

³ Ricard Morén-Alegret, PhD., Department of Geography, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, ORCID: 0000-0002-1581-7131, e-mail: ricard.moren@uab.cat

Abstract: This article examines the relationship between rural development and international immigration in the Pyrenees, highlighting a neo-endogenous approach that leverages immigration's benefits. Grounded in a European-funded project, the research used qualitative methods and case studies in rural areas of the Girona and Huesca Pyrenees (Spain) and Pyrénées-Orientales (France), in a fieldwork conducted in 2022. Findings show that some immigrant entrepreneurs create small-scale businesses with limited economic impact, but enrich the cultural and social fabric, introducing new skills and ideas for addressing rural challenges. These immigrants particularly value local culture and landscapes, fostering sustainability and community. Despite limited institutional support, the article argues that international immigration can help build inclusive, resilient, and sustainable rural communities through local collaboration and diversity.

Keywords: International immigration, neo-endogenous rural development, sustainability, social capital, Pyrenees, Spain, France

Resumen: Este artículo examina la relación entre el desarrollo rural y la inmigración internacional en los Pirineos, poniendo el énfasis en un enfoque neoendógeno que tenga en cuenta los beneficios de la inmigración. Basado en un proyecto financiado con fondos europeos, el estudio utilizó métodos cualitativos y estudios de caso en zonas rurales de los Pirineos de Girona y Huesca (España) y los Pirineos Orientales (Francia), a partir de un trabajo de campo realizado en 2022. Los hallazgos muestran que algunos empresarios o emprendedores inmigrantes crean negocios a pequeña escala que, a pesar de su impacto económico limitado, enriquecen el tejido cultural y social de las áreas rurales, a partir de conocimientos, habilidades e ideas nuevas que permiten abordar los desafíos rurales. Estos inmigrantes valoran particularmente la cultura y los paisajes locales, fomentando la sostenibilidad y el sentido de pertenencia a la comunidad. A pesar del limitado apoyo institucional, el artículo sostiene que la inmigración internacional puede ayudar a construir comunidades rurales inclusivas, resilientes y sostenibles a través de la colaboración y la diversidad locales.

Palabras clave: Inmigración internacional, desarrollo rural neoendógeno, sostenibilidad, capital social, Pirineos, España, Francia

Highlights

- In the Pyrenees, immigrant entrepreneurs possess diverse forms of capital, including human and social capital.
 - Immigrants' social capital (including transnational bonds) are key for business creation and success.
 - International immigrants bring about cultural exchange, enriching the social fabric of rural communities.
 - Lifestyle immigrants show special sensitivity towards local, social, cultural, and natural resources.
 - Immigrant entrepreneurs hold significant potential to promote local neo-endogenous development in the Pyrenees.
 - Housing poses a significant challenge in the Pyrenees, hindering the potential arrival of new residents.
-

1. Introduction

Beyond biodiversity, achieving sustainable rural development in mountain areas also relies on economic growth, business innovation, and the richness of sociocultural diversity (Gretter et al., 2017; Paine et al., 2020). As certain rural communities strive for economic advancement, and at times, for their very survival, there is an increasing acknowledgment and consideration of the positive impact of international immigration on rural and mountain development. As a variety of authors have suggested, international immigrants have served or contributed to prevent or decelerate human depopulation in certain European rural areas (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Gil-Alonso, 2013; Hedlund et al., 2017). Indeed, international immigration has the potential to make a significant contribution to local development and enhance rural resilience. In addition, it has occasionally played a pivotal role in the restructuring of agriculture and the economic transformation of non-urban societies, particularly at a time when farming is no longer the primary source of employment in many European rural economies (e.g., Boyle & Halfacree, 1998).

Rural areas hosting international immigrants often witness a distinct division between low to medium-skilled manual workers in sectors such as agriculture and hospitality, and highly educated individuals who have chosen these regions for lifestyle preferences (Munkejord, 2017; Rye & Scott, 2018; Mendoza, Morén-Alegret & McAreavey, 2020). For the former, the academic literature has long identified the key role of manual immigrant labourers, mainly from developing countries, in Southern European agriculture which is dominated by family-based small farms (e.g., Corrado, Castro & Perrotta, 2017; Papadopoulos, Fratsea & Mavrommatis, 2018). For the latter, skilled international migration might bring in diverse perspectives, skills, and entrepreneurship. By injecting new expertise and ideas into local industries, they might foster innovation and competitiveness, resulting eventually in job creation and an increase in tax revenues (Eimermann, 2016; Olmedo, van Twuijver & O'Shaughnessy, 2023). This article specifically focuses on this second group, and it explores the relationship between rural development and international immigration in several places of the French and Spanish Pyrenees, emphasizing the importance of an integrated approach that leverages the benefits of immigration for neo-endogenous development.

This paper argues that a neo-endogenous model of development represents a better resource to address local development at rural settings, as a point of departure for citizen empowerment and engagement (MacKinnon et al., 2022). Focusing also on wellbeing, rather than exclusively on economic growth, it provides a framework that includes all population groups by mainstreaming quality of life. The neo-endogenous paradigm also considers collaboration between local and international stakeholders, which is crucial for sharing knowledge, resources, and expertise. It posts that, by striking a balance between local needs and global realities, rural societies can strive towards a more sustainable and equitable future (Gkartzios & Lowe, 2019; Kluvankova et al., 2021). Finally, applying a place perspective to the neo-endogenous model of development, this article will interrogate the potential of international immigration in development pathways by asking if immigrants contribute to economic and social innovation (e.g., diversifying businesses and promoting cultural activities) at local level in rural areas of the Pyrenees. In this way, this article studies how immigrants may be contributing to increase economic, social and cultural diversity in villages, hamlets, and dispersed human settlements, which could, in turn, attract more people, investment and valorise the rural communities and place identities (see also Labrianidis & Sykas, 2013; Marango, Bosworth & Curry, 2021).

In line with the idea of applying a place perspective, this article explores the relevance of the territorial capital, which is argued to be essential for local development in rural Pyrenees. Territorial capital refers to the tangible and intangible assets of a specific geographic area that contribute to its economic, social, and environmental development. This includes social capital created at a local level, as well as natural resources, infrastructure, cultural heritage, and local institutional frameworks (Camagni, 2008). Tailored strategies that build on local strengths, address weaknesses, and foster collaboration among various stakeholders can maximize the potential of territorial capital and contribute to inclusive local development (Svendsen 2013; Willet & Lang 2018). As an example, in the Pyrenees, there are several geographical indications and quality schemes promoted by the European Union, which represent

an important policy tool for the internationalisation of agricultural products and the territorial openness of rural regions (De Filippis et al., 2022).

The mobilisation of territorial capital through social capital portrays a dynamic social reality that goes beyond the idea of the rural as a stable, backward, and unproductive setting (Bosworth et al., 2016; Farkas, 2021). In short, rurality is defined here as a territorially specific milieu with distinct physical, social, and economic characteristics, where location, natural resources and landscape, as well as social capital and rural governance might exert dynamic and complex influences on (immigrant) entrepreneurial activity in rural areas. Rurality is viewed thus as a dynamic entrepreneurial resource that shapes both opportunities and constraints (see also Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulos & Skuras, 2004).

