them more regularly and gradually replaced their temporary shelters with more permanent, if impromptu,

structures. Some were first established by commercial fishers who visited favoured sites regularly or by farmers who would repair to the coast after the harvest or even bring stock to graze on coastal vegetation in the dry summer months (Selwood et al., 1996). From the interwar period onwards, however, most shacks and ‘shackie’ settlements were established by families from the growing city of Perth.

The establishment of these informal, and indeed illegal, settlements was facilitated by their isolation. They were initially only accessible by



Figure 1 The South West of Western Australia and the locations of Wedge and Grey

tens of kilometres of bush tracks, which had often been improved, if not created, by the 'shackies' themselves (Suba and Grundy, 1996). Furthermore, the shack settlements were normally established in areas of limited agricultural potential that therefore remained under natural bushland and in public (Crown Land) ownership.

As we indicate below, many of these settlements have been and many of the remainder are currently under threat of being removed by government decree. The rationales for their removal relate to their alleged adverse environmental impacts and the, equally alleged, economic inequity inherent in their initial illegal establishment. As a counter to these arguments, the remaining 'shackie' organisations argue that the environmental impacts of the shack settlements are now significantly less than those of contemporary mainstream coastal developments. Furthermore, legal and financial arrangements for the regularisation of such occupations of public land have been applied elsewhere. Finally, they contend that their communities have developed valuable and cohesive social characteristics over several generations. On these three interrelated criteria, therefore, they perceive their settlements as being as, if not more, sustainable than most other forms of recreational coastal development. Given the considerable lapse of time since their original establishment they also deem them to be worthy of heritage acknowledgement. In the remainder of this paper we assess these contentions in the light of extensive archival research, (participant) observation and numerous discussions with Western Australian 'shackies' and government officials over a period of several decades.

Postwar pressures on the shack settlements

While 'shackie' numbers were small, while the 'shackie' settlements were relatively inaccessible and while alternative development pressures on these settlement sites were essentially non-existent, these communities were largely ignored by government and the wider society, an omission which had facilitated their original establishment and initial sustainability. Over the post war period, however, population growth in Western Australia has been rapid, expanding from under 500,000 immediately after World War Two to over 2,000,000 in the early 2000s (ABS, 2008). Furthermore, as elsewhere in Australia, most of this growth has occurred in the capital city of Perth, which is the permanent home of the majority of the Wedge and Grey 'shackies', or in existing and new settlements along the coastline in what Salt (2001) describes as the "Big Shift" and Burnley and Murphy (2004) as the "Sea Change" movement. In these circumstances, and with the increases in both leisure

time and vehicle ownership rates that occurred in early post war Australia, it was not surprising that this period saw a surge in shack and 'shackie' numbers with numerous settlements, such as Wedge, expanding to several hundred shacks and, at peak holiday periods, accommodating populations in the thousands (Selwood and May, 2001). On the coast north of Perth, the early post war expansion of the shack settlements was also facilitated by the upgrading of numerous bush tracks during the Second World War to enable a coast watch service to operate and immediately thereafter as the Western Rock Lobster fishing industry grew rapidly (Suba and Grundy, 1996).

Coastal development pressures also grew and, in the 1950s and 60s, the state government gazetted a number of town sites along the coast north of Perth, several of which grew into small, but legal and mainstream, fishing and recreational communities with housing on planned and subdivided lots, provision of power and water and requirements for proper sewerage disposal (Landgate, 2009). In these circumstances, it is equally unsurprising that the expansion of 'shackie' settlements relatively close to these new developments both increased their visibility to government authorities and increased official concerns over their actual and potential adverse impacts in areas such as public health and environmental protection. Government action ensued. A committee set up by the State cabinet in 1968 to report on unlawful use of Crown Land on the coast north of Perth recommended the removal of what they termed the squatters and their settlements. This recommendation became a requirement in 1980 when legislation was enacted "for the express purpose of providing the necessary means to remove squatters from public lands" (Suba and Grundy, 1996). A further state wide policy, developed in 1989, forbade the construction of any new coastal squatter shacks and required the removal of existing shacks within a six year period.

While the state government has issued several edicts for the removal of the 'shackie' settlements in recent decades, the implementation of this policy was left to the various local (shire) authorities, which, since the 1950s and 60s, had been dealing with the issue by granting temporary leases to the 'shackies' which subsequently expired as the shack removal programme progressed. Several coastal shires undertook shack removal in the 1980s and 1990s, but this process has not been completed in shires such as Dandaragan, where local resources were limited and where several settlements, notably Wedge and Grey, remained relatively inaccessible. A perhaps foreseeable consequence of the gradual removal of the shack settlements was a 'domino effect'. As shack settlements were closed down in some shires and locations, the more

determined 'shackies' merely dismantled their shacks in settlements under imminent threat of removal and relocated to those that remained. By the turn of the century, Wedge and Grey, were virtually the only 'shackie' settlements remaining on the central coast north of Perth (Photo 1).



Photo 1 The 'shackie' settlement at Grey

After a brief period of calm, two new threats to the continued existence of Wedge and Grey have emerged recently. In 2010, the Indian Ocean Drive was opened. This road completed a coastal tourist route north from Perth and provided sealed road access to within a kilometre of both Wedge and Grey. Hitherto, these settlements had only been safely accessible by four

wheel drive vehicles travelling more than ten kilometres along bush tracks or the beach. Clearly this development massively increased the development potential in these two scenic coastal settlements only two hours' drive from a city whose population is rapidly approaching 2,000,000. Even when this road was only in prospect, a spokesperson for the local tourism organisation predicted "you will get developments in lesser known places because the drive will be easier and because the hot spots are too busy" while a developer observed "the whole of this part of the coast is terribly underdone" ('North the New South' *Sunday Times*, 2 November 2008)

Also in 2011, a state government report on the remaining shack sites (WA Legislative Council Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, 2011) recommended that "the responsible minister and managing authority instruct leaseholders and shack owners to remove the shacks at Wedge and Grey" although other shack settlements, notably those in more remote locations and those used by licensed professional fishers, were allowed to remain. Given their initial illegality and the strength of the development pressures, it seemed that Wedge and Grey were unsustainable in their present forms. Yet, as we indicate below, it is sustainability, together with heritage, that the 'shackies' have recently invoked in their attempts to retain these two settlements in something akin to their present form.

'Shackie' resistance at Wedge and Grey

As, first, the local Shires through leases and controls and, second, the state government through strategies for shack settlement removal threatened both the informal nature and the existence of Wedge and Grey, the 'shackies' began to organise to protect and sustain their settlements and communities and thereby their (albeit seasonal and recreational) way of life. Community associations were formed in both settlements, the Wedge Island Protection Association in 1968 and the Grey Conservation and Community Association in 1969. This latter was perhaps a prescient title in relation to environmental and social sustainability, an issue to which we return below. Initially, their efforts focussed on gaining and, subsequently, extending leasehold agreements for all the shacks in their settlements and by cooperating with the local authorities over issues of public health and environmental conservation. These were related activities since successes in the local sphere could be cited to achieve success at higher levels. In its Submission to the Central Coast Planning Steering Committee in July 1992, the Grey Conservation and Community Association emphasised the increasing amount of time and effort that the 'shackies' had given to "tip maintenance, removing car bodies, dune rehabilitation, improving 'roads' and planting native trees". This submission is typical of many made to various state and local government bodies by the community associations over the years, but their most notable recent retention strategy involves the invocation of the heritage value of the settlements.

The first suggestion that the shack settlements might have heritage value was made by one of the current authors (Selwood, 1991) and the 'shackies' of Wedge and Grey have pursued the issue of heritage value ever since. With hindsight, the first government acknowledgement of this issue was perhaps premature since it seemed to imply that the shack settlements were, or would shortly become, only of historic significance. A 'photographic and descriptive record' of the coastal shack settlements was commissioned and the resulting report (Suba and Grundy, 1996) referred to the shack settlements as a 'disappearing lifestyle'. Since then, however, a coastal shack settlement closer to Perth has been heritage listed (City of Cockburn, 2004; Jones and Selwood, 2012) and the issue of heritage listing for Wedge and Grey has been central to their most recent struggles for survival.

The 2011 report by the WA Legislative Council Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs did acknowledge the heritage significance of the two settlements, but it argued that this did not outweigh the "equity considerations" related to the initial illegal occupation of the sites by the

‘shackies’ and the right of the wider population to enjoy the recreational opportunities of these locations. The state government only accepted the report’s recommendation for the removal of the Wedge and Grey shacks “with qualification” and sought to “examine options for Wedge and Grey that meet the requirements for public recreation and tourism use in conjunction with a level of shack retention that contributes to the opportunities for public use” (Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs Report on Shack Sites in Western Australia: Government Response, tabled in the Legislative Council of Western Australia August 18 2011). Nevertheless, the Wedge and Grey community associations sought further acknowledgement of the heritage significance of these settlements and worked with the National Trust of Australia (WA) to obtain an assessment of their cultural heritage significance by a firm of heritage consultants (Godden Mackay Logan, 2012).

The Godden Mackay Logan report concluded that the two settlements fulfil all the criteria for inclusion on the Western Australian Register of Heritage Places and, on the basis of their findings, the National Trust of Australia (WA) has nominated both for inclusion on the Register. At the time of writing (December 2013), no decision has been made by the state’s Heritage Council.

Following the launch of the Godden Mackay Logan report in early October 2012, the Wedge and Grey community associations organised an Open Day on Sunday October 28th to showcase their settlements to the wider public and demonstrate why they considered their settlements to be worthy of both preservation and heritage designation. In particular, the Open Day presentations and publications emphasised the environmental and social sustainability elements of the settlements and their lifestyle. In the section below, we draw on (participant) observations and on publications from the Open Day, when many ‘shackies’ opened their houses and were keen to talk to visitors about their shacks, their lifestyles and their experiences.

Wedge and Grey as environmental and social sustainability exemplars?

The message at the top of the Open Day handout provided by the Grey Conservation and Community Association perhaps best encapsulates the message that both settlements wish to present about themselves:

Today we want to show you what the Settlement at Grey looks like. Our family oriented heritage and our ‘Aussie make do’ ability to enjoy life without the supply of standard household services of electricity, water, sewage and waste collection. We also wish to demonstrate that we are genuine custodians of this area and look after it.

Environmental sustainability

In the interwar and early post war periods, some of the historic environmental and public health concerns of the authorities may have been justified. Bush tracks were sometimes 'bashed' through to the settlement sites, natural vegetation was cleared and often used for fuel and sanitation provisions were inadequate. However, as time passed, the settlements grew and generational change occurred within the 'shackie' population and an increasing proportion of the inhabitants came to possess technical expertise and/or environmental sensibilities.

Gradually, non-existent or 'long drop' toilets (simply a deep hole in the ground) were replaced by septic tanks and leach drains. Since much of Perth's urban fringe and many country towns are still sewered in this way in Western Australia, both the parts and the expertise for implementing such systems were readily available. More recently, solar powered composting ('eco') toilets



have been introduced. These draw on cutting edge technologies used to develop water minimising sewerage systems for remote Aboriginal communities in extremely arid environments. Similarly, fuel and power sources which were once sourced from vulnerable dunal vegetation or supplied by polluting, noisy, fossil fuel using generators are now being replaced by state of the art solar and wind powered systems using the ample supplies of natural energy available in a windy west coast location with a sunny Mediterranean climate. Equally innovative methods of battery storage are now being incorporated into self-sufficient electrical systems that can readily

Photo 2 Modern battery storage of renewable energy in a coastal shack

and continuously power lights, cookers, fridges, televisions and many other appliances in the shacks (Photo 2).

Rainwater is obtained from the roofs – the roof area of an average sized shack can supply sufficient water for a family for a year thanks to the wet winter weather – and is stored in tanks to provide gravity fed systems. This has long been normal ‘shackie’ practice, as has been the use of recycled building materials of all kinds (sinks, stoves, windows and doors as well as roofing and walls). While these traditional and innovative technologies make possible a very high level of environmental self-sufficiency at the level of the individual shack, both settlements also aim for a high degree of collective environmental sustainability through community wide recycling schemes, dune rehabilitation and tree planting with native species and controls on excessive track development. The Open Day stalls at Wedge featured numerous environmental posters and displays and the slogan “Wedge naturally” was prominent on (green) tee shirts, bumper stickers and cold drink holders.

Social sustainability

These communal environmental initiatives are also reflective of the social sustainability aspirations and experience of the two settlements. While many of the environmental initiatives involve leading edge technology, in terms of social sustainability they hark back to the village ideal where everyone knew and helped everyone else. Indeed the sign at the entrance to Grey pronounces it to be a “sustainable village” while the “Welcome to Wedge” sign states “If you need help, simply ask someone”. In social/community terms, these are not simply rhetorical statements. Flags are flown on shacks when people are in residence so that any child who needs help can seek it (Photo 3). This reflects a



Photo 3 Flags flying on shacks to indicate the presence of adults in residence

general value that, within Wedge and Grey, children are a community responsibility and therefore they can have a freedom to roam which no longer applies, especially in modern cities.

There is a strong emphasis on community events, especially at major holiday times such as Christmas, Easter and ANZAC Day when most ‘shackies’ aim to be ‘in residence’ and on gatherings in

communally built and maintained 'village hall' type structures. Furthermore there is a general sharing of skills with individuals with expertise in such fields as electricity, plumbing, gas, vehicle repairs etc. being widely known across the communities.

Conclusion: Wedge and Grey as sustainable and/or heritage rural settlements?

In spite of their informal and illegal beginnings and strong governmental initiatives for their removal, Wedge and Grey have survived for seven decades. In a state which will not celebrate its bicentenary until 2029, they have therefore existed for over a third of Western Australia's recorded history and, according to a major firm of heritage consultants and the National Trust of Australia (WA), they merit inclusion on the Western Australian Register of Historic Places on all five criteria – the aesthetic, historic and social nature of their significance and the rarity and representative degrees of that significance. Furthermore, they compare very favourably with 'mainstream' coastal developments in many environmental terms. They place much lower demands on power, water, sewerage systems and building materials than would any conventional development catering for a comparable number of tourists and their inhabitants exhibit a high degree of environmental concern and conservation action. This is allied to extremely high levels of community strength and vitality which are demonstrated not only by their intra communal ties and activities but also by their (to date) successful and politically astute campaigns to preserve their settlements and lifestyle.

However, their medium term, if not immediate, challenge may come from the third component of sustainability, namely economics. One aspect of this is the equity issue raised by the Legislative Council in its 2011 report. Here, the 'shackies' have exhibited a willingness to change (an essential component of any sustainable rural system). The descendants of the original squatters are now, very largely willingly, paying lease fees to the government (\$4 400 000 since 1995, according to a Wedge Open Day handout) for a relatively minimal level of services. They are also increasingly willing to allow access to their communities for non-shack owning recreationists. Indeed the Wedge Island Protection Association proposed (without success) the development of a managed camping facility to a recent parliamentary enquiry. The greatest, and largely economic, challenge to the survival of these two settlements, however, is the growing threat of coastal development stemming from the state's rapid demographic and economic growth and the construction of the

Indian Ocean Drive. In his classic work on "Places on the Margin", Shields (1991:3) describes these as locations which "have been 'left behind' in the modern race for progress (and which) evoke both nostalgia and fascination. Their marginal status may come from out-of- the-way geographic locations, being the site of illicit or disdained social activities or being the Other pole to a great geographical centre." The main challenge to the sustainability of Wedge and Grey may not be that they once were "illicit" or that they are now at least idiosyncratic, if not actually "the Other", but simply that they are no longer "out-of -the-way."

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Farmers' Conceptualisations of Organic and Local Foods in Japan: Insights from Kyoto Prefecture

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Abstract

There are growing concerns internationally relating to the quality of the food available for purchase in conventional outlets. These concerns arise from animal disease scares, incidences of contamination, the presence of residues that may be injurious to human health and issues surrounding animal welfare. As a result the demand for organically produced products has increased. There is also increased interest in local foods which may not carry an organic label but which offer assurance when the place of production and the producer are known. Japan assumes particular interest as a context in which to explore issues surrounding organic and local foods because of the historical importance attributed to food quality. Studies of Japanese consumer attitudes to organic and local foods are available in English. There is less information available in English about how organic and low input foods are understood by Japanese producers and their motives in pursuing these methods of production. This paper seeks to contribute by presenting the results of in-depth interviews with three specialist food producers in Kyoto Prefecture. The purpose of the paper is to gain insights into how organic and low input production methods are conceptualised by the producers and the implications for accessing markets.

Key words: Kyoto Prefecture, organic, low input, food production

Introduction

Since the late 1990s alternative food systems (AFS) have emerged as a reaction against the negative outcomes of over-intensive industrialised methods of farming for human and animal health and the physical environment (Winter 2003). Specific animal diseases such as BSE, a more general growth in allergies attributed to additives in food, and concerns relating to residues of pesticides and insecticides for human health, have created widespread public concern about intensive production techniques. These concerns have generated a lack of confidence in large scale production and commercial quality assurance methods. As a result, new opportunities have emerged for smaller scale producers, using low input and organic methods, to serve local markets and local consumers directly. A re-localization of food has occurred which is closely embedded in the place and methods of production and trust by the consumer in the producer is of central importance (Hinrichs 2003). This paper is designed to contribute information about organic and low-input food production in Japan from the perspective of producers who have been under-represented in the English language literature to date. A philosophy of food quality is long established in Japan and consumer initiatives to ensure food safety have a long provenance (Moen 2000). Local foods and the building of trust through direct consumer-producer contact are also documented (Nishiyama and Kimura 2005). Local production systems in Japan include low-input regimes and official certification of produce as organic according to international norms (Willer and Kilcher 2010).

Food is viewed as being central to the sense of being Japanese (Hiroko 2008). Food ingredients, their presentation and formal dining became highly stylised during the period of the samurai in the 1400s and elements of this formality survive, particularly in the case of the tea ceremony (Clammer 1997). In more recent centuries, the philosophical basis for a local food movement (*shokuyodo*) in Japan dates to the late nineteenth century when the concept of a balanced diet was advocated by Sagen Ishizuka, a doctor in the Imperial Japanese Army, who pioneered the concept of the macrobiotic diet (Yokoyama and Sakurai 2009). Locally grown produce (from within a radius of about 12 km of the place of residence) supplemented by vegetables, fish and other seasonal produce were considered to provide a well-balanced diet and to contribute to a healthy body and a healthy mind. Until the middle of the twentieth century food production and consumption were locally based. After World War II, the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries (MAFF) adopted a policy of agricultural modernisation alongside industrialisation through the increased use of

fertilisers and pesticides (Nishiyama and Kimura 2005). Pollution of soils and waterways followed as did increases in diseases arising from chemical exposure. From the mid-1950s, public concern relating to the quality of food and its implications for human health increased in Japan and found expression in a number of popular and official developments designed to increase food safety which continue to the present day. As well as being motivated by the desire to secure a supply of food that does not pose a threat to human health, these developments elevated the role of the local as a site of production in attaining that end. Trust in food quality was based on direct contact between producer and consumer in places of sale, intermediary control by consumer purchasing groups and organic labelling (Moen 2000).

