



Posters

Theme 1 - Agri-food Systems, Forestry and Circular Economy

Poster 1.1

#145 - Floating wetland islands as nature-based solutions for rural agriculture

Presenting Author: Cristina S. C. Calheiros, CIIMAR/CIMAR LA, Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research, University of Porto, Terminal de Cruzeiros do Porto de Leixões, 4450-208 Matosinhos, Portugal

Co-author: Valentina Carrillo, CIIMAR/CIMAR LA, Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research, University of Porto, Terminal de Cruzeiros do Porto de Leixões, 4450-208 Matosinhos, Portugal

Co-author: Sofia Pereira; Universidade Católica Portuguesa, CBQF – Centro de Biotecnologia e Química Fina – Laboratório Associado, Escola Superior de Biotecnologia, Rua Diogo Botelho, 1327, 4169-005 Porto, Portugal

Abstract:

Rural agricultural systems are increasingly facing challenges related to water management, diffuse nutrient pollution, and a strong dependence on external inputs, particularly synthetic fertilizers. In this context, Floating wetland islands (FWI) emerge as a nature-based solution (NbS) with high potential to integrate water management, agricultural production, and the principles of the circular economy.

FWIs are artificial structures designed to float on water bodies such as lakes, ponds, and canals. These systems generally consist of a floating matrix that supports aquatic or semi-aquatic plants, whose roots remain in direct contact with the water column, thereby promoting nutrient removal and recovery processes, mainly involving nitrogen and phosphorus. In recent years, FWIs have evolved to incorporate edible crops such as rice, lettuce, spinach, and mint, among others, allowing nutrients to be stored as plant biomass that can be harvested and reintegrated into the production system.

The objective of this NbS technology is to integrate ecological and productive functions, contributing to improvements in irrigation water quality, the reduction of pollutant loads, and the generation of biomass with agricultural, forestry, or energy value. Moreover, FWIs stand out for their adaptability to rural contexts, as they allow for local-scale implementation and require relatively low operational and maintenance inputs.

Despite their potential, several challenges remain, including the construction of floating rafts using environmentally friendly and locally available materials, the selection of appropriate vegetation according to territorial conditions and food security considerations, and the social acceptance of these systems by rural communities. This work discusses the role of FWIs and their potential implementation as a strategy to enhance the resilience of rural landscapes and to support the transition toward circular and sustainable technologies.

Keywords:

nature-based solution; floating wetland islands; rural agricultural



Theme 2 - Climate Transitions, Landscapes and Environment

Poster 2.1

#157 - Rainfall erosivity in the Douro Demarcated Region (2000–2025): Implications for soil erosion in permanent crops

Presenting Author: Daniela Duarte, Geography Department, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Porto University, Portugal

Co-author: Gabriela Lima, Geography Department and Centre for Geographical Studies and Spatial Planning, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Porto University, Portugal

Co-author: Susana Pereira, Geography Department and Centre for Geographical Studies and Spatial Planning, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Porto University, Portugal

Abstract:

Rainfall erosivity (R factor) plays a central role in soil water erosion processes and is one of the main factors in the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE). The R factor represents the average potential of rainfall to cause erosion by integrating the intensity, duration, and volume of precipitation events. Higher R values indicate greater soil detachment capacity and soil erosion. This factor is expressed in $\text{MJ}\cdot\text{mm}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$ and is calculated from the multiannual average of the sum of the EI_{30} indices of erosive events.

This study aims to assess rainfall erosivity and its potential impact on soil water erosion in three experimental areas in the Douro Demarcated Region: Quinta do Seixo, Quinta do Bonfim, and Fundação da Casa de Mateus, for the period between 2000 and 2025. These areas, dominated by permanent crops, namely vineyards, present topographic and climatic conditions that are conducive to the occurrence of erosive processes.

The R factor was calculated using precipitation time series from E-OBS (daily data) and local stations (hourly data). The combined use of hourly and daily data allowed for the characterization of the temporal variability of precipitation and the identification of high-intensity events responsible for peaks in erosivity. The results show that hourly series better capture rainfall extremes, leading to higher R values, whereas the exclusive use of daily data tends to smooth rainfall intensities and underestimate erosivity, introducing a negative bias in the assessment of erosion risk.

Keywords:

Rainfall erosivity; R factor; permanent crops; Douro Demarcated Region.





Poster 2.2

#142 - Shared Socioeconomic Pathways for the Douro Wine Region

Presenting Author: Helder Fraga, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: Nathalie Guimarães, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: Nazaret Crespo, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: António Fernandes, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: João Santos, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Abstract:

Climate change is projected to induce substantial modifications in viticultural systems across traditional wine-producing regions, including the Douro Winemaking Region (DWR) in northern Portugal. This study quantifies the potential impacts of future climate conditions on key viticultural variables—grapevine yield, phenological development, and potential alcohol content—using an ensemble of high-resolution, downscaled climate simulations. Projections are evaluated relative to a recent reference period (1986–2015) and for two Shared Socioeconomic Pathway scenarios, SSP1–2.6 (low-emissions) and SSP5–8.5 (high-emissions), for the mid-21st century (2041–2070). Results show a coherent and statistically robust climate change signal across all indicators, with both the magnitude and spatial variability of impacts increasing under SSP5–8.5. Yield projections indicate a generalized decline across the DWR, on the order of -1 to -3 t ha⁻¹, with the most pronounced reductions occurring in currently high-yielding areas, particularly the Douro Superior subregion. This marked spatial heterogeneity suggests an overall increase in regional vulnerability and highlights the importance of spatially explicit adaptation strategies. Phenological analyses reveal a significant advancement of flowering dates, reaching up to approximately 30 days earlier than the reference period, especially under the high-emissions scenario. Such shifts are likely to alter grape development dynamics, increase exposure to early-season frost risk, and disrupt established vineyard management calendars. Concurrently, potential alcohol content is projected to increase across the region, exceeding +2% vol in some locations under SSP5–8.5. These increases may pose challenges to wine typicity, regulatory standards, denomination-of-origin frameworks, and quality control, thereby requiring adaptive responses at both the vineyard and winery levels to manage elevated sugar accumulation. These findings indicate substantial, spatially heterogeneous climate-driven transformations in Douro viticulture. While the low-emissions pathway may partially constrain the magnitude of these impacts, projections under SSP5–8.5 point to the need for timely and proactive adaptation measures to preserve wine quality, socioeconomic viability, and the regional identity of the DWR.

Keywords:

Climate change; Bioclimatic indicators; Soil moisture; Living Labs; High-resolution climate projections



Poster 2.3

#163 - REFLORESTA - a POCTEP innovating in the management of forest rural areas with to achieve resilience an sustainable Landscapes: the case study of Alfarela de Jales

Presenting Author: Domingos Lopes, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Leonardo Alves, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Manuel Machado, AguiarFloresta

Co-author: Marta Roboredo, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Miguel Gil, Bóreas

Abstract:

Climate change is increasing the vulnerability and severity of forest fires, a challenge further intensified by rural depopulation, land-use change, and evolving economic and agricultural practices. These pressures are particularly acute in predominantly forested cross-border regions, where strengthening territorial resilience requires an integrated approach that combines fire prevention and post-fire recovery.

REFLORESTA addresses these challenges through innovative, science-based solutions. In the field of prevention, the project applies artificial intelligence techniques to identify vulnerabilities and high-risk areas by integrating meteorological, environmental, and territorial variables with fire records from the past 40 years. This approach improves risk assessments and incorporates weather forecasts, enabling operational services to anticipate fire behavior and implement preventive measures more effectively.

Post-fire recovery focuses on creating landscapes that are more resilient to climate change and future fire events. Hydraulic modeling is used to minimize soil erosion and ash runoff into watercourses, while satellite- and drone-based remote sensing enables rapid, high-precision damage assessments. These tools support the development of ecosystem-based recovery plans that promote sustainable landscape restoration.