In this regard, the social and human capital of educated international immigrants could play a pivotal role in promoting collaboration, sharing resources, and taking action, all of which are crucial for local development. Moreover, they frequently maintain robust social networks with both their home countries and fellow immigrants, serving as valuable assets for information exchange, establishing business connections, and gaining access to global markets. This potentially positive influence significantly contributes to local development (Stam, 2010; Sommer & Gamper, 2018). Additionally, the social capital of these immigrants can have a favourable impact on cultural diversity, social well-being, and civic engagement in rural areas – aspects that are integral to fostering a more inclusive perspective on local development (Munkejord, 2006; Jørgensen, Fallow & Nielsen, 2021).

In this context, the article explores how international immigrants engaged in entrepreneurial activities contribute to rural development in the Pyrénées-Orientales department (France) and the Pyrenean provinces of Huesca and Girona (Spain). The key questions addressed here include: (i) in what ways do international immigrants contribute to the development of economic, human and social capitals in rural Pyrenean areas, and how do these capitals facilitate economic growth and social innovation? (ii) how are these capitals territorially constructed in the Pyrenees? and finally, (iii) to what extent does all of these place-based capitals contribute (or not) to the formation of sustainable neo-endogenous local development in the Pyrenees?

The paper is structured as follows. The next section theoretically analyses endogenous and neo-endogenous local development approaches and international immigration, as well as demonstrating how links between entrepreneurship, social wellbeing and international immigration in rural areas are rarely studied in the academic literature. Subsequently, it presented the methodology used in the research project, upon which this paper is based. Later, the paper shows the research results. These are organized in three sections: the first revolves around the territorial capital and the contrasting views between public bodies, private companies and local stakeholders on the use (and abuse) of the territory in the Pyrenees. Here, theoretical local development ideas on peripheral regions are somehow challenged. Then the article goes studying the role of immigrants' capitals for developing neo-endogenous local development in the Pyrenees. This is done from the economic perspective (i.e., how immigrants can bring their skills, funding and experience in local entrepreneurship) and from the social point of view (i.e., how immigrants ease social interactions, create new cultural activities and indeed foster place identity). Finally, some conclusions and reflections for further research are offered.

2. Theoretical background

As a critique of traditional exogenous development approaches that often focuses on external interventions and neglected the potential of local actors and resources, the endogenous development theory surges in the late 1980s and 1990s in Southern Europe (Fuà, 1988; Garofoli, 1992). It emphasizes the importance of local resources, capacities, and initiatives in driving economic growth and development to obtain self-sustained development. In other words, development occurs when local communities can mobilize their own resources, knowledge, and institutions to address their specific needs and aspirations (Van der Ploeg & Long, 1994; Vázquez-Barquero, 2007). Indeed, the endogenous development approach argues that the efficiency of local initiatives mainly depends on the agreement between local actors on

strategies and goals, as well as local communities' participation in the management and control of development initiatives (Vázquez-Barquero & Rodríguez-Cohard, 2016).

Based on the principles of endogenous development, neo-endogenous development theory further expands on the concept of local development. The neo-endogenous paradigm was defined by the OECD as a "new rural paradigm", and it inspired the so-called "Rural Policy 3.0" (Belligiano et al., 2020). This paradigm arises above all from the need to interpret processes of social change in rural areas (Bosworth & Atterton, 2012). Here, local development cannot operate in isolation from forces outside the local area and the ability to generate extra-local connectivity through effective networks becomes a key feature of rural development (Ray, 2006; Gkartzios & Lowe, 2019). In accepting the need for external factors, neo-endogenous development is somehow a hybrid endogenous-exogenous model, which seeks to both support communities to be self-reliant and provide them with the capabilities to utilise extra-local factors to their advantage (Ray, 1999). Certainly, neo-endogenous research identified that rural economies benefit from interactions between local and more outwardly facing businesses (Bosworth & Atterton, 2012), promoting social innovation and civic values, particularly in marginalised rural areas that are often struggling with biophysical and market limits, as well as shortages of public funding (Kluvankova et al., 2021). In this regard, this literature has overlooked the potential role of international immigrants in fostering local development, particularly their ability to establish networks beyond local communities.

Certainly, the idea of social capital is placed at the centre of neo-endogenous rural development model (Ray, 2006; Bosworth et al., 2016). Social capital, defined as both bonding – within a community – and bridging – between a community and external actors – (Putnam, 2000) is stimulated within specific socioeconomic contexts. International immigrant may well dispose of an array of both types of social capital. Because of this, this article examines international immigrant's social capital and the role this capital play in local development, even if there has been calls for critical research about the ways social capital is a driver of territorial development in isolated rural mountain areas (e.g., Wiesinger, 2007). The underlying idea is that social capital must be activated to be meaningful. Moreover, while social networks foster the conditions under which collective efficacy may flourish, they are not sufficient for the exercise of social cohesion, since interaction is embedded in local traditions and social order is locally produced (Jørgensen, Fallow & Nielsen, 2021).

The existing literature on immigrants' social capital which overwhelmingly focuses on urban centres emphasizes the role of intra-immigrant networks (referred to as "bonding capital", Putnam, 2000) in entrepreneurship. Access to these social capital resources is associated with group solidarity, based on expectations of mutual support between members of the same immigrant community, which is united by cultural similarities and difficulties in accessing formal support systems (Faist, 2000; Sommer & Gamper, 2018). Many studies have shown that self-employed immigrants make extensive use of the bonding capital, mostly through access to financial capital, cheap and trustworthy labour, and business-related information (e.g., Sanders & Nee, 1996; Kanas, van Tubergen & van der Lippe, 2009). A specific source of bonding social capital is constituted by transnational social network, which have been seen as an alternative form of economic adaptation of foreign minorities in advanced societies (Portes, Haller & Guarnizo, 2002). These transnational ties can also positively influence local development by providing financial resources, promoting trade linkages, and facilitating the transfer of skills and ideas. However, only a few studies have empirically examined the effect of bridging social capital between immigrants and the host society, let alone theorise the relevance of this type of capital to immigrant entrepreneurship (Kanas, van Tubergen & van der Lippe, 2009; Mendoza, 2023).

The focus of the neo-endogenous development remains on local participation and local determination of key priorities. This approach places local communities at the centre of development processes, emphasizing their agency, resources, and capacities. In this sense, territorial capital emerged as a concept of interest for the research project upon which this article is based. This concept includes the way (new) residents of localities form social networks and how these are intertwined with the local economy, social fabric, and institutional framework (Marango, Bosworth & Curry, 2021). Indeed, place-based social capital might help territorial capital, place identity and local governance. Territorial capital may foster economic and social innovations which are brought forth in an action arena, where the actors agree on common

principles and goals and pursue collective actions based on negotiated decisions (Jørgensen, Fallov & Nielsen, 2021). Furthermore, mobilising territorial capital through territorial ties illuminates social relations that do not correspond with portraying the rural as stable or stagnant, backward, and unproductive, and all this functions as a counter-narrative to discourses on periphery and feelings of powerlessness (Svendsen 2013; Willet & Lang 2018). In line with this, Eimermann (2016), when investigating the effects on Dutch rural tourism entrepreneurs in Sweden, argues that a tourism-migration nexus occurs where the entrepreneurs are attracted by territorial capital before migration and use this capital in their firms to attract new tourists after migration. Similarly, Little (2012) examines the ways tourism transform nature, and in particular wild nature, in the framework of a contemporary concerns about health, wellbeing and the body. Olmedo, van Twuijver and O'Shaughnessy (2023) also showed how the link between rural social enterprises and their local context, since these enterprises engage with locational, material and identity dimensions of their "places". Finally, from a governance point of view, Labrianidis and Sykas (2013) reckoned that the interaction of immigrants with the place-based structures is easier in rural contexts, creating a favourable environment for immigrants' incorporation in local economies and societies.