The origin of the organic farming movement in Japan may be traced to 1971 in Kobe (Frank 2005). In 1989, MAFF opened an office for organic farming. Guidelines for the labelling of organic agricultural products were introduced in 1993 and revised in 1996, to distinguish between genuine organic foods and those produced with reduced inputs of inorganic fertilisers (Nagashima 2007). In 1999, certification by registered bodies became necessary in order for produce to be officially labelled as organic, following the criteria of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (MAFF 2007). Two sets of Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) are in place, for agricultural organic products and for processed organic products. Notwithstanding growing demand for organic produce in Japan, only 0.23% of the total agricultural land was allocated to organic production, in 2008, involving 3380 producers (Willer and Kilcher 2010: 131). Cost is an important factor that impinges on the adoption of organic certification (on average, some 100,000 JAY= c. €10,000). The cost of JAS certification is related to farm size, inspection costs, the travel costs for inspectors and the number of products to be certified. There are 57 organisations registered by the national government as JAS certification bodies and each has a slightly different schedule of fees. The lack of support from farmers' co-operatives for marketing is another factor that militates against the adoption of organic production. Also, Japanese consumers do not always prioritise JAC organic labelling in making food purchases being more interested in freshness and region of production and trusting non-profit and supermarket labels more (Sakagami *et al.* 2006).

A new alternative agricultural movement emerged in the mid-1990s, known as *chisan-chisho*, meaning local production for local consumption, which serves to link producers and consumers within localities (Nishiyama and Kimura 2005; Kimura and Nishiyama 2008). In 2002, in response to the presence of BSE

in Japanese beef, mislabelling of food and chemical contamination of imports, the government officially incorporated *chisan-chisho* into Japanese agricultural policy (Nishiyama and Kimura 2005). In some cases the central government allocates funds to local governments to develop *chisan-chisho* and interest in locally produced food is increasing (Nishiyama *et al.* 2007)

Methods

The research involved review of literature relating to local and organic foods in Japan and in-depth interviews with three purposively selected farmers at a farmers' market and in their homes in Kyoto Prefecture in March 2012. Kyote Marché is held three times annually in front of the City Hall. Selected high quality producers attend at the invitation of the organiser, a professor of agricultural economics and an agricultural extension specialist, who is the third author of this chapter. Three practitioners of organic and low input production, who were willing to be interviewed at the market and later at their homes, were recommended for the purpose of this study. Two were vegetable producers and one was a tea grower. One of the vegetable farmers, aged in his fifties, was long established and the other, a younger man in his early thirties, had become involved more recently. The tea farmer was aged in his mid-fifties. Introductions were made at the market and the range and quality of the products were noted. All communication was in Japanese and was translated into English by the second author of this chapter. Questions and answers were translated into Japanese and English, as pertinent. Notes were taken throughout, typed and then read by the Japanese colleague to clarify any misunderstanding that may have arisen. In-depth discussion took place with the second co-author and with other Japanese academic researchers relating to organic and low input food production in Japan. The texts were analysed thematically and reviewed by the Japanese co-authors to eliminate any misinterpretation. A narrative approach is adopted to the presentation of the results.

Results

Discussion took place with the farmers about their history of involvement with the particular form of production pursued and their motives, their philosophical position in relation organic and low input production methods and the contexts in which marketing took place. All were generous with their time and discussed all issues raised at length. The tea farmer spoke between filling tea bags to prepare an order. In the other two cases, discussion took

place over tea in the farmer's home and the farm of the young vegetable farmer was visited.

Organic tea farmer

The tea farmer, Mr N, lives in the town of Wazuka (population 2008: 5,011) in Kyoto Prefecture. The area was selected for tea production in the Kamakura period (1192-1333) and, currently, about 300 families are involved. It is one of the main production areas for Ujicha green tea which comprises only about 3% of total Japanese output but is highly prized for its flavour and colour. Mr N specializes primarily in Japanese green tea. His produce is organically certified and is labelled with the brand name 'Tea for Baby', implying a high level of food safety. He explained that an organic label is important in capturing a market and that it yields a price premium of 30%-40%. The higher price means



Photo 1 Mr N organic tea producer, Wazuka Prefecture

that he can earn an acceptable income from 2 ha of farmland, about 50% less than the average tea farm area in Wazuka. The fresh tea leaves are harvested in May to produce high quality green tea (these leaves are usually shaded from the sun which adds to production costs) and the older leaves in June which produces less expensive tea. The drying procedure is computer controlled which facilitates processing but Mr N

prefers to pack the tea by hand to reduce the risk of impurities entering the packages with the tea (Photo 1).

Mr N started tea farming some 35 years ago with his father who sold tea to retailers in Osaka. One of the retailers established a co-operative, in 1955, among customers who were concerned about food safety and sourced tea from Mr N's father. Mr N continues to sell to retailers in Osaka and Kobe for consumer co-operatives. The consumer pays about 10% less for the tea through the co-operative than in a supermarket. A higher price could possibly be gained but Mr N said that he places particular importance on retaining consumer loyalty, pointing out that some of his customers drank his tea as

children and now their children enjoy the same products (there is, however, some price pressure, as discussed later). Because the product is organically certified, organic fertilisers (sesame seed, rapeseed residue, pig manure and fish organs) are sourced from other prefectures. Organic rice is also sourced to add to some tea (fried rice is a popular additive to tea in Japan). All of these contacts took place at networking events held by the consumer co-operatives, pointing to their role in promoting organic production.

Mr N also sells through local cafés and Kyoto Marché. He has taken opportunities to attend food fairs in Paris on three occasions and in Brussels once and sells direct to a café in Los Angeles (Urth Caffé). He referred to a need to expand his markets because the managers of the consumer co-operatives are seeking to increase their own profits by reducing the prices paid to producers. When interviewed Mr N planned to establish links with local tourism providers and introduce a tea shop at his home. He already hosts consumer visits to his farm to view his methods of production and he would like to see more active promotion of Wazuka tea and the terraced tea gardens for tourism purposes and to create market recognition.

Mr N's experience illustrates the importance of an organic label in meeting consumer co-operative demands but also some of the difficulties that arise from over dependence on a particular market segment. Finding replacement markets is time consuming because the demand for organic tea is still relatively low compared with the conventional product. In this context Mr N is acting strategically in seeking to establish a stronger reputation for Wazuka tea, access international markets and embed his product in tourism locally.

Established 'organic' vegetable farmer

Mr S is a full-time urban 'organic' vegetable farmer in Kyoto Prefecture who also inherited his farm from his father (he owns 0.7 ha which is located about 1-2 km from his home). He began our conversation by speaking about continuing a tradition of agricultural production in Kyoto Prefecture that dates to the 11th and 12th centuries. All of the products are cultivated according to organic principles but are not certified as such because of the time and expense associated with labelling 70 different products. Compost from cow manure and rapeseed residue is used as an organic fertiliser. He provides information at the point of sale on posters about how to produce food without using chemical fertilisers and how to cook traditional vegetables that may not be familiar to consumers (Photo 2).

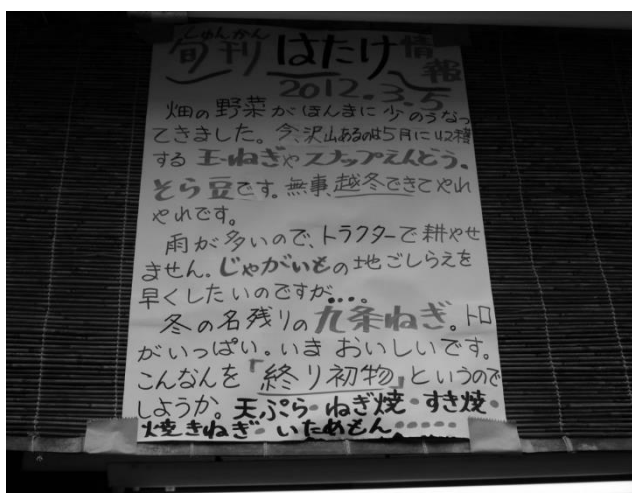


Photo 2 Mr S traditional low input vegetable producer's home shop, Kyoto City: information about traditional vegetables

Mr S sells traditionally produced and more modern varieties of vegetables including egg plant, a type of long green pepper, many types of radishes, brassicas, a type of thin carrot and spring onions which provide a colourful display. He maintains a tradition of naming onions according to the place of production.

He considers teaching consumers about the characteristics of local traditional foods to be an

important function of direct marketing; hence the information boards. Mr S has also lectured on organic farming to farmers and provided one-day training sessions for Kyoto Prefecture Government. When the Japanese government introduced a new Law to Expand Organic Agriculture in 2007 and Basic Guidelines in 2008, he organised a committee in Kyoto City to create a master plan to promote local organic farming.

Mr S is also active in local events organised by the agricultural co-operatives to provide education about local foods more generally in Kyoto City (the local co-operatives in Kyoto are exceptional in this regard). These include organised visits to farms to inform consumers about the sources of their food and the methods of production. He provides children at several local schools with experience of paddy rice cultivation in the school grounds and, since 2006, other local historical products have become part of these cultivation experiences. He also hosts visits to his own farm on three days over the growing season to participate in the planting, weeding and cropping of vegetables. In the community where his farm is located, he has organised a portable 'shrine' (1.5 tonnes in weight) decorated with flowers and vegetables for a traditional October harvest celebration, linking farming with local culture. A counter in front of his house is Mr S's main point of sale, which he wife attends (Photo 3). He has a loyal local clientele, including consumers who became aware of his vegetables at Kyoto Marché. He also gained customers

through the Marché- a restaurant and a small retail shop. He is confident in the merits of his low input methods and has established a comparative advantage based on traditional products of high quality.

New 'organic' vegetable farmer

Mr K worked for a private car dealer company initially. He wished to have greater independence at work and was glad to move to farming in Yamata City,



Photo 3 Mr S traditional low input vegetable producer's home shop, Kyoto City

in 2009, when his wife inherited a farm and the house where they live from her grandfather. His wife inherited 0.3 ha and he rents an additional 0.1 ha from a local farmer (Photo 4). Mr K believes that Japanese farmers should change their mind set and think not just about profit but also more about food safety and 'organic' production. His own memories as a child, of fresh food grown by his father in their yard or veranda, influence him in wishing to encourage children to acquire a taste for delicious vegetables.

Mr K faced many obstacles in becoming established as a farmer, partly because of not having an agricultural background and being new to the area where he lives, and he

is more weakly embedded in the local economy and society than are Mr N and Mr S. He is supported by his wife's family and has established links with young local farmers but he is the only 'organic' producer among them. There are difficulties in being accepted by older local farmers which inhibits the acquisition of knowledge about local cultivation cultures. Mr K also referred to the reluctance of the agricultural co-operatives to provide support to low input producers or market their less than standard produce (in terms of size and shape) because their main focus is on conventional standardised output. He has sourced information independently for the most part. He undertook training with a local organic farmers' group for one year which provided advice relating to weed and pest control using organic methods and

appropriate soil management without the use of chemicals. Learning about local skills and techniques is very important for new entry organic farmers like Mr S in order to cope with localised growing conditions. He also received advice from Mr S above. He practises pest control through a planting regime and is experimenting with a rotation but has not worked out the optimum sequence of cropping as yet. His farm income is supplemented by occasional part-time work on other farms. He wishes to specialize, expand the farm and become a full-time farmer but there is limited land available for rent locally.

Mr K cultivates conventional products: carrots, onions, turnips, sprouts, cabbage, spinach (in a polytunnel) and broccoli (Photo 4). He explained that trust in his methods of production and the quality of the produce are important for sales. When queried if he had an interest in certified organic farming, he said that there is an association of organic farmers but he does not



Photo 4 Mr K new low input vegetable producer's farm, Yamata City

attend the meetings, partly because of controversy surrounding production methods. Although JAS certification stipulates the methods that must be followed in organic production, there is considerable discussion among farmers like Mr K, who follow a personal philosophy and learn by experience, about the methods and inputs that can be considered as 'organic'. The cost of JAS

certification is also an entry barrier for small scale farmers like Mr K which contributes to the importance that they assign to low input methods as an alternative pathway to high quality produce and have reduced impacts on the environment.

Retail sales are very important for Mr K because the agricultural co-operatives are not willing to market his produce as explained above. He obtained contracts with three retailer shops in Kyoto and nearby cities through attending Kyoto Marché. In March 2012, he hoped to have contracts in the near future with another three retailers in Kyoto. Because of a need to control costs, he does not label produce with his name but the retailers do this independently. There is a fixed price for each vegetable type in the contract. Mr K felt that he had negotiated relatively good contracts but he receives only a limited

premium and sometimes the price is lower than for the conventional equivalents. He reported not being overly concerned about this because of his philosophy of providing a stable supply, access to quality produce and fixed prices to consumers but this may be because he is still trying to establish a market and is dependent on the retailers for sales.

Mr K illustrates some of the dilemmas that may face a young farmer who does not wish (or cannot afford) to obtain organic certification and pursues low input methods of production which he is still developing. He is therefore more dependent on retailer contracts which offer some security but, although he did not mention this, there is vulnerability associated with dependence on a limited number of customers, as in Mr N's case with the consumer co-operatives.

Conclusions

The evidence from the three case studies provides insights into organic and low input local farm production in Japan. Consumer co-operatives, which seek certified organic products, have an important influence on the adoption of organic certification which also confers a price premium in the case of the tea farmer. Over-dependence on consumer co-operatives can, however, create vulnerabilities and developing alternative markets is time consuming because of the relatively low recognition of certified organic status among consumers more generally in Japan. This is of particular importance in the case of a product like tea which involves considerable capital investment in cultivation and processing. The vegetable producers interviewed used non-conventional low-input methods of production, which were based on philosophical concerns relating to care for the environment and protecting human health and a clear understanding of the values associated with traditional products in the case of Mr S. Neither of them had sought formal organic certification for reasons of cost and problems associated with marketing. Both had established markets for their produce and emphasised the importance of trust by their customers and consumers in their production reflecting the findings of research by Sakagami *et al.* (2006).

Different ways in which associations with the local area are understood and used as features of the food produced are also apparent. In the case of tea, Mr N seeks to establish a market niche for Wazuka as a source of organic tea within the wider Ugi producing area. He is active in identifying potential international markets but sees closer embedding locally and integration with tourism as a market diversification strategy. Mr S is acutely aware of the

history and cultural value of local traditional vegetable products in Kyoto Prefecture. He seeks to preserve older varieties and educates consumers about them and is closely embedded in the cultural activities of his local community. He also instructs young farmers in organic and low input production and plays a wider educational role through involvement in school food projects and farm visits. Mr K, by contrast, who has moved to the area where he now lives and is new to farming, highlights inherent features of the vegetables, their freshness and quality. For him, locally grown vegetables relate not so much to place as to the low input methods that he uses.

The findings illustrate some of complexities associated with organic and low input methods of food production in Japan. Officially certified organic status can operate to the advantage of producers who have established markets which recognise certification. Because of the costs associated with certification, the actual labelling of the produce and the agricultural cooperatives' prioritisation of support for conventionally produced food, other producers seek a market niche in the recognition accorded to low-input methods of production. Mr S illustrates in a particularly marked way the success of this strategy when embedded in local traditions and culture. The recognition accorded to low input production can also provide a market opportunity for a younger farmer who is basing his strategy on the quality of production per se.

Local food has long established cultural significance in Japan which differs from that in many western societies (Clammer 2011). Local production has also been supported, since the 1950s, as a method of ensuring food safety in the wake of growing concerns relating to the health implications of intensively produced food. In 2002, *chisan-chisho*, local production for local consumption, was incorporated officially as a policy objective and supported by government. Consumer co-operatives, which functioned initially as a method of sourcing food more cheaply in the 1950s, have come to play an important role in promoting food quality and organic production. Locally produced food is, therefore, more deeply embedded in a range of institutions in Japan than it is in Britain, Ireland or the United States, for example. More similarities are likely to exist with the status enjoyed by regional products in France, Italy and Spain. There are some parallels between the research findings and western evidence. Thus, farmers' markets are sites of local food sales in Japan, as in western countries. A number of similarities may be noted relating to the adoption of organic farming. Organic certification is promoted as a method of ensuring the quality of food in Japan but consumers tend to prioritise freshness and region of production more than organic labels (Sakagami *et al.* 2006), as they do in the

United Kingdom (Weatherall *et al.* 2013). Mr N's response to the requirements of consumer co-operatives for organically certified methods of tea production, illustrates the influence of such joint purchasing groups which has been recognised recently in western countries also (Little *et al.* 2010). More generally, the research highlights the role of the costs associated with certification as inhibiting conversion to organic production, as noted by Morgan and Murdoch (2000) in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s. A need to combine local with scientific knowledge, in order to develop a workable organic regime, highlighted by the younger vegetable farmer in devising his method of low input production, reflects evidence found by Bager and Proost (1997) in Denmark and the Netherlands in the late 1990s.

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Alternative Food Networks or Agritourism? The ‘Vegetable Tourism’ Experience in the Barcelona Peri-Urban Area (Catalonia, Spain)

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Abstract

Over the last few years, an activity termed *holeriturisme*, meaning ‘vegetable tourism’, has been developed in a protected peri-urban farmland precinct in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. The purpose of this paper is to discuss this activity within the frameworks of alternative food networks and agritourism literatures. To achieve this aim, it begins by presenting the two distinct bodies of literature followed by a description of the case-study area. The paper then examines the ‘vegetable tourism’ initiative through data obtained from interviews. Results are also reported from the findings of two rounds of consumer satisfaction surveys which were conducted with a representative sample. The paper concludes by evaluating the potential of the ‘vegetable tourism’ initiative for influencing the development of alternative food networks in the metropolitan area of Barcelona and whether it can be considered agritourism.

Key words: agritourism, alternative food networks, ‘vegetable tourism’, Baix

Llobregat Agricultural Park (BLAP), metropolitan area of Barcelona (Catalonia).

Introduction

Since 2008, the Baix Llobregat Agricultural Park (BLAP, *Parc Agrari del Baix Llobregat* in Catalan), a protected farmland precinct in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, has been developing a novel activity termed *holeriturisme*. This title is derived from the Latin word *holus*, meaning ‘vegetable’, and hence the contraction, ‘vegetable tourism’. In line with the intentions expressed by BLAP managers, *holeriturisme* seeks to reinforce links between BLAP producers, on the one hand, and nearby consumers, on the other. This alliance promotes alternative food networks (AFNs) in accordance with the mainstream literature, and it has also been presented as a new form of agritourism, because it incorporates a leisure dimension.

Given this context, the purpose of this paper is to situate the *holeriturisme* within the frameworks of AFNs and agritourism literatures. To achieve this objective, this paper begins by presenting the two distinct bodies of literature followed by a description of the BLAP case-study area. The paper then examines the *holeriturisme* initiative through data obtained from interviewing. Results are also reported from the findings of two rounds of consumer satisfaction surveys which were conducted with a representative sample. The paper concludes by evaluating the *holeriturisme* potential for influencing the development of AFNs and whether it can be considered agritourism.

Alternative Food Networks

Over the past decade, there has been a growing debate about AFNs. Several authors have questioned whether they really exist, considering them to be a theoretical construction, claiming that the notion of *alternativeness* associated with food networks is not evident (Venn et al 2006; Goodman 2004). A decade ago AFNs research was “still highly fragmented and untheorised” (Marsden et al 2000: 426), it is now more coherent. According to Renting et al (2003) and Murdoch et al (2000), AFNs are *networks* or multiple relationships between producers, consumers and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply. In general terms, AFNs provide benefits for farmers by shortening the intermediary supply chains (by means of *short supply chains*, SSCs), allowing consumers to consume (perceived) fresher, safer and tastier foods whose origin is known and trusted. If modernity was characterised by a divorce between farmers and consumers, and between

farmers and food, AFNs attempt to bridge these fractures (Ilbery et al 2005).