Cross-border cooperation is a core pillar of REFLORESTA. By bringing together teams from Portugal and Spain under the coordination of the Junta de Andalucía, the project benefits from shared expertise and diverse pilot areas representing different ecosystems. Study areas have been established to test technologies, governance tools, and management approaches under real-world conditions.

In northern inland Portugal, a pilot area was established in Alfarela de Jales, within the municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar. A former pine monoculture was redesigned into a diversified landscape, demonstrating that production and protection forests can coexist. Nature-based engineering solutions were applied to reduce erosion, riparian vegetation was restored, and native species were introduced to enhance ecological resilience. Early results confirm the viability of integrated landscape design and the positive role of technology in achieving balanced economic and environmental outcomes.

Financiamento:

Projeto 0121_REFLORESTA_6_E – REFLORESTA - Innovación tecnológica, social y en gobernanza para mejorar la prevención y acelerar la recuperación de los ecosistemas y paisajes afectados por incendio, co-financiado por Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) através do Programa de Cooperação Interreg VI-A Espanha-Portugal (POCTEP) 2021-2027.

Keywords:

Forest ecosystem recovery; Pos-fire recovery; landscape design;



Poster 2.4

#183 - High-resolution bioclimatic indicators for assessing climate change impacts on soils across European Living Labs

Presenting Author: Nathalie Guimarães, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: Helder Fraga, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: Nazaret Crespo, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: António Fernandes, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Co-author: João Santos, Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB), Institute for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Sustainability of Agri-Food Production (Inov4Agro), University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), P.O. Box 1013, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal

Abstract:

Climate change is projected to induce substantial modifications in viticultural systems across traditional wine-producing regions, including the Douro Winemaking Region (DWR) in northern Portugal. This study quantifies the potential impacts of future climate conditions on key viticultural variables—grapevine yield, phenological development, and potential alcohol content—using an ensemble of high-resolution, downscaled climate simulations. Projections are evaluated relative to a recent reference period (1986–2015) and for two Shared Socioeconomic Pathway scenarios, SSP1–2.6 (low-emissions) and SSP5–8.5 (high-emissions), for the mid-21st century (2041–2070). Results show a coherent and statistically robust climate change signal across all indicators, with both the magnitude and spatial variability of impacts increasing under SSP5–8.5. Yield projections indicate a generalized decline across the DWR, on the order of -1 to -3 t ha⁻¹, with the most pronounced reductions occurring in currently high-yielding areas, particularly the Douro Superior subregion. This marked spatial heterogeneity suggests an overall increase in regional vulnerability and highlights the importance of spatially explicit adaptation strategies. Phenological analyses reveal a significant advancement of flowering dates, reaching up to approximately 30 days earlier than the reference period, especially under the high-emissions scenario. Such shifts are likely to alter grape development dynamics, increase exposure to early-season frost risk, and disrupt established vineyard management calendars. Potential alcohol content is projected to increase across the region, exceeding +2% vol in some locations under SSP5–8.5. These increases may pose challenges to wine typicity, regulatory standards, denomination-of-origin frameworks, and quality control, thereby requiring adaptive responses at both the vineyard and winery levels to manage elevated sugar accumulation. While the low-emissions pathway may partially constrain the magnitude of these impacts, projections under SSP5–8.5 point to the need for timely and proactive adaptation measures to preserve wine quality, socioeconomic viability, and the regional identity of the DWR. Este trabalho foi financiado pela FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia project WaterQB 2022.04553.PTDC (<https://doi.org/10.54499/2022.04553.PTDC>).

Keywords:

Climate change; Douro Valley; High-resolution; climate projections; winemaking



Poster 2.5

#197 - Post-fire recovery pathways in Mediterranean environments under climate change

Presenting Author: Leonardo Alves, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Domingos Lopes, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Tiago Monteiro-Henriques, Universidade de Helsinki

Co-author: Marta Roboredo, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Co-author: Duarte Marques; AguiarFloresta

Abstract:

Mediterranean rural landscapes are increasingly shaped by climate-driven disturbances, with wildfires increasingly influencing soil processes, vegetation dynamics and ecosystem resilience. In fire-prone regions, post-fire recovery is no longer a purely technical issue, but a key component of climate adaptation strategies aimed at sustaining landscape functionality and environmental stability. This study explores post-fire intervention practices implemented in a burned rural area of northern Portugal, examining their ecological relevance within broader climate transitions affecting Mediterranean environments.

The research is developed within the framework of the REFLORESTA project, a restoration-oriented initiative focused on supporting the recovery of degraded rural landscapes through adaptive and context-specific management approaches. An experimental setting was established in a recently burned area, where different post-fire practices were applied under comparable environmental conditions. Initial soil assessments revealed the presence of chemical constraints that may limit natural regeneration processes, drawing attention to the need for interventions that improve soil functioning, enhance surface protection and reduce erosion vulnerability, rather than prioritising biomass recovery alone.

The implemented practices include contrasting approaches such as soil amendments, organic surface cover and assisted revegetation, alongside untreated reference areas. Monitoring activities combine soil chemical indicators, proxies of biological activity and field-based vegetation surveys, allowing an integrated interpretation of early ecosystem responses while recognising the longer temporal scales required for landscape-level recovery. By framing post-fire management within ongoing climate transitions currently affecting Mediterranean rural areas, this study contributes to discussions on adaptive land management and environmental resilience. Rather than offering prescriptive solutions, it aims to support informed decision-making for post-fire strategies that enhance soil stability and promote the sustainable functioning of rural landscapes under increasing wildfire pressure.

Keywords:

climate transitions; post-fire landscapes; soil-vegetation interactions; Mediterranean environments; rural resilience





Poster 2.6

#199 - Protected area brands and their effects on companies. A contribution to sustainability?

Presenting Author: Andreas Voth, Department of Geography, RWTH Aachen University (Germany)

Co-author: Rocío Rodríguez Soler, Department of Geography, RWTH Aachen University (Germany)

Abstract:

Over the past few decades, the number, type and size of protected areas in Europe has grown significantly. The objectives of nature conservation are becoming increasingly linked to those of regional development. In this way, protected area policy has therefore shifted from a conservative paradigm to a more integrative one, paying more attention to the inclusion of people who carry out economic activities in protected areas. Within this more inclusive perspective, protected area brands have been created and consolidated in several European countries. These brands tend to promote the sustainability of the areas in which they operate, which are mainly rural regions. They usually offer products and/or services developed by entrepreneurs or companies in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Despite the growing number of protected area brands, research on this topic and the impact of the brands has been limited so far. This study aims to analyse effects of these brands on companies and their contribution to sustainability. To this end, 4 case studies have been selected from Portugal, France, and Spain. A mixed inductive-deductive approach based on interviews was carried out, with subsequent comparative analysis. The results indicate that protected area brands can contribute to create networks or improve communication between companies and the brand managers, who may be the park administrations or parallel institutions. However, some companies didn't identify sustainable effects linked to these brands as an impact for themselves, even if they had to implement changes in their processes. Protected area brands can contribute to create networks or improve communication between companies and the brand managers, who may be the park administrations or parallel institutions. These findings can serve as a basis for future improvements in the framework of these brands, both for managers and users of the brands.