3. Methodology

The project upon which this article is based analyses international immigration in the rural municipalities of the Pyrenees. In contrast to other mountain areas like the Alps, there is a scarcity of publications addressing international immigration in the Pyrenees while treating these mountains as a cohesive geographical entity. Typically, existing immigration studies concentrate on a single Pyrenean country (e.g., Berthomière & Imbert, 2020; Mendoza, 2023; Morén-Alegret et al., 2021; Solé, 2013). In contrast, among its objectives, this article examines economic immigrant pathways in various regions of both the French and Spanish Pyrenees to identify sustainable economic projects managed and/or supported by immigrants and present successful experiences concerning rural development. The methodology of the project consists in multi-sited research that relies mainly on qualitative methods applied to carefully pre-selected case studies after a statistical analysis of municipal data from INE, INSEE and EUROSTAT. The fieldwork was carried out in rural municipalities with fewer than 2000 registered inhabitants of the Girona Pyrenees (Alt Empordà, Ripollès and Cerdanya counties) and the Huesca Pyrenees (Ribagorza and Sobrarbe counties), in Spain, as well as the Dpt. of Pyrénées Orientales (Alta Cerdanya, Vallespir and Conflent counties) in France (see Fig. 1). This fieldwork was conducted from February to September 2022.

A total of 45 in-depth interviews with foreign-born immigrants were undertaken in the three study areas (16 in Girona, 15 in Huesca and 14 in Pyrénées Orientales). Interviewees were selected through a snowballing technique. In the first place, local contacts from the public administration and entrepreneurial associations help identify foreign-born immigrants in the area. Subsequently, previously interviewed key informants and immigrants provided us with information of other possible participants in the research. Potential bias was prevented thanks to the use of several ways for accessing informants. Interviews were structured along three main dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. Although the research did not attempt to achieve a representative sample, it is equally distributed between immigrant entrepreneurs, self-employed workers, and employees. Immigrants are heterogeneous concerning their country of birth. In contrast to studies that focus on a specific sector or workforce mainly based in the mountains (e.g., Nori, 2021), this article specifically focuses on immigrants engaged in a variety of entrepreneurial activities in the Pyrenees (31 out of 45 interviewees). Most of the entrepreneurs and self-employed workers interviewed for this project in both France and Spain were born in Central and Western Europe: in Girona, out of the 16 interviewees, 11 were employers and self-employed workers (nine Europeans and two Latin Americans), in Huesca, out of 15, the 10 employers and self-employed workers were, in general, originally from other European countries (seven out of 10, with the three remaining originally from Latin America), and finally in the case of the Pyrénées Orientales, the 10 employers and self-employed workers (out of 14 interviewees) were British (5), Spanish (4), plus one Dutch national. Regarding their educational background, eight out of ten individuals involved in entrepreneurship had completed university education. In terms of demographic characteristics, these immigrants were almost evenly split by sex and represented a range of age groups, though women were

slightly overrepresented in the non-representative survey. Finally, those interviewees selected for this research has lived in the Pyrenees for at least one year.

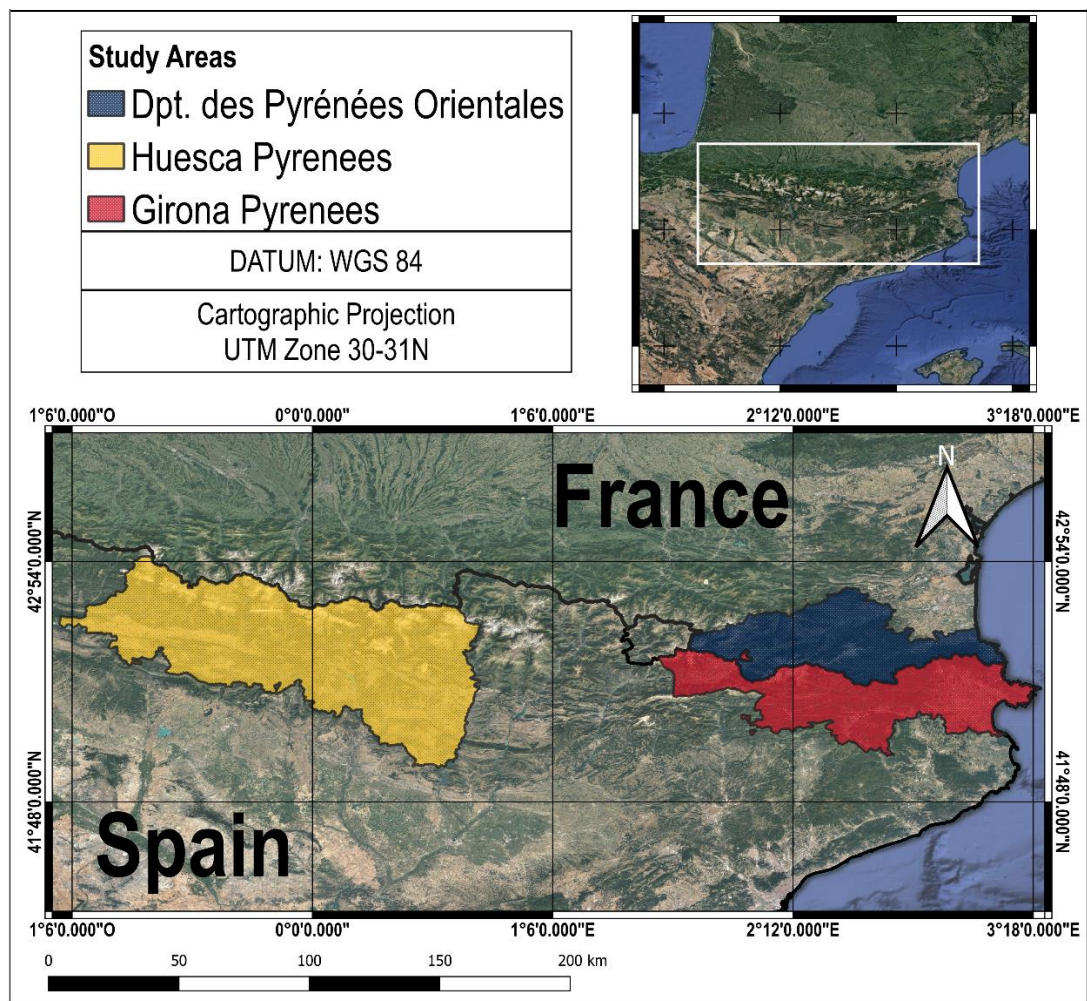


Fig 1. Study areas in the Pyrenees. Source: Ramsés Fernández

The immigrants' information is complemented by material from 14 semi-structured interviews with key informants (i.e., local mayors and relevant members of business associations in the Pyrenees). In both cases – immigrants and key informants –, the interviews had an average length of approximately one hour and they were carried out at the time and place of the interviewee's choice. All the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Finally, participants were assured that the collected data would be anonymized. Interview data were analysed through a content analysis method. First, the codes were defined and classified, according to the interview sections. Second, using free MAXQDA software, the interviews were labelled, and extracts were grouped into different topics. In addition, a systematic reading and analysis of this information enabled abstracting and the selection of relevant quotations to illustrate the main lines of analysis. All the interviews and the interview analysis process for this paper were individually done by the corresponding author, keeping a coherent analysis, while having support from co-authors. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, French, English, and Catalan languages.