However, there is some confusion between AFNs and SSCs, although it is commonly recognised that the latter are exclusively related to distribution, while the former have a wider meaning, embracing not only distribution but also consumption and production (Paül and Haslam McKenzie 2013; Sánchez-Hernández 2009). Be that as it may, AFNs are diverse in nature and space (Renting et al 2003). For instance, Sánchez-Hernández (2009) identifies 13 basic types, ranging from systems of protected regional foods to organic production, farmers' markets, direct sales, community supported agriculture or fair trade. Discussions regarding a reduced AFNs agenda focused on environmental issues (i.e. organic farming) and a wider alternativeness (i.e. social justice and equity, medium and small farms conservation, etc.) are perennial issues in academic debates (Morgan 2010). Recently, there have been some useful attempts to reconcile these variations. The framework presented by Morgan (2010) is particularly appealing, involving an intersection between, on the one hand, AFNs operating at a local and regional scale with a sustainable basis ('local and green') and, on the other hand, global AFNs based on fair trade values and working for social development in developing countries ('global and fair'). The example of the school food provision scheme in Rome, balancing fair trade food from overseas and Lazio's fresh food, is an example of this (Sonnino 2009).

A central category linked with AFN is regional/local food. The debate on whether food can be considered as 'regional' or 'local' has focused partially on the distance between consumer and producer, which varies according to different commentators. 'Local' according to Morgan (2010) is a maximum of 30 miles (50 km) but Kirwan (2004) suggests it is 50 miles (80 km) while Aubry and Kebir (2013) accept up to 200 kilometres. More vaguely, Renting et al (2003: 400) refer to "relations of proximity in time and space". Beyond the issue of physical distance between consumers and producers of regional/local food, other aspects of the linkage between a particular food and its area of origin have been a central issue in AFNs literature. This has been especially the case in France, where the notion of *terroir* (not restricted to wine) shapes and frames the countryside. In the EU (European Union), PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) are officially recognised labels for regional products. To attain this labelling, products must be distinctive and have either regional or local names. Significantly, the literature on PDO and PGI as specific AFNs mechanisms has sometimes been critical, suggesting these EU schemes as nothing other than marketing labels

(Goodman 2004). It is evident in this literature that regionally-based AFNs are not linked *per se* to the region itself, but the association is negotiated and contested (Sonnino 2007).

Agritourism

In the literature on tourism geography (for example, Such and García 2001) there is a widespread model defining a gradient composed of three tourist types in rural areas, as follows:

- *Tourism in rural areas* (TRA). This is defined by the space in which tourism activities are carried out, that is, rural areas.
- *Rural tourism*. This is determined by the rural population involved in its management, or the income earned by the local communities. Tourist experiences and activities must be based on rural attributes and resources.
- *Agritourism*, sometimes referred as *farm tourism*, is a specific rural tourism in which revenues are earned by farms in particular.

Therefore, TRA is an inclusive tourist type, capable of offering a variety of tourist experiences that are not necessarily related to the rural nature of the space in which they exist. Beyond this generic tourism, the denomination *rural tourism* is reserved for those tourist activities identified within the specific assets of rural life, rural people, rural traditional activities, rural culture and so on (Frochot 2005). In this context, *agritourism* is individualised as a reductionist modality within TRA and rural tourism. In agritourism, tourist experiences are centred on an active farmhouse by means of farming tasks, agricultural lifestyles and customs, and self-generated agricultural products (Tew and Barbieri 2012; Phillip et al 2010; Nilsson 2002; Weaber and Fernnel 1997). According to these authors, there are three basic interdependent requirements in agritourism:

- The tourist activity must take place on a working farm.
- A direct connection must exist between agriculture and tourism.
- A social interaction between visitors and farmers has to take place.

However, there is some controversy around such issues. In fact, usually the 'working farm' is taken for granted and indeed discussions on what is exactly meant by a farmhouse are missing (Phillip et al 2010). In this respect, Clarke (1996) considers that acceptable agritourism is when the farm maintains its farming-side activity as the principle occupation, while tourism is complementary, taking as a reference the figure that over 75% of total revenues are obtained by the professional practice of agriculture.

With regard to the direct connection between agriculture and tourism, usually it is not precisely defined (Phillip et al 2010; Sonnino 2004). In this sense Phillip et al (2010) propose a gradation of agritourist experiences depending on the meaning of farming. Two (out of five) of these experiences are specifically forms of direct contact, depending on the continuum of authenticity, ranging from 'front' to 'back' regions (MacCannell 1973). On the one hand, agritourism in 'front' regions consists of a dramatisation of agriculture for tourist enjoyment; this may be offered through visits to take a glimpse behind the scenes (farm tours, for example). On the other hand, genuine agritourism adventures are experienced in 'back' regions, defined as truly "authentic agritourism" (Phillip et al 2010), which can be experienced through active participation in farming tasks (Tew and Barbieri 2012).

The Parc Agrari del Baix Llobregat

The BLAP is an exceptional example of protected farmland precinct (Paül and Haslam McKenzie 2013) located in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. It covers 3,300 hectares of prime, very fertile and irrigated farmland on the southern edge of the Barcelona agglomeration, with a central position in the metropolitan area (five million residents in 2012 according to Idescat). There are approximately 600 holdings and 1,200 agricultural owners and workers (70% of whom work full time on the farms). Being a *huerta* (orchards) of the Mediterranean basin, the BLAP has significant heritage due to the historic development of the area dating from Medieval times. The main commodities produced are vegetables (artichokes, lettuce, chard) and fruit (peaches, plums, cherries). The artichoke is the preeminent product, and is in the process of obtaining a PGI (Prat Artichoke).

The BLAP came about as a consequence of a long-term claim by farmers. Since the 1970s they have resisted the urbanisation of their lands, but they needed a long-term guarantee they could maintain their activity without further threats from developers and urban encroachment. Agricultural Park status was achieved in the 1990s. A consortium between a farmers' union, the District Council, the Provincial Council and 14 municipalities was created in 1998. A vision was established which was to maintain the area as farmland linked to its urban environment, not by subsidisation, but by strategic management procedures. The Catalan Government joined the consortium in 2006.

The consortium is a complex body in terms of managing such a varied number of partners. As a farmers' union is a constituent member, the BLAP

works compulsorily with farmers' participation. The Park has adopted a Management and Development Plan (2002) and a Land-use Plan (2004). The latter established strong farmlands protection, while the former proposed a set of strategies and specific actions. The aim of the 2002 Plan is to provide mechanisms to facilitate farms maintaining their economic competitiveness but also their sustainability in environmental and socio-cultural terms. The policies drawn up by the BLAP include marketing actions which have progressively gained momentum. For instance, the design of a website (<http://www.elcampacasa.cat>) informing consumers which farmer produces what commodities, where they are located and where the products are sold.

Results from Interviews

As part of its marketing policies, the BLAP has, since 2003, developed a campaign called 'Flavours of the Orchards' (*Els sabors de l'horta* in Catalan) encouraging local restaurants to use BLAP products. In 2008, after the initial development of this campaign, the BLAP staff decided to refocus the promotion of the products of the area. According to interviews conducted in February 2010 with two key members of the BLAP Consortium (both of whom initiated and personally promoted the *holeriturisme* initiative), this reorientation was motivated by the perception that the promotion was too focused on restaurants. They indicated there was a willingness amongst BLAP officers to seek additional ways to promote the commodities to a wider consumer audience. Following an internal survey conducted by the BLAP, half of the farmers are not direct sellers, meaning that they sell their vegetables and fruits through wholesalers. In this situation, farmers typically "lose" control of their product and there is no contact between producers and consumers; indeed consumers cannot differentiate BLAP vegetables when buying at suburban markets or supermarkets. It is within this context that 'vegetable tourism' or *holeriturisme* was developed. Interviewees understand the "invention" of *holeriturisme* as a "pretext" or "excuse" that makes use of the "tourism fashion" to promote specific vegetables to consumers. In 2009 the first visits to BLAP farms took place. Typically, since 2009 the experience in a daily package includes:

- A visit to farms and interaction with farmers, including an explanation of organic farming and whether the farmer is organically certified (**Photo 1**).

- A visit to an interactive museum exhibition in the BLAP headquarters focussing on each agricultural product used in the *holeriturismo* experience.
- A cooking and tasting workshop. Depending on the product, the workshop is devoted to the blending of spirits with fresh fruit or, in the case of Prat Artichoke, the activity involves matching artichokes with beers (**Photo 2**).
- A restaurant meal using local produce.

Initially, the activities were planned around two products: during winter, the Prat Artichoke; at the end of spring, cherries. In order to complete the cycle, activities around leafy green vegetables (chard, lettuce, celery, spinach, etc.) for autumn and fruit (pump and peach) for summer have also been developed. The intention has been to have a specific activity for each season to enable consumers



Photo1 Visiting an artichoke-based farm.
Picture by Xavi Pérez (2010-02-06)



Photo 2 A tasting workshop on leafy vegetables. Picture by Xavi Pérez (2011-10-22)

to understand that agricultural production has a natural cycle and that products are only available seasonally (**Photo 3**). Interviewees stated that a reason for this emphasis is the conviction that peri-urban agriculture has a future only if there is a clear differentiation from the locally produced food and that which originates far from the city. This differentiation is dependent on

consumers understanding the natural ways of production, avoiding artificial procedures to produce 'out of season' and unsustainable transport costs, thus introducing SSCs. With this notion of 'seasons', the promotional campaign of the *holeriturisme* was called 'The time has come to...' (*Arriba el temps de...* in Catalan) (**Photo 4**).



Photo 3 *Holeriturisme* activities for each season. Designed by Alimon



Photo 4 Promotional posters. Designed by Alimon and Hernán Castellanos

Results from a Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Surveys were conducted in 2010 and 2011 to assess the success of *holeriturisme*. In February and March 2010, the survey was carried out among 470 individuals, yielding a 95% confidence level and a 4.51% absolute error. In February and March 2011, it was conducted with 655 respondents, yielding a 95% confidence level and a 3.82% absolute error. The survey included consumer profile questions (age, income, level of education, occupation, area of residence, etc.). There were 14 questions which assessed the customers' level

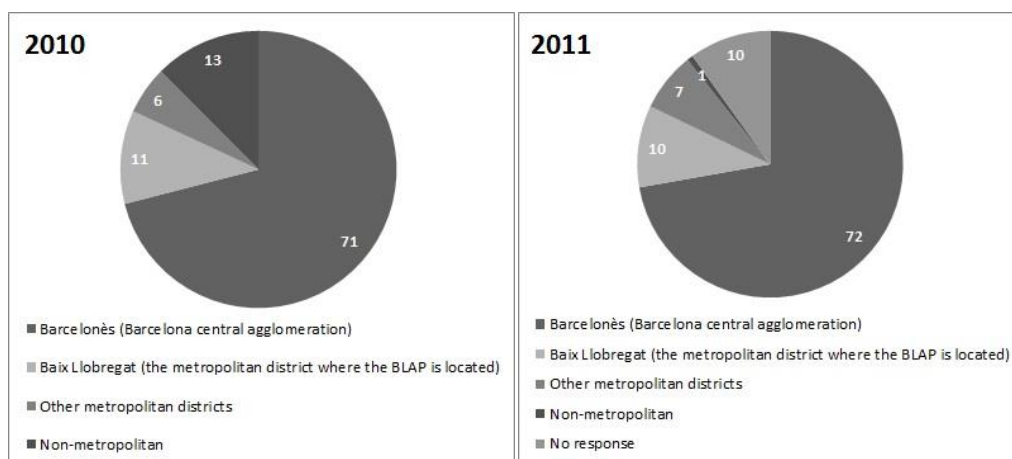


Figure 1 Area of origin in percentage of sample respondents

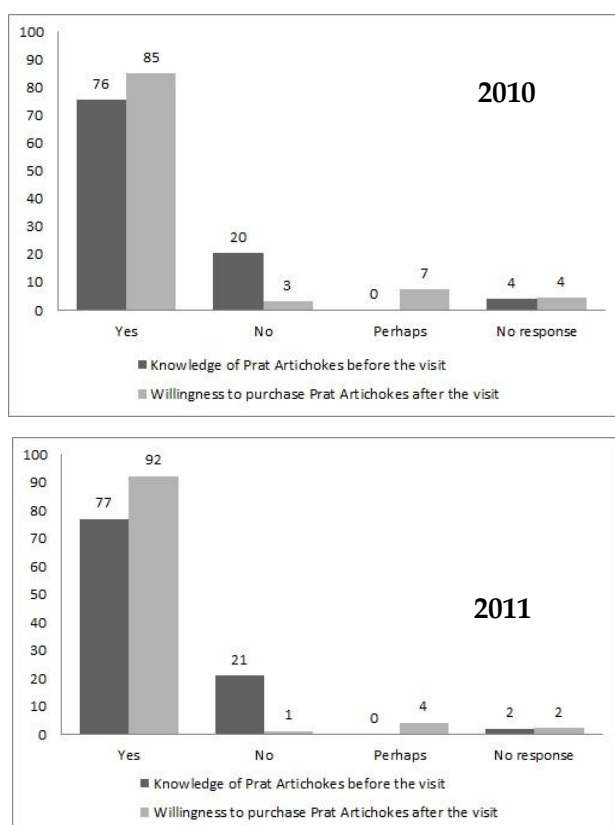


Figure 2 Knowledge of Prat artichokes before the visit and willingness to purchase artichokes after the visit, in percentage of sample respondents

of knowledge of *holeriturisme* and the reasons motivating them to participate in the tourism experience. Three questions are analysed herein as they provide specific insights relating to this research. As the surveys were conducted during winter, the ‘vegetable tourism’ activities logically centred on artichoke production.

In relation to the demand profile, almost all consumers were residents of the metropolitan area of Barcelona, mostly from the central agglomeration of Barcelona (Barcelonès). In 2010 the percentage of visitors from Barcelonès was 71%, while in 2011 this percentage reached 72% (Figure 1). In 2010, 12% identified themselves as

‘non-metropolitan’ and in 2011 this ‘non-metropolitan’ figure was minimal, although in the second survey around 10% of respondents did not declare their origin.

One question asked about the respondents’ willingness to purchase artichokes after the experience; 85% reported a positive willingness in 2010 and 92% in 2011 (**Figure 2**). This was interpreted as a success in the sense that the basic aim of the planned activity was achieved: consumers expressed that they were ready to acquire artichokes in the future. But, more significantly, these figures exceeded the percentage of those claiming to have known about the product before the visit (76% in 2010 and 77% in 2011).

An important question for the economic sustainability of the activity itself is the willingness to pay for the experience. €15 is the price calculated by the BLAP as its cost per head for offering the service (without the restaurant meal), which means that in order to make any profit they would have to charge more than this price. In 2010 only 16% agreed with a price of €20 or more (14%, €20 and 2%, €30), but the figure for 2011 declined to 14% overall, with none of the respondents willing to pay €30 (**Figure 3**). This decrease might be influenced by the current economic crisis in Spain.

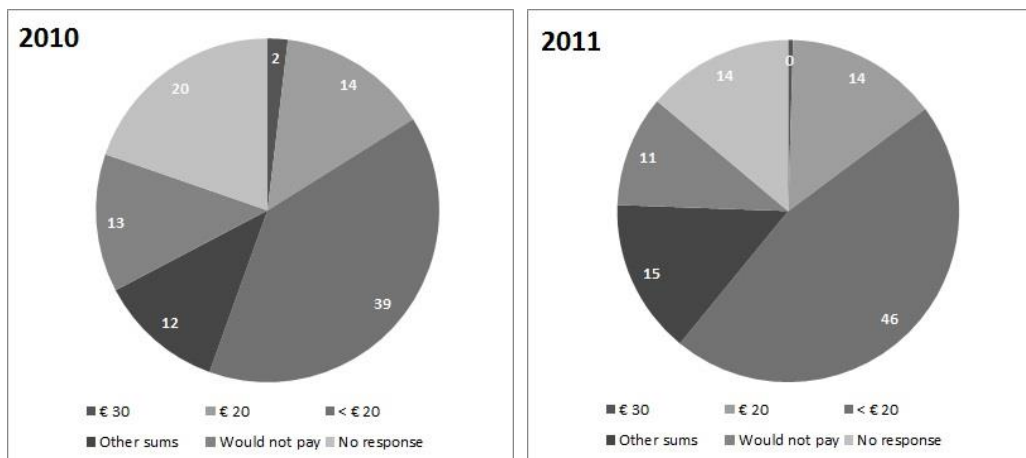


Figure 3 Willingness to pay in percentage of sample respondents

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the TRA subdivision of tourist types, ‘vegetable tourism’ can be categorised as *rural tourism* and, particularly, *agritourism* (Tew and Barbieri 2012; Phillip et al 2010). Between the daily package, the first activity (visiting farms) is a direct interaction of tourism with agriculture. Following MacCannell’s (1973) distinction, this visit is ‘front’ rather than ‘back’ as it consists of a farm tour with a dramatisation, but does not embrace the

participation of visitors in farming tasks — the latter might be considered “authentic” agritourism. Moreover, the other three activities included in the daily package are not agritourism at all, but ascribable to general *rural tourism* as they are not undertaken on a farm. Thus *holeriturisme* is consistent with the literature observations on agritourism, even if in this case-study interviewees reported that tourism is in reality a “pretext” or an “excuse” to develop AFNs. Clarke (1996) stated that in agritourism the ‘tourist side’ of a farm cannot be dominant, thus the ‘farming side’ must remain central. This is precisely the case in the participating farms, as this tourism is designed for promoting the sustainability of farming activities through AFNs rather than the development of new leisure activities. In this respect, it can be argued that there is room for compatibility between AFNs and agritourism if the latter is used for sustaining the former. This confirms Tew and Barbieri’s (2012) finding that agritourism is useful for marketing agricultural products.

AFNs involve a reconfiguration of systems of food production, distribution and consumption (Renting et al 2003; Murdoch et al 2000), and the case study provides evidence of how the pattern of *consumption* can be modified through an increase of consumers’ awareness on the locally-produced vegetables. Indeed, it has been observed that the number of people accessing the website <<http://www.elcampacasa.com/>> has a positive correlation with the dates on which the visits are organised (**Figure 4**). However, a question that might be worthy of further research is whether the percentage of consumers who, following the access to the website, eventually purchase commodities.

The fact that consumers directly interact with farmers during the agritourism experience might lead towards the development of direct-sale chains, even rendering the *distribution* itself redundant in the context of shortening food supply chains (Aubry and Kebir 2013). This progress might be based on the development of trust by consumers in producers, and the farmers’ conviction they will obtain an appropriate price without intermediaries. This deduction accords with Kirwan’s (2004) conclusions. Thus, the divorce between farmers and consumers identified by Ilbery et al (2005) can be bridged. Significantly, most consumers participating in *holeriturisme* visits are metropolitan residents (**Figure 1**), thus ‘local’ according to Morgan (2010) and Kirwan (2004).