Keywords:

protected areas, brands, sustainability, rural areas, local development





Poster 2.7

#203 - Species-Rich Hay Meadows under Climate Transition: Environmental Conditions and Landscape Implications in Rural Baden-Württemberg

Presenting Author: Rajina Bajracharya, Institute of Rural Studies of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institute, Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries

Co-author: Leonie Ratzke, Institute of Rural Studies of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institute, Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries

Co-author: Norbert Röder, Institute of Rural Studies of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institute, Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries

Co-author: Nicolas Schoof, LUBW Landesanstalt für Umwelt

Abstract:

Species-rich hay meadows also known as Flora Fauna Habitat (FFH) types namely Lowland and Mountain hay meadows, are key components of Central European rural landscapes, shaped by long-term low-intensity fertilization and management and now threatened by both agricultural change and climatic transitions. Their persistence reflects not only biophysical site characteristics but also broader landscape processes linked to rural depopulation, farm restructuring, and altered management intensity. This study examines how environmental and climatic conditions structure the distribution and degree of conservation status (A–C) of species-rich hay meadows in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Using measured spatial data from different sources on soil productivity, pH, water conditions, slope aspect, and background ammonia concentrations, combined with multi-decadal climatic averages (1961–1990; 1991–2020), we analysed site characteristics, climatic envelopes, distinguished by the habitat types and degrees of conservation. The representativeness of the variable ranges relative to the wider permanent grassland landscape was also analyzed. Results show that high-quality meadows persist mainly on moderately fertile, base-rich soils with mesic water regimes and low nitrogen pressure. Climatic comparison reveals a systematic warming trend, indicating a gradual displacement of conditions historically associated with the best conservation status. Species-rich hay meadows exemplify how climate transitions intersect with rural land-use change, emphasizing the need for adaptive conservation policies and targeted agri-environmental measures to sustain biodiversity in multifunctional landscapes.

Keywords:

Species-rich hay meadows; Climate transition; Rural landscapes; Grassland conservation





Theme 3 - Social Vulnerabilities and Opportunities Underlying Rural Transformations: Communities, Cultures and Identities

Poster 3.1

#46 - The rural community preparedness and wildfire risk: evidence from a national community-based programme in Arouca (Portugal)

Presenting Author: Célia Figueiras, Barcelos City Hall

Co-author: Diogo Miguel Pinto, University of Porto, CEGOT

Abstract:

Reducing the risk of rural wildfires increasingly depends on community preparedness, providing locally relevant information to rural populations, and effective coordination among institutions. In this context, this exploratory study analyses how territorial diagnostics can support the local implementation of the Portuguese Safe Village, Safe People programme, using the municipality of Arouca as a case study. Secondary data at national and regional levels, including land use, digital terrain models, road networks, burned areas, ignition points, and official rural wildfire hazard mapping, were integrated and analysed within a GIS environment.

The spatial operations used were clipping the layers of hazards, intersecting the land use with the ignition points, making measurements of the distance from features, and buffer-based (50 m, 100 m, and 500 m) evaluations around the three communities that have been locally integrated into the ASPS programme (Paradinha, Serabigões, and Vila Nova/Alvarenga). The performed analyses sought to determine exposure patterns, the spatial distribution of ignitions, and the historical occurrence of burned areas in the neighbouring territories. The findings delineate significant differences within the municipality in terms of wildfire risk and exposure. Paradinha represents a rather challenging situation, as 86% of the surrounding area is considered to be at very high risk (and approximately 93% at high or very high risk). On the other hand, Serabigões and Vila Nova show different mixes of fire hazard levels, ignition density, and burnt areas in the analysed buffers.

These differences reveal the shortcomings of one-size-fits-all community preparedness programs and emphasise the need for localised approaches taking into account each rural community's social and physical environment. Based on this, the research investigates the use of geo-referenced data to enhance the role of rural communities, local authorities, and emergency services in increasing preparedness, improving risk awareness, and making informed decisions based on facts and data.

Keywords:

Rural communities; Wildfire risk; Community preparedness; Place-based approaches; Portugal





Poster 3.2

#125 - Food Access Is Governed Before Markets: Women's Lived Experiences Negotiating Inequalities in Rural Bihar, India

Presenting Author: Shriya Bajaj, University of Sheffield, UK

Abstract:

Nutrient-dense foods (NDFs), such as fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, and dairy, are primarily accessed through markets in rural India. Because these foods are perishable, they require frequent procurement, making physical access to food acquisition sites especially important. In food and nutrition policy debates in low-and middle-income countries, access is often framed in terms of distance, availability, affordability, and market integration. This paper argues that such framings overlook how access is shaped well before NDFs are purchased and reach the market, examining the various spaces women navigate and how different inequalities influence each space and access to NDFs.

Drawing on qualitative fieldwork with women in rural Bihar, India, this study conceptualises food access as a process unfolding across interconnected spaces. This paper focuses on two such spaces: the household and the journey to markets. Within households, decisions about procuring NDFs are negotiated through authority, control over resources, planning of market visits, and social norms. Beyond the household, the journey to markets emerges as a critical site where gender and caste norms shape how remoteness is produced and negotiated, intersecting with infrastructural unevenness and environmental conditions. Extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall and heat, further intensify these inequalities by constraining mobility and increasing physical and social risks.

Reframing food access as a lived, relational process shows how women's everyday practices are shaped by social and spatial inequalities, positioning access itself as a key site of inequality within everyday foodways.

Keywords:

Food access, inequality, gender, rural



Poster 3.3

#153 - Qingtian Project: Socially Engaged Art and Geographical Imagination in rural China

Presenting Author: Wantong Zhang, University of Leicester

Abstract:

Over the past two decades, an increasing number of Chinese artists have moved from urban centres into rural areas to initiate socially engaged art projects. Although considerable art-historical research exists on this phenomenon, few studies have offered theoretical frameworks to elucidate the relationship between socially engaged art and rural places, nor have they summarised the enduring impact on local communities following the conclusion of project cycles. Drawing on assemblage thinking, this paper examines artist Qu Yan's five-year "Qingtian Project" (2016–2020) in Qingtian Village, Shunde District, Guangdong Province. It explores how artistic practice facilitated the exchange of cultural and economic value among villagers, local government, university platforms, non-profit organisations, and local enterprises, ultimately forming a trans-local assemblage. To obtain deeper, context- and experience-driven data, this paper employed qualitative research methods. Data sources include semi-structured interviews, on-site observations, and archival analysis. This paper elucidates how a remote village, through the recoding of geographical imaginations, was reshaped into an experiential, accessible, and replicable 'Lingnan Water Town' via practices such as ancient building restoration, folk activities, and art festivals. During this period, as residents navigated the regime of power, Qingtian transformed from a dispersed entity into a structured, institutionalised, and trans-local place. Crucially, it examines how heterogeneous material and expressive components continue to assemble and generate within this small village years after the project's conclusion, through ongoing study tours and the formation of an arts district.

Keywords:

Socially engaged art, place-making, assemblage, rural revitalisation



Poster 3.4

#225 - Anticipating Change: Mental Health and Social Vulnerability in the Planning Phase of Rural Transformations

Presenting Author: Chantal van der Sluis, University of Groningen & Hanze University of Applied Sciences

Co-author: Hiska Ubels, Hanze University of Applied Sciences

Co-author: Bettina Bock, University of Groningen

Co-author: Elles Bulder, Hanze University of Applied Sciences

Abstract:

Across Europe, rural areas are increasingly subject to large-scale spatial transformation plans related to energy transitions, climate adaptation and landscape restructuring. Existing research has largely focused on the social and health impacts of such transformations after physical changes have taken place. This paper shifts attention to an earlier and less examined stage: the planning phase, in which we explore to what extent future scenarios, visualisations and participatory processes already may affect residents' wellbeing in a rural context.

Using the rural case study of Oostpolder, a large-scale industrial port expansion in the Northern Netherlands, this paper examines how anticipated spatial changes influence mental health and wellbeing before any material transformation of the landscape has occurred. Drawing on survey data, we analyse stress-related complaints and psychological wellbeing (MHI-5) in relation to residents' perceptions of proposed changes, imagined future landscapes and their experiences with participation processes. The analysis explicitly considers moderating factors such as age, gender, place attachment and levels of residents' engagement in the planning process.