4. Local development: The role(s) of the rural territory

Endogenous and neo-endogenous approaches underscore the role of local actors in promoting economic initiatives. During the binational fieldwork, notable distinctions emerged in the narratives of interviewees on both sides of the border. In the French Pyrénées Orientales, there was a prevalent perception of a fragile regional economic structure heavily reliant on state subsidies, a viewpoint shared by key

informants and international immigrants alike. For some participants, a central concern was the concentration of major economic decisions in distant Paris, within a highly centralized country that seemed disconnected from the genuine needs of the Pyrenees. The subsequent statement from a key informant encapsulates an opinion widely echoed in interviews with various immigrants:

The Pyrénées Orientales rank among the French departments with the highest unemployment rates, standing at around 17% (...) The primary sector faces challenges, marked by the absence of large farms, with small-scale farmers relying heavily on subsidies. There is no industry (...) This reflects a political decision on territorial planning made in Paris (...) Most companies are one-person business. There is no real innovation (...) The region operates on two distinct tourist models – coastal sun and sea attractions during the summer and inland skiing destinations in winter – two separate domains with minimal connectivity between them (Technician, Parc Naturel Régional des Pyrénées Catalanes, Pyrénées Orientales)

The magnitude of the unemployment rate, although relatively lower on average compared to the perspectives shared by the previous key informant, serves as an indicator of the perceived economic fragility within the rural territory. According to Méloux and Péalapat (2021), the Pyrénées Orientales department exhibited an unemployment rate that was four points higher than that of the Occitanie region. This source also highlights socio-demographic challenges in the department, noting the region's modest population growth over the past three decades. Indeed, while the Pyrénées Orientales department as a whole registered a positive annual growth of 0.7%, driven by internal and foreign immigration, the inland Pyrenees communes were the sole entities experiencing a decline in population (-0.3% annually; Pôle Emploi Occitanie, 2021). Once again, insights provided by key informants underscore a palpable sentiment, particularly among the one hundred municipalities located beyond the influence of the Perpignan economic hub, where nearly a third of the rural population resides. In these sparsely populated areas, the feeling of territorial inequality is particularly pronounced.

The aforementioned key informant also observes that the recent decentralization process provides limited assistance ("Toulouse is still distant, and more subject to local interests"). This type of perspective is notably absent in the two study regions in Spain, where decision-making often occurs in closer proximity to the territory through local agencies and regional bodies. Both in Aragon and Catalonia, entities such as "comarcas" (counties), "diputaciones" (province governments), and "comunidades autónomas" (regional governments), play a role in managing various supra/intermunicipal activities and policies, while also providing support to municipalities. For instance, in Spain, regional governments have been pivotal in implementing LEADER programs over the past decades (e.g., Esparcia, 2000).

In contrast, four decades following the initial decentralization laws, the situation in the French department of Pyrénées Orientales differs significantly from those scrutinized in Aragon and Catalonia. Despite legislative changes aimed at devolving responsibility for economic development to the local level, the influence of the 'central' state continues to cast a shadow over local initiatives. In this regard, in May 2021, the then Prime Minister, Jean Castex (former mayor of Prades in Pyrénées Orientales), announced the launch of the "Avenir Montagnes" programme, endowed with over 300 million euros, aimed at supporting mountain areas in crafting a tourism development strategy aligned with the challenges of ecological and economic transition.⁴ Such an initiative not only reaffirms the state's pivotal role in local development but, according to some key informants, also reinforces the notion that deviating from "traditional models" of economic development is seemingly implausible. Indeed, the efforts at the state level to promote more prudent utilization of financial resources sometimes overlook the significance of local authorities, which continue to be crucial players in the development of sparsely populated regions in the French Pyrenees. In this regard, the qualitative analysis of interviews effectively highlights the contradictions, challenges and potential drawbacks associated with national policies intending to "rationalise" the structure administrations beyond the municipal level, such as EPCIs (*Établissement public de coopération intercommunale* or communities of communes).

⁴ See <https://www.gouvernement.fr/communiqu/12300-presentation-du-plan-avenir-montagnes>

Nevertheless, the underlying idea of a peripheral territory being used (and abused) by urban interests is also evident in Spain. The rural hinterland is expected to meet the needs of cities, such as a heightened demand for electricity, which is channelled through major corporations with the tacit approval of state institutions. The following excerpt which is from a mayor in the Ribagorza county (Huesca) illustrates this point:

In the 1980s, the best agricultural lands were devoted to electricity dams. In Ribagorza, the generated electricity is sent to Barcelona, and in Sobrarbe, it serves industries in Bilbao. Now, there's a push to inundate us with solar panels. Despite producing more energy through renewable energy companies than we actually consume, we are charged the same rates as everyone else (...) We have passed a resolution prohibiting the installation of photovoltaic fields in our municipality. The only acceptable use is for individual consumption. Companies have expressed interest, seeking 50 hectares, but my response has been a firm NO. Despite their persistence and lucrative offers, I've personally rejected their proposals. But I have no doubts that they will eventually be successful with other mayors, because they offer lots of money (Mayor, Ribagorza county, Huesca)

In contrast to these external demands, both key informants and immigrants emphasize the pressing need for housing on both sides of the border. Housing stands out as the primary challenge in the region, marked by a systemic shortage of apartments for rent, exacerbated by intense competition from tourist activities and second homes in the housing market. Given the potentially limited social life in rural areas, having a private and comfortable living space is almost considered a necessity. Aligned with this, some interviewed immigrants assert that housing was a decisive factor in choosing a specific municipality to reside in. In essence, once the decision to live in the region (mountain areas/Pyrenees) is made, the specific location depends on housing availability. As expressed by one key informant in Girona, "We just need a better train connection and more public housing. That's it." The scarcity of housing ultimately hinders new residents from moving into the Pyrenees, potentially impeding economic growth and sustainability in the area. For instance, on June 25, 2023, public demonstrations took place in the Spanish Pyrenees, protesting the current housing shortage for local inhabitants attributed to factors such as gentrification from second homes and tourist apartments.⁵ This issue might affect key figures in rural municipalities, including mayors and municipal councillors. The inability of some mayors and councillors to reside in the villages where they are implementing policies underscores the shortage of suitable housing, impacting not only international immigrants but also significant local individuals at the community level.

The excerpt below is from an interview with a mayor in Girona Pyrenees who outlined the potential construction of flats in the municipality. This key informant is explicitly opposed to a significant increase in the resident population. However, he acknowledges that an increase in the number of people living there, up to the levels the village had in the 1960s, would positively impact business recovery.