With regard to *production*, the ‘vegetable tourism’ experience contributes to the consolidation of organic farming, as it spreads awareness that most of the farmers participating in *holeriturisme* produce organically. In this respect, we agree with Blanc (2009) when he says that the production can be categorised as

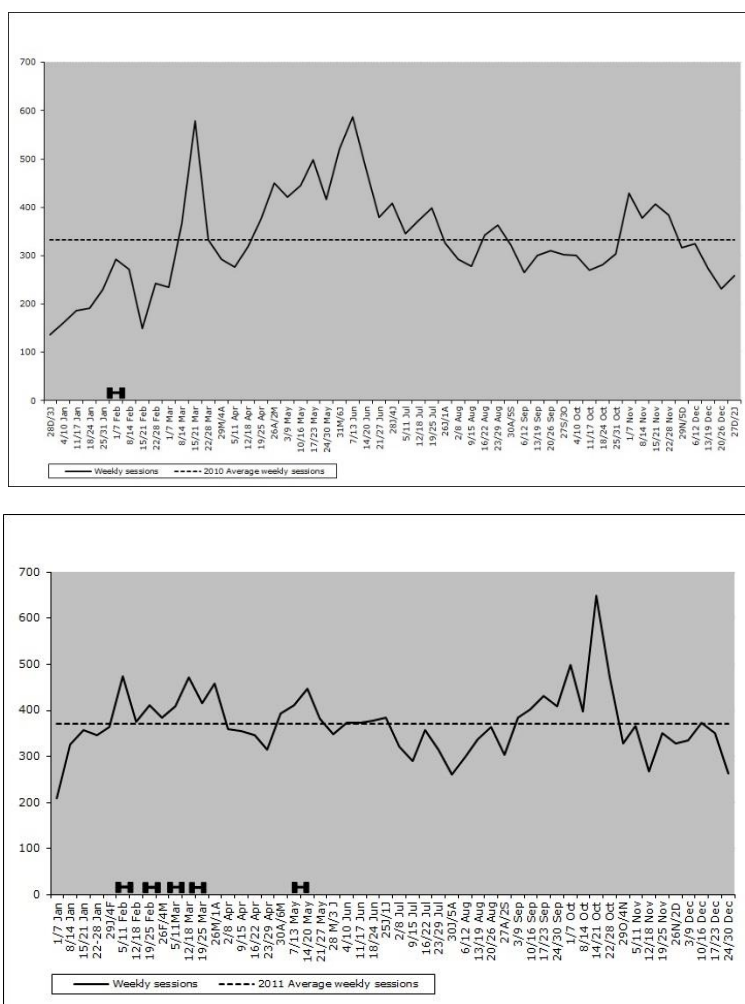


Figure 4 People accessing <<http://www.elcampacasa.com/>> in 2010 and 2011. <H> indicates when a holeriturisme activity has taken place

alternative when it is organic, but this is not necessarily the case for achieving an AFN, as this production must have a particular position in the local market to be an AFN.

The survey results in relation to costs reveal a scarcely favourable scenario for the introduction of a private operator on a franchise basis, as intended by interviewees. To date, the service has been managed by the BLAP, which partially subsidises the costs since the *holeriturisme* programme has been designed as a promotional campaign consistent with the BLAP marketing policies. However, if consumers are not willing to spend more than €20 a head for the day's experience (**Figure 3**), it is unlikely that a company will be able to

offer the service. In spite of this, the interviewees contend that the success of the experience cannot be exclusively measured in terms of profitability of the tourist activity itself, but rather by considering the farmers' long-term returns, i.e. the increase in the number of consumers who know about their products and buy directly from them. On the basis of our survey, it can be argued that there has been a 9% increase (2010) and 15% increase (2011) of knowledge of the Prat Artichoke as a result of *holeriturisme* (**Figure 2**). This means that BLAP's premier product has widened its potential demand. In this process, there is a broader scope for AFNs development than there was prior to the *holeriturisme* programme.

Our case-study also confirms some criticism of the PDO/PGI schemes, in line with those expressed by Goodman (2004). Even though EU-labelling is an aspiration for Prat Artichoke, all the products currently in the 'vegetable tourism' programme are not officially recognised by EU institutions. Nonetheless, the promotion of these products is effective and the *holeriturisme* is succeeding in marketing them reasonably well. While PDO/PGI schemes are, in themselves, theoretically AFNs and have been the main focus of AFNs research by Spanish scholars (Sánchez-Hernández 2009), this paper indicates that alternativeness has a wider range of possibilities beyond PDO/PGI schemes and that these possibilities are likely to be more *alternative* than the EU designations.

This paper has evaluated a specific strategic policy that stimulates and promotes AFNs through agritourism. Although scholars such as Marsden et al (2000) were, a decade ago, pessimistic about the sustainability of AFNs over time, it can be argued that they are expanding. However, it is obvious that the BLAP cannot produce all the food which is required by the total population of metropolitan Barcelona. In this respect, contributions such as Morgan (2010) or Sonnino (2009) are particularly appealing as they provide alliances between global AFNs and local/regional AFNs. As explained in this paper, the BLAP is positively involved in establishing and consolidating AFNs with metropolitan residents, but networking with AFN on a global scale (i.e. fair trade) could be critical in offering a real substitute to the dominant systems of food production, distribution and consumption.

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Farmer Livelihood Change in the Chinese Border Region of Northern Laos

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Abstract

Since the 1990s northern Laos has faced a massive influx of migrants from China in the border region of Phongsaly Province, which is home to ethnic minority peoples. As part of this process contract farming for Chinese companies has been introduced as a dry season secondary crop in paddy fields, and has brought about great change in the livelihoods of the local farmers since the mid-2000s. This research shows how the introduction of contract farming for Chinese companies occurred through the work of multiple factors such as the domestic Lao crop market, the composition of ethnic groups on the border and the languages they use, and responses by the local governments in their peripheral position along the international border.

Key words: Laos-China border area, contract farming, ethnic minorities, local government

Introduction

Since before World War II ethnic Chinese Chaozhou have engaged in commercial activities in Lao urban areas, such as the capital Vientiane, Pakse and Savannakhet, located in the southern region and Luang Phabang in the northern region (Yamashita 2006). These were ethnic Chinese who came to Laos by way of Thailand. However, after the border was opened in the 1990s, when relations between China and Laos were restored, a massive surge of new migrants arrived from southwestern China, mainly from Yunnan Province just across the border from Laos (Percival 2007: 42).

It is probably true to say that the Lao people do not unconditionally welcome this influx of migrants from China. However, stemming the flow of migrants from China, a country of roughly 1.34 billion people, into Laos, with a

tiny population of just about 6.6 million, is not a simple matter. Even Yunnan Province alone, just across the border from Laos, has a population of approximately 45 million, about seven times the whole population of Laos. What kind of region is the Lao border area with China? According to 2005 census data, 65% of the total population of Laos belong to the Tai group, which includes Lao of the Tai-Kadai linguistic group, whereas the largest groups making up the ethnic composition of the three provinces situated along the border with China, Phongsaly, Oudomxay and Luang Namtha, are the Khum of the Mon-Khmer linguistic group, the Akha and Phunoy of the Tibet-Burmese linguistic group and the Hmong of the Hmong-Mien linguistic group, as shown in Table 1. The Tai Lue are an ethnic group belonging to the Tai-Kadai linguistic group, the largest in Laos, but their population is 12.3 thousand a mere 2.1% of the population of the country (Sonoe and Nakamatsu 2009). This fact reveals that the ethnic minorities within the small country of Laos are the ones who directly face the influx of migrants across the Laos-China border.

Table 1 Ethnic composition in the northern three provinces of Laos (2005)

Province	Most populous ethnic group (Ratio %)	Second-most populous ethnic group (Ratio %)	Third-most populous ethnic group (Ratio %)
Phongsaly	Akha (27.0)	Khum (21.5)	Phunoy* (17.8)
Luang Namtha	Akha (25.1)	Khum (24.5)	Tai Lue (12.1)
Oudomxay	Khmu (58.9)	Hmong (13.9)	Tai Lue (9.6)

* Although “Singsily” was used as the name of ethnic group in population census in 2005, their name was officially changed into “Phunoy” in 2008. “Phunoy” is commonly used in Phongsaly province.

Source: Sonoe and Nakamatsu 2009: 34-35

This situation is complicated by the fact that these ethnic minority groups are distributed on both sides of the international border in a mosaic pattern. Until the first half of the 19th century, mainland mountain Southeast Asia consisted of the three kingdoms of Dai Viet, Lan Xang and Lan Na. Of these, the main area of the Lan Xang Kingdom is located in present-day northern Laos and also included Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province in China as well as parts of Thailand and Vietnam (Stuart-Fox 1997: 6-19). The different ethnic groups in this region resided as majority groups in each of the kingdoms, the areas of which bear no relation to the current international borders. French rule over Indochina, however, in classic colonial fashion led to the arbitrary delineation of the present borders of Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, China and Myanmar, with the result that the ethnic groups found themselves divided across modern international frontiers. In the case of Laos, after the international border was established, policies were

formulated by the Lao, who had now become the majority in the country. As a result, the ethnic groups along the Laos-China border became ethnic minorities in terms of population. After the capital moved to Vientiane from Luang Phabang in 1975 they also became more geographically remote from the political center, effectively becoming a peripheral area where economic development and improvement of social infrastructure were delayed. The region chosen for this research is the Laos-China border region of Luang Namtha and Phongsaly Provinces, which, is comprised of the Tai Lue as the main ethnic group. The Tai Lue carried out wet rice cultivation in the basins at the time of the Lan Xang Kingdom, and ethnic minorities such as the Akha and Phunoy, were engaged in swidden farming in the mountainous areas (Figure 1). The impact of China on this region has not been limited to the diffusion of Chinese commodities, but also has extended to agriculture, forestry and forest resource uses, the main means of livelihood of the people who inhabit the region (Yongge 2000, Yokoyama 2010, Goto 2011).

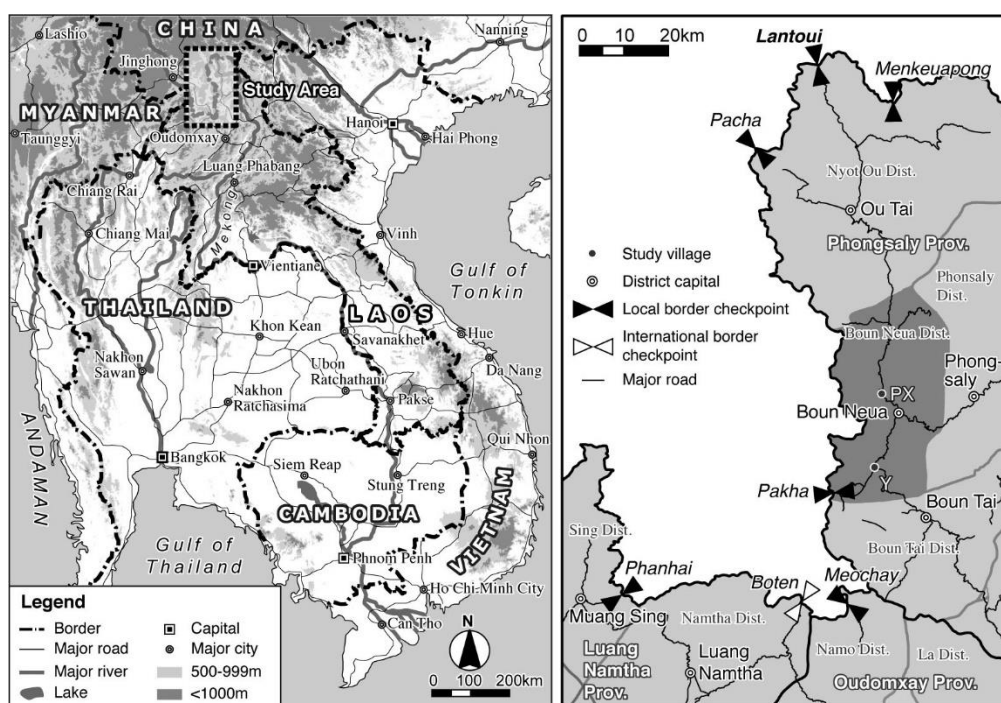


Figure 1 Study area

In this paper, we attempt to explore how the ethnic minority farmers who live near the Laos-China border in northern Laos have adapted to changes brought about by impacts from China. In doing so, we focus on contract farming in dry season paddy fields, which was introduced from 2000 onwards,

and we examine the responses shown at two different levels, one involving local government and another involving farmers.

Contract farming in dry season paddy fields

Phinong Chin and local farmers

Arriving in mid-2000s and after in northern Laos, Chinese farmers and firms began renting paddy fields that were not being used in the dry season from Lao owners in order to plant cash crops such as watermelons. One interviewed farmer in Boun Tai District, Phongsaly Province stated that Chinese began to rent paddy fields in the dry season for cultivating watermelons in 2006, and in addition to the rent they paid an extra amount of money which varied according to size of the watermelon harvest. Boun Tai is a Tai Lue town and the Chinese there are also Tai Lue who speak the same language, so there is absolutely no communication problem. The Lao Tai Lue call the Tai Lue with Chinese nationality "*Phinong Chin*" (Chinese relatives). It is accepted practice in Laos to call anyone that you have close relations with "*Phinong*," meaning a relative, even if there is no actual blood relation, and *Phinong Chin* is simply a special name given to Tai Lue with Chinese nationality.

Watermelon cultivation by the *Phinong Chin* in Boun Tai continued for three years, until 2008, when local Tai Lue started cultivating watermelons themselves the following year. As watermelons are very prone to replant failure, they cannot be planted on the same land in consecutive years. In this local community, land on which watermelon have been planted in one year cannot be replanted with watermelons for five years. The *Phinong Chin*, however, carried out sequential cropping of watermelons for three years on the



Photo 1 Grafted seedlings of watermelon cultivation in Boun Neua district, Phongsaly Province (March 2010)

same land. This sequential cropping was possible through the use of a grafted seedling technique in which pumpkins are first planted as rootstock and watermelon shoots are grafted onto them (Photo 1). The Lao Tai Lue farmers had no knowledge of this technique for avoiding replant failure, but in the three years that they rented out their land they were able to observe the *Phinong Chin* and learn how to plant watermelons after mastering rootstock grafting and the

timing for the use of fertilizer and pesticide inputs.

The same watermelon cultivation technique was being carried out not only in Boun Tai District, but also in neighboring Boun Neua District. The *Phinong Chin* began to plant watermelons in the basin area of Y village, Boun Neua District, renting land for several years from 2003. The year in which land began to be rented out differed from village to village, but in 2008 all the villages had ceased renting out land and the farmers using the grafted seedling technique had begun to cultivate watermelons themselves. From 2009, however, watermelon cropping declined and the local people began to do contract farming of secondary crops in dry season paddy fields with Chinese companies for crops other than watermelons. Below we look at the role of the district government that managed the contract farming with China and the livelihood strategies of the farmers who live in the region close to the border.

Contract farming and district government

According to the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) of Boun Neua, the amount of crop production exported to the Chinese market from Boun Neua District, which shares a border with China's Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, between the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011 was 10 million tons or more on an annual basis. The earliest contract farming was for sugarcane, which began in 1996, but it was from 2004 onward that many Chinese companies began to arrive in Phongsaly Province in northern Laos in order to undertake large-scale contract farming. In addition, the DAFO became involved in the contracts with Chinese companies for agricultural and forest products when contract farming of secondary crops in dry season paddy fields began in 2009.

Contract farming with Chinese companies can be classified into the following three types: 1) a Chinese company rents the land and Chinese employees carry out the farming, 2) a Chinese company makes a contract with the DAFO and the selling price of the crop is set at the same rate over the whole district, and 3) a Chinese company makes individual contracts with farmers. When contract farming began type 3 contracts were common, but problems arose with the companies not paying after the producer harvested the crop, a problem which occurred throughout Laos. From 2005 onward the Boun Neua DAFO began to make type 2 contracts whereby the DAFO interceded between the Chinese company and the farmers, demanding that both Chinese companies and farmers honor the contracts made through the DAFO. The advantage of contracting through the DAFO is that farmers are

able to make formal claims against unfair contracts. In fact, from time to time, unfair contracts for para-rubber are reviewed and the DAFO can request revision in order to give a better share to local farmers. In this way, efforts are being made through the intervention of the DAFO to make fairer contracts for ethnic minority peoples, who are in a weaker economic position.

Crop selection by contract farmers

The number of companies engaged in contract farming that had established offices in Boun Neua District as of 2011 totaled nine, seven of which were Chinese companies and two domestic Lao companies. Crops grown under contract farming by the Chinese companies were sugar cane, para-rubber, tea, tobacco, kidney beans, potatoes, chili peppers, maize, pumpkins, coffee beans, passion fruit, and those grown for Lao companies were sweet corn, pumpkins and bananas. Of the crops handled by the Chinese companies, tobacco is shipped to a Chinese-owned tobacco factory in southern Laos, but all of the remaining crops are exported directly to China. In addition, all of the companies employ a number of agricultural advisors, who give detailed technical guidance to the producers. Many of the agricultural advisers are *Phinong Chin* and give guidance in the Tai Lue language. As the Tai Lue language is very close to the national Lao language, it is also understood in the villages of ethnic groups other than the Tai Lue, and so interpreters are not necessary.

Since crops other than tree crops such as para-rubber, tea and coffee are basically cultivated under a one-year contract, changes in crop varieties can be extremely rapid, and this is even more so with secondary crops in dry season paddy fields. Table 2 shows a summary of dry season crops in Boun Neua District. It can be seen that large areas of red pumpkins and kidney beans were being cultivated, and that potatoes, which had been cultivated extensively at the time of the 2009 survey, slowly decreased in 2010 and declined even further

Table 2 Dry season crops of Boun Neua District, Phongsaly Province (2011)

rop	Cropping field	No. of villages	Area (ha)
Pumpkin (Red)	Paddy	12	144.52
Pumpkin (Long)	Paddy	7	47.41
Chili Pepper	Paddy	5	11.39
Kidney Beans	Paddy	12	148.13
Watermelon	Paddy	1	1.40
Cassava	Upland	2	2.00
Sweet Corn	Paddy/Upland	6	39.74
Tobacco	Upland	2	5.36
Potato	Paddy	3	19.92
Sweet Potato	Paddy	5	19.29
Total Area			439.16

Source: Document by DAFO of Boun Neua

in 2011.

It can also be noted that watermelons, cultivated everywhere at the time of the survey in March 2010, were hardly planted at all in 2011. How, then, do farmers select which crops to grow? We undertook an interview survey with farmers in Y village, where large areas of dry season crops are planted, and PX village, where planted areas are closer to the average for all villages. Both villages are ethnic Tai Lue villages.

Pumpkin and kidney bean contract farming began in Y village in 2008. An income of CNY1,500 (USD238.5) per mǔ (about 0.067 ha) could be earned for pumpkins and CNY3,750 (USD596.6) per mǔ for kidney beans. The profit from kidney beans was thus two or more times greater than that for pumpkins per unit area of land. In the case of kidney beans, however, it is necessary to carry out work every day in the harvesting period between mid-February and early March, which requires hiring laborers in households with low manpower.



Photo 2 Kindly beans harvest in Y village, Boun Neua district, Phongsaly Province (March 2012)

Households that do not have sufficient economic strength to hire laborers band together in groups of two or three households and harvest their land by exchanging labor on small areas (Photo 2). Kidney beans also require more frequent fertilizer application than pumpkins. Thus farmers stated that the decision on whether to plant pumpkins or kidney beans, or what proportion of the two crops to cultivate, depends on the

degree of manpower available in each household.