By focusing on the anticipatory health effects of rural transformation planning of the living environment, this paper contributes to debates on rural change by highlighting planning as a critical period where vulnerability arises. It argues for planning and governance approaches that recognise mental health impacts not only as outcomes of eventual physical transformations, but as integral considerations throughout the entire planning process.

Keywords:

rural transformations; planning phase; mental health; vulnerability; anticipation





Poster 3.5

#287 - Market-Oriented Agriculture, Climate Stress, and Migration: Livelihood Vulnerability in Nepal's High-Value Cash Crop Systems

Presenting Author: Ananda Raj Devkota, Australian National University

Co-author: Elles Bulder, Hanze University of Applied Sciences

Abstract:

Rural communities in Nepal are increasingly transitioning towards market-oriented livelihoods under pressures from climate variability, labour outmigration, economic globalisation, and policy shifts. High-value agriculture (HVA) is widely promoted as a pathway for poverty reduction and climate adaptation due to its potential to enhance household incomes, assets, and food security. While a growing body of literature examines climate change and labour outmigration in agrarian context, these processes are often analysed in isolation and limited attention is given to their interaction and how it reshapes the performance of HVA in reducing household vulnerability. Drawing on a mixed-methods study of large cardamom agroforestry in the mid-hills of Nepal, this paper examines how household vulnerability changes following the adoption of HVA under climate variability and labour outmigration. Using household surveys, in-depth interviews, and group discussions, the paper analyses the conditions under which HVA enhances adaptive capacity or deepens livelihood insecurity. Engaging with literature on sustainable livelihoods, agrarian transition, and boom crops, the study contests that environmentally friendly high-value crops do not necessarily provide sustainable pathways for livelihood improvement. The findings show that many households continue to experience livelihood 'precarity' shaped by interacting structural factors – climate stress, economic globalisation, demographic change, and state policy – and relational conditions embedded in commodity chain power structures. Outcomes from HVA are highly uneven: asset-endowed households are better able to improve their livelihoods through hybrid strategies combining traditional agriculture, farm diversification, and migration, while middle- and poor-income households remain in a "hanging in" position, reliant on small-scale cash cropping, subsistence farming, and low-return migration. Social differentiation is further reinforced as Poor and Very Poor households, Dalits, female-headed households, and land-poor farmers derive limited or no benefits from HVA. The paper concludes that structural and institutional context significantly limit the effectiveness of HVA as an adaptation strategy.

Keywords:

Differentiated vulnerability, relational vulnerability, cash crops, livelihoods precarity





Poster 3.6

#288 - Bwyd Da a Llysiau Lleol *: addressing rural food vulnerabilities through transformational policy, embedded community action, partnerships and meaningful social enterprise.

Presenting Author: Dr Eifiona Thomas Lane, Prifysgol Bangor University, Wales

Co-author: Dr Rebecca Jones, Prifysgol Bangor University, Wales

Abstract:

This paper discusses a range of innovative food based community development (*Good Food and Local Vegetables) that result in multiple outcomes such as Carbon savings, improved food access and capacity building all of which can be mapped against the cross cutting innovative policy imperative of Welsh Government's seven Future Wellbeing Goals. This legal commitment to sustainable development is a transformational policy that directly interprets the United Nations Sustainable Development goals through influencing the delivery of devolved statutory services by the public and voluntary sectors in Wales since 2004. The recently implemented strategic vision for Community Foods funded >£2 M across Wales is clear in its innovative approach to funding partnership to address food vulnerabilities and developing livelihoods in the community sector. However it may be suggested, that governance vision of supporting opportunities to grow community scale localized productivity which improves access to fresh food for some, is not reinforced by wider rural land use and agri-food policy which continues to weaken re-localization of local supply chains and markets through mainstream farming outcomes.

The food based case studies presented in this paper, are rooted in traditional rural communities within traditional agricultural landscapes heavily influenced by seasonal tourism, with deep values of cultural identity and sense of belonging, which this research argues, both facilitate and enabling targeting and participative localized development of successful partnerships and innovative co-designed activities common.

Drawing from the discourses that arise from the stakeholders involved, the nature of the communities involved, their aspirations and geographies are discussed within the context of public sector cuts, lack of resources and sparse potential of private sector contribution. This increasingly challenging context exacerbates longer term growth of existing community projects and delivering organizations which are seeking to maintain rural places and embedded social capital of through community focused entrepreneurship.

Keywords:

Local food access, community food, devolved governance, Future Wellbeing Goals Wales





Poster 3.7

#322 - Migrant Entrepreneurship in the Peripheral Rural Region of Podlaskie Voivodeship in Poland

Presenting Author: Aliaksandra Sidarava, Stanisław Leszczycki Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization
Polish Academy of Sciences

Abstract:

Peripheral regions in Central and Eastern Europe are frequently framed within the discourse of “left-behindness,” characterized by demographic decline, limited economic diversification, and structural marginality. But shifts in migration patterns are beginning to alter local labour markets in ways that extend beyond the major metropolitan centres. The political crisis that unfolded in Belarus in 2020 brought a noticeable increase in migration to Poland, particularly to its eastern border regions.

Although migrant entrepreneurship has been extensively studied in major cities, its significance in peripheral regions remains relatively underexplored. This gap is particularly visible in the context of Eastern Poland. Building on the framework of mixed embeddedness and the concept of economic anchoring, this paper investigates how migrant entrepreneurship takes shape in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, focusing on its organisational patterns and developmental trajectories.

The main objective is to identify the prevailing patterns of economic adaptation among Belarusian migrants in a peripheral setting and to determine whether their entrepreneurial activity is driven primarily by necessity or by opportunity.

It draws on quantitative analysis of administrative and statistical data, including business registrations, sectoral distribution according to the PKD classification, and changes in legal forms of economic activity between 2018 and 2025. By comparing the periods before and after 2020, the paper aims to capture potential structural shifts in market orientation.

Taken together, these observations add nuance to ongoing discussions about so-called “left-behind” regions. Rather than simply reproducing existing economic limitations, migrant entrepreneurship in Podlaskie seems to both reinforce and subtly reshape local structures. This suggests that processes of innovation and diversification are not exclusively metropolitan phenomena, but can also emerge within peripheral settings.

Keywords:

migrant entrepreneurship, left-behind regions, economic anchoring, regional resilience





Theme 4 - Social and Spatial Inequalities in Rural Areas

Poster 4.1

#59 - Visualizing Conflicts of Interest in a Regional Newspaper (Example of Izola, SW Slovenia)

Presenting Author: Špela Guštin, not affiliated

Abstract:

Conflicts of interest in rural areas are a contemporary issue often covered in the media. However, the conflicts are complex and difficult to describe, let alone capture their essence in photographs, often part of newspaper articles. Newspaper photo editors decide based on personal judgment, newsroom norms, and publisher pressure (Bissell 2000; Seelig 2005), so every published photo reflects a selective rather than objective reality (Bissell 2000, p. 92). We were interested in how photographs in a regional newspaper represent conflicts of interest in rural areas of Izola Municipality (SW Slovenia, 28 km²). We used Atlas.ti for content analysis (Chapman et al., 2016) of 125 photos from 87 newspaper articles on 21 rural conflicts in the Municipality of Izola (Guštin & Potočnik Slavič, 2015), published in a regional newspaper between 2008-2014 to allow comparison with conflict analysis from the same period. Most photos (73 %) were taken outdoors. Of the 125 photographs, 37 show an object (building, road, vehicle), 32 show people (mostly men), 24 show a construction site, 16 show a landscape or a settlement, and 16 show the location of the planned intervention or a graphic representation of the location. The photographs vary depending on the cause of the conflict. Three individuals (two photographers and one journalist) created 66 % of all photos. When we look at newspaper photos, we see formal representations (Halfacree, 2006) of a rural area being shaped by a few individuals (the “visual elite”; Seelig, 2005). These photos can influence the pictures (mental models) we have in our heads (the everyday lives of the rural; Halfacree, 2006). The gap between real life and this selective newspaper reality can generate further conflicts. Moreover, the shift from outdoor to indoor photos could be an indicator of a change in conflict intensity.