If we successfully secure the 18 flats we are advocating for, with an average occupancy of three people each, we can introduce 50–60 additional individuals to the current population. We are not aiming for a larger population. This would transition us from the current 320 registered inhabitants to 400, a figure similar to the 1970s, and perhaps revive the 25 businesses that we once had here. Presently, only 10 remain, including two grocery stores, a bakery, a hairdresser, and a recently opened bar in the town centre, which is great news. However, the bar hasn't received a single euro in aid from European funds, simply because it is categorized as a bar. This underscores the disconnect between institutions and the reality of our villages. For us, a bar is a vital element (Mayor, Ripollès county).

This mayor expresses criticism towards development aids that overlook the option of subsidizing a bar. He emphasizes, "Institutions do not really know our reality, the villages' reality." Perhaps the key idea to highlight from this section is the disparity between the broader demands of the country (seen as positive for the urban population as a whole) and the day-to-day existence of small villages in rural mountain

⁵ See: <https://lavalira.eu/el-sindicalisme-per-un-habitatge-digne-convoca-concentracions-diumenge-vinent-al-sobira-i-la-cerdanya/>

areas, like the Pyrenees. Additionally, this key informant establishes a connection between immigration, economic growth, and well-being, a topic that will be further explored in the next section.

5. Immigrants' capitals and local development: The economic impact

The preceding section concludes with a contemplation on the significance of new residents in stimulating business growth. In this section, our focus shifts to the impact of international immigrants' human and social capital in nurturing innovative economic pathways. Because they are self-employed and entrepreneurs and/or equipped with high levels of human capital, one might assume that interviewees were financially well-off upon arrival. However, upon delving into their narratives, it becomes evident that economic capital does not play a particularly prominent role in the success of their businesses. In fact, entrepreneurs interviewed in the Pyrenees shared that they tend to be self-employed workers, or establish small, family-run businesses, often without hired employees (see also Müller & Jansson, 2007; Carson & Carson, 2018).

In our study area, the development of businesses is significantly influenced by human capital. Nearly all the entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals interviewed possessed tertiary education, and they demonstrated fluency in multiple languages, providing a competitive edge, especially for those involved in the education sector (see also Mendoza, Morén-Alegret & McAreavey, 2020). This is particularly evident among language teachers, cultural promoters, and environmental professionals interviewed for this project. Yet for others, university education and prior training, while partially beneficial, only offer a limited understanding of interviewees' professional success. Remarkable enough, half of the entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals interviewed embarked on entrepreneurial activities for the first time in the Pyrenees, while the other half were typically engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits unrelated to their previous experiences (see also Hoey, 2005). An illustrative case is Pierre, who previously worked in the public health system in France and, upon retirement, decided to reintroduce saffron production in the Ribagorza county. This example underscores how human capital can foster a unique appreciation for landscape and nature, potentially leading to the development of innovative products (see also Carson, Carson & Eimermann 2018; Mattsson & Cassel, 2019). In his own words:

Upon retirement, I returned to this town, in Aragon, where my family has its roots (...). I became engaged in saffron production because I couldn't bear to witness these villages gradually fading away. I felt a personal responsibility to act. My son, who has studied agronomy, assisted me (...). To be honest, I engage in this not for business but for personal satisfaction (French male, 84, Huesca).

On the other side, social capital emerges as the most potent competitive advantage for immigrant entrepreneurs, demonstrating their ability to initiate and expand businesses in rural environments (Mendoza, 2023). Social capital encompasses various dimensions, comprising both immigrant community networks, which may have binational or transnational links, and those formed by immigrants within local settings (referred to as "bonding" and "bridging" networks, according to Putnam, 2000). Although these aspects have predominantly been explored in urban contexts, literature has long highlighted the importance of networks from the immigrants' country of origin in the establishment of businesses (e.g., Stam, 2010; Carson, Carson & Eimermann, 2018). In our fieldwork, we encountered several examples of such international links. For instance, this was particularly significant for Johanna, as her small campsite primarily caters to Dutch visitors, with publicity and marketing efforts directed towards the Netherlands.

This is a special campsite. It is not for everyone. It is for people who want to get total disconnection. You're in nature (...) We have a very basic tapas bar for dinner, but this is basically do-it-yourself. The Dutch prefer this kind of campsite, and they are almost 90% of our customers (Dutch female, 60, Girona).

In a similar vein, Louis has been homeworking for the same French company for several years. After the COVID outbreak, he made the decision to leave Barcelona with his family and relocate to the Pyrenees. At his interview, he contemplated moving just a few kilometres north and purchasing a house in the French Pyrenees, where, in his perspective, the housing market is more accessible.

I've been working for the same French advertising company for many years. Why do we live here? We've got tired of Barcelona, and during the COVID, we moved to my political family house in the Pyrenees. And now we don't want to go back. We're looking for a house in the French side of Cerdanya (French male, 53, Girona).

Yet networks are not only based on international bonds, but also on networks drawn from local society: their social networks are built/expanded via an array of informal and formal channels, which may be enhanced by their status as “welcomed” foreigners in areas suffering from chronic problems of depopulation and economic stagnation (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Mendoza, Morén-Alegret & McAreavey, 2020). As a mayor in Girona Pyrenees said in the interview, “foreign-born residents make up approximately 20% of the municipality, coming from diverse backgrounds, including French, British, German, Eastern European, and South American origins. Some of them run businesses in the village. Recently, we opened a co-working space to attract more newcomers”. This “positive stereotype” may have a clear impact for some immigrant entrepreneurs, helping them make relevant contacts within the local economy, particularly in areas with a long tradition of tourism. This is certainly the case of Angelo who owns a rural lodge in a small locality of Alt Empordà, but he is very active in creating/expanding new economic activities in the region.

I've recently opened a pizzeria in the village (...) I used to collaborate, before COVID, with a Swiss girl who did donkey promenades in the mountains (...) I also organize lunch in the countryside with the cooperative of a neighbouring town. In this way, visitors can appreciate the variety of local products (Italian male, 60, Girona)

For the majority of those interviewed, business, social life, and, eventually, friendships are interconnected, a crucial aspect to consider when relocating to and settling in the Pyrenees. This aligns with observations in the literature on lifestyle immigrants (e.g., Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Romagosa et al., 2020). The key emphasis here is that interviewees leverage social networks and relationships not solely for business creation but also to attain their lifestyle objectives, a topic that will be elaborated upon in the subsequent section.

6. Immigrants' capitals and the well-being of the communities

International migration may also foster cultural exchange and social integration in local rural communities (e.g., Munkejord, 2006; Eimermann & Kordel, 2018). Undoubtedly, the perspectives, traditions, and knowledge systems brought by immigrants can contribute significantly to the social and cultural vibrancy of their host communities. Cultural diversity has the potential to promote understanding and social cohesion, ultimately fortifying the social fabric of rural societies. A case in point is Misuki, a Japanese woman who played a key role in establishing an association dedicated to Japanese culture and language in the French Pyrénées Orientales.

I've met very nice people in Conflent, thanks to the Japanese association my husband and me created in 2018 (...) We did the website during COVID. So it's been four years that the association exists. At Prades media library, we were asked to organise events on Japan. With all this, I met a lot of people (...) I do not feel excluded. Many French people are interested in the Japanese culture. And this is very positive for me. It doesn't bring me a lot of money, but it does bring me other sources of wellbeing. That's how I found C (the Spanish neighbour), because she came to a workshop on Japanese poetry (Japanese female, 42, Pyrénées Orientales).