The two villages present contrast with regard to the amount of land in different crops. In PX village, kidney beans were not cultivated and the farmers selected either pumpkins or potatoes to grow (Photo 3). Potatoes were introduced into the village in 2009 and pumpkins in 2011. Income gained from pumpkins was CNY1,275 (USD193.7) per mǔ, and that for potatoes was CNY1,100 (USD167.1) per mǔ. It was reported that the profit per unit area of land was slightly higher for pumpkins than for potatoes, but pumpkins require thinning out and crop management is much more difficult than that for potatoes. It was therefore said that households which did not wish to spend a



Photo 3 Pumpkin cultivation in PX village, Boun Neua district, Phongsaly Province (March 2012)

lot of time tending the crop would instead select potatoes even though the income was smaller. In addition, the fact that the income from pumpkins was smaller per unit area of land in PX village than in Y village was due to PX village being farther from the border and the higher transport costs are deducted from the payment farmers receive. In PX village, 25 households out of a total of 54 selected pumpkins as the secondary crop to plant in dry season paddy fields and 20

households selected potatoes, but no households planted both pumpkins and potatoes. The reason was this is that different contracting companies buy each crop and do not permit a household to contract with more than one company, which they would have had to do in order to cultivate both pumpkins and potatoes. The ban on contracting more than one company came about because both pumpkins and potatoes use the same kind of fertilizer, and it was thought that if households cultivated both crops, some households would divert the fertilizer supplied by the potato company to the cultivation of the pumpkins contracted to another company.

As noted above, a wide variety of secondary crops are cultivated in dry season paddy fields. The factors for determining which crops to plant include not only crop price and household manpower, but are also influenced by arrangements between companies.

Discussion

Secondary cropping in dry season paddy fields involved the introduction of completely new techniques and crop varieties, which were incorporated into ethnic minority agriculture in the border region from the 2000s onward. What, then, were the contributing factors leading to the rapid development of contract farming on the Laos-China border? Up until now, the image of the great power, China, invading diminutive Laos using the weapons of economic power and huge human resources comes to mind. It must be remembered though that the groundwork for Lao farmers engaging in agricultural and

forestry production for the China market was laid in the 1990s. This development was based on a number of factors, such as the limited scope of the Lao domestic market for agricultural products, the composition of ethnic groups in the border region and the languages used, and the responses of local government on the periphery.

When compared with other northern border regions, Boun Neua District, Phongsaly Province, is overwhelmingly dominated by area and crop varieties dedicated to contract farming involving secondary cropping in dry season paddy fields for the Chinese market. The greatest contributing factor leading to the acceptance of this by the local farmers is the fact that in the cool climate in Boun Neua District does not permit double cropping rice even if there were sufficient water available. In an interview survey with farmers in the vicinity of Y village, many farmers stated that even if they had irrigation, the yield of rice in winter is low because of cold temperature, and therefore they do not plant a second rice crop. However, historically they did plant other crops such as garlic and shallots for local markets. Nevertheless, Phongsaly Province has a low population density and no large cities, and thus urban markets are limited and secondary cropping in dry season paddy fields was carried out on a small scale, about the size of home gardens. The Laos-China border region is exceptionally remote from the parts of Laos that have a high population density, such as the Vientiane plain and the Mekong River lowlands of the south. The DAFO did consider shipping dry season crops domestically, but looked at within the framework of the Lao nation-state, shipping these crops to the domestic markets from the geographical periphery of the northern border regions would have incurred large transport costs, and so the idea was abandoned. It was in this situation that the attention of the Yunnanese companies turned toward the land across the border in Laos. From the Chinese viewpoint, with high population pressure and a large number of farmers with no land, the paddy fields which were unused in the dry season must have looked like a good opportunity. Even if rice could not be grown on the land in the dry season, it was certainly possible to grow crops for the Chinese market.

Furthermore, it can also be noted that the low language barrier for the farmers located close to the international border was linked to the expansion of contract farming. The fact that the *Phinong Chin* carried out agricultural development through the use of the Tai Lue language, of which there are many speakers in Phongsaly Province, eliminated technical anxieties and certainly aided the introduction of secondary cropping in dry season paddy fields. Seen from the viewpoint of the nation-state framework, the Tai Lue known as the

Phinong Chin are an ethnic minority in both China and Laos, but were the core ethnic group in the former Lan Xang Kingdom. They are also one of the ethnic groups relatively well represented among the population on the Laos-China border, and their language is extremely close to the national Lao language. It was therefore possible to use the Tai Lue language for technical guidance among ethnic minority groups other than the Tai Lue. Thus, due to historical and geographical factors, despite the fact that they belong to different countries, there was no language barrier present in the border region.

Lastly, the flexible management system along the border has also made a great contribution to the advance of contract farming. In contrast to the international border checkpoints such as Boten, shown in Figure 1, which cannot be crossed without a passport, the local border checkpoints are managed by the province and do not require passports to go across the border. A border-pass is issued using a simple procedure as long as a person is able to prove that he or she is a Lao national. Thus the *Phinong Chin*, the trucks and the local people on shopping trips can pass freely across the border for a small toll fee. Moreover, as the province manages the export of agricultural products, which crop will be exported from which border checkpoint can be arranged simply through a decision at the province level, even when new crops are introduced. At the Pakha border checkpoint in Boun Neua District, Phongsaly Province, when contract farming for sugar cane began in 1996, the provincial administration quickly handled the export of dry season crops, and the number of different crops expanded rapidly in the 2000s. In northern Laos, two local border checkpoints, the Phanhai border checkpoint in Sing District, Luang Namtha Province and the Meochay border checkpoint in Namo District, Oudomxay Province, are functioning as the main export gateways through which agricultural produce and forestry products are passing into China. In contrast, the international border checkpoint in Boten, Luang Namtha Province, which is managed by the central government, has complex customs procedures and imposes high tolls, so that this checkpoint has hardly been used at all for the export of agricultural produce and forestry products in recent years. It can be said that local border checkpoints managed by the province and the easy access of local people between the two countries have been important factors in the expansion of contract farming for a wide variety of crops.

Conclusion

Contract farming was introduced from the 2000s onwards and brought about

great change in the agriculture of the ethnic minority peoples of the northern border region of Laos. However, this does not mean that Lao ethnic minorities had no other choice but to accept contract farming due to political and economic requirements for meeting Chinese food demand. During roughly a century since the international border was established in 1900, the northern border region was marginalized and suffered from disadvantageous environmental conditions, which limited double cropping in paddy rice fields. Since the border has opened, however, local government and ethnic minority farmers have adapted to increasing contact with the major regional power, China, while making good use of such factors as common language and devolution of border management to the province level. It is reasonable to conclude that contract farming was introduced as a result of these factors, bringing about great changes in the livelihoods of the farmers.

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Is “Community” An Entity of Geographical Territory? A Case Study of Community Forestry in Central Vietnam

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Abstract

Approximate 30% of the population in Vietnam, including most of the country's ethnic minority people, lives in or near the forest, which is a critical component of their livelihood, culture, and beliefs. Forest management has existed for centuries in Vietnam, and, historically, forest use has been governed in accordance with native people's customary systems, largely in remote areas where ethnic minorities are the dominant population (Sunderlin 2006). Many of these ethnic groups have traditional customs that dictate their role in protecting the forests that surround their residential areas (Tran 2010). In fact, different regions boast exclusive rights for each ethnic minority group in regard to forests and traditional forest management.

State-led forest management in Vietnam after its reunification in 1975, however, separated local dwellers from the forest over the course of several decades, supplanting customary governance. Following some challenges on forest policy, Vietnam adopted a comprehensive renovation of the forest sector during the 1990s. More importantly, the government recognized individual households, as well as a community, as autonomous economic units. Along with these overall changes, the forestry sector and, thereby, forest protection, were subject to changes that influenced the development of community forestry.

Community forestry, which has been regarded as an effective approach to forest management, has recently been widely adopted in Asian countries; Vietnam is not exceptional. Vietnam has made legal reforms to present proper conditions for the development of community forestry; yet, in some cases, there has been a gap between stated intentions and observed results in the field. In the context of these circumstances, this paper aims to analyze how

customary rules in a community compromise with statutory laws in the process of the forestland allocation and forest management through the case studies in Central Vietnam.

Key words: community forestry, customary law, ethnic minority, forestland allocation, Vietnam

Introduction

Vietnam has a land territory of 33 million hectare, of which three-quarters have mountainous and hilly terrain. Its population is 92 million as of 2013, with 53 ethnic minority groups and one majority group. Approximate 30% of the population, which includes most of the country's ethnic minority people, lives in or near the forest, which is a critical component of their livelihood, culture, and beliefs. The forest holds important roles in environmental protection and socio-economic development, as ethnic minorities have lived in relative harmony with the forest ecosystem for centuries. Sunderlin (2006) illustrated that traditional forest management has largely existed in remote areas where ethnic minorities are the dominant population, many of whom have traditional customs that dictate their role in protecting the forests that surround their residential areas (Tran 2010).

During the period of centrally planned economy system, Vietnam confronted an overall socioeconomic crisis and serious shortages of food. In response to these crises, the government adopted a comprehensive renovation (*Doi Moi*) of the country's economic system in 1986. Since then, many institutional reforms have been undertaken; for example, the state recognized peasant households as autonomous economic units, and a market-based economy was accepted and developed. Moreover, decisions related to production and use of labor and funds, and rights to long-term use of land were given to peasant households from agricultural cooperatives.

Along with these overall changes in the country, the forestry sector and, thereby, forest protection, were subject to changes that influenced the development of community forestry. Vietnam is not exceptional in this regard, as community forestry, which has been regarded as an effective approach to forest management, has recently been widely adopted in other Asian countries. Vietnam has made reforms in its legal base to allow proper conditions for the development of community forestry; however, there has been a policy gap between stated intentions and observed results in the field (Blaikie and Springate-Baginski 2007). In the context of these circumstances, this paper

will describe recent Vietnamese policy changes in forest management and analyze how customary rules in a community compromise, and/or conflict with statutory laws regarding forest management.

Methods

The research started with a review of literature to establish a course of forest management and the resulting barriers to community forestry in Vietnam over the past several decades. The review also aimed to show recent changes or transformations in the forest sector that could provide either opportunities or challenges to the development of community forestry. Then, empirical studies were done to examine local reactions to the state's control over forests and the limitations in implementing a new forest policy. Ta Vac village, an upland ethnic minority village in Thua Thien Hue Province, was selected as a case

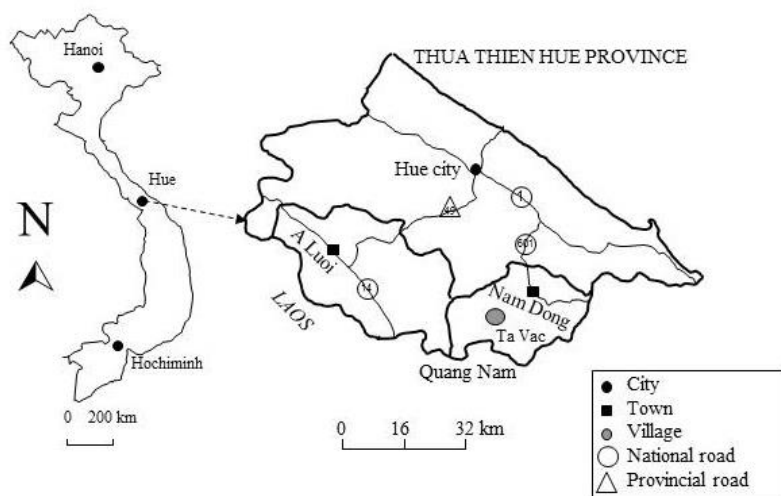


Figure 1 Location of the study site

study (Figure 1). The field survey was conducted in both August 2009 and November 2010, utilizing direct observation, key informant interview, and force group discussion methods.

Forest policy and community forestry in Vietnam

During the collectivization period from the mid-1950s through the mid-1980s, all forests in Vietnam were nationalized and put under management of the state (Nguyen et al. 2010) to be administered in the service of national interests. The state established a centralized system of state-owned forest enterprises (SFEs) and other governmental organizations to manage forest resources. These SFEs were established in the early 1960s not only to manage but also to exploit the forest resources by processing and distributing timber forest products (Tran 2010). During this period, the SFEs mainly functioned as timber

exploiters, selling these resources for industrial and export purposes as a way to mobilize capital for the national economy. Little attention was given to forest management during this time, because the SFEs, with huge areas of forest under their control, did not have sufficient manpower for effective management (Nguyen 2010). This state-led forest management system's shortcomings, as well as the consequent logging of large tracks of forest by the SFEs, were eventually exposed as key causes of deforestation (ADB 2000).

The blame for the deforestation, however, was deflected to local people, as policy-makers perceived forest management as a process that served to protect forest resources from local dwellers (Nguyen et al. 2010). The state policy aimed to exclude local people from access to forest resources, which were crucial for their subsistence, and was implemented with a sophisticated system of fines (Sikor and Apel 1998). Although people who lived in or near a forest had no legal access to the land, they had to exploit its resources for survival, breaking state regulations on forest protection. As a result, the local use of forests collided with the state's forest management policy. Local people perceived that the forests belong under the administration of state forest institutions and these give them no rights over forest resources, while state officials regarded local people as a threat to forest protection (Sikor and Apel 1998) and viewed customary forest management laws as an obstacle to the implementation of statutory laws (Nguyen et al. 2008).

The system of SFEs continued to expand even as the natural forests were unable to produce the quantity of logs needed, so revenues from forest exploitation dropped dramatically. The state was unable to allay costs for the SFEs, and instead transformed the enterprises into self-financed units. Under this mechanism, the SFEs became even less interested in forest management and more focused on enhancing forest exploitation to finance their operations and denying local people access.

Even though ethnic minority people had been practicing "slash-and-burn" cultivation as a main livelihood for decades, the government attributed a major cause of deforestation to this mode of cultivation (Ireson and Ireson 1996). Consequently, between the late-1960s and early-1990s, the government launched a program of fixed cultivation and sedentarization that aimed to transform shifting cultivation communities into "sedentary" settlements, and to persuade them to adopt fixed cultivation practices including paddy fields (Tran 2010). It was also implicitly intended to relocate and bring together ethnic minority people, who were scattered in the mountainous frontier areas of the country, in order to facilitate state control over them. Under this program,

ethnic minority people were moved far from the forests in which they used to live for generations and from which their culture, traditions, and customs were derived. Customary forest boundaries also disappeared, which resulted in conflicts in forest use among ethnic minorities. The population rearrangement in these new settlements distorted the traditional community structures of ethnic minority people. More remarkably, the collectivization of agriculture failed to generate sustainable agriculture, resulting in low productivity from mountain paddies (Castella and Quang 2002). Farmers became unable to sustain “fixed cultivation” practices, and thus increasingly returned to slash-and-burn cultivation in forests (Meyfroidt and Lambin 2008). This fact exacerbated the competition for land among ethnic minorities, worsening their mutual conflicts in forest use.

Along with this program, the government attempted to create New Economic Zones, which fueled this competition and resettled millions of people from the lowland to the uplands. These new zones aimed to increase cultivation and exploit the natural resources in areas regarded as “under-used” (World Bank 1995). The cultivation was not able to provide the people with sufficient food, however, so they had to again rely on exploitation of forest resources for survival. Consequently, the competition for forest resources occurred not only among indigenous people (e.g., ethnic minorities) but also between themselves and migrants (e.g., Kinh people). Further, the differences in culture, traditions, and customs between them caused societal conflicts as well.

Table 1 Forest change in Vietnam (1943–1995)

Year	Natural forest (1,000 ha)	Plantation (1,000 ha)	Total (1,000 ha)	Forest cover (%)
1943	14,300	n.a.	14,300	43.0
1976	11,077	92	11,169	33.8
1985	9,308	584	9,892	30.1
1995	8,255	1,050	9,305	28.2

Source: Nguyen *et al.*, 2010; n.a.= not available

The poor state-led forest management system in combination with the above factors contributed to severe deforestation throughout Vietnam. Nguyen *et al.* (2010) noted that forests were mismanaged and deemed unsustainable due to misguided policies and inadequate institutional arrangements. Forest cover

has decreased dramatically over the past several decades, from 43% of the country's area in 1943 to only 28% in 1995 (Table 1), even though the government had been taking rehabilitative actions.

In response to this situation, the forestry sector shifted from state-based to social-based forestry beginning in the early-1990s as part of the comprehensive renovation process taking place across the country. Attention has been paid to addressing local interests and involving local people in decision-making and management processes regarding the forests. The law system was revised and hundreds of legal documents related to forest management were issued to create a legal corridor for this shift, such as accepting private organizations and households as eligible entities to be granted rights to forest and forestland for stable and long-term use. The legal framework and government policy related to forestry has developed and created a considerable legal basis for community forestry. Communities (e.g., groups of households and villages) were recognized as legal recipients of forest and land-use rights, and would receive allocations under long-term lease arrangements of 50 years or more. Particularly, community members have rights to exploit and use forest products and other forest yields for both public purposes and domestic use, and to conduct production activities and enjoy investment results from the allocated forest. Simultaneously, communities are obligated to formulate regulations, as well as plan and organize forest protection and development activities; fulfill financial obligations such as fees for resource use; and return forests to the state when required.

However, challenges have occurred in this development of community forestry. Within the legal system, the legal status of communities remains unclear in regard to forest management; for example, village communities have not had a clear legal position because they are not recognized as a legal subject in civil law (Nguyen 2009). As a result, although communities were granted legal rights to forests under the forest and land allocation policy, they have found it difficult to realize these rights (Sikor and Nguyen 2007; Tran and Sikor 2006).

Allocation of forestland to communities has primarily only happened when forests had been managed or used "efficiently" by the community or when forests "cannot be assigned to households or individuals," and has often been limited to pilot sites supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Clement and Amezaga 2009). The allocation of forests to communities was used as a tactic to prompt the progress of allocating forest and forestlands to people, as stipulated in the state policy, and to ease the overwhelming and

costly process of allocating land parcels to individual households (Clement and Amezaga 2009). Therefore, most forests are still in the hands of the state (Nguyen *et al.* 2010). Moreover, even though the devolution of forest management authority has been promoted, the policy may bear the potential to increase state control (Sikor 2001).

Local authorities have some concerns but have not yet made an effort to allocate forestland to communities; rather, they have entered the allocation process with weak commitment and even less responsibility. In addition, policy implementer's viewpoint on "community" does not reflect the "real" community as that of people. "Community" in official documents has often actually meant the Commune People's Committee (Clement and Amezaga 2009). As a result, community forest management developed from this viewpoint does not embed local interest and initiatives.

Further, forests that have been allocated to communities are usually very poor in quality, as few provinces officially recognize the rights of communities to manage valuable forests (Clement and Amezaga 2009). Rationally, the SFEs try to retain wealthy forests and transfer poor ones to communities as a way to deincentivize people's involvement in forest protection, because the communities have to bear certain costs to manage them.

Forest allocation to a village community: The case study of Ta Vac village

General features of Ta Vac village

Ta Vac village is located in Nam Dong District, a mountainous district of Thua Thien Hue Province (Figure 1). The village's total population is 195 persons from 43 households. Except for one person, all belong to the Katu ethnic minority. People in Ta Vac village subsist mainly on agricultural production, and although the planting of rubber and acacia trees has resulted in a new and lucrative livelihood, the majority of the population still relies on forest resources.