Bissell, K.L. (2000) A Return to ‘Mr. Gates’: Photography and Objectivity. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 21(3) pp. 81-93.

Chapman, M.V., S. Wu and M. Zhu (2016) What is a picture worth? A primer for coding and interpreting photographic data. *Qualitative Social Work*, 16(6) pp. 810-824.

Guštin, Š. and I. Potočnik Slavič (2015) Prepoznavanje in prostorska razmestitev konfliktov na podeželju. *Geografski vestnik*, 85(1) pp. 81-101.

Halfacree, K. (2006) Rural Space: Constructing a Three-Fold Architecture. Pp. 44-62 in P. Cloke, T. Marsden and P. Mooney eds., *Handbook of rural studies* (London: Sage).

Seelig, M. (2005) A Case for the Visual Elite. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 12(3-4) pp. 164-181.

Keywords:

Conflicts of interests, newspapers, content analysis, photographs, Slovenia



Poster 4.2

#202 - Social and Spatial Inequalities in Rural Labour Markets: A Qualitative Perspective on Local Resilience in Poland

Presenting Author: Krystian Koliński, Faculty of Human Geography and Planning, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Abstract:

Rural labour markets are shaped by long-term structural disadvantages related to spatial peripherality, limited accessibility, and uneven access to institutional and economic resources. These factors contribute to persistent social and spatial inequalities, which are further intensified by external shocks such as economic crises or demographic decline. Despite the growing interest in labour market resilience, qualitative, place-based studies at the local level remain underrepresented.

This paper aims to explore how social and spatial inequalities influence the resilience of small local labour markets in rural areas. The analysis is based on qualitative research conducted in four small local labour markets in Poland, selected to represent contrasting spatial contexts and extreme levels of resilience potential. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews (IDI) with key local stakeholders, including representatives of local governments, labour market institutions, employers, and development actors.

The results reveal that spatial inequalities are closely linked to the position of local labour markets within broader regional systems. Markets functionally connected to nearby urban centres demonstrate higher adaptive capacity due to better access to human capital, diversified employment structures, and institutional networks. In contrast, more isolated rural areas experience cumulative disadvantages, including weaker governance coordination, limited labour mobility, and restricted stakeholder cooperation, reinforcing social vulnerability and labour market exclusion.

The findings highlight the importance of spatial context and local governance in shaping rural labour market resilience. Qualitative approaches are essential for understanding how social and spatial inequalities are produced and mitigated at the local level, providing valuable insights for place-based rural and labour market policies.

Keywords:

rural labour markets; social and spatial inequalities; resilience; local governance; qualitative research





Poster 4.3

#210 - Comparing Social Inclusion Challenges in Rural Europe: Insights from Four RUSTIK Living Labs

Presenting Author: Carla Wember, Institute for Rural Development Research (IfLS)

Co-author: Svea Thietje, Institute for Rural Development Research (IfLS)

Co-author: Sarah Peter, Institute for Rural Development Research (IfLS)

Abstract:

Social and spatial inequalities are increasingly shaping rural development trajectories across Europe, yet they manifest differently depending on local demographic, socio-economic and governance contexts. Within the Horizon Europe project RUSTIK, four Living Labs addressed distinct social inclusion challenges in rural regions: Rhein-Hunsrück (Germany) explored how young people's needs and perceived barriers shape access to education and the labour market, and how mismatches with employers can marginalise some groups. North Karelia (Finland) addressed immigrant integration in the context of new municipal responsibilities. Monmouthshire (Wales) examined youth out-migration by investigating what influences younger working-age residents' willingness to stay in or return to the county, including inequalities in access to transport, services and opportunities. Osrednjeslovenska (Slovenia) approached social inclusion through food waste and food redistribution, examining how redistribution models relate to dignity, wellbeing and inclusion of vulnerable groups. All Living Labs applied participatory methodologies using mixed methods, including surveys, qualitative interviews, workshops and stakeholder co-creation, allowing for methodological flexibility and adaptation to local needs. The comparison shows that, despite addressing different target groups and policy contexts, all Living Labs encountered similar structural issues such as demographic change, limited access to services and the under-representation of certain groups in decision-making. A key commonality was the importance of qualitative, experience-based knowledge to better understand exclusion mechanisms. Trusted intermediaries (e.g. NGOs, schools or local authorities) played a crucial role in reaching hard-to-reach groups and building trust. Differences emerged in governance arrangements, the role of public administrations and the extent to which policy frameworks acted as drivers or constraints. Methodological choices also varied, reflecting differences in target groups and data availability. The findings underline that addressing rural social inequalities requires context-sensitive, participatory and flexible approaches. Living Labs offer a valuable framework for comparing diverse inclusion challenges while generating transferable lessons for socially just rural development.

Keywords:

Social inclusion; rural inequalities; Living Labs; participatory approaches; rural transitions





Poster 4.4

#242 - Gold-silver mining extraction versus heritage preservation in the Carpathian Mountains: A case study of the socio-environmental conflict in Roşia Montană, Romania.

Presenting Author: Ilinca-Valentina Stoica, University of Bucharest, Romania

Co-author: Daniela Zamfir, University of Bucharest, Romania

Co-author: Athanasios-Alexandru Gavrilidis, University of Bucharest, Romania

Co-author: Marie Houdart, French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), France

Abstract:

The Carpathian Mountains have a long history of exploiting underground resources, which dates back to ancient times. More recently, during the communist era, there was extensive large-scale resource extraction. After the fall of communism, significant restructuring occurred, leading to the closure of many mining operations. This study tackles a case study from the Western Carpathians, where a company with international roots proposed a controversial open-pit gold and silver mining project using cyanide more than two decades ago. The projected impacts include environmental issues, the loss of cultural heritage, including ancient Roman mining works, and the relocation of population. This research aims to investigate the evolution of the socio-environmental conflict in Roşia Montană by examining its broader implications, the multi-level actors involved, their actions, and overall management. The methodology includes investigating national policies and analysing relevant reports, legislative acts, and media coverage over several decades. The results summarise the key moments and perspectives of the main actors involved, including the corporation, the local community, civil society, and political groups. Starting in 2000, a movement against the mining project formed, led by some residents who established an NGO. Over the years, this initiative gained both national and international support, ultimately becoming the largest civil society movement in Romania since the fall of communism. In the face of strong opposition, draft bills for mining operations were rejected, and many decisions were overturned in court at both the national and international levels. A significant milestone in this struggle was the inclusion of the Roşia Montană mining landscape on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2021, effectively halting mining prospects in the area. This paper problematises a rural, mountainous area viewed by central decision-makers as a strategic resource, highlighting the conflict between heritage conservation and exploitation.

Keywords:

conflict, multi-level actors, resource exploitation, civil society movement, heritage conservation



Theme 5 - The Role of Creative Villages in the Sustainability of Rural Territories

Poster 5.1

#111 - Community Planning Innovation for the Use of Buildings in Renewing Rural Settlements

Presenting Author: Zeevik Greenberg, Center of Rural Studies Tel-Hai College

Abstract:

Main objective: This presentation proposes a unique operational model for a building of community and cultural significance that is empty and neglected. We will demonstrate how it can be renewed and operated according to an economic-community model that transforms it into an active social and community center for diverse populations in the rural settlement.

Methodology: The model we present is based on interviews with twenty-five local leaders and community members, responsible for various community areas, who constitute the community's current management backbone. In addition, we also interviewed members without official positions.