The sentence “it brings me other sources of wellbeing” deserves being highlighted here. Through her involvement in the association, she contributes to building social capital and fostering community engagement, essential elements for establishing cohesive and potentially resilient societies. A comparable scenario arises from the cultural initiative led by Márcia, a Brazilian national, in a small village in the Pyrenees of Huesca that is divided into two small hamlets. While a few local families persist in the lower mountain, the abandoned hamlet uphill has been revitalized by an international group comprising individuals from various origins.

We have a vibrant collaboration with Graus, the capital of Ribagorza. We actively participated in the local theatre festival (...) In our home, we have an outdoor theatre, and presently, we are refurbishing an old cellar to create a more intimate setting – an indoor theatre for around 30 people (...) It's truly charming; from the outdoor theatre, there's a delightful view of the mountains. People appreciate it (...) We organized workshops for children (...) Our intention is not to isolate ourselves from the community. We established an association to cultivate stronger connections with the downtown village. Even elderly residents living downhill have made the journey up to attend our performances (Brazilian female, 62, Huesca)

Márcia actively participates in the local community, guided by a distinct sense of community that is closely intertwined with the very survival of the locality. Similarly, Joana has dedicated 15 years to an environmental association in the Pyrenees. In the educational centre, she has been highly engaged in organizing visits for children, exhibitions, and publishing material on local wildlife. However, her frustration stems from the dissolution of the association due to what she perceives as a lack of interest among local residents. In her own words:

I studied biology (...) A friend of mine was employed in the region, and that's how I became involved (...) We established an association and collaborated with the environmental education centre (...) In the mornings, I used to focus on diversity issues at the information centre in the natural reserve, and in the afternoons, I devoted my time to my association, conducting studies on large predators like bears and wolves (...) This went on for 15 years. I found joy in undertaking innovative projects with schools and developing educational materials (...) Now, unfortunately, the centre has closed down because the members of the association who managed it have aged, and there is no one to take their place. It's truly disheartening. Presently, I exclusively work for my association, the one I initiated with my friends (Spanish female, 44, Pyrénées-Orientales)

By integrating her knowledge into local practices, this interviewee has advanced environmental stewardship and resilience, fostering sustainable approaches that safeguard ecosystems and encourage biodiversity conservation (see also Kluvankova et al., 2021). This example, alongside previous instances, illustrates the crucial role played by international immigrants in promoting environmental sustainability, cultural activities, and, more broadly, social interactions that enhance local rural well-being and contribute to strengthening a sense of place in the Pyrenees. In this regard, the following interviewee, a Colombian-born woman who settled in a small town in the Girona Pyrenees, elucidates her social life with people of different origins in a village of fewer than 500 inhabitants. Here, we observe how immigrants inject vitality into sparsely inhabited villages.

I arrived in this village in 2020 (...) C. is my language exchange partner (for learning Catalan). She's a wonderful person who provides guidance (...) In the afternoons, I go for a walk and for a chat with Mrs. P. She owns a significant part of the town. She's very old, and she's quite lonely. I enjoy conversing with her (...) On other days, I meet a friend – a retired lawyer from Barcelona – who escaped the city for a quieter life (...) In my block, there is a young man from Gambia who came here alone, leaving his wife behind. The shepherdess also resides here; she sells cheese, and I assist her in selling cheese on weekends. I genuinely enjoy living here. It feels like a family (Colombian/Spanish female, 57, Girona)

This excerpt suggests, in accordance with Labrianidis and Sykas (2013), that the interactions of immigrants are more facilitated in rural settings, establishing a conducive environment for their integration into local societies. Our fieldwork also reveals that a distinct cultural identity, a heightened sensitivity to the environment, and other factors among immigrants contribute to the development of a personal sense of belonging, subsequently reinforcing a broader sense of community in rural settings (see also Munkejord, 2006).

6. Conclusions

The paper based upon a cross-border study has shown that the introduction of economic and socio-cultural diversity to the Pyrenees through international immigration has also the potential to introduce diverse forms of capital (and eventually a positive impact on neo-endogenous development). These immigrants can play a crucial role in retaining and attracting a more diverse human population. Furthermore, this influx of diversity may help overcome vulnerabilities, particularly addressing issues such as the departure of the most qualified young generations and contribute to tackling challenges related to both biodiversity and socio-economic sustainability.

Based on the analysis of interviews and discussions, it can be inferred that possessing substantial financial capital in quantitative terms does not always significantly contribute to business success in the Pyrenees. This qualitative finding is positive news for policymakers, especially during austerity periods. This also suggests that in sparsely populated mountain areas, rural policy-making efforts should prioritize projects with a greater qualitative impact rather than a purely quantitative one. In fact, immigrant entrepreneurs in the study areas of the Spanish and French Pyrenees tend to establish small family-run enterprises without hired employees (and generally operate as self-employed workers), resulting in a relatively modest financial capital in quantitative terms (see also Müller & Jansson, 2007; Carson & Carson, 2018). However, this capital can bear a considerable qualitative impact in sparsely populated places. For instance, a thoughtfully planned micro-investment has the potential to sustain an entire family in rural areas, supporting the livelihoods of immigrant entrepreneurs and their children. This, in turn, can be pivotal for maintaining the viability of rural schools and local businesses.

Notably, in the context of business development in the Pyrenees, the significance of human capital surpasses that of economic capital. Nearly all immigrant entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals interviewed possessed tertiary education and demonstrated proficiency in multiple languages, providing them with a competitive edge in local labour markets. However, while university education and prior training contribute partially to understanding the professional success of interviewees, half of the employers and self-employed individuals initiated entrepreneurial activities for the first time in the Pyrenees. The other half typically engaged in entrepreneurial ventures unrelated to their previous experiences.

In addition, among the immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed, social capital emerges as the most potent competitive advantage, influencing their ability to establish and expand businesses in rural settings. As detailed earlier, social capital encompasses various dimensions, including both networks within immigrant communities (potentially with binational or transnational aspects) and those forged by immigrants locally. Within this framework, numerous interviewees highlight the interconnectedness of business, friendships, and social life. This aspect gains particular significance when considering the relocation to and residence in the Pyrenees, as emphasized in studies on lifestyle immigrants (e.g., Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Romagosa et al., 2020). In this regard, it is relevant to underscore that interviewees not only utilize social networks and relationships for business success but also to fulfil their lifestyle objectives.

This paper demonstrates that immigrants generally exhibit a keen appreciation for local, cultural, and landscape resources, often being a motivating factor behind their relocation to rural areas (see also Bartoš, Kušova & Těšitel, 2009; Iversen & Jacobsen, 2017). Consequently, they play a role in stimulating local economies and contribute to the reinforcement of values related to sustainability, community, and a sense of place. While the entrepreneurial endeavors of interviewed immigrants result in successful businesses (see also Carson, Carson & Eimmermann, 2018; Mattsson & Cassel, 2019), the companies they establish tend to be constrained in both size and capital and, therefore, their impact on local economic development and job creation in the Pyrenees is generally modest. However, international immigration may bring a wide variety of cultural diversities to rural areas, which may enrich the social fabric of local rural communities as well as give new ideas and skills to face old and new rural challenges alike.