Eighty-percent of Ta Vac Village is covered by forests, with 64 hectares of natural forest and around 75 hectares of plantation forest (e.g., rubber and acacia trees). Until 1995, the natural forest was managed by the local SFE and while people in the village could customarily utilize that forest for livelihood, they seemed to take no obligation to protect it. In 1995, the SFE contracted with the village community to protect the forest. In the contract, the village community was required to patrol the forest, uncover and report illegal exploitation to the SFE, and prevent forest fires. In return for these services, the SFE paid the village about VND 1.5 million (\$70 at current value) per year. The

village divided the forest into three plots and assigned each to a clan, who would be responsible for forest management (e.g., formulating schedules and assigning members to patrol the forest). The payment from the SFE was used as the village's common fund. In 2000, however, the contract was terminated because the SFE had no more budgeted funds to pay for this contract. As a result, the village community relinquished its management and patrol responsibilities while the SFE committed insufficient supervision due to lack of manpower. As a result, the forest seemed to become open for access.

Implementation of forest allocation in Ta Vac Village

In 2006, forest allocation was started in Ta Vac Village. The 60.2 hectares of natural forest was withdrawn from SFE control and allocated to the village community. The forest had previously been a rich resource, but after exploitation by the SFE until the late-1980s and then being open for access since 2000, it became a poor one, with few valuable trees and non-timber-forest-product (NTFP).

The Green Corridor Project, an NGO project funded by World Bank, supported the implementation of forest allocation to the community of Ta Vac Village. State forestry organizations were invited to work as technical assistants and facilitators, and local authorities provided legal support. Although these outside actors actively participated as the project operated, they disappeared after the allocation was complete.

People in Ta Vac Village are strongly dependent on forests for production, livelihood, culture, and beliefs, but they were not so interested in being allocated this forest, which had been open for access since 2000 when the contract of forest protection with SFE was terminated. The forest was too poor to gain economic benefits, and people could customarily utilize other forests under the SFE's control to meet their needs.

In order to activate people's interest, state officials held village meetings in order to disseminate information regarding the forest allocation policy; however, few meetings were actually held and the information emphasized usufruct and benefits from the allocated forest that would not be realized. Though people's knowledge related to the allocation improved, the meetings did not provide much change in their awareness or behavior regarding exploitation and management of the allocated forest. Regardless, people in the village still entered the process of forest allocation because they strongly expected financial support from the project rather than benefits from the resources within the forest.

Villagers' participation in the process of forest allocation was very limited; consequently, the results of this process embedded mandatory ideas from outside actors rather than initiatives from villagers themselves. Fifteen key persons representing the village were involved in the processes to demarcate forest boundaries, assess forest stock and people's need for forest products, and in the creation of a village plan to regulate forest management. This participation was more an assignment of tasks rather than taking part in decision-making. Some village meetings were held to address forest allocation issues, with between 50% and 70% of village households participating. The village regulation was drafted during the meeting in the presence of only forestry officials and those 15 key persons. At this meeting, the forestry officials, working as the facilitator, read the statutory regulations and then allowed the key persons to advance their ideas, which were discussed and recorded in the draft. The forestry officials so rigidly followed the existing legal framework on forest management that the draft primarily contained statutory regulations. The final draft was presented at the village meeting for the community's comments. Approximately 60% of the households in the village were present at this meeting and few comments were given. It was not because the draft was too perfectly produced to invite comments, but because villagers were shy about giving opinions due to the language barrier and the presence of state officials, whose draft was full of technical and legal terms that villagers did not understand.

Formation and operation of a community forest management system

From the viewpoint of the NGO project as well as involved state organizations, a "community" is supposed to be a cluster of hamlets in which people share the same residential space regardless of their social bonds. As such, a forest management board (FMB) was facilitated in Ta Vac Village to expand upon its existing administration system, which is an extension of the state administration system. The FMB, comprised of a leader and members that were cadres of the village administration system, organized three forest protection teams based on the residential space. By establishing itself in this way, however, the forest management system seemed unable to be sustained. During the initial years when the project was operating and, thus, outside actors' facilitation was still active, the forest management system was functional, but it has been facing problems in recent years. No FMB meeting was held in 2009, although it had been held regularly before, and since 2008, there has been no regular forest patrol because the FMB was not successful in

mobilizing the villagers. Activities for forest development such as thinning the forest, cutting non-purpose trees, and planting indigenous trees in the allocated forest have not been continued.

In response to these problems, the FMB leader raised an idea that the forest management system should be changed in accordance with the traditional clan system; particularly, (1) the forest protection teams should be reformed based on the clans rather than the residential hamlets, (2) each clan selects one person as a representative to coordinate forest management activities among the clan members, (3) these representatives also should be members of the FMB, and (4) the allocated forest should be divided instead into three plots and assigned to three clans. In 2009, the village community suggested this idea to relevant stakeholders, but it was not accepted. The problems the village community had been facing became worse, and in early 2010, the village community decided to act upon their proposal to change the forest management system even though it was not accepted by outside officials. Since then, forest patrolling has resumed, as the village community regularly organizes people to patrol the forest two times a month. Each clan rotationally assigns one person to patrol the forest along with the single representatives from each of the other two clans. Together they cover the forest regardless of clan boundaries to ensure that the whole forest is well protected. It can be suggested that the reforms according to the villagers' initiative has revitalized interest in the forest management system. Interestingly, although the clan system has existed longer than the village administration, since the forest management system has been in place, the clan system has been assumed to be disappeared. The clan system, however, still has certain components integrated in the village's administration system, which sometimes results in clans being a dominant source of administrative power.

Although people were originally not so interested in being allocated the forest, they have expected future benefits from the allocated forest. People did not assume that a forest management system based on the residential hamlets (rather than clans) would result in such positive benefit sharing, while they believed that the one based on the clans can take this function well. Therefore, the transformation from the statutory to indigenous system in terms of forest management at the village level was necessary to encourage people's participation.

Summary and discussion

People in Ta Vac Village were not so interested in assuming the allocated forest

for three reasons: (1) this forest was very poor in term of economic benefits, (2) it was seemingly left open for access, even under the SFE's management, and (3) the villagers could still utilize other forests still under the SFE's management to meet their needs. In such a situation, the development of community forest management requires significant effort from relevant organizations to improve the village community's awareness and capacity for forest management, and to encourage people's participation. In Ta Vac Village, however, it seemed that neither condition was satisfied. State organizations actively participated in the allocation for a short period of time but did not make more effort after the project was phased out. In addition, the outside actors who facilitated the implementation of forest allocation improperly understood "participation". Although people were involved in the implementation process, their traditional characteristics were not given attention to and their ideas were not properly encouraged. As a result, "products" formed during the land allocation were characterized by outside actors' ideas rather than people's initiatives.

Outside actors such as the NGO project and state forest organizations viewed "community" as an entity of geographical territory while the real "community" in Ta Vac Village was founded on the clan system with social bonds. This inconsistency proved itself as an underlying reason resulting in the system of community forest management, which was established on the village's existing administration accordance with outside actors' viewpoint, being unable to retain its functions. Therefore, changes in this system in light of people's initiatives necessarily occur to sustain community forest management.

Conclusions

In Vietnam, interdependent relationships between forest and mountainous people have existed for centuries. The forests provide important sources of physical and spiritual well-being to more than one-fourth of the population. In response, ethnic minority communities governed the forest via a customary system, which is regarded as a type of community forestry. Intervention by state-led forest management, however, separated indigenous people from the forests over several decades, undermining and supplanting their traditional governance. Along with this course, although being assumed not to exist or at least given no attention, customary elements were still effective, enabling to recover this traditional governance. Moreover, these elements shaped people's behaviors toward the state's control over the forests. In such context, people viewed the forest as being administrated by state organizations that are against

their interests, and thus they sometimes ignored statutory laws.

It was not until the 2000s that Vietnam's forestry sector was subject to reforms that created a legal framework and necessary conditions for community forestry. Unfortunately, many limits existed to developing an appropriate form of community forestry. Legally, the position of communities in forest management remains unclear, and their authority of control over their allocated forests is strongly restricted by the government and state forest organizations. While the forest allocation policy takes people's participation into account, its intent could not be realized due to implementers' inappropriate definition of "community," as well as improper facilitation and lack of effort. As a result, community forestry was established by outside actors (e.g., state officials) rather than popular interests, motivations, and initiatives, which are necessary for its sustainability.

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Taleb's Notions of Antifragility and Optionality, and their Relevance to the Commission's Work

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Abstract

This thought-piece canvasses the dramatic forces at work likely to reshape rural economic and social life in coming decades and their implication for how increasingly fragile rural society must adapt quickly to changing circumstances. It focuses in particular on how the small and medium sized businesses, which are so prominent in rural areas, should manage their enterprises to survive growing uncertainty. And employing Taleb's notions of optionality, we explore the changing cultures, mindsets, and behaviours that are likely to help in both this survival task and also the seizing of many new business opportunities that will emerge in coming years. In many ways, this psychological reorientation can draw on the cultures of successful places like Silicon Valley, and especially their can-do, risk accepting, trendsetting and mutual supportive environments. The roles of governments will also change in such environments. Our discussion will terminate with a 13-point research agenda to investigate the means of shoring up rural sustainability under such taxing conditions.

Key words: Rural sustainability; economic and social uncertainty; small and medium enterprises; optionality; psychological reorientation; research agenda

Introduction

This is a thought-piece about the meaning of sustainability in a tempestuous age which will likely shake the foundations of Australia's and most of the world's rural communities in coming decades. It rehearses the dramatic forces at work which are shaping all facets of ruralities including the range of goods and services produced in different places, an international scramble for access to increasingly scarce resources, the incursion of corporate management practices, fast-changing demographics, refurbishment and extension of infrastructure, financial strategies, and increasing riskiness of decision-making. The fragility of rural economy and society is likely to be exacerbated by the declining capacity of governments, businesses and their host communities to forward-plan and to control their destinies in such an environment. And a

consequent stressor will be increasing role thrust on local entrepreneurs and institutions to shape their own futures bereft of regionally targeted central government aid. This in turn will set a premium on what Taleb (2012) terms antifragile strategies involving optionality, experience, and imagination – all mediated by experience. My thinking on these themes was developed in an Australian context, where government thinking is resolutely pro-market and compares starkly with the much higher levels of assistance provided to rural communities in most other OECD nations. In my view however, the acute budgetary dilemmas experienced by governments in those nations will likely render Australia's experiences and thinking progressively more relevant in coming years.

My role then is to alert readers to a whole new way of thinking about the emerging economic, social and cultural management of rural space. In Plato's (360BCE) famous dialogue, *Timaeus*, Critias argues that there are distinct worlds of being and becoming. The former represents eternal truths, while the latter is work in progress. I suspect that much of the Commission's current analysis of rural conditions and processes tends to focus on and overemphasise present and past conditions while under-estimating turbulent future challenges. We analysts should spend more time trying to understand better our evolving (or becoming) ruralities in order to show the way forward. This is not itself an easy task and Stanislaw Lem (1964) argues that, under these conditions, *"analysis must be abandoned in favour of creative activity – of imitological practice. Hard-won objectivity drowns in a glut of complexity. So humans must grow into the fabric of the world"*. Interestingly, this is the core of Michel de Montaigne's philosophy encapsulated in his *Essais* published in 1580, which stresses the importance of experience, rather than theory, in directing human action. Even more strangely, I share these same views with Taleb (2007, 2012) who observes that in an increasingly fast moving and complex world underpinned by a massive raft of incipient technologies we must in effect resort to a form of trial and error in shaping our futures, buttressed by using feedback from our activities to learn from mistakes. This prescription is reminiscent of Lindblom's (1959) seminal work on the science of muddling through. In short, we have the same personal philosopher just as some fitness fanatics have their own personal trainers. If readers doubt this prescription try reading Hammersley's (2012) book entitled *64 Things You Need to Know Now for Then*, which explores in depth the massive future impacts of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Do this and the world will never look the same again and one will begin to re-imagine the plasticity of future rural

spaces.

Demise of the status quo

Perhaps, then, rural sustainability is no longer mainly about preserving existing lifestyles, cultures and industries ... or even environments, the latter potentially unviable under scenarios of global warming. Of course, some valuable attributes of past economies and societies might be consciously retained to remind ourselves of our historical roots and even derive local income. But reverence for the past should not preclude or seriously impair the evolution of efficient, effective and attractive futures for our descendants. Nor is sustainability about developing broad-based blue-prints for the controlled evolution of future rural space, either by central governments, local authorities, or communities themselves. In a fast-changing world we often cannot forecast accurately even 5 years ahead. Let us therefore examine the drivers of fast changing economy and society.

We are entering an ultra-competitive multi-polar world order dominated by macro-economic settings and embodying many issues that increasingly inter-dependent governments struggle to control. The economic prosperity of localities, regions and nations alike is now often at the mercy of currency valuation, interest rates, governments' fiscal strategies, capital flows, relative regional and national competitive advantages, international trade settings and labour migration, and subsidy regimes. These variables are highly inter-dependent and dynamic both within and between nation spaces.

We are witnessing a dramatic upward technological (broadly conceived) spiral that appears to threaten the competitiveness of nearly all current rural industries and services. Where they are produced, whether they are needed, and how production is managed are all open to debate. The list of technological arenas includes: bio-medical, pharmaceutical, genetic engineering, synthetic materials with revolutionary properties (lightness, strength, malleability, conductivity, etc.), ICT (see Hammersley, 2012), crowd-sourcing / funding, new forms of energy supply and distribution, robotics – including drones, 3-D printing, data mining and presentation, aero-space, finance & business management, and legal frameworks. Collectively, these all apply to typical rural commodity production, as does substantial climate and other environmental change. Note, too, the lapse time between new findings in pure research on the one hand and the development of commercial products on the other is shrinking dramatically. Moreover, commercial products are being ever faster adapted to new and unimagined

uses. For example, most suppliers of rural producer and consumer services is potentially threatened with redundancy by e-commerce, e-networking and associated lifestyle changes.

Our economic and social environments are also increasingly complex and unpredictable, and therefore much less manageable. In part, this reflects the above technologies and increasing economic globalisation. In other respects, society's structure is fragmenting. For example, a recent British study identified seven social classes (Savage et al, 2013), not the two Marx envisaged. Over and above this, we confront a huge transformation of system dynamics best explained by the melding of several distinct systems theories. Complexity theory focuses on the increasing multitude of intersecting variables with extensive feedback loops and variably lagged system responses. A 4-variable system has $N^2 - N$ first round interlinkages (= 12). A 60-variable system which is closer to encapsulating modern society therefore has 3,540 first round linkages and over 1.5 million third-round linkages. To make system analysis much more difficult, information theory tells us that we often have little or no accurate information about individual variables because of reporting errors, the sheer absence of data, or its excessive age. Much worse still is information about the interaction between pairs of variables and second or third round feedback loops. In addition, chaos theory analyses the very real prospects of extreme leveraging in some systems, such that even short-term forecasting is likely to be impossible. At this point we should note Diamond's (2005) tipping point theory which explains sudden and unexpected system collapse from time to time. Lots of variables also experience cycles of expansion and contraction over time, or are perhaps subject to the whims of fashion. Such cycles are often asynchronous in either of two ways, both of which greatly add to forecasting uncertainty. In the first case, cycle A might lag cycle B with a relatively fixed time lag. Such lags are often fairly easy to detect statistically on a one to one basis. But major forecasting difficulties emerge where several lagged variables are chained in a feedback loop. Worse still, asynchronicity can involve waves having different amplitudes and time-spans between peaks and troughs in ways analogous with the science of quantum mechanics (Sorensen, 2011). We're not finished yet! Human systems are also subject to the prevalence of such psychologies as fear and greed, analysed by Prechter's (2003) sub-discipline of socionomics. And Taleb (2007, 2012) further notes that economic systems tend to have pervasive and massive non-linearities between cause and effect. In short, conventional economics and sociology are in turmoil, and accurate spatial forecasting is nigh-on impossible even in the short-term.

Don't even try it over the longer term, except perhaps for entertainment and perhaps stretching people's imaginations.

Finally, we should note further threats to the rural status quo, including resource exhaustion; tragedy of the commons (partly responsible for tipping points); the need to expand food and fibre production by about 73% up to 2050 (UN FAO, 2009); somewhat random threats to environmental depletion or despoilation; the emergence of global labour markets and rapidly increasing population migration; demographic time-bombs in several nations, especially in China, Russia, Japan and several European countries where female reproductive rates are way below the levels required to sustain existing population size and age composition; and ageing or dysfunctional infrastructure. On one estimate c. US\$25-30 trillion of investment is needed in the next 15 years globally to rectify matters (CIBC World Markets, 2009).

Policy Implications in a Rural Context

In a dynamic and complex world over which communities businesses and governments have diminishing control over events we increasingly face two forms of spatial fragility. First, regions or places will experience a rising tide of serious shocks that they are ill-equipped to handle. Secondly, we used to look to government for protection against shocks in the form of social security, subsidies, state ownership of production, tariffs and quotas, or labour market regulation. Alas, most of these have seriously reduced traction in a highly competitive and multi-polar global economy where free-trade has been widely adopted, even in the resources sectors which characterise rural space. Taleb (2012) makes it clear that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are so prominent in rural economies, are increasingly on their own in navigating their future survival, albeit aided by local business networks, local government, and community organisations of various kinds. And, if superior tiers of government have a role under such fluid circumstances it is by attempting to provide for stable adaptation of the kind advocated by Sorensen and Epps (2005).

The former CEO of General Electric, the legendary Jack Welch, was a source of great advice to all kinds of business from corporations to SMEs, and it makes grim reading. In times of turmoil, instability and uncertainty:

1. Change before you have to.
2. Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it to be.
3. Control your own destiny or someone else will.

4. If you don't have a competitive advantage, don't compete.
5. If the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, the end is near.

Putting these ideas another way, sustainable rural economies and societies will be those that are maximally adaptive to threats and opportunities. They will be entrepreneurial and risk accepting, highly networked and mutually supporting, fast-moving in their adoption of – or adaptation to new technologies, future oriented in the sense of welcoming the future and actively seeking it out, imaginative in their perception of opportunity, willing to discard the past and in particular the baggage of marginal heritage and dinosaur industries, and institutionally rich (including the crucial area of venture capital). Unsurprisingly, these dimensions are similar to those advocated by Start-up Genome which documents the qualities found abundantly in Silicon Valley (SV) or other high-tech nodes: <http://www.startupgenome.com/>. So can we imitate aspects of SV's business culture even in rural society? In an Australian context, this might seem a daunting task because Santa Clara County, which includes all of the southern end of the San Francisco Bay area between Palo Alto (home to Stanford University) and San Jose, accommodates some 1.7 million disproportionately entrepreneurial and high-tech people. Rural Australia is home to only 2.6 million people in a vast area little short of the continental United States. So Australia's remoter rural regions lack the intellectual intensity sparked in part by close proximity. That said, the culture of Silicon Valley might be easier to re-create in the ruralities of many other OECD economies.

However daunting the task might seem Taleb (2012) details one priceless strategy that farmers, rural communities, rural institutions, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can, even must, pursue. He calls it *optionality* and it seems to apply equally for farmers (who often run SMEs), rural service enterprises, community organisations, and local governments – indeed the whole of rural economy and society. In my view, the creation of robust communities is a whole-of community endeavour leading to stable adaptation in the sense of keeping up with and responding quickly to the forces of change. Indeed, optionality also works for individuals as Taleb proved for himself when a Wall Street trader before he turned academic. Optionality involves all relevant actors in rural communities individually and collectively:

- a) Constantly combing their domains for future options arising from emerging and evolving technologies and/or their adaptation to new

uses;

- b) Evaluating those options as far as possible in quantitative / qualitative terms for their impact, good or bad, on current commodities, goods or services provided;
- c) Conceiving alternative remedial strategies, if any, to cement in place those activities by tweaking volume and quality of operations, or methods of delivery;
- d) Providing new commodities, goods or services, whether emergent from current operations or completely fresh;
- e) Identifying prospects for, and extent of, first mover advantage arising from (b) and (c);
- f) Selecting those options with some optimal combination of:
 - a. Lowest risk
 - b. Highest ratio of upside to downside (or benefit-cost)
 - c. Greatest long-term pay-off. and
 - d. Exponentially upward expanding possibilities.