Results: We presented a proposal to redesign the building to meet the needs of the renewing community, including both local rural residents and new counter-urbanization migrants. The building will serve as a multipurpose community center that hosts permanent social and economic activities that vary throughout the day. The innovation in this model is that underlies its operation and ensures long-term sustainability for the building and its activities.

The model connects three growth engines: (1) social level, renting rooms for community activities; (2) educational level, renting buildings for teaching needs and youth activities use education budgets; (3) and during morning for the local business sector operates—renting workrooms, meeting rooms, business activity space, at costs that will enable local entrepreneurs to use and operate in the space.

Conclusions: This combination of needs will provide solutions such as a classroom and a senior citizens' club that transforms into a café in the evening, along with multipurpose spaces that enable classes, workshops, group meetings, and even individual workrooms. This model ensures the preservation of its unique character and the renewal of its significance as an active and initiating community center, with the economic capacity to operate and sustain itself, and with social and economic viability.

Keywords:

Community Innovation, Sustainability, Community Plan, Social Needs





Poster 5.2

#313 - Creative Villages as Place-Based Tourism Products: Community-Led Initiatives in the Network of the Most Interesting Villages in Poland

Presenting Author: Marcin Wojci, Faculty of Geographical Sciences, University of Lodz, Lodz, Poland

Abstract:

Introduction, Objectives and Methodology

The concept of creative villages has gained importance in rural studies as an expression of place-based development and community-led innovation. In Poland, the Network of the Most Interesting Villages supports bottom-up initiatives aimed at transforming local resources into distinctive tourism products. The objective of this study is to analyse community-led initiatives functioning as place-based tourism products, to develop a typology of these initiatives, and to identify the creative ideas generated by local communities. The research is based on qualitative methods, including document analysis, field observations, and comparative case studies of selected villages belonging to the network.

Results and Discussion

The results show that community-led initiatives are highly diverse and deeply embedded in local cultural heritage, landscape assets, and social narratives. The proposed typology distinguishes heritage-based initiatives, experiential and educational tourism products, thematic villages, and storytelling-oriented place concepts. Local creativity is expressed through the reinterpretation of endogenous resources and the active involvement of residents in designing tourism experiences. These initiatives contribute to the diversification of rural tourism and strengthen local identity, social capital, and place attachment. Network-based cooperation plays an important role in increasing visibility and supporting the development of local tourism products.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that creative, community-led initiatives are a key element of place-based tourism development in rural areas. The proposed typology provides a useful framework for understanding how local ideas are transformed into tourism products and may support policies promoting creative and sustainable rural development.

Keywords:

creative villages; community-led initiatives; place-based development; rural tourism; social innovation





Theme 6 - Impact of tourism, heritage and creative economies on rural areas

There are no posters on this topic.



Theme 7 - Governance and Planning in Rural Areas

Poster 7.1

#169 - Public Management Models in Polish Suburban Areas: Social Perceptions and Implications for Smart Suburbs

Presenting Author: Jadwiga Biegańska, Department of Urban Studies and Sustainable Development, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

Co-author: Elżbieta Grzelak-Kostulska, Department of Urban Studies and Sustainable Development, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

Co-author: Stefania Środa-Murawska, Department of Urban Studies and Sustainable Development, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

Abstract:

Suburban zones in Poland have been undergoing dynamic transformations for over two decades, as a result of which they have acquired many characteristics typical of highly urbanised areas, including social, functional, and infrastructural features. These processes have been accompanied by numerous challenges, among which public management has become a particularly significant issue. Owing to their in-migration-driven development, suburban zones are especially predisposed to changes in governance, notably in the implementation of innovative solutions that actively involve residents in decision-making processes.

The aim of this study is to analyse the social perception of public management models in suburban zones in Poland and to identify factors differentiating these perceptions. It is based on the results of a nationwide survey conducted among residents of suburban areas. The authors assumed that the effectiveness of implementing smart solutions—including e-planning tools that utilise modern information and communication technologies across all stages of the planning process—depends to a significant extent on both the prevailing public management model and its social acceptance.

The results of the analyses confirm the existence of a relationship between the perceived management model and residents' social characteristics, such as openness to innovation or, conversely, conservative attitudes. The findings highlight the crucial role of social factors in shaping the effectiveness of smart concept implementation in suburban areas.

Keywords:

Poland, suburban zones, public management model, smart suburbs, social perception.





Poster 7.2

#170 - Innovative Pro-Environmental Technologies and Public Management Models: A Case Study of Polish Suburban Zones

Presenting Author: Elżbieta Grzelak-Kostulska, Department of Urban Studies and Sustainable Development, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

Co-author: Jadwiga Biegańska, Department of Urban Studies and Sustainable Development, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

Abstract:

Long-term research on suburban zones suggests that, similarly to urban areas, they are also likely to evolve into smart spaces. In this context, a smart city is understood broadly as an urban region in which suburban zones constitute a key component alongside large cities. However, while cities function as innovation centers where new technologies are readily implemented, their diffusion in suburban zones is typically slower and more heterogeneous. This is particularly evident in Poland, where suburban development intensified only after the system transition.

This study examines the presence of innovative pro-environmental technologies (IPTs) in Polish suburban zones from a social research perspective, with particular attention to public management models. The analysis is based on data from a nationwide survey conducted on a representative sample of 939 respondents. The results demonstrate a strong relationship between the adoption of IPTs and the governance model applied in suburban communes. The more traditional the governance model, the less innovative the commune. It should be emphasized that the most effective public management model is one that engages all users of the space. Research indicates that the closer the approach is to participatory governance, the more effectively IPTs are implemented, in line with the principles of sustainable development.

Keywords:

Poland, suburban zones, public management model, smart suburbs, innovations.



Poster 7.3

#209 - Empowering Rural Communities Through Gamified Civic Education: A Bottom-Up Initiative

Presenting Author: Christos Politis, Q-PLAN International

Co-author: Dr. Orestis Vravosinos, University of Chicago

Co-author: Maria-Eleni Papavramidou, Free University of Berlin

Co-author: Foivos Tsiklias, Speak Up project

Abstract:

Community-led governance and participatory planning are increasingly recognised as essential for building resilience and social cohesion in rural and semi-rural areas facing demographic decline, social polarisation, and environmental pressures. This paper presents Speak-Up, a participatory, youth-driven initiative that develops a mobile phone application in the form of a quiz-based game designed to educate and empower communities on issues central to rural governance, including environmental sustainability (climate change, recycling, and plant-based behaviours), public health, migration, and social inclusion.

The main objective of the project is to enhance young people's ability to engage in informed, constructive discussions and local decision-making by providing accessible, scientifically grounded knowledge through gamified learning. Methodologically, the initiative follows a participatory research and development framework, combining co-design, iterative prototyping, and structured user testing. The core research activities include alpha and beta testing rounds aimed at gathering qualitative and quantitative feedback on user experience, learning outcomes, and potential social impact. The alpha testing phase involved 43 participants and informed key design and content improvements, while beta testing is scheduled for March–April and will focus on measuring changes in players' confidence, knowledge acquisition, and willingness to engage in democratic discussions.

Preliminary results from alpha testing indicate high user engagement and increased self-reported readiness to challenge misinformation and discriminatory narratives. By delivering critical information in a simplified and engaging format, the app helps shorten knowledge gaps and opens spaces for democratic dialogue within and beyond rural communities.