Local neo-endogenous development and international migration are intricately linked, offering both challenges and opportunities. By adopting a synergistic approach that harnesses the potential of international migration for neo-endogenous development at the local level, communities can tap into

the economic, cultural, and environmental benefits that immigration brings. Yet fieldwork data shows an array of micro-practices that indeed foster local collaboration and help create a sense of place, but they generally lack effective institutional support. Only by fostering open collaboration with adequate multi-level institutional support and embracing the diversity that international immigration offers can rural localities build resilient, inclusive, innovative, and sustainable communities for the future.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on the SURDIM (Sustainable Rural Development and International Immigration in the Pyrenees) project that has been funded by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship (Grant Agreement number 101023968. Autonomous University of Barcelona, UAB). It has also received funding from the ELDEMOR (Endogenous Local Development and Mobilities in Rural Areas of Spanish and Portuguese Peripheral Regions) project (Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. Grant number CNS2022-135614. University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, UPGC).

Academic references

- [1] Bartoš, M., Kušová, D. & Těšitel, J. (2009). Motivation and lifestyle of the Czech amenity migrants. *European Countryside* 1(3), 164–179. DOI: 10.2478/v10091-009-0014-4.
- [2] Bayona-i-Carrasco, J. & Gil-Alonso, F. (2013). Is foreign immigration the solution to rural depopulation? The case of Catalonia (1996–2009). *Sociologia Ruralis* 53(1), 26–51. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9523.2012.00577.x.
- [3] Belliggiano, A., Sturla, A., Vassallo, M. & Viganò, L. (2020). Neo-endogenous rural development in favor of organic farming: Two case studies from Italian fragile areas. *European Countryside* 12(1), 1–29. DOI: 10.2478/euco-2020-0001.
- [4] Benson, M. & O'Reilly, K. (2016). From lifestyle migration to lifestyle in migration. *Migration Studies* 4(1), 20–37. DOI: 10.1093/migration/mnv015.
- [5] Berthomière, W. & Imbert, C. (2020). The Ariège 'refuge': Advantage and diversity of a host topography. *Journal of Alpine Research / Revue de Géographie Alpine* 108(2), 1–15. DOI: 10.4000/rga.6947.
- [6] Bosworth, G. & Atterton, J. (2012). Entrepreneurial in-migration and neoendogenous rural development. *Rural Sociology* 77(2), 254–279. DOI: 10.1111/j.1549-0831.2012.00079.x.
- [7] Bosworth, G., Rizzo, F., Marquardt, D., Strijker, D., Haartsen, T. & Thuesen, A. A. (2016). Identifying social innovations in European local rural development initiatives. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 29(4), 442–461. DOI: 10.1080/13511610.2016.1176555.
- [8] Boyle, P. & Halfacree, K. (1998). *Migration into rural areas: Theories and issues*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- [9] Camagni, R. (2008). Regional competitiveness: Towards a concept of territorial capital. In Capello, R., Camagni, R., Chizzolini, B. & Fratesi, U., eds., *Modelling regional scenarios for the enlarged Europe: European competitiveness and global strategies* (pp. 33–48). Berlin: Springer Verlag.
- [10] Carson, D. A. & Carson, D. B. (2018). International lifestyle immigrants and their contributions to rural tourism innovation. *Journal of Rural Studies* 64(8), 230–240. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.08.004.
- [11] Carson, D. A., Carson, D. B. & Eimermann, M. (2018). International winter tourism entrepreneurs in northern Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 18(2), 183–198. DOI: 10.1080/15022250.2017.1339503.
- [12] Corrado, A., Castro, C. & Perrotta, D. (2017). *Migration and agriculture. Mobility and changes in the Mediterranean area*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

- [13] De Filippis, F., Giua, M., Salvatici, L. & Pineiro, C. (2022). The international trade impacts of Geographical Indications: Hype or hope? *Food Policy* 112, 102371. DOI: 10.1016/j.foodpol.2022.102371.
- [14] Eimermann, M. (2016). Two sides of the same coin: Dutch rural tourism entrepreneurs and countryside capital in Sweden. *Rural Society* 25(1), 55–73. DOI: 10.1080/10371656.2016.1152033.
- [15] Eimermann, M. & Kordel, S. (2018). International lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs in two new immigration destinations. *Journal of Rural Studies* 64(8), 241–252. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2018.04.007.
- [16] Esparcia, J. (2000). The LEADER programme and the rise of rural development in Spain. *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(2), 200–207. DOI: 10.1111/1467-9523.00142.
- [17] Faist, T. (2000). *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.2307/2675522.
- [18] Farkas, T. (2021). The role of the social capital in rural development: Case study analysis of village research camps in Romania and Hungary. *European Countryside* 13(3), 584–598. DOI: 10.2478/euco-2021-0033.
- [19] Fuà, G. (1988). Small-scale industry in rural areas: The Italian experience. In Arrow, K. J., ed., *The balance between industry and agriculture in economic development* (pp. 259–283). London: Macmillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-349-10271-6_14.
- [20] Garofoli, G. (1992). *Endogenous development and Southern Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- [21] Gkartzios, M. & Lowe, P. (2019). Revisiting neo-endogenous rural development. In Scott, M., Gallent, N. & Gkartzios, M., eds., *The Routledge companion to rural planning* (pp. 159–169). Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781315102375-17.
- [22] Gretter, A., Machold, I., Membretti, A. & Dax, T. (2017). Pathways of immigration in the Alps and Carpathians: Social innovation and the creation of a welcoming culture. *Mountain Research and Development* 37(4), 396–405. DOI: 10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-17-00031.1.
- [23] Hedlund, M., Carson, D. A., Eimermann, M. & Lundmark, L. (2017). Repopulating and revitalising rural Sweden? Re-examining immigration as a solution to rural decline. *The Geographical Journal* 183(4), 400–413. DOI: 10.1111/geoj.12227.
- [24] Hoey, B. (2005). From pi to pie: Moral narratives of noneconomic migration and starting over in the postindustrial Midwest. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 34(5), 586–624. DOI: 10.1177/0891241605279016.
- [25] Iversen, I. & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2017). Migrant tourism entrepreneurship in rural Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(4), 484–499. DOI: 10.1080/15022250.2015.1113887.
- [26] Jørgensen, A., Fallow, M. A. & Nielsen, R. S. (2021). ‘Just ask Eric’: On the importance of governance efficacy, territorial ties and heterogeneous networks for rural development. *Sociologia Ruralis* 61(2), 303–332. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12328.
- [27] Kanas, A., van Tubergen, F. & van der Lippe, T. (2009). Immigrant self-employment testing hypotheses about the role of origin- and host-country: Human capital and bonding and bridging social capital. *Work and Occupations* 36(3), 181–208. DOI: 10.1177/0730888409340128.
- [28] Kluvankova, T., Nijnik, M., Spacek, M., Sarkki, S., Perlik, M., Lukesch, R., Melnykovych, M., Valero, D. & Brnkalakova, S. (2021). Social innovation for sustainability transformation and its diverging development paths in marginalised rural areas. *Sociologia Ruralis* 61(2), 344–371. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12337.
- [29] Labrianidis, L. & Sykas, T. (2013). Social construction of community and immigration networks in rural areas: Towards a dynamic view of their importance to Balkan immigrants. *Sociologia Ruralis* 53(1), 1–25. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12000.