In view of these considerations, congruence with current culture, preferences, and actions is of minor importance. Crucially, Taleb insists that actors should not be afraid of making mistakes! SV's initial start-up failure rate is c. 80-85%! However, for those trying a second time the failure rate is only 70%! The benefit of the successes is truly spectacular and buries the losses of all the failures, suggesting that experience is a valuable contributor to success. He also argues that, in a complex and rapidly changing economic and social environment, present practice may offer the decision-maker little of value. Don't dwell in the past! So at the heart of optionality is the detection of a constant stream of ideas relating to goods and services and/or their production, making wise choices among alternatives, finding the entrepreneurs and venture capital to implement the above agenda, and running existing operations – businesses or services – in a financially conservative way by retaining capital for a 'rainy day'. Collectively, these interconnected strands define a can-do, but highly fluid, culture requiring mobile and imaginative mind-sets!

Geographers and economists have long known much about how SV operates (Saxenian, 1996; Koepp, 2002), but can we construct a similar environment in rural space constrained by low population density, disconnected communities often 100km apart, conservative respect for tradition, mobile workforces, the prevalence of SMEs rather than large corporations, and fragile industries buffeted by flood, fire, drought, and

oscillating commodity prices. And how might we reincarnate it? In Australia, at least, farming and mining share the attributes of SV because they are particularly fragile due to oscillating commodity prices, seasonal climatic conditions, export orientation and currency valuations. They are also underpinned by substantial research and development which is disseminated rapidly through agricultural field-days and nowadays ICT (Sorensen, 2009). Commercial survival in the farm sector therefore depends on being perpetually adaptable. However, town-based service provision often greatly lags in the adaptation game or plays it at the low end of the innovation spectrum (Kotey and Sorensen, forthcoming). At the very least we therefore have two-speed ruralities. In practice, great regional differences in resources, climate, landscape, accessibility, human and social capital, and access to finance cloud the picture further.

Under these challenging conditions, superior tiers of government may have legitimate roles as facilitators of rapid – and stable – adaptation among both market and civil sectors. Critically, these roles will be largely aspatial and spread among numerous agencies given the inherent difficulty of top-down strategic planning. Suppliers of transport, energy, hydraulic, and information infrastructure or essential health and education public services typically follow universal or community service obligations (USOs / CSOs) in isolation. In contrast, the roles of treasuries and reserve banks are to keep economies living within their means and free of destabilising boom-bust cycles. Another established role of government in market economies to broker scientific research and development strategies for the agriculture sector, based on the premise that often small scale and widely dispersed farmers cannot come together to perform that task themselves (Sorensen, 2009). Such strategies have paid huge dividends in Australia. Perhaps also, governments could try to disperse technological expertise among rural communities, and there is evidence of Australia treading this path. And a final top-down contribution to the spread of stable adaptation ‘down-under’ is the operation of a relatively free market economy by global standards. This country lacks many of the rural support mechanisms used in other countries to insulate small communities from change. Thus Jack Welch’s dictums quoted earlier have considerable force at the local level and undistorted markets enforce irresistible change.

The survival or remote small communities – and their base agriculture, recreation or mining economies – therefore largely depends on local self-help employing Taleb’s optionality recipes. The price of survival, and place

sustainability, is eternal vigilance on the part of individual economic enterprises, community agencies and individual residents operating privately. In SV, it matters little whether such action is collective or atomistic and that recipe probably extends to rural communities also along the lines of Ed Morrison's (2010) 'Strategic Doing'.

A Prospective Research Agenda

Many of the ideas expressed here extend beyond conventional analysis of what it means to be sustainable and how to promote it via public policy. In my view, the following research themes require careful scientific exploration as to their validity and calibration. How can we best:

- a) Promote awareness of global scientific & technological advances, and the business or lifestyle opportunities they represent, among rural residents?
- b) Enhance endogenous research and development both in agriculture and mining and in services?
- c) Efficiently and effectively translate (a) and (b) into a stream of ideas for innovative, lower cost and better quality products and services?
- d) Harness those ideas entrepreneurially for production of goods and services – including the supply of venture capital?
- e) Create greater risk awareness and acceptance across rural business and communities alike?
- f) Leverage learning from failure (from experience)?
- g) Engineer a large and steady flow of rural venture capital – perhaps in innovative ways through crowd funding?
- h) Educate rural community members in the necessary skills to enable all of the above?
- i) Evaluate the public and private infrastructure necessary to promote these research agendas?
- j) Prioritise competing projects to maximise pay-offs from alternative combinations of options, given inevitable limitations in the supply of infrastructure and investment capital?
- k) Decide which should be the lead individuals or agencies in these tasks?
- l) Improve the pool of high class future-oriented leaderships? AND
- m) Promote energetic community discussion and contest around these themes – and indeed evaluate whether such contests of ideas crucial to the creation of future-oriented communities?

This 13-point agenda has only just begun. And consider this: the

environmental and geographical heterogeneity of rural space is so great that the answers are (i) likely to differ from one place to another and (ii) differ spatially in their priorities.

Conclusion

Reading Taleb's (2012) book on the nature of, and antidotes to, fragility has been for me a wonderful eye-opener and I strongly recommend it to others. It crystallised my own journey of exploration into the world of economic and social uncertainty and its implications for understanding the nature of sustainability and how best to enhance the capacity of rural economy and society to adjust rapidly to their changing environments. But even that journey is clouded by our skeletal understanding of how rural society evolves in complex environments. Perhaps I am unduly pessimistic, but failure to seize the optionality agenda and adopt aggressive future orientation may see many rural societies as they are currently constituted being swept away over the next two decades in a tide of obsolescence! It's certainly happening in parts of rural Australia. In short, I suspect that many of the world's ruralities are probably not sustainable in their current form.

Notes

- ⁱ The 1964 book was written in Polish and the author does not have a page number for this quote.
- ⁱⁱ Biographical note: Nassim Taleb was born in Lebanon in 1960. A former Wall Street trader, he holds chairs at the Polytechnic Institute at New York University and at Oxford University. He was influenced, in many ways like me by: *Friedrich Hayek*, *Karl Popper*, *Henri Poincaré*, *Michel de Montaigne*, *Benoit Mandelbrot*, and *Frédéric Bastiat*. In 2011, he made the Bloomberg 50 most influential people in global finance.

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The Commodification of Rural Space for Regional Development in Japan

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Abstract

Rural areas in Japan were generally considered as spaces for agricultural production, but they have often become regarded as spaces with other functions, such as leisure and recreation, environmental conservation, and culture and education, in addition to being places for growing food. While the role of food production has decreased in rural areas, the role of “consumption” has increased. This situation may be understood as the “commodification of rural space.”

This paper first classifies the commodification types of rural space, showing their distribution, and regional differences, in rural space in Japan. The differences in natural conditions such as topography and climate, the characteristics of farming, and the existence of current tourist sites determines the nature of rural space in Japan. In addition, proximity to metropolitan areas is a significant variable, and some kind of zonal structure centering on metropolitan areas can be recognized. Next, the Nasu region and Asahi town are examined as case studies. Despite the different styles of commodification in the both regions, rural commodification linked to regional development.

Key words: Rural space, commodification, recreation and tourism, regional development, Japan

Introduction

There has been a large increase in farm retirement since the 1990s, as many part-time farmers who had taken on the central role of farmers retired. In addition, various agricultural issues, such as the following became obvious: the environmental problems caused by agriculture, the lack of successors in the farming sector, the problem of rice overproduction, competition with imported farm products, the decrease in food self-sufficiency, the loss of the local population, and the existence of many rural societies in a state of near-collapse (Tabayashi 2007). On the other hand, multiple functions have been expected in rural areas, and the diversified factors of non-agriculture usage have also been included here in terms of landscape, as well as functional aspects.

In addition to the original rural residents, various people, particularly urban residents, conduct activities and utilize present-day rural areas in different ways. Although all rural areas are regarded as areas for farm production, more recently such functions as recreation and tourism, residential accommodation for urban workers, repositories of cultural and educational values, and environmental conservation have been added. However, the most important function of rural areas is still food production. Even in that case, a variety of high-quality farm produce are expected, rather than the low-cost and mass-produced farm produce as in the past. In developed nations including Japan, the trend of rural resources being utilized and consumed in different ways has sharply increased since the 1990s. For example, there are walking tours, agricultural-experience activities, green tourism, guest houses with farming operation, second homes, Kleingarten (allotment gardens), and farm produce stands, as well as many cases in which the rural space is evaluated for non-farm production (Tachikawa 2005). Such phenomena can be regarded as the “commodification of rural space in Japan” (Clope 1992; Halfacree 1993; Woods 2005). Since the present rural spaces are strongly influenced by commodification, it is important, in order to understand characteristics of present rural areas, to clarify in what way, and according to what processes, the commodification of rural space has been promoted, and furthermore, how rural commodification characterizes present rural space in Japan (Takahashi 1999).

A rural area is defined here, based on Clout (1972) and Takahashi (1987), as a part of the national land that is characterized by low population density and extensive land- utilization. However, the term, “rural area” generally gives the image of a rural settlement with a block of farms and forestland connected to it; therefore, the term “rural space” is used in order to emphasize a much wider range of functions (Ishihara 2003). Specifically, rural space is the part of the nation’s land that does not have any urban characteristics. Rural space includes fishing villages in coastal regions, hilly and mountainous areas that can be described as mountain village-space, and mountain regions with very few residents.

This paper clarifies the changing process and characteristics of rural space in Japan as it becomes commodified, and seeks to classify regional differences in the process. First, regional differences in commodified rural space in Japan are classified. Second, we focus, more deeply, on two case studies representing significantly different approaches to commodification. The first case of the Nasu region in Tochigi prefecture, is an example of conspicuous

recreation and tourism, while the second, concerning the ecomuseum activity of Asahi town in Yamagata prefecture, shows how thoroughly the landscape and environmental conservation of a rural area, and the evaluation of society and culture, enhances the quality of rural life. The latter example is potentially the type of commodification of rural space that has the widest spatial applicability in Japan. Finally, we examine the overall characteristics of present-day Japanese rural space. ⁱ

Commodification of Rural Space and Its Types

In the United Kingdom, it is said that the “commodification of rural space was advanced by the rural policy from the Thatcher era” (Cloke 1993:55). More specifically, markets opened for various “products,” not only for the residential regions, rural communities, rural village lifestyle and landscape, and newly commoditized food but also for the industrial goods produced in rural villages. According to Woods (2005:174), the commodification of rural space means that “the countryside has become a commodity, to be bought and sold through the consumptive practices of tourism, property investment by in-migrants, and the marketing of rural crafts and products, and the use of rural images to sell other products.” There are various forms of consumption in rural space:

“For instance, admirers of scenery visually consume the landscape of rural villages. Hikers in hilly areas consume the fresh air and atmosphere of tranquility. Nature observers visually consume the wilderness. Mountain bikers consume the topographical obstacles standing in front of them. Visitors to a farmers’ festival or a festival of rural villages consume the culture of rural areas. Shoppers purchase not only farm products but also craftworks, and diners consume the food and drink of rural areas. In each case, the attributes of rural areas such as scenery, nature, tranquility, heritage and culture are converted into trading products (Woods 2011:92-93).

According to Dahms (2004), the revitalization of a small city in the rural regions of Southern Ontario, Canada was actualized through such values as “small is the best,” and the existence of “heritage buildings,” “refreshing air,” and “low cost housing.” However, the most significant factor was the rural area’s attractiveness. The population in Thornbury, a small city on the shore of Lake Huron, has increased since the 1980s. Its scenic location, amenities and environment, friendly community, and other characteristics of the rural area have attracted immigrants from major cities. Thornbury is a positive example of how the commodification of rural space has proceeded (Dahms

1996).

Akitsu (2007) explained that the commodification of rural space means that rural areas receive recognition as places of residence, tourism, recreation, and experience, while becoming objects of consumption. "As a result, in rural space, due to this, work is organized and transportation and communications are improved, and in some cases, even mountains, rivers, farm land, housings are transformed to a more preferable landscape" (Akitsu, 2007:159).

"Commodification," as it is discussed here, is not necessarily limited to the creation of wealth through consumption. For example, the ecomuseum mentioned by Rivière (1973) in France indicates "a museum whose purpose is to contribute to applicable regions through historically exploring the lives of residents in regional society, natural environment, and social environment, and conserving, cultivating, and exhibiting the natural and cultural heritage" (Arai 1995:11). As a consequence, the residents became more proud of, and are more likely to identify with their regions, and they can achieve a feeling of spiritual satisfaction. This type of consumption of rural space is also considered to be included in the definition of commodification.

Incidentally, the commodification of rural space in Japan has proceeded in various forms. According to Perkins (2006), we can classify rural commodities in Japan into four types. The first type is the commercial supply of ordinary farm products, such as rice, vegetables, fruits, and various livestock products.

The second type is the supply of new farm products that are related to the health and well-being of consumers. These include health foods, as well as beauty products derived from rice, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat. Since, more people have become interested in environmental conservation in recent years, the demand for organically cultivated farm products and chemical-free food has increased, along with products with traceable origins.

The third type of commodification concerns rural residences for urban workers, which has rapidly increased. This phenomenon occurs both on the rural-urban fringe and in more distant locations that are accessible by bullet train. Recently, the number of people working in urban areas and residing in rural areas has increased. The number of people who have retired from jobs in urban areas and started farming or enjoying the country life has also increased. This category also includes urban residents who purchased second homes in the countryside to relax in during the weekends and holidays.

The fourth type of consumption of rural space involves recreation and tourism, enabled by the provision of walking paths and hiking routes,

farm-produce stands, orchards for fruit picking, citizen farms, agricultural-experience farms, farmhouse restaurants, Kleingarten, guest houses, magnificent natural landscapes and hot springs, large scale ski resorts, swimming beaches, pastures in which horse-riding is possible, agricultural museums, and sports facilities (Butler 1998).

The above examples are the four types of commodification of rural space that were pointed out by Perkins (2006). Moreover, as to the fifth type, based on our research experience, there are activities to improve the quality of life by conserving the landscape and environment and, furthermore, by understanding the culture and society of rural areas. It is not only the urban residents and rural residents emigrating from cities but also the longtime residents of rural areas who are involved in these activities. Residents in rural areas find meaning in nature, landscape, lifestyle, traditional events, and the culture of the regions around them, and become proud of their regions, reinforcing their emotional attachment and sense of identification. Urban residents look for healing in the landscape, environment, culture, and society, thereby gaining a feeling of satisfaction.

Of the above-mentioned types of commodification of rural space, the supply of ordinary farm products and the supply of new farm products, as mentioned by Perkins (2006), overlap one another, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them. They are therefore grouped into one category, and furthermore, by adding marine products, four types are established as follows: (1) the supply of agricultural and aquatic products, (2) the consumption of rural space for recreation and tourism, (3) residency in rural areas, and (4) activities that improve the quality of life by conserving and managing landscapes and the natural environment and by developing an understanding of traditional rural culture and society.

Regional Differences in the Commodification of Rural Space in Japan

The conditions of the distribution of the commodification of rural space in Japan as well as the regional differences in rural space will be examined here. In order to understand regional differences, Yamamoto et al. (1987) collected images related to regional differences in the employment structure of farm households from people who were in charge of agricultural policy and geographers who were acquainted with each region and categorized rural space in Japan. This method was referred to in the course of this research. From 2007 to 2010, 15 rural and agricultural geographers, including the present author, conducted a joint research project into the commodification of rural

space in Japan,ⁱⁱ and the regional images presented by the 15 researchers who participated in the investigation and research of each responsible region were integrated.ⁱⁱⁱ

First, each researcher created a distribution of commodification types of rural space on a map for each of the regions for which they were responsible. All the researchers discussed them. Figure 1 is a summary based on the results of Tabayashi. Since the degree of understanding for each type slightly differs depending on the researcher due to difficulties in comprehending the

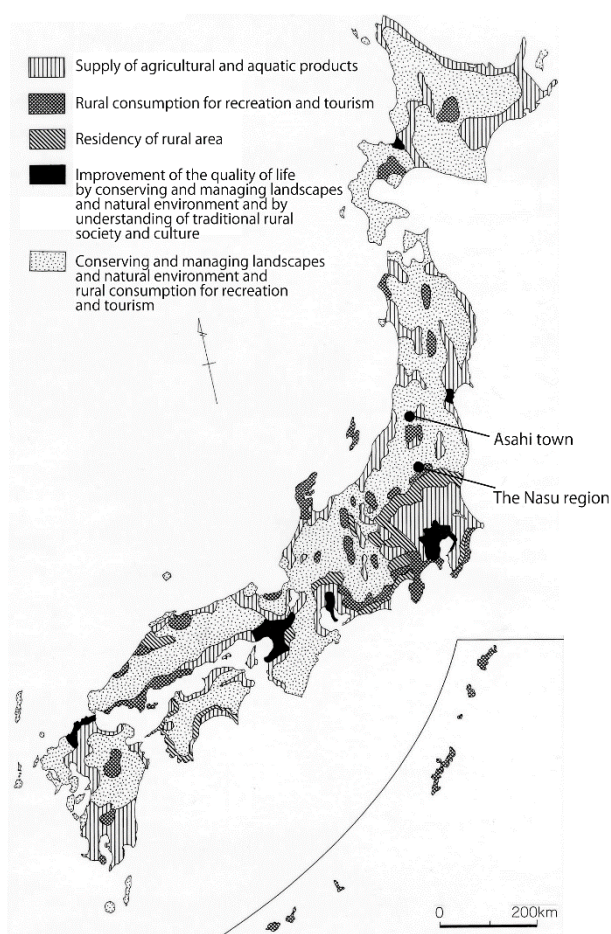


Figure 1 Regional differences in the commodification of rural space in Japan
(Source: Tabayashi 2013a)

conditions in instances where multiple types exist in reality, or where the focusing point of each local region differs, there are some aspects of the map that are not consistent. However, it is possible to interpret general trends and regional differences.

When summarizing regional differences in Japan from the standpoint of the commodification of rural space as a whole, the areas surrounding metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Nagoya, Sapporo, Sendai, and Fukuoka, can first be categorized according to the type of quality-of-life improvement, according to the method of conserving and managing the landscape and natural environment, as well as by

developing an understanding of traditional rural culture and society. In the areas surrounding the metropolitan areas, the commodification of rural space,

such as residences in rural areas and recreation and tourism activities can be seen. In addition, there are many second homes in rural areas near the metropolitan areas, which are also regarded as residences in rural space. Recreation and tourism sites can be seen outside the area. Most of Japan's major plains are characterized by their supply of agricultural products. Additionally, recreation and tourism mainly characterize the existing tourist spots in mountainous or coastal areas. Broad mountainous areas with sparse population can possibly be characterized according to the quality-of-life improvements by conserving rural landscapes and environments,^{iv} and by recreation and tourism.