The paper concludes that Speak-Up functions not only as an educational tool but also as a transferable model for community-led digital governance initiatives. Its visibility and dissemination may inspire similar bottom-up interventions in rural areas, supporting resilient planning aligned with broader policy agendas on climate action, health, and migration. Project website: <https://www.speakupforjustice.com/>

Keywords:

Community-led governance; Rural planning and resilience; Bottom-up participation; Digital civic education; Environmental sustainability and social inclusion



Poster 7.4

#224 - Governance Models and Resilience in Agricultural Socio-Ecological Systems: A Bibliometric Review

Presenting Author: João Maurício C., CARME, Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Co-author: Maria Eduarda Fernandes, CARME, Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal

Co-author: José Palma-Oliveira, University of Lisbon, Faculty of Psychology, Portugal

Co-author: Cristina Branquinho, Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon

Abstract:

Agricultural and forestry systems function as socio-ecological systems where governance arrangements and actor behaviour interact under multiple drivers: ecological, socio-economic, and institutional, shaping resilience trajectories over time. From this perspective, resilience is not merely an ecological attribute, but an emergent property arising from the interplay between ecological processes, institutional structures, and human decision-making. Although governance is increasingly recognised as a key determinant of sustainability in rural systems, existing research remains fragmented across disciplines, concepts, and analytical scales. This study examines how changes in governance models are conceptualised in the literature on agricultural and forestry systems, which drivers are most frequently associated with these changes, and how they are linked to resilience outcomes. Methodologically, we combine a bibliometric analysis with a structured literature review based on publications retrieved from Web of Science and Scopus. The bibliometric analysis maps the intellectual structure of research on governance changes in agricultural and forestry contexts, identifying dominant themes and emerging research direction. The literature review synthesises evidence on governance change pathways such as shifts from centralised to polycentric or adaptive arrangements and the drivers triggering these transformations, including climate change, policy reforms, market incentives, and social contestation. Overall, the preliminary results show a strong emphasis on adaptive and participatory governance, alongside limited comparative evidence on causal mechanisms and context-specific trade-offs. By linking drivers of change, governance transformations, and resilience outcomes, this paper contributes a structured analytical framework with implications for rural development policy and future research on resilient rural spaces.

Keywords:

governance; agricultural systems; socio-ecological systems; resilience; sustainability





Poster 7.5

#255 - Participatory Decision-Support Tools for CAP Strategic Plans – Insights from Case Studies in the Tools4CAP Project

Presenting Author: Carla Wember, Institute for Rural Development Research

Co-author: Simone Sterly, Institute for Rural Development Research

Abstract:

The Tools4CAP project responds to the need for innovative tools that support evidence-based, inclusive decision-making within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Planning processes across European regions. Decision-making for CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) is shaped by challenges, including complex multi-level governance arrangements, limited administrative capacity, uneven data availability, time pressure, and difficulties in ensuring meaningful stakeholder participation. The Tools4CAP project identified these challenges across multiple phases of the policy cycle, particularly in translating identified needs into coherent interventions and in making transparent prioritisation choices.

In this poster, we will present the outcomes of case studies conducted in the project that used participatory decision-making methods. Firstly, we synthesise results from case studies applying the Intervention–Objective–Impact (IOI) matrix as a facilitated exercise to link interventions with objectives and expected impacts. The IOI matrix helped structure dialogue, improve transparency around coherence, and make synergies and trade-offs explicit. Yet, the process was time- and facilitation-intensive, depended on participants' familiarity with impact-based reasoning, and was constrained where evidence and data were limited. Secondly, the poster will outline results from case studies using intervention setting approaches to translate strategic aims into concrete, context-sensitive measures and clearer intervention logics. These participatory settings supported shared understanding and revealed feasibility gaps between ambitions and administrative realities. Limitations included challenges in adapting generic tool formats to diverse territorial contexts and restricted flexibility where institutional frameworks were fixed. Thirdly, we discuss a case study that tested participatory prioritisation tools to rank interventions against agreed criteria (e.g., relevance, feasibility, expected impact). These tools increased transparency and helped navigate competing interests. In some cases however, prioritisation risked oversimplifying complex policy trade-offs.

The poster highlights when participatory decision-support tools strengthen agricultural governance and where capacity, data, and institutional constraints limit their uptake and transferability.

Keywords:

CAP policy, Agriculture, Rural Stakeholder Engagement, Participatory Methods





Theme 8 - Rural-Urban Dynamics

Poster 8.1

#130 - Spatial pattern of urban-rural integration in China and the impact of geography

Presenting Author: Yurui Li, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Abstract:

Urban-rural integration (URI) is a global challenge that is highly related to inequalities, poverty, economic growth, and other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Existing research has evaluated the extent of URI and explored its influencing factors, but urban-rural linkages are seldom incorporated in evaluation systems, and geographical factors are rarely recognized as the influencing factors. We construct a URI framework including regional economy, rural development, urban-rural linkage, and urban-rural gap. Based on a dataset consisting of 1,669 counties in China in 2020, we reveal the spatial pattern of URI and find a high correlation between the spatial pattern of URI and the relief degree of land surface (RDLS). Using structural equation modeling, we discover that topography has direct ($-0.18, p < 0.001$) and indirect ($-0.17, p < 0.001$) effects on URI. The indirect negative effects are mediated through the infrastructure, and the combination of localized advantages and modern technical conditions could mitigate the negative impact of topography. Finally, we identify 742 counties as lagging regions in URI, which can be clustered into eight types. Our findings could facilitate policy designing for those countries striving for integrated and sustainable development of urban and rural areas.

Keywords:

Urban-rural integration; Relief degree of land surface; Infrastructure; Structural equation modelling; Sustainable urban and rural development patterns; Sustainable Development Goals





Theme 9 - Changes in Rural Areas Facing the Complexity of New Challenges

Poster 9.1

#167 - Good practices for the development of rural areas: case studies from Galicia and Northern Portugal

Presenting Author: José Manuel Rocha, Departamento Geografia, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Portugal

Co-author: José Rio Fernandes, Departamento Geografia, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Portugal

Abstract:

Over the last few decades, the rural population has been shrinking, rendering many areas inhospitable and leading to demographic, economic and social decline. Agriculture, which had already been in decline due to a lack of labour, became progressively transformed, with the emergence of large agricultural cooperatives and the conversion of traditional techniques into intensive, technology-based production systems.

This work focuses on “good practices” for rural areas, that is, well-defined measures and strategies aimed at promoting rural development. Experiences that have been successfully implemented, or even certain failures analysed from a learning perspective and subsequently turned into successes, can be replicated in other territories.

These practices take into account different perspectives of action: (a) innovative approaches to enhancing the productive capacity of agroforestry areas, particularly by overcoming structural barriers associated with land fragmentation; (b) an integrated territorial approach, especially a joint and synergistic vision of rural settlements and their surrounding areas at both social and productive levels; and (c) multi-level and participatory governance, involving different key stakeholders (in particular landowners, local residents, entrepreneurs and public administrations).

The implementation of good practices adds value to the territory through a set of ideas and measures that are producing positive results and are applicable within the region.

Keywords:

Not provided





Poster 9.2

#171 - Social Perception of Post-Mining Transformation in Rural Poland: Evidence from the Area of the “Adamów” Lignite Mine

Presenting Author: Ewa Szafrńska, Faculty of Geographical Sciences University of Lodz

Co-author: Joanna Petera-Zganiacz, Faculty of Geographical Sciences University of Lodz

Co-author: Danuta Dzieduszyńska, Faculty of Geographical Sciences University of Lodz

Co-author: Marta Nalej, Faculty of Geographical Sciences University of Lodz

Abstract:

The study analyses the social perception of transformation processes in rural areas affected by the functioning of the open-pit lignite mine “Adamów”, located in central Poland. The cessation of mining activities resulted not only in permanent landscape transformations, but also in profound functional, social, and economic changes influencing the living conditions of the local community.

The research focuses on the temporal dimension of social and spatial change, analysing how local inhabitants retrospectively assess transformations occurring before the establishment of the mine, during its operation, and after its closure. Additionally, the study explores expectations regarding the future development of the post-mining area.