- [30] Little, J. (2012). Transformational tourism, nature and wellbeing: New perspectives on fitness and the body. *Sociologia Ruralis* 52(3), 257–271. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9523.2012.00566.x.
- [31] MacKinnon, D., Kempton, L., O'Brien, P., Ormerod, E., Pike, A. & Tomaney, J. (2022). Reframing urban and regional 'development' for 'left behind' places. *Cambridge Journal of Regions. Economy and Society* 15(1), 39–56. DOI: 10.1093/cjres/rsab034.
- [32] Marango, S., Bosworth, G. & Curry, N. (2021). Applying neo-endogenous development theory to delivering sustainable local nature conservation. *Sociologia Ruralis* 61(1), 116–140. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12315.
- [33] Mattsson, K. T. & Cassel, S. H. (2019). Immigrant entrepreneurs and potentials for path creating tourism development in rural Sweden. *Tourism Planning & Development* 17(4), 384–403. DOI: 10.1080/21568316.2019.1607543.
- [34] Méloux, S. & Péalapat, C. (2021). *Portrait de l'espace rural dans les départements d'Occitanie. INSEE Dossier* 12.
- [35] Mendoza, C. (2023). International immigration and entrepreneurship in rural areas of the Spanish Pyrenees. *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 72(2), 119–131. DOI: 10.15201/hungeobull.72.2.2.
- [36] Mendoza, C., Morén-Alegret, R. & McAreavey, R. (2020). (Lifestyle) immigrant entrepreneurs in Spanish small villages: Rethinking international immigration in rural Alt Empordà, Catalonia. *Belgeo* 1(2020), 1–19. DOI: 10.4000/belgeo.44107.
- [37] Morén-Alegret, R., Milazzo, J., Romagosa, F. & Kallis, G. (2021). 'Cosmovillagers' as sustainable rural development actors in mountain hamlets? *European Countryside* 13(2), 267–296. DOI: 10.2478/euco-2021-0018.
- [38] Müller, D. K. & Jansson, B. (2007). The difficult business of making pleasure peripheries prosperous. In Müller, D. & Jansson, B., eds., *Tourism in peripheries: Perspectives from the far North and South* (pp. 3–18). London: CABI Digital Library. DOI: 10.1079/9781845931773.0003.
- [39] Munkejord, M. C. (2006). Challenging discourses on rurality: Women and men in-migrants' constructions of the good life in a rural town in northern Norway. *Sociologia Ruralis* 46(3), 241–257. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9523.2006.00415.x.
- [40] Munkejord, M. C. (2017). 'I work with my heart': Experiences of migrant care workers in a northern, rural context. *Population Ageing* 10, 229–246. DOI: 10.1007/s12062-016-9157-z.
- [41] Nori, M. (2021). Integrating immigrant workforce in European pastoralism: reality, policy and practices. *Italian Review of Agricultural Economics* 76(1), 49–58. DOI: 10.36253/rea12825.
- [42] Olmedo, L., van Twuijver, M. & O'Shaughnessy, M. (2023). Rurality as context for innovative responses to social challenges: The role of rural social enterprises. *Journal of Rural Studies* 99(1), 272–283. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.04.020.
- [43] Paine, D., Spehn, E. M., Prescott, G. W., Geschke, J., Snethlage, M. A. & Fischer, M. (2020). Mountain biodiversity is central to sustainable development in mountains and beyond. *One Earth* 3, 530–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.oneear.2020.10.013.
- [44] Papadopoulos, A. G., Fratsea, L. M. & Mavrommatis, G. (2018). Governing migrant labour in an intensive agricultural area in Greece. *Journal of Rural Studies* 64, 200–209. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2018.03.013.
- [45] Pôle Emploi Occitanie (2021). *Diagnostic territorial. Département des Pyrénées orientales*. Toulouse: Pôle Emploi Occitanie.
- [46] Portes, A., Haller, W. J. & Guarnizo, L. E. (2002). Transnational entrepreneurs: An alternative form of immigrant economic adaptation. *American Sociological Review* 4(1), 278–298. DOI: 10.2307/3088896.

- [47] Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. DOI: 10.1145/358916.361990.
- [48] Ray, C. (2006). Neo-endogenous rural development in the EU. In Cloke, P., Marsden, T. & Mooney, P., eds., *Handbook of Rural Studies* (pp. 278–291). London: Sage. DOI: 10.4135/9781848608016.n19.
- [49] Ray, C. (1999). Endogenous development in the era of reflexive modernity. *Journal of Rural Studies* 15(3), 257–267. DOI: 10.1016/S0743-0167(98)00072-2.
- [50] Romagosa, F., Mendoza, C., Mojica, L. & Morén-Alegret, R. (2020). Inmigración internacional y turismo en espacios rurales: El caso de los “micropueblos” en Cataluña. *Cuadernos de Turismo* 46, 319–347. DOI: 10.6018/turismo.451861.
- [51] Rye, J. F. & Scott, S. (2018). International labour migration and food production in rural Europe: a review of the evidence. *Sociologia Ruralis* 58(4), 928–952. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12208.
- [52] Sanders, J. M. & Nee, V. (1996). Immigrant self-employment: The family as social capital and the value of human capital. *American Sociological Review* 61(2), 231–249. DOI: 10.2307/2096333.
- [53] Solé, A. (2013). *Estrangers a la muntanya* [unpublished PhD thesis]. Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- [54] Sommer, E. & Gamper, M. (2018). Transnational entrepreneurial activities: A qualitative network study of self-employed migrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany. *Social Networks* 53, 136–147. DOI: 10.1016/j.socnet.2017.04.007.
- [55] Stam, E. (2010). Entrepreneurship, evolution and geography. In Boschma, R. & Martin, R., eds., *The Handbook of Evolutionary Geography* (pp. 139–161). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- [56] Stathopoulou, S., Psaltopoulos, D. & Skuras, D. (2004). Rural entrepreneurship in Europe A research framework and agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research* 10(6), 404–425. DOI: 10.1108/13552550410564725.
- [57] Svendsen, G. L. H. (2013). Public libraries as breeding grounds for bonding, bridging and institutional social capital: The case of branch libraries in rural Denmark. *Sociologia Ruralis* 53(1), 52–73. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12002.
- [58] Van der Ploeg, J. D. & Long, A. (1994). Endogenous development: Practices and perspectives. In Van der Ploeg, J. D. & A. Long, A., eds., *Born from within: Practice and perspectives of endogenous rural development* (pp. 1–17). Amsterdam: Van Gorcum.
- [59] Vázquez-Barquero, A. (2007). Endogenous development: Analytical and policy issues. In Scott, A. J. & Garofoli, G., eds., *Development on the ground: Clusters, networks and regions in emerging economies* (pp. 23–44). Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.
- [60] Vázquez-Barquero, A. & Rodríguez-Cohard, J. C. (2016). Endogenous development and institutions: Challenges for local development initiatives. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 34(6), 1135–1153. DOI: 10.1177/0263774X15624924.
- [61] Wiesinger, G. (2007). L'importance du capital social dans le développement rural, les réseaux et les prises de décision dans les zones rurales. *Journal of Alpine Research / Revue de Géographie Alpine* 95(4), 1–14. DOI: 10.4000/rga.350.
- [62] Willett, J. & Lang, T. (2018). Peripheralisation: A politics of place, affect, perception and representation. *Sociologia Ruralis* 58(2), 258–275. DOI: 10.1111/soru.12161.