As seen above, the differences in natural conditions such as topography and climate determine, at first, the nature of rural spaces in Japan. In addition, the proximity to metropolitan areas is significant, and some kind of zonal structure centering on the metropolitan area can be recognized. It is also understood that rural space is impacted by an existing tourist site. Relatively simple patterns were confirmed in the Hokkaido and Tohoku areas. However, since farm households still focusing on producing crops in these areas, and since they are distant from the metropolitan areas, it is thought that the various types of the commodification of rural space excluding the first type, the supply of agricultural and aquatic products have not yet been promoted.

Regional Development by the Commodification of Rural Space

The Case of the Nasu Region in Tochigi Prefecture

The Nasu region referred to here is the range between Nasushiobara city and Nasu town located in the northeastern part of Tochigi prefecture (Figure 2). Nasushiobara City was established by merging Kuroiso city, with Nishi Nasuno town, and Shiobara town in January 2005, as of October 2012, its population is 117,758 living in an area of 592.82 km². Nasu town was established by merging Nasu village, Ashino town, and Iono village in 1954, and its population as of October 2012 is 27,063, while its area is 372.31 km². The major tourist sites, that constitute the current Nasu region are the Shiobara hot springs, the Nasu highland, and the Nasu alluvial fan; tourism activity on the Nasu alluvial fan began in the 1980s.

The Shiobara hot springs and Nasu highland, which are tourist sites that have represented the Nasu region for a long time, have prospered by attracting many tourists to the hot springs in the 1970s. In addition to tour groups, the number of independent tourists and families increased from the 1980s to the early 1990s. The accommodations in the Shiobara hot springs, were

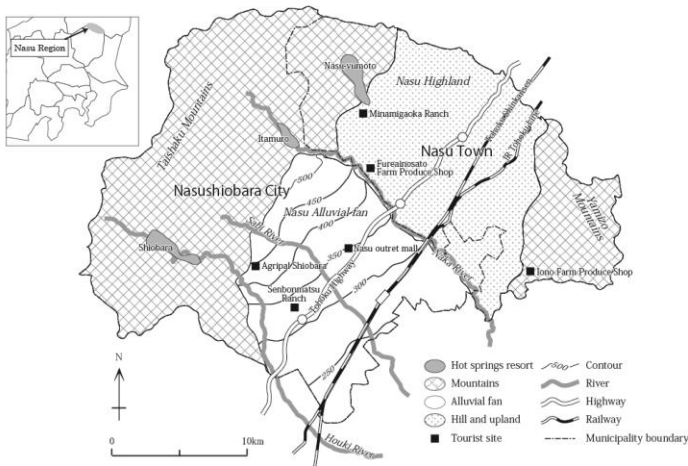


Figure 2 The Nasu region, Tochigi prefecture
(Source: Tabayashi et. al. 2008)

ski resorts, the promotion of the Rindo lake family farm and the Minamigaoka ranch as tourist spots, the building of other leisure facilities, and the proactive implementation of developments in the cottage areas and of the construction of resort inns. In addition to these projects, the number of small-scale private museums, such as one displaying classic cars and music boxes, and places at which to experience cloisonné work increased, and the characteristics of multiple tourist sites were further developed. Each tourist site in the Nasu region faced their peak of development around 1990. In this period, there was a full-scale promotion intended to make the Senbonmatsu ranch, on the Nasu alluvial fan, into a tourist site.

However, once the bubble economy collapsed in the early 1990s, the number of tourists visiting all of the tourist sites decreased. As a countermeasure, in both the Shiobara hot springs and the Nasu highland, tourism promotion was explored by utilizing the natural landscape and farm and rural resources for tourism, such as building natural walking-paths, setting up farm-produce stands, and introducing experimental agricultural programs as well as health tourism and enhanced tourist facilities. While the Senbonmatsu ranch has expanded its tourism business, the Nasunogahara museum was newly constructed on the Nasu alluvial fan, and furthermore, a rural-space museum project was implemented. Common agricultural and rural landscapes were conserved as cultural heritage. This implies that the movement to commodify rural space has been remarkable.

remodeled to make them larger, while the surrounding ski slopes were developed; as a result, many more tourists could be accepted. Although climbing and hiking to Mt. Nasu in the Nasu highland and the hot spring tourism were already popular, additional development took place, including: new

As part of the future vision for the Nasu region, it is necessary for individual tourist sites, such as the Shiobara hot springs, the Nasu highland, and the Itamuro hot springs to promote the development of tourism by utilizing each of their regional characteristics and by building a large and diversified tourism region through mutual collaboration among the tourist sites. The utilization of agricultural and rural resources in the commodification of rural space for tourism enables individual tourist sites to peripherally expand, to fill in the gaps between tourist sites, and to build a tourism region with a wide spatial extent. Indications of the value of the rural-space museum project, which old Nishinasuno town played a central role in implementing, are widely recognized. For example, Nasu Sosui Canal, the rice paddies developed by the canal and its various related historical sites, is in the process of being developed, as are museums, farm-produce stands, food culture, and agricultural experiments (Plate 2). Strong attempts have been made to utilize the landscape of the entire rural area for tourism. This has provided significant opportunities for urban residents to escape from urban life and



Photo 1 Diversion dam of Nasu Sosui Canal in Nasushiobara city, Tochigi prefecture
(Taken by the author, August 2008)

participate in extraordinary experiences. A greater response is demanded by the new types of tourism and recreation, such as green tourism, ecotourism, and educational tourism. In other words, the growth of new tourist regions can be expected as a result of the commodification of rural spaces.

The Case of Asahi Town in Yamagata Prefecture

According to Arai (1995:11), an ecomuseum is “a museum which residents and government utilize for regional development by researching regional life, nature and culture, and conserving and developing them in the local area through cooperation.” Residents take the lead in utilizing regional resources, while the region itself is regarded as a museum and is sustained and

developed. In cases where the activities are conducted in a rural area, such museums can be regarded as the commodification of rural space. Asahi town located in the southwestern part of Yamagata prefecture, has taken the lead in Japan's ecomuseum activity, and there are many reports of the town's activities (Oohara 1999; Komatsu 1999; Hoshiyama 2005). Asahi town stretches to the eastern foot of Mt. Ooasahi, which is the highest peak in the Bandai Asahi National Park (Figure 3). The Mogami River runs through the center of the town area where forests and wilderness areas account for 76% of the land, and farmlands and settlements are located on the river terraces on both sides of the river (Asahi Town Policy and Promotion Office 2011). According to the local resident registration in April 2012, the population is 7,866.

In 1989, in Asahi town, Yamagata prefecture, an ecomuseum study group, which later became the NPO Asahi Ecomuseum Study Group, was established,

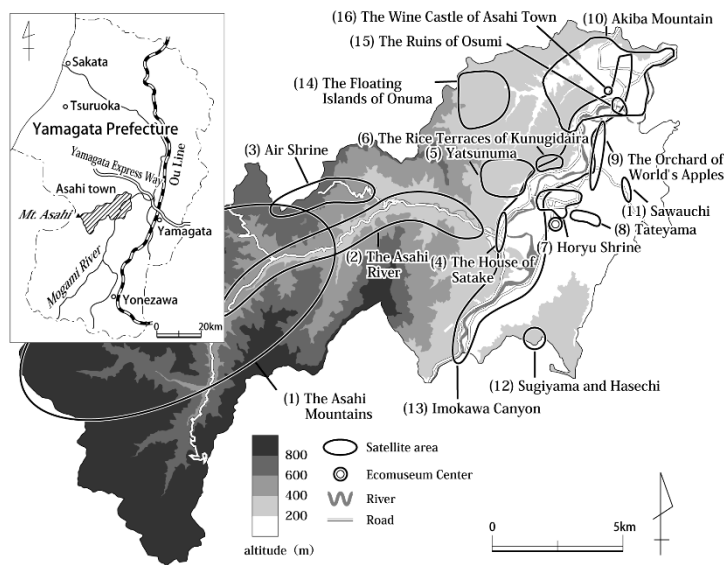


Figure 3 Asahi town, Yamagata prefecture
(Source: Tabayashi et.al. 2011)

and the following activities were started: the members lead lives by utilizing the region's nature, culture and history, and through these things they identified the town's resources and conducted research into utilizing them for the town's development (Asahi Choshi Hensan linkai

2010). The mayor at the time agreed on this activity and, in 1991, the principles of an ecomuseum were applied to the third comprehensive development basic plan (Asahi town, Yamagata prefecture 1991).

An ecomuseum consists of three major elements: (1) territory (boundary region), (2) core, and (3) satellite (attractive site). The ecomuseum's territory consists of the local visitors' areas and, in the case of Asahi town, it

corresponds to the town area. The core is "Soyukan," a facility complex completed in June 2000 that is composed of an ecomuseum information center, a library, a cultural hall, and a central community center. In the Asahi Town Ecomuseum, a satellite area is set up by a range that contains several satellites that are close to one another. The satellite areas were designated by the NPO Asahi Town Ecomuseum Association (formerly the NPO Asahi Ecomuseum Study Group) and the local government. There are 16 satellite areas: (1) the Asahi Mountains, (2) the Asahi River, (3) the Air Shrine, (4) the House of Satake, (5) Yatsunuma, (6) The Rice Terraces of Kunugidaira, (7) Horyu Shrine, (8) Tateyama, (9) the Orchard of World's Apples, (10) Akiba Mountain, (11) Sawauchi, (12) Sugiyama and Hasechi, (13) Imokawa Canyon, (14) the Floating Islands of Onuma, (15) the Ruins of Osumi, and (16) the Wine Castle of Asahi Town (Figure 3). Although many of these are nature areas, other satellite areas representing industry, history, and culture have also been designated.

According to the NPO Asahi Ecomuseum Association, Asahi's citizens have acquired a better understanding of the regional culture and natural heritage through the activities of the ecomuseum in Asahi town. This has promoted a greater mutual understanding among residents of the region and their interest in the region has increased as a result. The people who participated in this activity gained an emotional attachment to and pride in the region, stimulated by some parts of Asahi town that the participants were not aware of before. The implementation of a tour or interview often enables various activities in the community.

The activities at the ecomuseum have been conducted for more than 20 years and the principles of the ecomuseum's activity have essentially become well known to the local residents. The spontaneous utilization, maintenance, and control of natural resources are implemented as regional promotion activities. These activities lead to other activities that sustain and develop regional societies as well as enhance the resident's quality of life.

In the Noujuu area, the conservation of rice terraces and their utilization are conducted on 14ha of "The Kunugidaira Rice Terraces" (Plate 2) throughout the year, which makes it a dynamic region. Residents had not been aware that it attracted nationwide attention until 1999, when it was selected as one of the best 100 rice terraces in Japan by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan. Therefore, unrepaired irrigation ditches and farm roads were common, and some of the paddy fields were abandoned. The NPO Asahi Ecomuseum Association and the local government held a workshop with the theme "The future of terraced paddy fields and its region," at which



Photo 2 The Kunugidaira rice terraces in Asahi town, Yamagata prefecture
(Taken by the author, July 2009)

they formulated various measures to maintain the rice terraces. In Noujuu, the Promotion Committee for Kunugidaira-Tanada (rice terraces) maintenance work was organized, with the participation of all 39 households in the area. The environmental conservation of the rice terraces and the beautification activity of Ipponmatsu Park, where

people can look over the terraced paddy fields, were also implemented with support from approximately 130 people, who were residents from outside the area and volunteered for this project.

In Noujuu, the residents gain a sense of spiritual satisfaction through broadly promoting the attractiveness of the rice terraces of Kunugidaira, including accepting visitors or communicating with members of the rice terrace conservation group and promoting people who can enhance its value. Furthermore, the rice terraces directly bring profits to the farm operations. The large profit results from the marketing the rice using images of the terraces. In the rice terraces, the harvested rice is naturally dried by being hung on stakes, thereby giving it better taste than rice that is dried by a machine. A rice dealer in Kanagawa prefecture focused on this and offered to make a deal with them; as a result, there are currently 23 farm households in the Kunugidaira Rice Growers Association. They ship their rice, at the high price of 19,000 yen per 60kg, to four rice dealers in the Tokyo metropolitan area and Fukushima prefecture. If the rice was sent as a regular shipment through an agricultural cooperative, 60kg would be approximately worth 11,000 yen. Because of this, the Noujuu area has also achieved the highest shipping price for rice, except for the rice terraces in Asahi town. In the Noujuu area, young people are engaged in farming, while business farms operated by farmers under 64 years of age comprised 45.2 percent of the total (the prefecture average was 28.6 percent). Regional development activity for the maintenance

and utilization of the rice terraces plays a significant role in uniting the residents in Noujuu, and in keeping the region's society dynamic.

Characteristics of Regional Development due to the Commodification of Rural Space

Based on the cases of the Nasu region in Tochigi prefecture and Asahi town in Yamagata prefecture, the feasibility of regional promotion through the commodification of rural space has been examined. The Nasu region is located approximately 140km, by road, from Tokyo and, with the opening of the bullet train and the Tohoku expressway, a great number of tourists from the Tokyo metropolitan area visit this region. According to the Tochigi prefectural government, there were 15.5 million visitors in 2010. The region is composed of the high-profile Shiobara hot springs resort and the Nasu highland, which has developed additional hot springs and multiple tourist sites with various recreational functions such as climbing, hiking, and providing second homes. Moreover, a wide agricultural area, the development of which was promoted after the Meiji era, exists in the surrounding area. Amid the stagnating trend of tourist sites following the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, the Nasu region enhanced the hot spring and various tourist facilities. Furthermore, regional development has been implemented to build a large, multiple tourist region by commodifying rural space.

Meanwhile, Asahi town in Yamagata prefecture, located 410 km from Tokyo by road and 95 km from Sendai, is a mountain village where farmland and settlements are spread on the terraces of the Mogami River. While depopulation has affected the area, it was promoted as a tourist site where the residents have coexisted with the rich natural surroundings since the 1980s. In 2010, approximately 278,000 people visited the site. This region has an ecomuseum with activities that are superior to those of the ecomuseums in other regions in Japan. Residents lead lives that utilize nature and the region's culture and history. The regional resources are utilized for the town development by promoting the entire region as a museum. The principle of ecomuseum activity has been widely accepted by the local residents. The spontaneous utilization, maintenance, and control of the regional resources have been proactively implemented.

Despite the different styles described below, the commodification of rural space is linked to regional development in both the Nasu region and Asahi town: by attracting many tourists from the Tokyo metropolitan area to the Nasu region, and by local residents' pride in utilizing regional resources in

Asahi town. In both regions, such movements have been active since the 1990s, and most started when the local residents enthusiastically became involved in the movements after being inspired by outsiders. Also in the case of Asahi town, there has recently been an increasing number of tourists from the cities of Sendai and Yamagata after the opening of an expressway. The following factors are related to the differences between the two regions: the availability of current tourist resources such as hot springs, their past performance as tourist sites, and their proximity to large metropolitan areas. Therefore, the regional characteristics of each region were promoted alongside the promotion of the commodification of rural space in each region.

When summarizing the characteristics of regional promotion due to the commodification of rural space through these cases, the commodification of rural space is, in other words, the utilization of regional resources in rural space. Commodification involves production activities and industries that are familiar to the regional residents, and their landscape, environment, life style, history, and culture. Although the target of the commodification of rural space varies depending on the region, it potentially exists in any region. In addition, the utilization of such regional resources does not only relate to economics but also includes spiritual elements such as the sense of satisfaction or pride felt by the people experiencing it; thus, it can be applied to many targets. Moreover, it is not just the case of constructing facilities by newly investing a large amount of funds. It has the characteristics of utilizing existing resources with the wisdom and ingenuity of the residents.

Urban residents, who are the consumers of rural space, have been deeply involved in the discovery, utilization, development, sustainability, and maintenance of the regional resources of rural space, and their sense of attachment of the local residents and their enthusiasm for regional sustainability are indispensable. In recent years, regional residents have often taken the initiative in promoting the commodification of rural space. As seen in the Nasu region, by connecting the regional promotion bases of different characteristics with the commodification of rural space, there is the possibility of developing multiple and vital regions together as a whole.

Conclusions

The commodification of rural space means, in other words, to utilize the regional resources of rural space. Those resources produce activities that are familiar to regional residents, industries, products, landscapes, environments, life styles, annual events, history, and culture. Here, commodification not

only measures the monetary exchange-value of goods but also values, including spiritual values such as pride, satisfaction, and emotional attachment. Since the target of the commodification of rural space potentially exists in any area, a hub of current regional promotion can be stretched from dots to lines, and, furthermore, into whole areas through the commodification of rural space. It is possible to develop multiple and proactive regions into a whole by linking hubs of regional promotion with the different characteristics of commodified rural spaces.

The commodification of rural space can be found in each region of Japan. However, it has mainly been launched by urban residents. For residents who were born in urban areas, rural areas are unconventional, fresh, and attractive places. For those residents, rural areas are great products to be consumed (Yamamoto 2013). Since residents who were born and raised in urban areas have no accessible rural hometowns, they look for that home in rural spaces that they do not know. There are natural, agricultural, forestry, and fishery sites, that are left intact to the families, relatives, and regional societies. They can actually experience these rural characteristics and identify different regional identities based on other regional characteristics (Shinohara 2013).

On the other hand, local residents of rural spaces have rediscovered and become proud of nature, their environment, society, and the life surrounding them in response to the inspiration of the urban residents. This is an indication of the rural residents' sense of attachment to their region and their enthusiasm for regional sustainability. They use their knowledge to utilize nature, culture, and human resources in an attempt to proactively supply rural spaces as they seek a new regional image. This is a survival measure in the decaying farming villages in mountains, where population decline proceeds amid attempts to establish a new life style and promote the region (Nishino 2013). Modern society is defined in the minds of people by the way rural space is consumed, and the storyline of rural space is made up of cultural and historical products (Matsui 2013).

In any case, the various phenomena occurring in the rural areas of developed countries, including Japan can, to a substantial degree, be understood by introducing the concept of the commodification of rural space. Furthermore, promoting the commodification of rural space could possibly lead to healthy social development. Therefore, generalizations and concepts must continually be developed and more empirical research is needed in the future.

Notes

- ⁱ This paper is mostly attributed to those who were already presented; Tabayashi (2010); Tabayashi (2013a); Tabayashi (2013b); Tabayashi, Tanno, Yokoyama, and Yoshida (2008); and Tabayashi, Yokoyama, Oishi, and Kuribayashi (2011).
- ⁱⁱ The 2007–2010 Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A), “Human Geographical Study on the Commodification of Rural Space in Japan” (Representative of researchers: Akira Tabayashi)
- ⁱⁱⁱ This research was conducted by allocating regions to 15 people: Hokkaido: Shuichi Shinohara and Tadayuki Miyachi; Tohoku: Takaaki Nihei; Kanto: Toshio Kikuchi and Norihiro Obara; Tokai: Mitsuru Yamamoto; Tosan: Masaaki Kureha; Hokuriku: Akira Tabayashi; Kinki: Toshiaki Nishino and Nagatada Takayanagi; and Chugoku: Hirokazu Sakuno; Shikoku: Zang Gui-Min and Azusa Iguchi; Kyushu: Go Fujinaga and Keisuke Matsui; and Okinawa: Azusa Iguchi.
- ^{iv} Due to the small population in the area, the part “developing an understanding of traditional rural society and culture” was omitted from “improvement of quality of life by maintaining landscapes and environment and developing an understanding of traditional rural society and culture.”

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