The results contribute to a better understanding of the long-term socio-economic consequences of large-scale extractive activities and may support the planning and management of post-mining areas from the perspective of local communities.

Empirical data were collected using a survey method with the CAPI technique (Computer-Assisted Personal Interview). The research was conducted in autumn 2025 among a representative sample of 120 residents of the study area. Respondents were selected using quota sampling based on gender, age, and place of residence.

The preliminary results of the study indicate a predominantly positive assessment of the mine’s impact on the socio-economic conditions of the local population. The establishment and operation of the mine contributed to a substantial improvement in living standards, primarily through the provision of stable and relatively high-income employment, which reduced households’ dependence on agriculture as their former primary source of income.

Keywords:

post-mining areas, social perception, landscape transformation, rural communities, living conditions.



Theme 10 - Digital Transition, Innovation and Rural Infrastructures

Poster 10.1

#96 - The Just and Smart Region? Negotiating Social Justice in the Digitalization of Rural Areas

Presenting Author: Wolf, Paul Henning, Vechta Institute of Sustainability Transformation in Rural Areas (VISTRA), University of Vechta, Fellow of Hans-Boeckler-Foundation

Abstract:

In recent years, the “smart region” as a guiding vision of rural development has gained prominence, raising hopes for the potential of socio-technical innovations to enable the socio-ecological transformation in rural areas. Its development unfolds within a field of tension shaped by questions of social justice that arise from the opportunities and risks of municipal and regional development through “smart” technologies. Addressing these questions is crucial for the acceptance and success of a sustainable digital transformation. While such issues are hardly touched upon in academic discourse, their negotiation in municipal practice has so far been examined primarily with a focus on urban smart cities. Against this background, this contribution asks:

- How does the smart region strengthen equitable social participation in rural areas?
- How can the process of smart digitalization be designed in a just manner?

The contribution provides an overview of the scientific discourse on questions of (in)justice regarding the development of smart regions, drawing on the more extensive body of research on urban smart cities, situating it within a framework of theories of spatial justice. Using methods of “more-than-digital” ethnography, rural smart cities and smart regions are examined comparatively to analyse how issues of social justice manifest in the practice of local transformation and how the actors involved negotiate the often conflicting objectives of a just digital transformation. Based on the fieldwork currently in progress, conclusions for the possibility and the success of a fair and sustainable digital transition of rural areas are presented and discussed.

Keywords:

Smart Region, Spatial Justice, Digitalization, Participation





Theme 11 - New Theory and Methods in Rural Research

Poster 11.1

#34 - Combining Territorial Ecology and the Capability Approach: A Framework to Analyse Rural Sustainability

Presenting Author: BELLOM Aubéline, Université Grenoble Alpes – UMR PACTE

Abstract:

This poster presents a methodological innovation for rural research by combining Territorial Ecology with the Capability Approach to analyse how rural sustainability emerges at the intersection of material constraints and actors' ability to act. The main objective of the research is to develop and operationalise an integrated analytical framework capable of capturing both the metabolic functioning of rural territories (through resource flows, dependencies, and vulnerabilities) and the social and institutional conditions that shape individual and collective agency.

Methodologically, the framework articulates multi-scalar material flow analysis with qualitative data drawn from interviews, field observations, and documentary analysis. It is applied to an in-depth case study of the Vallée de Quint (French Alps), a small mountain territory characterised by low agricultural intensification, strong local cooperation, and long-term agroecological practices. The metabolic analysis reveals patterns of relative material autonomy, dependencies, and structural vulnerabilities, while the capability-oriented analysis highlights how collective initiatives contribute to expanding local actors' freedoms to act, particularly regarding resource management, governance, and adaptation strategies.

Results show that rural sustainability in this territory emerges from the combination of specific material configurations (reduced external inputs, diversified agroecosystems, shared infrastructures) and strong collective capabilities (mutualisation, local governance, cooperative institutions). The conclusions emphasise the relevance of this hybrid framework for rural studies, offering transferable tools to analyse, compare, and support sustainability transitions in diverse rural contexts.

Keywords:

Territorial Ecology, Capabilities, Rural Sustainability, Territorial Metabolism, Agroecological Transitions





Poster 11.2

#222 - Integrating System, Target and Transformation Knowledge through Transdisciplinary Methods: Insights from 14 Rural Living Labs in Europe

Presenting Author: Carla Wember, Institute for Rural Development Research (IfLS)

Co-author: Simone Sterly, Institute for Rural Development Research (IfLS)

Abstract:

Rural research is undergoing a profound methodological shift toward integrative, participatory and transdisciplinary approaches capable of capturing the complexity of contemporary rural transitions. The Horizon Europe project RUSTIK exemplifies this shift through a multi actor research design implemented across 14 Living Labs, where rural actors and researchers collaboratively generate and interpret data to address ecological, socioeconomic and digital transition challenges. This design reflects the triad of system, target and transformation knowledge conceptualized by Schneider and Buser: understanding current rural dynamics, co defining desirable futures, and identifying pathways to achieve them.

RUSTIK advances system knowledge through innovative spatial and quantitative methods, including participatory GIS, data scraping for real time territorial datasets, and the integration of high-resolution Copernicus environmental layers. Living Labs also co-develop new local indicators and conduct mixed method data experiments to reveal functional linkages, vulnerabilities and assets within rural territories.

Target knowledge emerges through the collaborative development of Transition Narratives and Theory of Change frameworks, enabling stakeholders to articulate shared goals and clarify assumptions underlying desired rural futures.

To support transformation knowledge, RUSTIK experiments with agent-based land use modelling, participatory policy learning, and decentralized rural proofing in selected regions, offering actionable insights into how policies and governance arrangements can better align with rural needs and opportunities.

By integrating these three knowledge types within a co-creative methodological framework, RUSTIK demonstrates how theoretical renewal and methodological innovation can produce more inclusive, context sensitive and future oriented understandings of rural change, contributing to the reinvention of rural spaces in a rapidly evolving world.

Keywords:

Transdisciplinary research, rural sustainability, Living Labs, digital transition, socio-ecological resilience





Theme 12 - Sustainable Development Goals and Synergies for Rural Areas

Poster 12.1

#263 - SDG interconnections through indigenous knowledge and climate smart technologies – a case of rural Malawi

Presenting Author: Adwoa Serwaa Ofori, University College Dublin

Co-author: Karen Keaveney, University College Dublin

Co-author: Miriam Kalanda-Joshua, University of Malawi

Abstract:

The impacts of climate change and variability pose significant challenges to food security in much of rural Africa where there is a heavy reliance on rainfed agriculture. Thus where adaptation is concerned, safeguarding food security and building resilience in farming practices can be problematic for rural smallholder farmers. There are useful climate smart agricultural technologies but the extent of uptake of these by rural farmers is oftentimes the challenge. Indigenous/traditional and local knowledge and practices are also valuable however there is limited recognition in such regard, despite many rural smallholder farmers having acquired the knowledge and practices through their forefathers and engagement with nature. This paper emerges from an ongoing project on integrating indigenous and traditional knowledge with climate smart agricultural technologies for sustainable food production in Malawi. The study examines how the blend of traditional, indigenous practices with climate smart approaches assists farmers to secure their food supply amid changing conditions and in so doing, highlights the interconnections forged between a number of sustainable development goals such as SDGs 2, 3, 5 and 10. 141 interviews and 6 focus group discussions were undertaken across three rural communities. 35 high-level interviews were undertaken with experts and government officials. Demonstration farms were established to make use of and apply indigenous/traditional and modern insights and farming practices to indigenous and hybrid crops. The results elicited the value of integrating the indigenous/traditional with the climate smart in terms of food production and behavioural change as well as how such simultaneously forged synergies around a number of SDGs.

Keywords:

interconnection, rural, indigenous knowledge, food security

